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By Alan Alexander, Carl Bowen and Stephen Lea Sheppard

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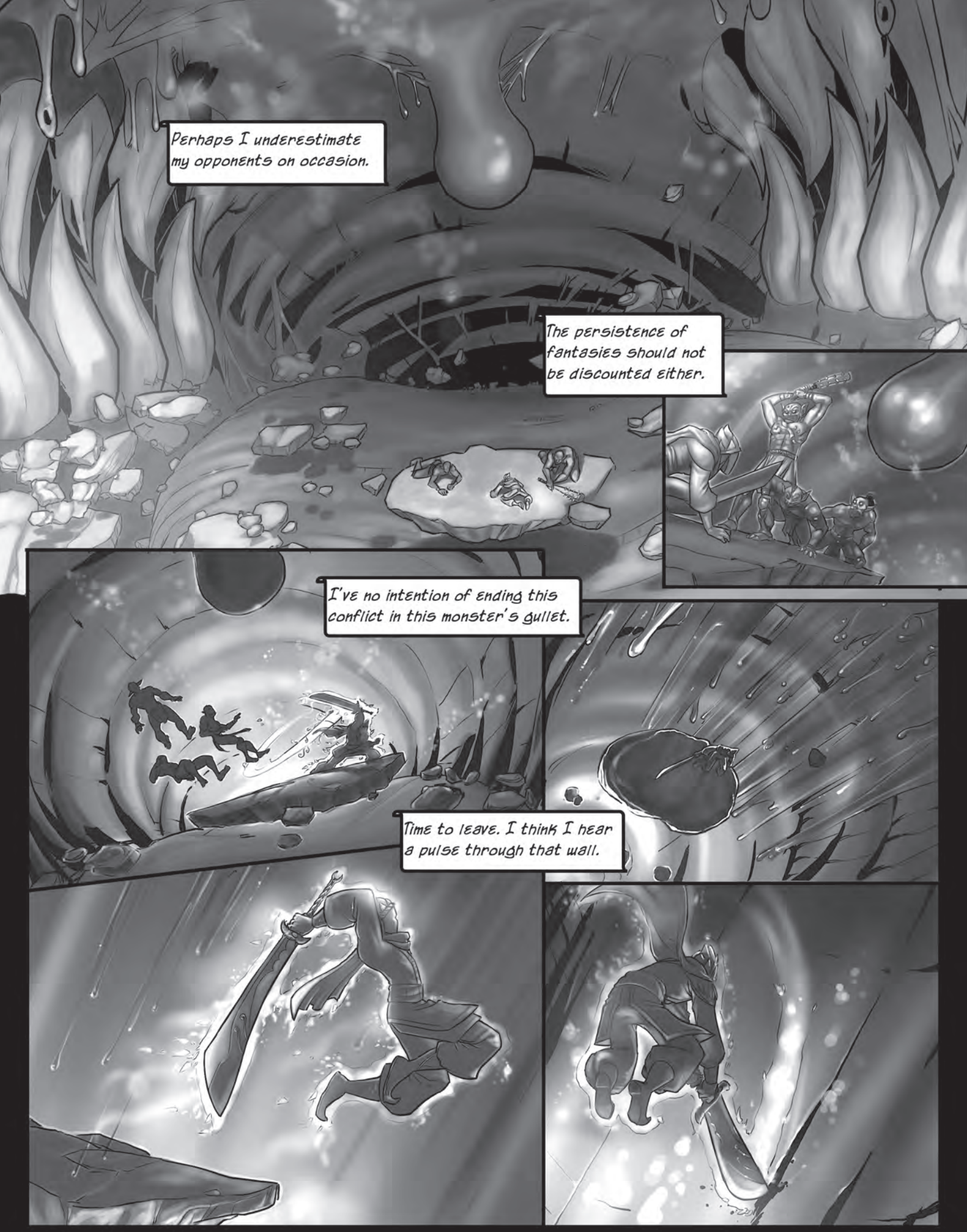
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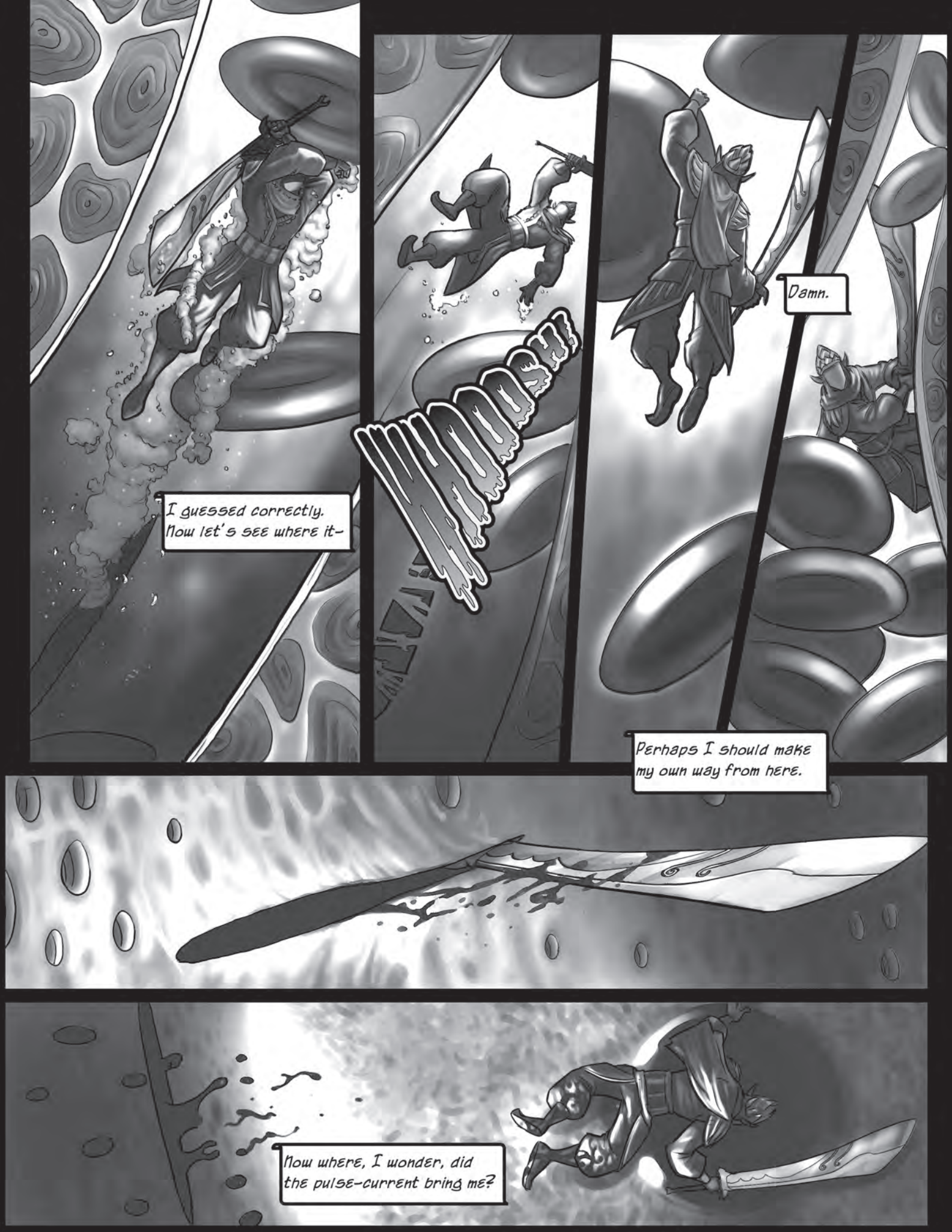
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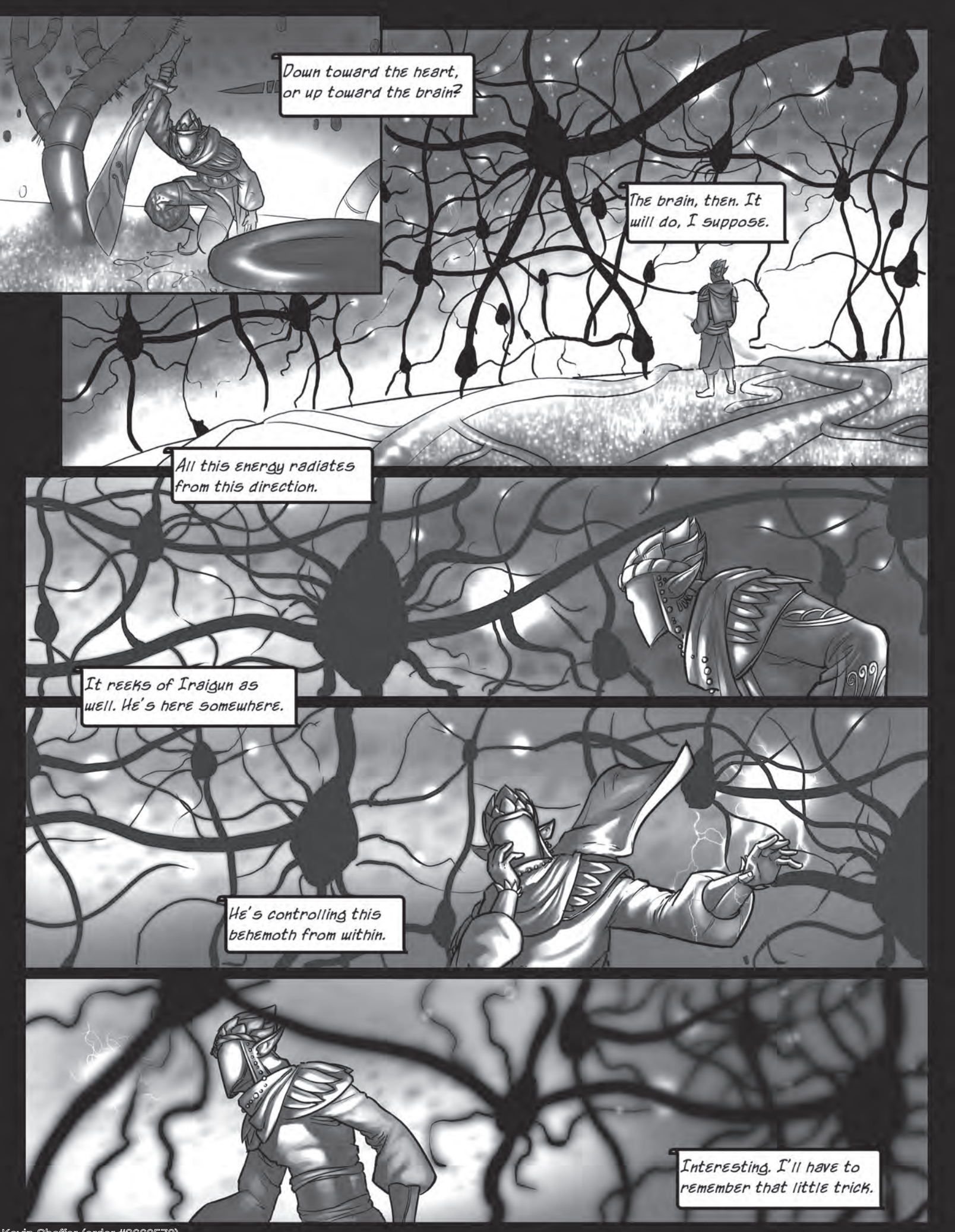
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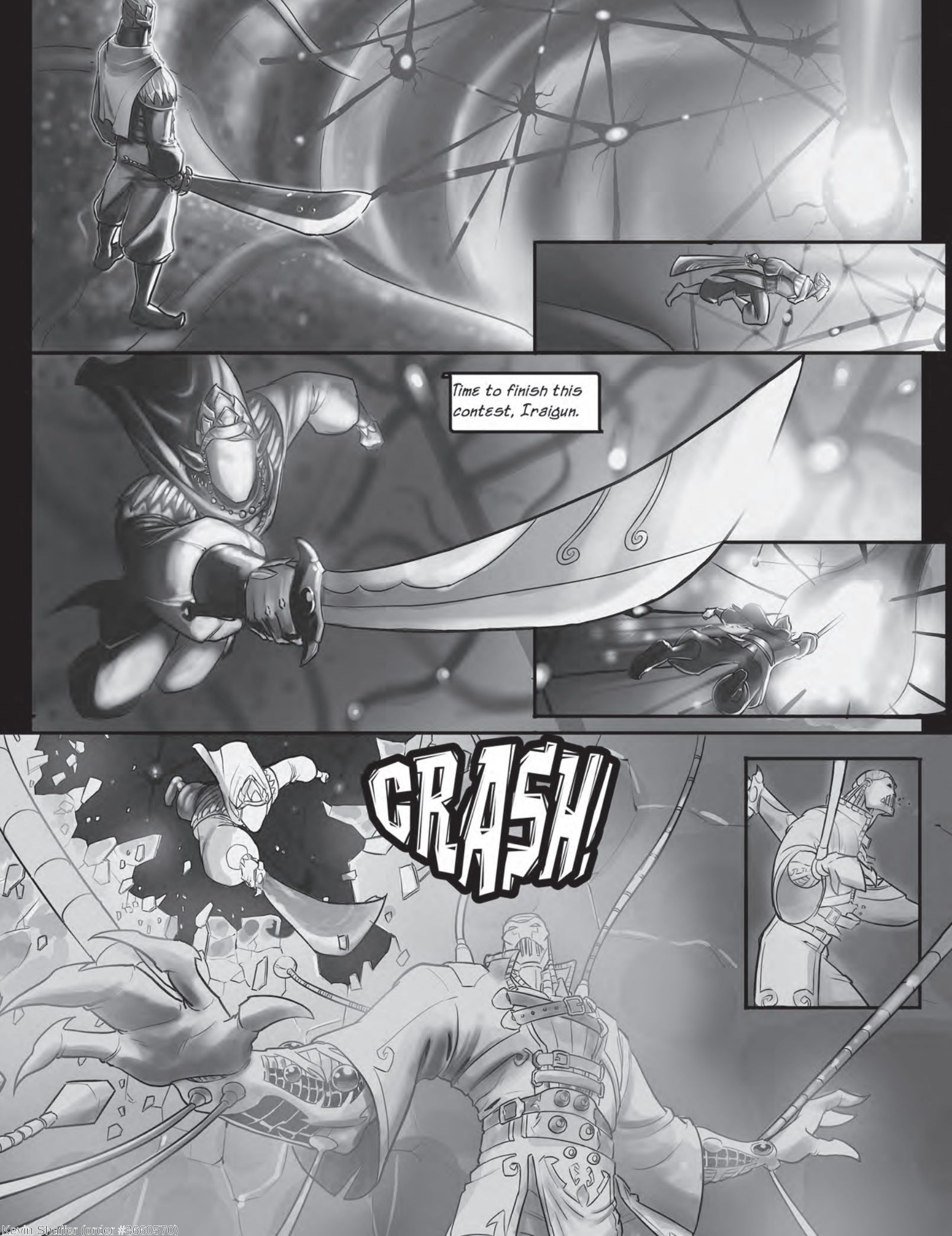
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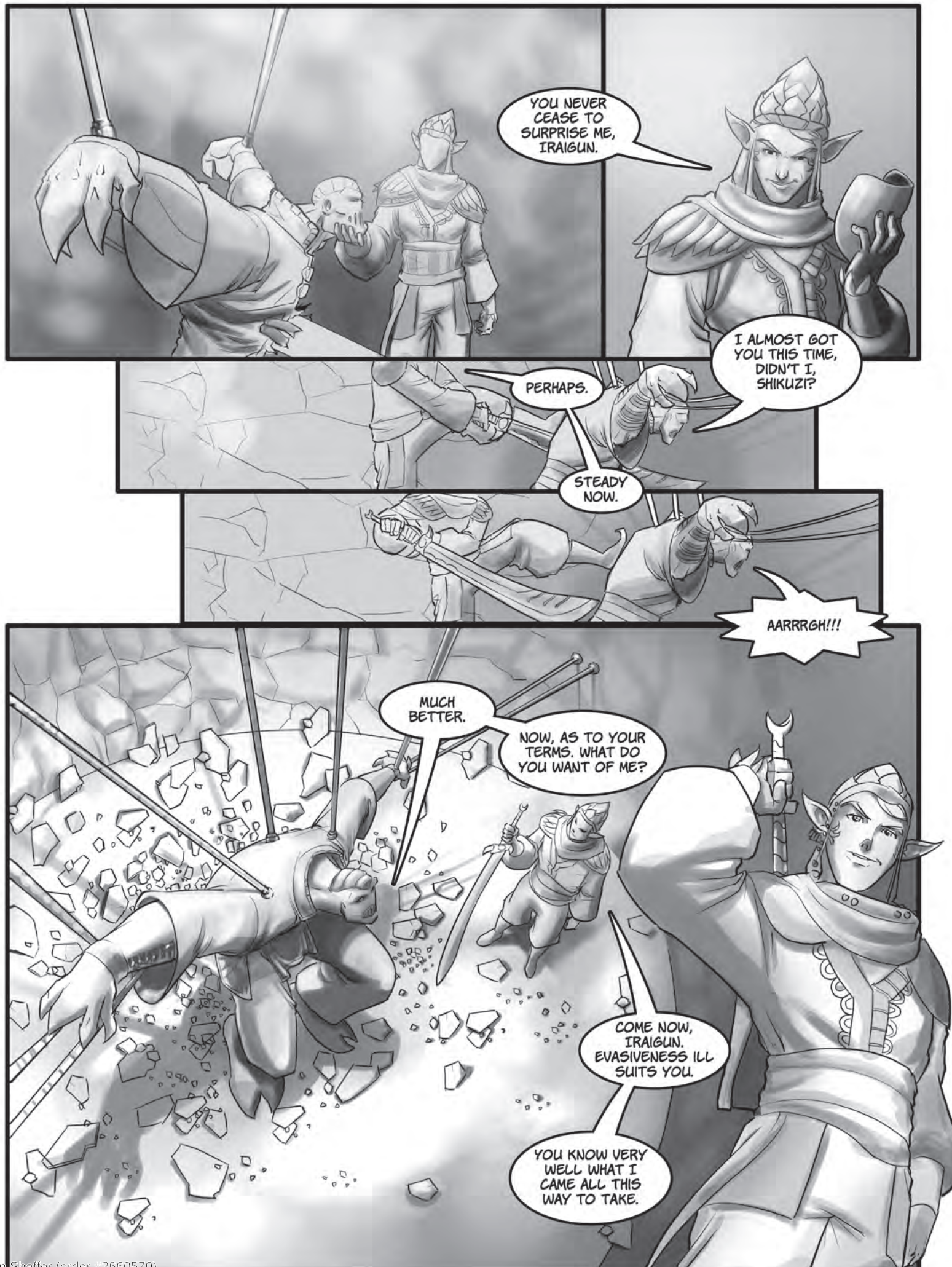
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This third of the Scrolls of Esoteric Wisdom focuses on the two ancient allies of the Old Realm Solar Deliberative, the Dragon Kings and the Mountain Folk. Once the rulers of Creation before the ascendancy of man, the mighty Dragon Kings were nearly destroyed at the fall of the First Age and their descendents have long since fallen into barbarism. Does the return of the Solars signal a return to greatness for the Dragon Kings, or are they too far gone? The Mountain Folk once armed the Solars for the Primordial War, but those same Lawgivers later came to distrust the Jadeborn and had their creator Autochthon lay the Great Geas upon them, locking them in their subterranean world. Will the modern Solars make amends for their predecessors' misdeeds, or will they take further advantage of these stoic craftsmen and warriors?

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Graceful Wicked Masques

The Fair Folk™

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INTRODUCTION

And the little Wild Thing said: "I want to have a soul to worship God, and to know the meaning of music, and to see the inner beauty of the marshlands and to imagine Paradise."
And the Oldest of the Wild Things said to it: "What have we to do with God? We are only Wild Things, and of the kith of the Elf-folk."
But it only answered, "I want to have a soul."
Then the Oldest of the Wild Things said: "I have no soul to give you; but if you got a soul, one day you would have to die, and if you knew the meaning of music you would learn the meaning of sorrow, and it is better to be a Wild Thing and not to die."

—Lord Dunsany, "The Kith of the Elf-Folk"

Exiles from the Wyld that surrounds Creation, the raksha are a threat to all shaped reality. Taking on physical form, becoming the very thing they despise, the so-called Fair Folk prey on the fringes of Creation, biding their time with unfathomable distractions until the next great crusade rides forth from the formless madness beyond the world's poles to finally end the blasphemy of shape.

How to Use This Book

Graceful Wicked Masques—The Fair Folk provides the rules and background to run a game that focuses upon raksha characters or to design such characters as allies or antagonists for other **Exalted** games. The book's contents are as follows:

Chapter One: The Raksha

This chapter details the shaped raksha and the cutthroat society in which they dwell.

Chapter Two: Lords of Chaos

This section is devoted to the unshaped raksha, monsters of mercurial formlessness and unrelenting hunger. In many ways, these are the greatest of the Fair Folk, at least in terms of pure might. Yet their very nature leaves them mad gods, both unable to direct their power with intellect and purpose as shaped raksha do and more vulnerable by far to the calcifying effects of Creation.

Chapter Three: Character Creation

This chapter supplies the rules you need to create a raksha character.

Chapter Four: Traits

In this chapter, you can find traits unique to raksha characters, as well as information on how to adjust existing traits for the Fair Folk.

Chapter Five: Reality Shaping

This section features complete rules for the unique power of the raksha to enforce their wills on the stuff of the Wyld.

Chapter Six: Charms

This chapter focuses on the Charms of the Fair Folk, how they aid them in shaping the Wyld and how they perform in Creation.

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Chapter Seven: Storytelling

The book's final chapter describes the special factors one must consider when Storytelling a game about the Fair Folk.

Lexicon

The majority of terms used in the core **Exalted** core book also apply to the Fair Folk. The following terms, however, refer particularly to raksha characters and their particular milieu, the Wyld.

abstract tick: A period of time in the Wyld usually longer than a long tick, but occasionally as short as a regular tick in Creation thanks to the vagaries of time in the Wyld.

Assumption: The physical form a shaped *raksha* builds for himself with Charms in order to better survive outside the Wyld.

Cup: The *Grace* of the *Fair Folk* focusing on conciliation and performance, it emulates the Virtue of Compassion.

Fair Folk: The most popular term used by Creation's denizens to refer to the *raksha* in order to avoid drawing the alien creatures' attention. Raksha only refer to themselves with this term as an act of self-aware humor.

Grace: An artifact repository for the one of the *raksha*'s Virtue and Willpower emulators. Five Graces exist—*Cup*, *Ring*, *Staff*, *Sword* and the prime *Heart* Grace.

Heart: The central *Grace* of the *Fair Folk*, which houses her self-awareness and Willpower. It is defended by the other four Graces.

journey: A connection between two *waypoints* remembered as a dreamlike and impressionistic transition that puts travel between the two waypoints in context.

possession: A thing which intrinsically belongs to one of the *raksha* as a result of metaphysical links created through various Charms. Any possession may be reflexively summoned from or dismissed to Elsewhere by its raksha owner, and may be cosmetically modified by her to better meet her current needs or whims.

raksha: An aggregate of five *Graces*, possessing either a single or dual feeding maws, commonly referred to as one of the *Fair Folk* by Creation's inhabitants. To survive outside the Wyld, a raksha must use an *Assumption* to create a physical form for himself to avoid calcification by the sheer rigidity of shaped reality.

Rakshastan: Those parts of Creation that have been overlapped by the Wyld. Creation's inhabitants typically refer to Rakshastan as simply "the Wyld," but more accurately, it is a blend of both Creation and the true Wyld that exists beyond the world's boundaries. Rakshastan isn't a unified nation of any sort, merely the natural habitat of shaped *raksha* that surrounds stable Creation.

ring: A group of *Fair Folk* working together to achieve common goals or for mutual protection from more powerful *raksha*. The closest Fair Folk equivalent to the Exalted circle.

Ring: The *Grace* of the *Fair Folk* focusing on identity and the drive to fulfill the *raksha*'s purpose, it emulates the Virtue of Temperance.

shaping: A *raksha*'s innate ability to shape the reality of the Wyld through the power of her *Graces*.

shaping action: The time necessary to complete a single act of *shaping* in the Wyld.

shinma: Embodying pure concepts that exist in and even beyond the Wyld, the shinma abide somewhere between natural laws and idiot gods, venerated and studied by the *raksha* (as well as the Primordials and the Exalted savants of the High First Age).

Staff: The *Grace* of the *Fair Folk* focusing on diplomacy and society, it emulates the Virtue of Conviction.

Sword: The *Grace* of the *Fair Folk* focusing on dominance and respect, it emulates the Virtue of Valor.

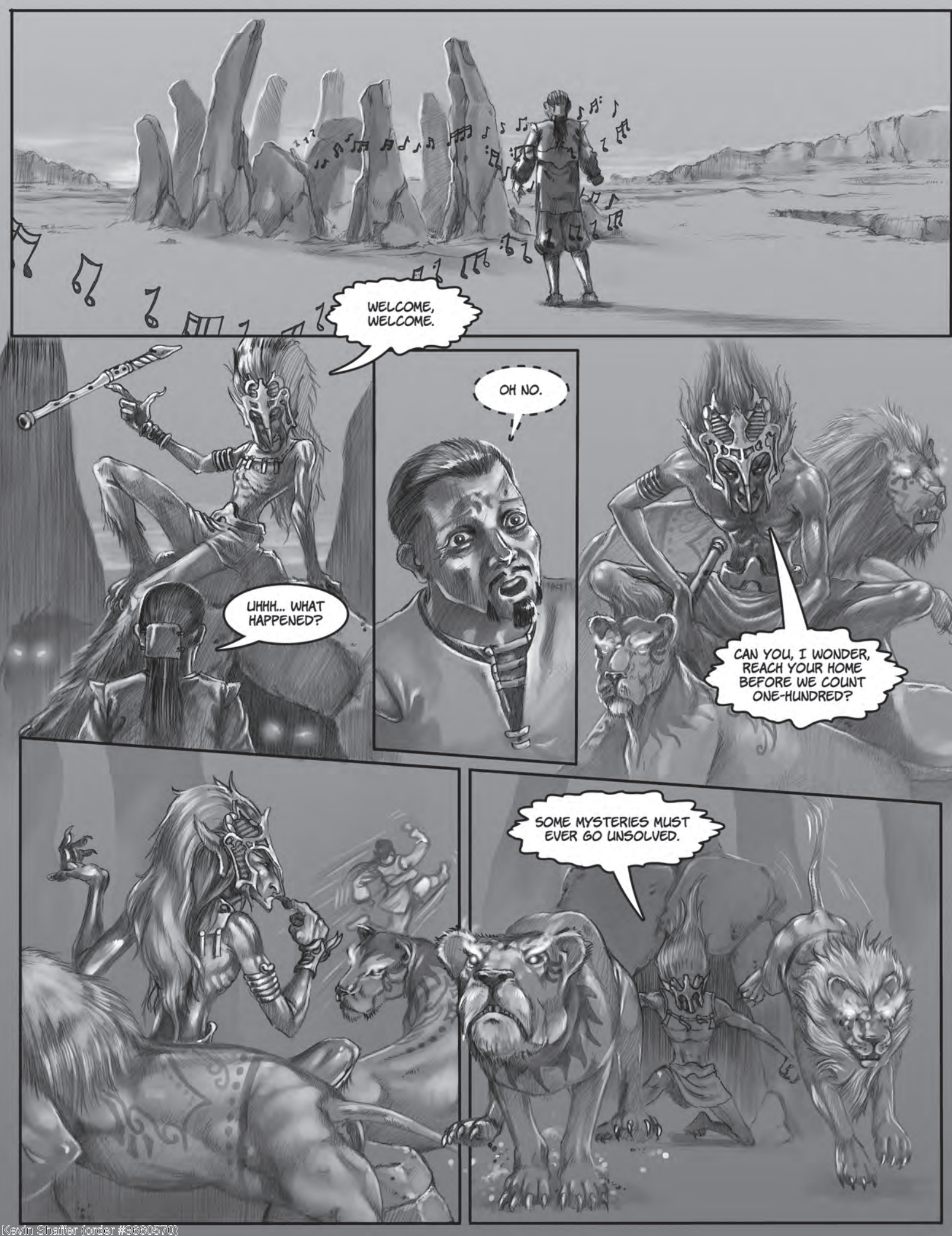
tale: The Wyld-time equivalent to a scene in Creation.

waypoint: A place in the Wyld of variable size wherein events can occur.

This Is Not a Complete Game!

Graceful Wicked Masques—The Fair Folk, despite its size, is not a complete game. It is a supplement for White Wolf's **Exalted**, a game about near-divine heroes in a world of high fantasy. The core book describes the Solar Exalted, the Sun-blessed rightful rulers of Creation, reborn into a world that for centuries has hated them as the Solar Anathema, the demonic despots of the First Age. This supplement does not describe the game's various core traits, present its rules for combat or provide a complete setting. This supplement just gives in-depth information about the Fair Folk, their society, their activities and the rules necessary to create and play raksha characters. You'll need to consult the **Exalted** core book in order to play.

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CHAPTER ONE
THE RAKSHA

They are the ageless nightmares from beyond the boundaries of Creation. They are the alluring whispers from the shadows by the roadside. In them is made real every beautiful, horrifying, desirable, repellant phantasm of the Wyld. They love you, they need you, they despise you, and they thrive on your dreams. They go by the name raksha, though this name was given to them rather than created by them. To the ignorant, fearful masses of Creation, they are simply the Fair Folk. Stories about them have circulated since the beginning of human history, and in those stories is reflected all the manifold shapes of human emotion—and myriad stranger ideas besides.

It is that last which best sums up the Fair Folk, as much as anything can define such beings. Above all else, they are strangers. They are the Other; alien and ultimately unknowable to the denizens of Creation. For all that they can make themselves look like humans and make themselves understood by humans, they are not human, and they do not want what humans want. And yet, without Creation and the humans who populate it, the raksha would be nothing whatsoever.

That bitter central paradox has defined the Fair Folk experience from the dawn of time all the way up to the modern day. And it will continue for as long that paradox amuses the raksha.

The History Imposed upon the Raksha

Were Creation an expression of the perfection that is natural to the raksha, there would be no history, for there would be no time, no succession of events and no actors to carry out those events. History is not a thing of the raksha, nor is it an affectation that delights them. The stories the raksha would prefer to tell concern only themselves and are timeless besides. They consider it a conceit of lesser minds to chain recollections of interesting events too strictly to the drudgery of a single timeline, or even to rely overmuch on the strictures of causality. Were it the choice of the raksha, a recounting of history would flow unending from the stream of consciousness, with the rise and fall of empires

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and kingdoms given equal weight with the romances of farm girls and the obsessions of greedy tax-collectors. Only the fancy of the speaker telling the tale would elevate one event above another in importance, and that fancy would change with the concerns of the day—to say nothing of the embellishments and inventions of listeners passing the tale on to new generations of speakers.

As with so much of their experience, however, this choice does not belong to the raksha. The concept of time is alien to them and was imposed upon their consciousness. The never-ending weave of interlocking causalities that is so easily accepted and taken for granted by the natives of Creation is not of the raksha, but it ensnares them and pulls them along in one direction. Its ceaseless progression is tedious. With the penetrating insight of the outsider, the Fair Folk recognize the painful repetition of small patterns to which nature itself condemns the Creation-born. They see the Creation-born making the same mistakes time and again, only dressing those mistakes in different clothes as if that somehow made the mistakes fresh or new or interesting.

It is no wonder, then, that when they have the freedom of leisure in their own company, the raksha prefer to remember history only as it appeals to them. Among themselves, they give equal weight of focus to events minor, allegorical or apocryphal. They resignedly adhere to true facts when they must relate to or communicate with the Creation-born, but only when they must. And only when they are inclined to do so truthfully in any case.

Time Not

Once existence was truly timeless. It did not necessarily come before the advent of what is now understood as time. The minds of the Creation-born understand it to have occurred "before" the current cycle of Ages, but that's only because the understanding of the Creation-born can move in only one direction. Philosophical arguments could be made that this period is a state of being yet to come at the end of all Ages—the entropic perfection toward which all things strive. Even that distinction, however, relies on the Creation-born concept of time, and this period was not a time. To the best of the knowledge of the raksha, this period is simply Time Not.

During Time Not, everything existed, but it existed in no place. This region was infinite, and all things within it were infinite as well. Nothing was apart. There was nothing from which to be apart. Everything was all at one point, which was the wholeness of infinity. Everything was possible, but nothing was necessary or likely. Infinity was whole, and existence was perfection.

The raksha can be made to speculate about Time Not. When they do, they occasionally express a sadness that the Creation-born choose to mistake for homesickness. This sadness is not genuine. The raksha are no more creatures of Time Not than the Creation-born are. It is even possible that Time Not is an unachievable ideal to which the raksha aspire. No one can speak with authority about Time Not because it cannot coexist with the present arrangement of Creation, even conceptually.



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Advaita Iraivan

The banishment of Time Not was accomplished by Advaita Iraivan. Indeed, without Advaita Iraivan, there would be no existence or anything other than Time Not, for Advaita Iraivan is the shinma that defines the principle of separation. Its most important separation pulled apart its own ignorance from awareness, allowing it to understand its component selves and to recognize in itself a distinct whole separate from things that were not Advaita Iraivan. This awareness allowed Advaita Iraivan to separate itself entirely from Time Not, which then enabled it to distinguish all the distinct, manifold elements of which Time Not consisted. The greatest elements that Advaita Iraivan separated from Time Not were the other shinma, each of equal vastness and power. Each shinma defined some principle of existence that was simple to express but infinite in application. Among them were Nirakara, which defines the principle of shape; Nirguna, which defines the qualities of existence; Nirvishesha, which defines the principle of identity; Nirvikalpa, which defines the principle of communication; Nishkriya, which defines the principle of conflict; Nirupadhika, which defines the principles of space and location; and Dharma, which defines the principles of corrosion, ignorance and desire.

It is a misconception of some raksha—and some Creation-born philosophers who struggle to understand the shinma—that Advaita Iraivan was the "first" shinma or that it somehow "created" the other shinma. Advaita Iraivan cannot create anything, it can only separate and recognize differences. It did not create the other shinma, it only separated out the ignorance that kept the shinma from recognizing their own existences. It did not come into existence itself first, because the recognition of separations that Advaita Iraivan performed did not take place in a frame of time. Its every separation happened simultaneously—including the separation between one moment and the next. Only *then* was Time Not truly banished. Only then did time itself exist in any conceivable sense.

After

The result of Advaita Iraivan's act of infinite separation was to set apart the whole of conceivability into the opposing states of reality and not-reality. Not-reality consisted only of the absence from which the whole of Time Not had been taken. It is possible to conceive of this not-reality as Elsewhere, though it is just as likely that it is the Void. It is not entirely impossible, however, that both of those theoretical places are the same.

Separate from not-reality existed the shinma and that which was not shinma. It is now understood as the primeval Wyld or the endlessness of Pure Chaos. Nothing existed here that had not existed in Time Not, save for the distinction of time, but the distinction was as yet purely conceptual and without inherent importance. The importance of time was advanced by patterns of consciousness that existed in the Pure Chaos. Advaita Iraivan recognized these patterns of awareness as distinct from the awareness of the shinma and distinct from one another as well. These patterns were aware of the differences between moments and of the other principles defined by the shinma, but since they were not shinma themselves, their awareness was not limited solely to the definitions of those principles. Their awareness was such that they were able to combine and apply those principles as best pleased them. They were able to conceive and to create in ways the shinma never could. Within them was the ability to claim and to change the Wyld and to judge each change good or bad as the moments of time passed. They built shapes and sounds and concepts—all too large for current Creation-born minds to grasp or too infinitesimal for such minds to recognize—attaching neither significance nor importance to any of them. These patterns had no shape, but they had limits. They were infinite and ever-changing, but they remained eternally themselves.

The raksha daydream about this period after Time Not and wish to re-create it for themselves. They consider themselves to be the true and rightful descendants of the formless beings who existed then, separate from the shinma. Yet their understanding of this period is flawed. What they know of their nature today they could not learn until something fundamental about those previous beings changed. The raksha have invented a story to explain this change and to account for all the infuriating circumstances that occurred as a result.

According to the story, a schism developed between the shapeless beings. On one side were those who were content with existence; on the other were those who were not content. Those who were not content engaged in strange practices and wrestled away the rights to certain secrets from the shinma who kept them. They learned how to do more than simply create; they learned how to create toward a purpose. They learned how to create in cooperation and toward a unified goal. They learned how to create in such a way that their creations would last, never changing and never coming undone. Those who were content with existence ignored the others, which demonstrates the poison of contentment. Those who were not content re-forged their identities, purged their ancient natures, constructed hideous

The Origin?

The foregoing is not necessarily the true, verifiable origin of the Primordials and the raksha. It is, rather, a philosophical parable the raksha choose to understand about their origin and that of their bitterest enemies. No raksha believes in the literal truth of this parable, but it frames the context of the opposition between the denizens of the Wyld and the Creation-born. Ultimately, it's only a story—one designed to amuse those who would ponder the unknowable.

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shapes for one another and became the Primordials. Those who were content remained as they were and were called raksha by their counterparts.

Heaven and Earth

Could the raksha have put a stop to the efforts of the Primordials and ensured everlasting peace by forestalling the construction of Creation? Perhaps, if they had realized what the Primordials were doing. Yet hypothesizing and thinking ahead were not activities of much worth to the raksha at that time. They witnessed the strange activities of the Primordials but only shunned them, rather than opposed them. To the raksha, the strange, static forms within which the Primordials had imprisoned themselves were abhorrent, repellant. They drew away from the Primordials and lost sight of the Primordials' goals and activities. It was no matter at the time, because whatever the Primordials' great project was, it had no effect on the Wyld in which the raksha thrived. It offered no obvious amusement or reward. The raksha deemed it unimportant.

The raksha did not take notice of what the Primordials were about until a great contingent of those malcontents harnessed a number of shinma, pulled a section of the Wyld around themselves and suddenly disappeared from the raksha's awareness. This disappearance altered the Wyld in a way that the raksha could no longer define, unsettling them deeply. The Primordials who had not disappeared tried to explain what a wonder they had wrought. They named the place where the others had gone "Yu-Shan" and spoke about their wonderful new Games of Divinity. But of what use were such things to the raksha, who had all of the Wyld to play in? The raksha knew only that the Primordials had wrought an unpleasant change in the fabric of things, a change the Primordials would not—perhaps could not—undo.

The worst, of course, was still to come, and it came too quickly for the raksha to prepare.

Extruding an infinitely long fiber of solid reality from their newly hidden game parlor, the Primordials enwrapped a broad swath of pristine Wyld and choked it into an ugly, static abomination. The raksha could only look on in horror as the Primordials' Creation took shape, killing off the Wyld's potential and variety in that region. They could only watch helplessly as several of their number were trapped in the center of this expanding Creation and driven into a slumber that extinguished their sentient awareness. As it was finished, the vast shinma known as Nirakara yielded up an aspect of itself to define the boundaries of this Creation, marking it out as a *place* with a definite *shape*. Within that place and because of it, time became a constant with a regularized flow, rather than the loose ordering of distinct moments it had been thus far. No more could the raksha selectively ignore the flow of time as they once had. Thus did the framework of history impose itself upon their consciousness.

Alas, the raksha reacted too slowly to interrupt the formation of this chancre of hateful stability in their perfect Wyld. When it was finished, Creation was too stable and too well designed to collapse on its own. Neither could it be ignored. And yet, repulsive though it was, Creation fascinated the raksha. Many raksha crowded around its threshold to peer in at its infinite complexity. They saw in it many mechanisms and aesthetic effects similar to ones they had created for themselves and dispensed with out in the Wyld. The processes by which the Primordials had made their Creation still relied on the same shinma-derived concepts that the raksha employed in their own amusements, but the Primordials applied these concepts in strange ways and expanded on odd, frivolous tangents of uninteresting ones. The workings of Creation were not wholly alien to the raksha, but neither were they attractive.

What's more, Creation was not safe for the raksha. All had for an example those few who had been caught at the center when Creation was formed, and none could argue that the unfortunates would ever be truly raksha again. Some bold few, however, assumed that things would be different now that Creation was fully formed. Others even suggested that simply not being surprised by the nature of Creation—as the lost unfortunates had been—would be protection enough. How wrong they were. All who tried to pass the threshold unprotected into the Primordials' Creation were undone at a stroke, unable to exist there in their natural state as matrices of whims and desires. Only those few who passed through a certain aspect of the shinma Nirakara known as the Gateway of Sundraprisha and forged a physical shape for themselves stood a chance of surviving within Creation. Even they could last only as long as they could concentrate before dissolving into lifeless Essence and being absorbed. Creation was simply no place for those who existed outside it. That the Primordials could survive within their Creation only made those beings so much more alien and bizarre to the raksha looking on.

In time, as with every interest that captures a raksha's attention, the contemplation of Creation simply grew banal and boring. The results of the Primordials' constant tinkering and reshuffling were good for brief surges of raksha interest, but each such surge was smaller than the last. To the raksha's way of thinking, Creation didn't *do* anything. It simply existed for its own sake, having no effect on anything in the Wyld around it. Its every internal process existed solely to contribute to the overall maintenance of the whole. If Creation did have some purpose other than to simply exist, that purpose was evident to none but the Primordials—and they had long since ceased communicating with the raksha in any meaningful way. In fact, once the Primordials finished making adjustments to their Creation, most of them disappeared into their concealed gaming parlor once more, wherein the raksha could no longer perceive them at all.

One Redeeming Feature

As repellant and arcane as Creation was in most respects, one aspect of it did interest the raksha as more than just a

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passing fancy. That mechanism radiated the scintillating touch of the shinma Nirguna, which defines the most interesting qualities of existence. That mechanism made itself evident in the abundance of sentient life forms with which the Primordials had populated their Creation. As with the Primordials and the raksha, sparks of free, self-serving will drove these simplistic objects of Essence and physical matter. In them was the capability to imagine states of being contrary to the ones they knew; in them existed the will to strive to achieve those imagined states. Unlike so many of the non-sentient processes of Creation, the sentient beings were able to commit or refrain from actions for no reason other than that their desires demanded it. They could supersede the laws of causality with which the Primordials had bound their Creation together, especially during the regular periods when their physical forms proved incapable of taking any actions. This spark of will endeared the various forms of sentient life to the raksha for a time, or at least kindled a fleeting spark of sympathy for them in the raksha's fickle hearts.

Yet this will did not shine equally bright in all of the Primordials' sentient creatures. The gods who oversaw and maintained Creation in the Primordials' stead—ruling the whole from the center as they strode on the calcified carcasses of the unfortunate few raksha caught unawares at Creation's inception—were powerful, but among them was the spark of will least proportionally bright. They were too much the Primordials' creations to utilize their will in pursuit of selfish desires. Their will could flare brighter, and did periodically, but its light was inconstant. For some reason, it shone its strongest during those rare occasions when the Primordials returned from their hideaway to inspect their Creation. This correlation interested the raksha, but the gods were not interesting enough in themselves to hold the raksha's attention.

Somewhat more interesting were the secondary caretakers beneath the gods, the Dragon Kings. In them did the spark of will burn brighter more often, and they held the raksha's attention for several generations. Their souls were capable of vivid, powerful dreams, and their waking minds were better designed for creating unreal fantasies from whole cloth. While the Dragon Kings were less bound to the Primordials' wretched stasis than were the gods, however, they were still incapable of the infinite complexity that would have most appealed to the raksha. For one thing, they could die, which inherently limited the intensity their spark of will could achieve. It mitigated the limitation somewhat that they could pass their consciousness forward to future incarnations, but that legacy proved to be a limitation of its own. The Dragon King psyche depended too much on the recycling of memories, without a concomitant infusion of new will. Without the former, Dragon Kings deteriorated and became as beasts. Without the latter, they could never become anything more than Dragon Kings. Once the raksha figured out these flaws in the Dragon Kings' design, the Dragon Kings ceased to interest to them.

For similar reasons and a host of others, none of the early sentient races of Creation appealed for very long to the raksha. The alaun were too devoted to their Primordial masters and too willing to sacrifice their desires in pursuit of their masters' favor. The scathacs intrigued the raksha, but only until the raksha revealed the false complexity of a scathac mind as just a morass of competing lesser desires deriving from each scathac's component selves. The appetites of the mazriki seemed promising and taught the raksha much, but the mazriki's palates were too depressingly narrow to be worth the raksha's attention. The will of the t'shay'i burned brightest of all, but the Dragon Kings all too rapidly hunted them to extinction. With each flare of interest and subsequent disappointment, the raksha turned away from Creation as best they could and returned their attention to their own desires. At least there, in the Wyld, their desires could not disappoint.

Delight, from an Overlooked Quarter

The raksha peered into Creation with decreasing frequency during that place's primeval development. It was dangerous to them, and ugly besides. The raksha also discovered that the longer they contemplated what the Primordials had wrought, the less themselves they became. Those who gazed too deeply into the irritation in the skin of the Wyld found their minds infected by repeating patterns and static formations that made Creation easier to understand but the Wyld proportionally more difficult to shape to their desires. Those who studied the place the most intently of all found themselves inexorably compelled to pass through Nirakara via the Gateway of Sundraprisha and enter it, risking dissolution and incorporation into the fabric of that place. Those who resisted the lure of destruction speculated that Creation was nothing more than an arcane trap devised by the Primordials to calcify and destroy their rivals.

Nonetheless, the lure was strong, and the raksha continued to regard Creation periodically. In one period, they made a discovery that excited them more than every previous discovery had done—a design of sentient creature they had overlooked. This creature was similar to the other sentients in physical design, yet weaker and less willful than many. It had always existed in the background of Creation, never rising above its station or challenging the others when its desires came in conflict with theirs. Like the raksha, these creatures seemed perfectly content with their station. They appeared to be only a slightly smarter species of will-less animal, which was why the raksha had previously overlooked them.

The gods, however, took what seemed an undue interest in these beings, which piqued the interest of the raksha. On closer inspection, the raksha realized that these creatures—these human beings—possessed a unique confluence of shinmaic principles that made them unlike all the other creatures. They had abundant reserves of will, but they could be mastered and trained like animals. Their natures

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were limited and their lives were tied to repetitive cycles less complicated than even the Dragon Kings', yet in their dreams could be found an infinite complexity that beggared even the Wyld sometimes. Somehow, even more baffling, the humans did not seem to recognize this capacity in themselves. It took the intervention and patronage of the gods to reveal to humanity what made it the most interesting creature in all of Creation.

At first, the raksha did not know why the gods of Creation did this. They watched as scores of the most powerful gods and elemental beings selected and separated out a fraction of humanity based on bizarre criteria. More raksha gathered as those gods pulled off one piece of each human's soul, changed it intrinsically in some unfathomable way and put it back in place. The gods gave their chosen and altered humans gifts that interacted with Creation's Essence flows. They trained their chosen in how to utilize those gifts, always preparing for… some momentous event that the raksha could not guess at. The watchers wondered for years what that event might be before the answer came. For no reason the raksha could name, every member of the Primordial Host (save two) poured suddenly into their Creation. When the Primordials arrived, the humans whom the gods had altered made war against them.

The raksha stared in fascination as the Primordials fought. Their victory seemed a foregone conclusion, but for too long had the Primordials been creators and too well had they fortified their Creation against casual destruction. Plus, whatever alteration the gods had made to their chosen humans, it amplified the humans' will and power beyond all measure. These amplified, exalted humans were able to not only stand up to the Primordials, but to push them back and to strike down their unfolding souls from within. When the first Primordials fell, a great cry rang out among the raksha gathered to watch at Creation's perimeter. The humans had wrought an impossible thing! They meant to wrest control of their existence from their creators. Perhaps they intended to tear down Creation and learn to master the Wyld as the raksha had. The raksha watched, rapt, as more Primordials fell and others were enslaved. They cheered again as one of the most fanatical Primordials sacrificed a portion of itself in an attempt to destroy Creation rather than cede it to humanity and the gods. The chancre contracted to a size many thousands of times smaller than its original as concepts and constructs were eradicated, and the raksha dragged the Wyld back into the emptiness left in its wake. When the fighting was over, Creation was much diminished, and all but a mere handful of the Primordials were either dead or sealed away in a place the raksha did not know. And none of it would have been possible without the strange, compelling power conferred upon humanity.

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Further Discoveries and Bitter Disappointments

If the raksha truly hoped that the new masters of Creation would destroy the hateful construct and join them in the Wyld, they learned the disappointing truth soon enough. Many gods had been obliterated—their chosen humans with them—and most of Creation had burned down to its finest component atomies, but that which remained was as strong as ever the original had been. Stacking disappointment upon itself, the diminished world seemed to satisfy the surviving human beings. In fact, rather than unravel it, the humans shored up the boundaries of their world and shaped the face of it anew to their liking. This industrious maintenance of Creation confused and frustrated the raksha who had gathered to witness the overthrow of the Primordials, and many of them drifted back into the Wyld to find more stimulating amusements. There they built and unmade their own worlds more suitable to their fleeting fancies than Creation.

Those raksha with longer attention spans stayed close around Creation, studying the new form it had taken. They found its center to be denser and more structurally stable, but many of the protective layers that had once confounded raksha intrusion had been stripped away or changed such that they now served different purposes. Taking hold of the shinma Nirvikalpa, which defines the principle of communication, the raksha could now attract the attention of the human beings within Creation and lure them out toward the fringes. So much had Creation changed that humans who were brave or determined enough could now walk out of Creation altogether and enter the Wyld. Their passage carried them outward through Nirakara and undermined the stability of their forms, which revealed to the astonished raksha the glorious beauty of the essential nature and will of humanity. As the first humans to cross the threshold unraveled into a pageant of dreams and fantastical graces, the watching raksha snatched them up and drew them inward. Thus did they learn much about human nature that they could not have otherwise understood. Thus also did they gain insight into the things of Creation that were important to humanity.

For a long time, the raksha indulged themselves in this new pastime of luring humans to themselves and internalizing the beauty that was revealed when they unmade themselves in the Wyld. The most daring raksha pressed themselves as close to Creation as they could to take first pick of their delectable prey. Others passed all the way through Nirakara into Creation itself. As during the primeval period, this transition forced shape upon the raksha, but the new forms they took on more closely resembled the forms of human beings. By accident, the raksha discovered that humans found these shapes pleasant and were more willing to approach the raksha thus than they were to journey into the Wyld to meet them. Even better, the raksha found that if they gathered enough humans around them quickly enough, they could resist the unmaking stagnation that Creation otherwise forced upon them. They had only to replenish the Wyld within themselves by extracting the dreams and the spark of will from the humans they gathered.

The properties of this new activity caused a sensation among the raksha. To wait and to lure humans into the Wyld was an intoxicating thrill. To actually reach into Creation and take some away was a daring game of infinite varieties. Many raksha passed through the Gateway of Sundraprisha into Creation only long enough to snatch up the nearest humans and retreat back with them into the Wyld. Others waded in more slowly, bravely allowing the humans to come to them and sustain the waiting raksha until it could finally take no more of shape and Creation. The most brilliant and fearless raksha made it so deep into Creation that they found locations within that could sustain them just as the Wyld could. In these oases of raw power, called demesnes, the raksha could no longer feel the banal weight of Creation. Nor did they require the dreams of human beings to sustain them, though feeding on the same still gave them pleasure. With the Primordials gone and humans now flourishing in abundance, the raksha had discovered a way to enjoy Creation.

Alas for these inquisitive, intrigued raksha, that enjoyment was not to last.

The Exalted Interfere

The raksha desired the leaders of humanity—the Exalted—who had thrown down the Primordials. They had not yet tasted the dreams of the Exalted, as most of the god-chosen elite remained tightly clustered around the center of Creation, but they often conspired and schemed in hopes of finding a way to do so. Attracting the attention of the Exalted was difficult at first, but they soon learned the trick of it. Rather than completely consuming the human prey they attracted, they chose to restrain themselves and let certain humans return from them only half consumed. Brave raksha of shape and substance ventured unbelievably far into Creation, traveling heartward from demesne to demesne, consuming only what few humans they needed to make the trip.

These methods proved wildly successful. Having settled affairs at the center, the Exalted directed their attention outward and noticed at once the raksha and the survivors of the raksha's hunger. Their response was swift and certain, placing the concerns of humanity above the interests of the raksha. They drove the invaders out of the demesnes and harried them to the very edges of Creation whence they had come. At no time did the Exalted even attempt to see things from the raksha's point of view. In many ways, they were as stubborn, antisocial and Creation-obsessed as were the Primordials before them. It was a bitter realization for the raksha.

Even more bitter was the raksha's discovery of just how greedy the Exalted could be. Had things remained as they were upon the overthrow of the Primordials, the raksha

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might have settled into an easy contentment sharing the Wyld with Creation and the Creation-born. The Wyld was expansive enough for the raksha to amuse themselves as they saw fit, and Creation had enough humans in it that it could suffer the occasional predation of the raksha (so long as the Exalted did not catch the perpetrators in the act). Yet, while the raksha might have been content with this arrangement, the Creation-born were not. They multiplied and spread out to conquer every part of their world until nothing was left to make their own. Had they been raksha, they would have simply unmade that which no longer pleased them, but such is not the way of the Creation-born. Instead, they spread out to the threshold of Creation and *pushed its boundaries farther apart*.

Defying the transition through Nirakara, the Exalted carried the solidity of Creation out into the Wyld. This invasion was very similar to the means by which the raksha had come inward to settle in Creation's demesnes, and it engendered a similar reaction from the Wyld's inhabitants. The raksha on the fringes fought against the steady expansion of Creation, and even the greatest and most solipsistic raksha—who had never thus far paid Creation the slightest notice—lent their power to the effort.

Their efforts came to nothing. The Exalted were simply too powerful. The Creation-born wrought solid territory from the Wyld and shaped it to their liking, forcing the raksha within that claimed territory to flee it or be subsumed into the new annex's fabric. When confrontation failed to sway the Exalted from their course, the raksha attempted to negotiate. The only concessions they could wring out of the Exalted, however, were temporary, lopsided and deceptive. In the end, the best they could say was that if they had been forced to allow certain Creation-born Exalted free access to the Wyld in perpetuity, at least they had not been forced to allow free access to *all* Creation-born Exalted.

A Cycle of Crushed Hope

That first age after the downfall of the Primordials was an awful time of much abuse heaped upon the raksha's heads. It dragged on century after century, causing the raksha to wonder if it would ever stop. They understood the Wyld to be boundless at that time, but what if the slayers of the Primordials took it into their heads to change that? The Creation-born seemed to derive such impossible power from the font whence flowed their dreams and will… Perhaps it was within them to do away altogether with the Wyld and its denizens. If they did, they certainly would not share the demesnes of Creation with what dispossessed refugees the raksha would become. Contemplating this tragedy, it was all the raksha could do to distract themselves with Wyld-shaped amusements and the heady bouquet of dreams stolen from what humans they could cadge from Creation's widening borders.

Relief from this depression came just as those raksha closest to Creation were prepared to surrender to despair. Like the Creation-born, they could see that the most offensive group of Exalted had ascended to the height of its power and sunk to the depths of its depravity. Those Exalted had long since ceased to be merely human, and their pursuit of their desires had grown beyond even the wildest extrapolations of human needs. The eldest and strongest of them were more like the raksha or the Primordials than any Creation-born beings have ever been before or since. The un-Exalted humans beneath them no longer loved or worshiped them except by force, and the discontent of the masses infected the lesser Exalted. This bitterness swelled into outrage, and the lesser Exalted organized a revolution much like the one the gods had engineered once before. The masses rose up and rebelled against their masters, scorching Creation anew with cataclysmic war.

As with the Primordial War, the raksha held out hope that the combatants would destroy Creation and return its stability to pristine Wyld. As then, Creation remained and failed to crumble. Neither side of combatants possessed the raw power to burn away Creation as the defeated Primordials had done, and the aggressors were better killers than the defenders had been in their time. The lesser Exalted slew most of their enemies at a single stroke in an artfully executed ambush. Those who did not die at the ambush proved too scattered and unwilling to cooperate for Creation to see too much widespread destruction in the battles that followed. One by one they fell, until only the lesser Exalted remained.

The Aftermath

When the dramatic rebellion was accomplished, very little had actually changed. Despite some cosmetic damage in the places where the foremost of the Exalted had fallen, Creation was just as stable and expansive as it had ever been. Three types of Creation-born Exalted remained. The least powerful Exalted regrouped at the center to rule over humanity. They seemed the best suited to that role, representing the very elements of which Creation consisted and able to harmonize their actions in a way that their defeated masters never could. They could also refresh their numbers naturally in ways the gods had never allowed for the other Exalted.

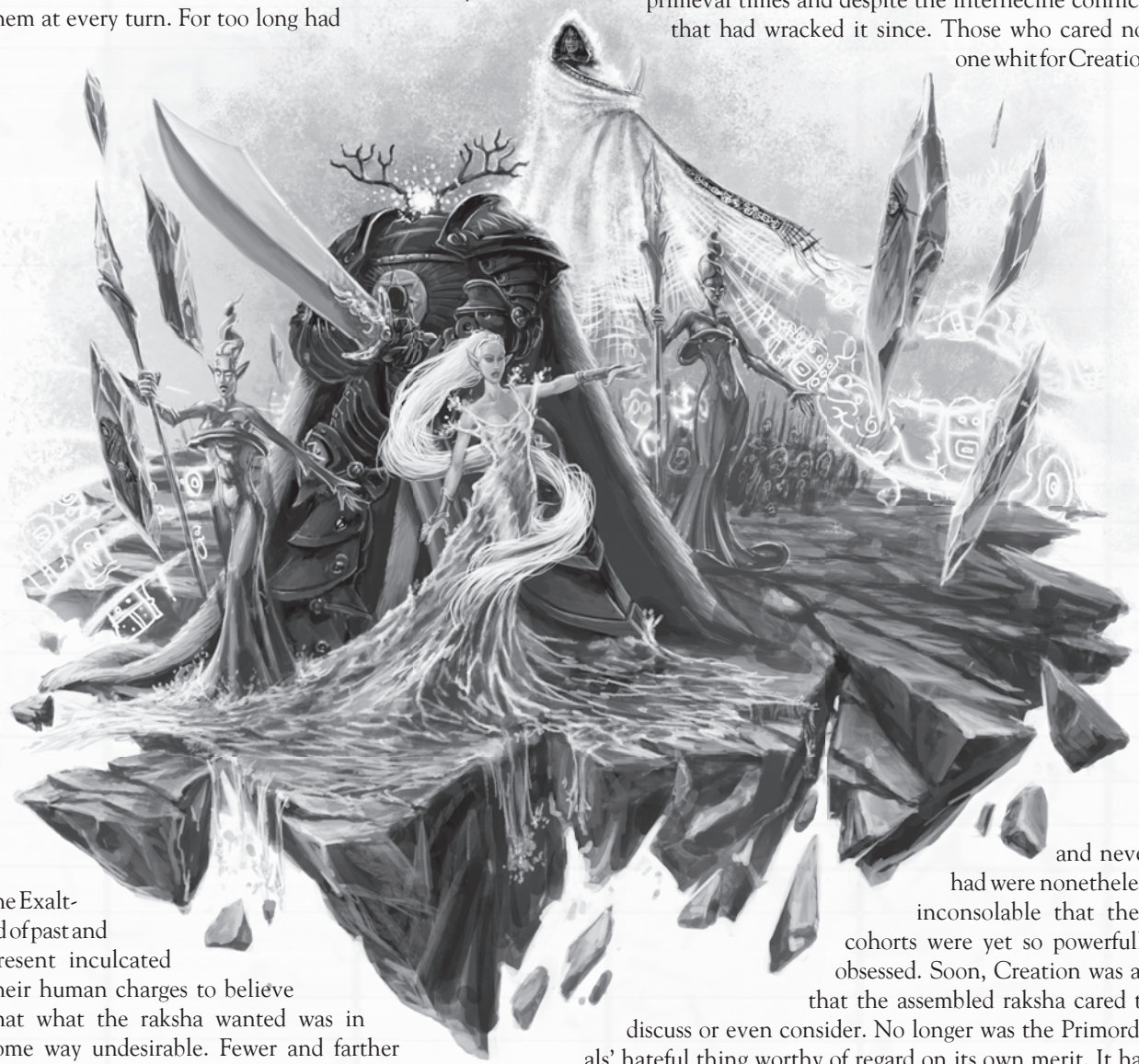
Of the remaining Exalted who were least in number, the raksha can say little and agree to less. Although it was those Exalted with whom the raksha had most often come into conflict during their first abortive expeditions into Creation, the raksha could no longer recognize them. They did… something… very confusing. Thereafter, they revealed themselves with ever-dwindling frequency.

The raksha found most interesting those most powerful Exalted who remained after the second major rebellion. Once the companions and counterparts of the ones the rest had thrown down, these Exalted burned with a Wyld-born flame that set them apart. As they fled to hide at the fringes of Creation (or even in the Wyld itself), the raksha came to them and surrounded them to observe their reactions. The raksha hoped that these Exalted might find common cause with them, but the Exalted were still too profoundly beings of Creation.

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Some passed through Nirakara in despair and were unmade to varying degrees, but none of them were willing to join in communion with the raksha. Neither could they be forced. When approached, they turned claws and fangs and blades and other horrors of Creation on the raksha and drove them back.

Meanwhile, the elementally aspected Exalted at Creation's heart worked diligently to patch the places where Creation's borders were weak. For a time, the raksha enjoyed more liberal access into Creation to snatch away mortals or to feed on their dreams, but the efforts of the Exalted stymied them at every turn. For too long had the Exalted of past and present inculcated their human charges to believe that what the raksha wanted was in some way undesirable. Fewer and farther between were the willing humans who shared their dreams freely with the Wyld. Gone were those who were too innocent and trusting not to realize what the raksha wanted from them. All too common were those who wielded the name Fair Folk like an epithet and hid behind the protection of distasteful iron. As one Age ended and the next began, the raksha despaired of their relationship with Creation ever improving.



The Balorian Crusade

The time passed with very little changing in Creation that was of interest to the raksha. Most of them turned instead to conflicts and passions they shared among each other, which had always been keener and clearer and more real to them. Yet even then, the issue of Creation could not be ignored. Those who were most taken with it were inconsolable that the dreams of humanity within would never be freely theirs. Those who most reviled it were inconsolable that it was still so rigidly insoluble despite its radical diminishment in primeval times and despite the internecine conflicts that had wracked it since. Those who cared not one whit for Creation and never had were nonetheless inconsolable that their cohorts were yet so powerfully obsessed. Soon, Creation was all that the assembled raksha cared to discuss or even consider. No longer was the Primordials' hateful thing worthy of regard on its own merit. It had become a subject of contention among the raksha.

Prince Balor of the Terrible Gaze was the first to offer a viable final solution to the question of Creation. Let the raksha take shape in innumerable manifestations of their splendor and ride forth into Creation, he proposed. Let the armies of Pure Chaos wash over what the Primordials had made and scourge it. Let it be remade as pure Wyld.

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It spoke to his frustration that Prince Balor proposed this course of action. Never once had the prince regarded Creation before that point. Never had he sampled the delectable dreams of the Creation-born. Never had he as much as been tempted to pass through the Gateway of Sundraprisha and walk among the Creation-born. Such was his piety, his devotion to the raksha, his ultimate bravery that he was willing to lead the crusade of unraveling into hostile territory because he felt it would be the best thing for the raksha.

The bravest and best of the raksha rallied to Prince Balor at once, but his lover Princess Melusine of the Glittering Train stepped forth to oppose him. To pull apart Creation wantonly (however bravely) would be to do a great disservice to the Creation-born, she argued. Such delight had the Creation-born given to those raksha who would but take it, that to unmake them would be to rob them of the chance to provide it ever again. Surely if human beings could be taught to understand the pleasure their dreams gave the raksha, they would offer themselves up willingly and would not need to be destroyed.

This opposing view threatened the entirety of the raksha with a schism, and they might have simply warred among themselves if not for the words of the Duke of Mirrors. The Duke stood between the quarreling lovers and agreed with each of them in turn, but only so far as he felt they both deserved. It was the Duke's way to never lend more weight to one side of a divisive issue than he gave the other. To indulge unevenly in any single shade of passion's spectrum was to demonstrate excessive focus. That way lay obsession in the Duke of Mirrors' philosophy. His words soothed tensions for a time and attracted those raksha who had no stake in the Prince's and Princess's argument but enjoyed the conflict for its own sake.

The penultimate word on the subject came from the sisters Incarnadine and Viridian, who opposed the Duke of Mirrors at every turn. They declared that passionate belief was the only true measure of a raksha and that that principle should guide a raksha's actions, not the arguments of others. If some raksha wholly determined to unravel Creation, let them try it. If others wholly determined to tend Creation for its own delight, let them try it. If some wholly determined to make sure that every raksha achieved no more and no less than his fellow raksha, let them make it happen. In any case, in every case, let the raksha do as they firmly believed must be done.

Thief of Words

Other arguments arose over what action the raksha should take regarding Creation, but all others were subsumed into those main four, which balanced each other to the exclusion of all. There could be no agreement between them, and weapons were raised between the raksha several times. All hope seemed lost, until one raksha who had not yet distinguished himself in any way spoke out for the first time that anyone in the assemblage could recall. "What is it that fuels the courage of Creation?" he asked, paraphrasing an out-of-context remark Prince Balor had made. "How is it that the Creation-born have warmth that we can steal?" he wondered, shading the word "warmth" with affection borrowed from Princess Melusine. "Why do the beings of form seek to own and possess, that we should be like them?" he sighed, reflecting back a question the Duke of Mirrors himself had asked when the argument began. "By what right do you claim, 'None will turn us from our path'?" he demanded of Incarnadine and Viridian who, by this time, were clamoring for his attention.

The adherents of the four arguments answered as one, "The power of will."

This answer was the only right one, and the speaker wrapped it around himself as the others spoke it before the amazed onlookers. They named him Thief of Words and marveled at his boldness and cleverness that he could oppose five such personalities and please them all equally. "This is the power of our will," he declared. "Whether we shall ravage or destroy, whether we shall claim or unmake, we shall do as we desire, now and forever." At this, a great hue and cry went up among the raksha, and they turned their eye toward Nirakara and the boundaries of Creation.

When they did so, their eyes beheld a miraculous wonder. Messengers stood waiting, having arrived in the Wyld from a shadow of Creation the raksha knew not. They wore memories of ancient regalia and made signs of power that the raksha had not witnessed since the overthrow of the greatest of the Exalted. They spoke of things that interested Prince Balor not at all, but one thing did they offer that he could not ignore. It was an invitation written on scrolls of human skin, saying only: *Come, we await you. Do as you wish to the living, for our sole concern is with the dead.* Prince Balor plunged onward through the Gateway of Sundraprisha into Creation, forming around him an army whose like he imagined Creation had never seen. The Prince thought little about the circumstance of the messengers, but those who remained behind marveled. No army of raksha should have been in any way capable of entering Creation, for such was the nature of one of the oaths they had been forced to swear to the Exalted after the overthrow of the Primordials. By those oaths, only an invitation by the masters of Creation should have allowed the armies of the Wyld to invade en masse. Where, then, had the messengers come from if all of those once-masters had long since been cut down by the lesser Exalted?

Dreams Destroyed

The Balorian Crusade went far better in the beginning than any raksha participating in or merely watching it expected. The crusaders exploded through Nirakara from all sides of Creation in a fury, displaying every nightmare form of which humanity had ever conceived. They crashed headlong into a picket of powerful Exalted, but these Exalted were neither as organized nor as powerful as the ones who

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had led the fight against the Primordials. What's more, their exposure to the Wyld had made them weak, whereas the raksha were not concomitantly weakened by their transition through Nirakara. While the picket slowed the initial assault considerably, it did not break it or turn it aside. The armies of the Balorian Crusade marched, and where they were victorious, they drew the Wyld inexorably behind them.

Once past the picket, the crusaders encountered very little resistance. They smote armies of mere humans and God-Blooded with barely a thought, trampling them beneath the feet of behemoths and unmaking them with raw Wyld Essence. Their next obstacle was the armed might of the lesser Exalted who rushed out from the center of Creation in countless waves to thrash the raksha back to the Wyld. Yet even these comparatively mighty warriors thronging in great numbers offered only a minimal resistance. The Crusade proceeded apace with no indication that it would slow down until Creation was completely unmade.

Treachery

The rate of victory in the Balorian Crusade troubled Princess Melusine. She remembered the power of the dreams and the will of the Creation-born from countless excursions to that realm's edge, yet nowhere was that strength in evidence now. Something had weakened Creation while the raksha had argued. The Crusade notwithstanding, the prevailing emotion of the humans she scooped up to feed upon was overbearing, wretched despair. The flavor of the humans' despondency was bitter, and Princess Melusine determined to find out what had caused it. Yet she would not be able to do so if her lover unmade Creation first. To slow him down, she made her concerns known to the sisters Incarnadine and Viridian. The rate of victory had not troubled them as it did the Princess, but they knew well that if Prince Balor were to achieve the final end of his goal, the conviction that propelled his bravery would be extinguished and he would be inalterably diminished. As they had long ago vowed to protect the spark of conviction in all its form, they knew what they had to do. They caught Prince Balor unaware between conquests and explained to him their predicament. Together, they praised him for his conviction and together they slew him, turning against him a weapon one of the Creation-born had lost. Thus did Prince Balor learn what so few of his crusaders had to date: that the things of Creation could destroy the invaders from beyond its borders. His last hideous expression of outrage blasted the land around him and incinerated the sisters who had laid him low. His last cry of despair for the lover whose interest he had lost when Creation was conceived went unheard by all but his standard-bearer, who abandoned his responsibility and fled into the Wyld to weep piteously.

The sight of Balor's standard lying discarded by the betrayed Prince's side affected the Duke of Mirrors in a way that belied the temperance he had shown before the Crusade's outset. For reasons he would earn no chance to understand, he was compelled to pass through the Gateway of Sundraprisha himself and rush to the murdered Prince. In his eyes shined a reflection of that which had been best in Balor, and the Duke raised the standard in one awkward, newly formed fist. It was heavy and unwieldy, but in an instant Princess Melusine's hand covered his and they raised the standard together. In that brief moment, the Duke understood all the events that had led to Balor's destruction, and the Princess saw that understanding reflected in the Duke's visage. "Now?" they asked one another. And to each the other replied, "Yes, at last."

Cataclysm

What the Princess and the Duke might have accomplished after that point is a topic of much speculation among the raksha today. Some swear that they held aloft Prince Balor's standard and took joint command of his armies. Others are certain that the pair flew away together to the deepest of Pure Chaos to be unmade. Witnesses with no reason to lie claim that the Duke and Princess fought one another for control of the massed raksha force but quit the field separately when neither could overpower the other. Some claim instead that they destroyed each other. None now remain who know, and the Princess and Duke have not been seen since.

Most likely, they were destroyed not by one another but by the cataclysm that descended upon the raksha host unexpectedly in that moment. Rains of bladed iron fell on them from the sky and tore through them in whirlwinds of unholy fury. Vortices of calcifying energy boiled up out of the ground, unmaking the raksha's bodies. Horrors emerged from the earth and swallowed whole hosts of lesser goblins. The raksha did not understand what doom had come upon them, but the survivors were able to piece it together later. Some weapon of the long-ousted Exalted had been activated, and the raksha had no defense against it. All they could do was flee its terrible wrath, abandoning shape to take refuge in the Wyld. The majority of them did this at once, pushing the Wyld ahead of them. The Crusade had come to an end, and the raksha were defeated.

Further Tumult

Many survivors of Prince Balor's doomed crusade returned to the Wyld to sulk and nurse their wounds. Most have remained there ever since, raging against Creation and all that it has cost the raksha—their peace, their independence, their heroes… Those who were Prince Balor's most ardent supporters want nothing more than to finish what their Martyr Prince began, but the weapons of Creation frighten them too much to renew the attempt.

And yet, the Crusade was not a total tragedy or an utter defeat. The raksha have come to realize that their efforts diminished Creation considerably. They pulled the tides of the Wyld in almost to the mountain at Creation's heart, and those tides never receded back to the boundaries set by

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the Exalted who were overthrown. The Wyld pours in all around it now, blending the reality of Creation with the madness of Pure Chaos. Where these two realities intersect and overlap, the raksha can take shape and live undetected and unmolested by the forces of Creation. Even those raksha refugees who were abandoned within Creation when the Crusade fell apart managed to find shelter in lingering pools of Wyld or in demesnes that the Creation-born could no longer hold by main force.

Even better, the hateful Scarlet Empress who scattered Balor's armies and threatened to turn Creation's weapons against the raksha if they ever returned has apparently disappeared. This news has ignited the dreams of humanity and rekindled the spark of will that her iron dominance threatened to snuff, which has rekindled the passions of Creation's raksha observers. It troubles them that the greatest of the Exalted now appear to be reemerging just as the Scarlet Empress has vanished, but as the priests of vanquished Balor say, fortune favors the bold. The returning Exalted are yet new to their ancient power, and the raksha have a chance to impose their will upon Creation before the so-called Lawgivers become unmanageable. The clergy of the Church of Balor, established in his memory, have begun to stir their adherents into a new frenzy of conquest-lust, and the raksha once again gather at the boundaries of Creation to see what pleasures this bizarre, alien, ever-fascinating realm has to offer.

The Imagined and Accepted Nature of the Raksha

Despite the fact that they exist, the raksha are not real. They are not tangible, physical creatures with motives that the philosophers among the Creation-born can parse and puzzle out. They are not *of* Creation, so the denizens of Creation have no true frame of reference to which to compare the raksha. The raksha are simply raksha, and nothing more. In their natural habitat, they are just dream and self-interest and desire, bound only by the attention they choose to pay to what goes on around them.

Many of the Creation-born have encountered the raksha, but most of those who can describe the experience have not met the true raksha. To do so legitimately usually involves passing the wrong way through the shinma Nirakara—which defines shapes—and thus being unmade. (Exceptions to this general rule can be found, but seeking them out requires a will and bravery uncommon to the mortals of the Age of Sorrows.) Most people who relate sincere tales of meeting and interacting with the Fair Folk have not exactly encountered the raksha, but instead, been confronted by the lies in which the raksha clothe themselves.

Indeed, in Creation, in the shoals of the Bordermarches and in the treacherous depths of the Middlemarches, it is highly unlikely one will encounter a raksha *not* clothed in those comfortable lies. The heavy weight of the banal rules that Creation imposes on every being within necessitates those lies. Without them, a raksha could not exist for long in Creation. He would be calcified before it had even occurred to him to escape. The raksha must, therefore, pass through the shinma Nirakara at that shinma's boundary aspect known as the Gateway of Sundraprisha and spin for himself a cloak of substance. He may then enter Creation, but he must either seek the shelter of places where the Wyld overlaps it or take refuge in an uncapped demesne. Otherwise, he must rely on the succulent dreams and virtues of the mortals on whom he feeds.

The Graces

To the best reckoning of the Creation-born, a raksha is nothing more than a formless congeries of randomly conjoined patterns of Essence. It is a mass of defining characteristics, opposing characteristics and feeding maws. How it could be that such patterns come together and give rise to these alien intelligences in the first place is a mystery older than Creation itself. Savants and mystics dedicated to that subject matter tell stories about Time Not and the shinma Advaita Iraivan—which defines the principle of separation—but those stories come from the raksha themselves and are only as ingenuous as they are fashionable. Taken by themselves—and lacking a reliable sense of their origin—the patterns of which the raksha consist cannot be understood objectively by the Creation-born.

These patterns can be described, however, by representational metaphors called Graces. The Graces represent not exactly specific qualities inherent to the raksha, but similarities in quality that allow the raksha to relate to the Creation-born. The primary means by which the raksha relate to the Creation-born is through the medium of the Creation-born's Virtues and the quality of self-determination (represented by Willpower). Taking an interest in the beings of Creation and noticing those qualities causes similar patterns of Essence in a raksha's formless self to resonate. Those resonant reflections are the Graces, and to recognize the arrangement and relative intensity of them is to distinguish one raksha from another. (Human minds do this subconsciously.)

It is upon this framework of opposing Graces that a raksha hangs the substance of his physical self when he passes through the Gateway of Sundraprisha and enters Creation as a tangible being. It is likewise because of the resonance between the raksha's Graces and the corresponding Creation-born qualities that the shapes the raksha take are so similar to those of the Creation-born. The images that the raksha adopt are reflections of the lies and dreams and horrors that the Creation-born can only imagine. The Virtues that the raksha's actions express are reflections of the expectations imposed on them by the Creation-born.

The Graces of which the raksha consist can be not only metaphorical, but physical objects as well. Indeed, when a raksha creates a shape for himself, he forges a physical representation of his Heart Grace—which contains his free will

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and identity. The Graces as physical objects are akin to the artifacts of Creation but are far more precious to the raksha than any daiklaves or armor are to the Creation-born. A raksha can give up possession and ownership of his Graces, though doing so puts him at the mercy of whoever receives it. If someone else takes ownership of a raksha's Grace—as easily done as attuning to any artifact of Creation—he wields significant power over that raksha. Conversely, a raksha can forge a Grace artifact from one of a fellow raksha's Graces or even from a corresponding Virtue of one of the Creation-born. Doing so grants the character for whom the Grace was created a certain potential for power but also grants the raksha who created the Grace a dangerous power over the character. One who owns a raksha's Grace (or Graces) can strip away the protection such a Grace grants the raksha—or give it away to one who will.

The Heart

The Heart Grace is an expression of the shinma Nirguna, which defines the qualities of existence and can be understood as the raw beating heart of the Wyld. An understanding of that principle is the central aspect of every raksha's being. Within one's Heart Grace is contained the raksha's uniqueness and presence. Therefore, it is the first thing that a raksha who gives himself shape as he enters Creation forges for himself. The stronger and better the raksha's Heart Grace is, the more "real" the raksha is. This is not reality in the sense that the Creation-born understand it, but in the raksha's own sense of the word. What is more real to those born of the Pure Chaos of the Wyld is increasingly powerful and incomprehensible to those born of Creation.

Through the Heart Grace does a raksha access her Willpower and Essence, as well as her power of self-determination. A raksha whose Heart Grace belongs to someone else is utterly the slave and plaything of the one to whom her Grace belongs. A beneficent owner who has forged or otherwise come to possess a raksha's Heart Grace might simply give it to her freely or offer it as the reward for some favor or period of faithful service. A cruel owner might dangle it forever just out of reach. A raksha might give her Heart Grace away as a sign of fealty to a more powerful noble, as an astounding gesture of love or to signal defeat in a contest of the highest stakes.

When one is forged, a Heart Grace takes the shape of an unbreakable adamant egg, inside which is visible a tiny image of the raksha whose identity it represents. Unlike the other Graces, the Creation-born cannot have Heart Graces forged for them.

The Cup

The Cup Grace is an expression of the shinma Dharma, which defines the principles of corrosion, ignorance and desire. It is through a sober contemplation of those principles that a raksha derives this Grace's corresponding Virtue,



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Compassion. Raksha know inherently that they are small beings that consist of nothing more than hungers and self-absorbed passions. They are perfectly ignorant patterns of desire. Yet, in the deeps of Pure Chaos, they are threatened at every turn with dissolution and absorption by the greater unshaped horrors that populate those boundless reaches. Nothing is permanent, not even themselves, and to seek safety in denial of this fact is sheerest folly. A raksha's only defense against the danger of her natural existence is to make herself as useful to her betters as possible.

Discovering the means of becoming useful thus relies on a contemplation of the perfect opposites of the principles that the shinma Dharma represents. These opposites, which are also included in the wholeness of Dharma, are stability, wisdom and altruism. In contemplation of those principles does a raksha discover the method of perfect servility to greater powers. To best serve someone, she must understand and internalize his needs above her own, which is the root of Compassion. It is this Virtue that the Cup Grace preserves. At the same time, it simultaneously overwhelms and undermines a raksha's Temperance, driving a raksha to excesses in pursuit of her betters' desires.

In Creation, where the dangers of the raksha's natural habitat are nonexistent, Compassion and the Cup Grace are powerful tools of the raksha. It is through them that a raksha ensnares and dooms Creation-born fools. The raksha first offers herself or her services for no seeming reason other than to elevate some chosen being above his fellows. The more that subject relies on the raksha's abilities, the higher he rises and the more dependent he becomes on the service the raksha provides. In time, he has no glory, no standing, no identity other than what the raksha has given him. He belongs wholly to the raksha who has so skillfully made herself indispensable to him.

Physical artifacts of the Cup Grace—be they forged for a raksha or a Creation-born soul of at least minimal compassion—take the shape for which they are named. The higher in esteem the raksha forging the artifact holds the Virtue of Compassion and the subject to whom the Grace pertains, the more ornate and magnificent a physical cup he creates. Some image of the subject of the Grace is always visible on the artifact, perhaps deep within the cabochon jewels that adorn it or reflected in whatever liquid the cup contains at the moment.

The Ring

The self-contained eternity expressed in the Ring Grace derives from the shinma Nirvishesha—which defines the principle of identity. This shinma is said to be the heartless machine god of order upon the Wyld, determining the rules by which that which is not Pure Chaos must abide. It is also the creator of self-awareness. The Ring Grace, which symbolizes this shinmaic principle, represents a complete, contained, never-ending thing with all its energy directed inward upon itself. It is this inward focus that gives a raksha its identity, for without it, the raksha would be nothing more than a meaningless pattern of Essence.

The Ring Grace is the redoubt of a raksha's Temperance. It defines those principles by which the raksha defines itself and therefore must never violate, even for its own pleasure or gain. Adhering to these principles protects the raksha and strengthens them, making them ever more surely themselves against the crushing banality of existence in Creation. Those in whom the Ring Grace is weak are only barely aware of themselves, conceiving of their existences as the fancies of greater creatures. Their importance is strictly limited, and they will leave no legacy behind when they cease to exist. Raksha whose Ring Grace is strong will outlast the destruction of Creation and even the final dissolution of the Wyld.

Physical artifacts of the Ring Grace—be they forged for a raksha or a Creation-born soul of at least minimal temperance—take the shapes of circles. They could be literally rings, which is most common, or other forms of jewelry such as bangles, necklaces, anklets or crowns. Wall-mounted mirrors or smaller hand mirrors are also widespread examples of forged Ring Graces, reflecting the identity that they were forged to shore up. Rarely are artifacts representing Ring Graces particularly ornate or outwardly precious. It is often the case that the less Temperance a Ring Grace has to protect, the more expensive and ornate it seems. Thus do the raksha often reveal the vanity and dependence in the souls of the Creation-born, or in their own souls.

The Staff

The Staff Grace represents the shinma Nirvikalpa—which defines the principle of communication. This principle is conceived of as a great unbroken being within which all perspectives are one and the same. Nirvikalpa connects all beings in a way that underlies the divisions imposed by Advaita Iraivan. Through the medium of this shinmaic principle, the hungry patterns of madness that compose the raksha are able to connect and communicate with one another in meaningful ways.

The fact that raksha can understand one another enlightens them to the peril of their existence. They can see that, like themselves, the other raksha are all mad, self-absorbed, ravenous patterns of Essence. They must, therefore, insulate themselves against one another with codes of behavior, with laws and taboos. They must create a social power that restrains them each within the limits of their own selves. The individual tenets of this social power—the rules and taboos that govern how the raksha interact—are all subject to change at any time, but what never changes is the aggregate power of the flowing, chaotic rule-set. That it exists and restrains the raksha *is* its power.

From this power, and the ever-changing currents of whim that drive it, do the raksha derive their Conviction. Their Conviction represents those beliefs or principles that they actively impose on others so as to insulate themselves against their fellows. It stands in contrast to the Temperance

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of the Ring Grace. The Ring Grace looks inward and sets boundaries that a raksha dare not cross lest he no longer be who believes himself to be. The Staff Grace instead reaches out and sets boundaries that he dare not let others cross lest they undermine his importance.

Physical artifacts of the Staff Grace—be they forged for a raksha or a Creation-born soul of at least minimal conviction—usually take the shape of the eponymous object. For variety, they can appear as gnarled walking sticks, sturdy quarterstaves, elegant crosiers, ostentatious battle standards and the like. On them are writ the proudest of the raksha's convictions, as well as the words of oaths the raksha has sworn to uphold.

The Sword

The Sword Grace represents the shinma Nishkriya—which defines the principle of conflict. Within that shinma is contained a numerous array of lesser principles such as Mokadi, the god-bludgeon; Aardra, who drenches the Wyld with blood; Tejaprabha, the sun-slaying missile; and Ishiika, the grass-cutter scythe (which Prince Balor of the Terrible Gaze wielded during his doomed crusade). These lesser shinma all represent not simply conflict for its own sake, but conflict in pursuit of greatness. Thus does the Sword Grace of the raksha derive.

Many raksha consider existence for its own sake to be a waste of time. They are not satisfied with a life of servitude—even the sham-servitude of an éminence grise—whence comes the power of the Cup Grace. Neither defining themselves via the Ring Grace nor insulating their identities via the Staff Grace is enough for them. To them, it is worthwhile only to be great. Otherwise, why choose to be at all?

Such raksha take their strength from the Virtue of Valor, which their Sword Grace represents and protects. It drives them to challenge themselves and challenge others constantly, seeking always to better themselves and improve upon the legacies they will leave behind when they are gone. The Sword Grace also serves a secondary purpose of defending a raksha's Heart Grace. Any Grace forged for a raksha can be stolen or broken, but the Heart Grace and the Sword Grace together are a special exception. A raksha's Heart Grace cannot be stolen or broken by someone who does not own that raksha's Sword Grace.

Physical artifacts of the Sword Grace—be they forged for a raksha or a Creation-born soul of at least minimal valor—are almost always weapons. Most of those are swords, but any weapon will do. As long as it can be used to conquer and to impose one's will in pursuit of greatness, it can serve as a Sword Grace. The more dangerous and recognizable a raksha's Sword Grace is forged to be, the more formidable an opponent that brave raksha is sure to be.

Bedlam

The Graces not only define the raksha and distinguish them, but also help the raksha resist the calcifying power of Creation. It is the nature of Creation to force sentient beings into predictable patterns of existence. The fact that human nature has never dramatically changed is evidence of this design feature. An examination of the complete history of Creation would reveal a never-ending cycle of ascension, decadence, outrage, revolution, usurpation, devastation, reclamation and ascension. For all that they enjoy the dreams and passions of humanity, the raksha find these patterns banal and undesirable.

Therefore, it is through their Graces that they hold off such patterns. As long as their Graces remain intact (regardless of who owns them), the raksha remains apart from the predictability-enforcing mechanisms of Creation. If a raksha should put too much strain on one of his Graces he enters a state known as bedlam. (Strain can be placed upon a Grace by channeling too often the Virtue that is represented and protected by it.) The state of bedlam is similar to a Creation-born Exalt's Limit Break, in that the raksha's actions are temporarily not those of his own choosing but rather those imposed upon him by circumstance and influenced by his identity. In bedlam, the raksha succumbs for a time to the inertia imposed by Creation. In this state, the raksha is said to be suffering a curse based on the Virtue corresponding to the Grace whose protection has been removed. A raksha who exhausts his Compassion suffers the Curse of Hubris—in which solipsism renders the raksha unable to view others as anything more than vaguely interesting phenomena. A raksha who exhausts his Conviction suffers the Curse of Alienation—in which the raksha is estranged from the social power through which he affirms his identity and instead helplessly betrays the ideals with which he otherwise insulates himself from other raksha. A raksha who exhausts his Temperance suffers the Curse of Namelessness—in which the raksha forgets the innermost boundaries that define him and instead surrenders to the heights of excessive folly. A raksha who exhausts his Valor suffers the Curse of Meekness—in which a passive acceptance of circumstance renders the raksha prone to harm or humiliation.

Fortunately, bedlam is never permanent. A raksha's Graces will eventually reassert themselves, restoring the strength of the Virtues that correspond to them. Unfortunately, exhausting one's Virtues is not the only way one enters bedlam. The owner of one of a raksha's Graces can use the artifact that represents it to strip away that Grace's protection, inflicting the appropriate curse on the raksha for a time. A Grace-representing artifact can also be broken or destroyed outright, which likewise inflicts the relevant curse on the raksha from whom the Grace was forged. Destroying or breaking a Grace is as hard as damaging an item made of one of the magical materials, but it's not impossible. For that reason, raksha who possess their own Graces take great pains to hide them or otherwise protect them.

The Necessities of Survival Within Creation

One of the most attractive features of the raksha, at least to escapists and philosophers who value them, is that they

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need nothing in their natural habitat. In the Pure Chaos that exists beyond Creation and the marches, the raksha are nothing more than whorls of Essence subject only to their passions and to that which can be imposed upon them from without by their betters. Anything they might arguably be said to need, they can create from the infinitude that surrounds them.

As the raksha take an interest in Creation and draw closer to it, however, the strange thing that the Primordials wrought imposes uncomfortable necessities upon them. Only those who cannot adapt to the imposition of those needs cannot survive even the faintest brush of Creation and remain intrinsically raksha. Such, indeed, was the fate of those raksha who were caught at the center of the calamity as Creation was precipitated out of the fullness of the Wyld. (In fact, were it not for one of the hated Primordials' efforts, those once-raksha would no longer be anything at all.) Therefore, it behooves the raksha to approach Creation slowly and acclimate themselves to the necessities of existence within and beside it.

It behooves the raksha as well to understand how internalizing these necessities changes them. To approach Creation and to assert one's existence upon it is to change one's very nature as a raksha. This change is not a complete restructuring that makes one as different from his fellows as the Primordials are or as different as the trapped unfortunates now called Mountain Folk are different from the raksha. Nonetheless, it is fundamental and irreversible. A raksha who approaches Creation is still a raksha, but he is somewhat less a raksha than those who dwell within Pure Chaos and remain ignorant of what the Primordials made. Communication between those raksha concerned with Creation and those not is still possible through the medium of the shinma Nirvikalpa, but the relationship is a strained and awkward one.

Taking Shape

The foremost requirement for interacting with Creation in any meaningful way is that the raksha must adhere to some fixed shape. The requirement derives from the nature of Creation and the limitations of the Creation-born, but it is ultimately rooted in the nature of the raksha. In order to exist, a raksha must exert itself and have an effect on something that is not itself. Beyond Creation exists an infinitude of that which is not a given raksha, granting that raksha an infinitude of that upon which it can impose any effect that confirms its existence. Creation, however, is not infinite. Most of it, in fact, is empty and devoid of even Essence. There is precious little upon which a raksha can exert itself in its natural state. Even worse, Creation is without sentience or imagination. Only those beings within Creation that possess sentience and the spark of will are capable of affirming the raksha's existence.

Therefore, in order for the raksha to make themselves perceptible to sentient Creation-born observers, they must first take shape. Only then can the Creation-born acknowledge the existence of the raksha, confirming what each raksha himself believes. Without that acknowledgement, and without any other ability to affect Creation, the raksha is infected by self-doubt as to his own existence and becomes unable to hold together even those patterns of Essence of which he consisted in his natural state.

Taking shape is accomplished by passing through the shinma that defines the principle of shape, Nirakara, at the threshold between chaos and Creation, known to the raksha as the Gateway of Sundraprisha. At that moment, the raksha's Graces become fixed points within the patterns of his Essence. The atomies of Creation's physical substance cling to these fixed points with varying degrees of intensity, forming first the raksha's primary feeding maw then the solid shell that enables independent sentient minds to perceive the raksha. This shell is not natural to the raksha, but it is wholly the raksha from the instant it is created. It could be temporary, depending on the intention of the raksha who created it, or it could last forever with the proper care. It imbues the raksha with memorable traits and abilities that the Creation-born consider worthwhile, such as power, dexterous grace or luminous beauty. It also renders the raksha vulnerable to the peril of physical destruction, a danger unknown beyond Creation's borders.

Devouring Sustenance

The second most important necessity in Creation is that the raksha must feed. The Essence of life, which is unique to Creation, imposes this restriction. By the Primordials' design, in order to sustain its life, a living thing must take in that which is not itself, change in some fundamental way what it takes in, and integrate it with that which is already itself. So too, then, must the raksha do when they come into Creation. Their definition of what makes them "alive" does not match the criteria understood by the Creation-born, but it resonates in such a way through the medium of the shinma Nirvikalpa that it allows the appropriate rules to apply.

Despite the seeming similarities of their physical shells, though, that which sustains the Creation-born does not sustain the raksha in Creation. They gain no nourishment from food or water. The heat of the sun does not replenish their energy, nor do they respire Creation's clean air. They need only one form of sustenance, one as ephemeral and insubstantial as are the true raksha themselves. This non-substance is the very stuff of sentience that glows so brightly within the souls of Creation's sapient beings. It consists of dreams and passions and emotions and pure will, in which are contained shades of the infinite Wyld. These qualities express themselves in the Virtues and Willpower of the Creation-born, which most closely resemble the parallel qualities of the raksha. These qualities make the Creation-born desirable to the raksha and enable communication between them.

Devouring the essential qualities of the Creation-born is accomplished when a raksha opens one of his feeding maws

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and latches it onto the object of his hunger. To describe the act thus, however, is only to allude metaphorically to a process that Creation-born minds can barely comprehend. That which is called a feeding maw is one of the patterns of Essence of which a raksha consists, which creates a condition of negative pressure in the vicinity of a quality the raksha desires. When the feeding maw opens, the desirable quality that exists in abundance outside the feeding maw is drawn inexorably into it until either the quality is completely consumed or the raksha closes the maw. Most of the time, a raksha conceals a feeding maw behind his strongest Graces, which protect the maw just as they protect the raksha's corresponding Virtues. The Grace behind which the feeding maw is centered (i.e., the feeding Grace) determines the quality that the raksha draws off when it feeds. The Virtue that corresponds to that Grace is called the raksha's feeding Virtue.

Those Creation-born who understand this feeding requirement consider it a reason to fear and shun the raksha. Ignorant, fearful mortals focus only on those most depleted objects of raksha hunger, those soulless, once-human shells who have been drained of every Virtue and every ember of Willpower. They believe that such a state is the only possible result of raksha feeding. But just as the raksha are capable of passionate excess, so too are they capable of restraint. The raksha know well that the sustaining qualities of sentient beings are not infinite within such beings, so they have learned to ration the resources each being represents. This is not to say that all raksha are so conscientious, but they all know *how* to be.

It should also be noted that some raksha who have come into Creation can circumvent this necessity altogether. If they stay in the Middlemarches, the raksha can sustain themselves on the formless madness that overlaps Creation there. Likewise, if they can make their way to an uncapped demesne within Creation, or into a freehold built on such a site, the pressure of the laws of Creation slackens enough that feeding is no longer a strict necessity. The raksha who dwell in such places are still able to feed on human dreams, but the only force that impels them to do so is the insistence of their base desires. Only those raksha who dwell unprotected in stagnant, banal Creation must feed in order to continue to exist.

Means of Acquiring Sustenance

When the raksha are bound by this necessity of survival (or leave the Middlemarches to indulge in it), they have three main options for fulfilling it. The most pleasurable and popular is for a raksha to hunt for Creation-born victims and devour their Willpower or the Virtues best suited to his taste. Many Fair Folk prefer a straightforward hunt, riding into a human settlement with a band of hungry fellow raksha and snatching up as many interesting mortals as they can bind together and drag away—assuming they don't just feast there



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in the settlement before moving on. A raksha who is braver, less cautious or simply alienated from Rakshastan—i.e., those regions of the Wyld defined and ruled by the raksha—might make such raids alone, capturing fewer prizes or engaging in a brutal feeding spree before making his lone escape. Fair Folk from different regions prefer different varieties of the hunt that are each uniquely amusing and offer their own challenges. The Lion Folk of the South, for instance, prefer to lure their prey out onto the savanna and run them down like wild animals. The raksha of the Northeast stalk their prey invisibly from the shadows of the trees, never revealing themselves until the fatal climax of the chase. Whether they run their mortal prey to ground, stalk said prey from the shadows or scoop desperate, terrified humans up in barbed nets as they flee their burning villages, the Fair Folk take special joy in the effort, reward and sense of accomplishment the hunt provides.

Raksha who are lazier, weaker, less talented or simply jaded from monotonous repetition set aside the pleasures of the hunt and engage in a more difficult means of acquiring sustenance. Rather than gathering up prey themselves, they take pains to have their prey come to them. They sing under windowsills or within banks of rolling fog or from the shadows outside city walls, lying about the great joys and eternal glory that comes of giving oneself up to the Fair Folk. (This method is especially popular around the Northern city of Whitewall.) To the greedy, alluring raksha tricksters offer everything from mundane silver to unique gossamer wonders. To those they judge hedonists, the Fair Folk offer the unsubtle pleasures of their flesh or the headiest of dream-born intoxicants. To those in need, they offer service; to those in pain, relief. To those forlorn, they offer love; to those suffering injustice, vengeance. Anything a Creation-born mind can desire, the raksha can create beyond the safe stability of Creation. Some raksha actually even deliver the things they offer. Yet, any prize the Fair Folk award is only bait in a gilded trap. When a mortal reaches for that bait, the raksha sink in their talons and open wide their feeding maws. It is up to the individual predator's sense of humor whether he *then* awards the prize he offered his prey or simply casts the worthless husk aside.

The third of the most popular means of acquiring Creation-born dreams is also the most controversial. It involves making deals with Creation-born servants to deliver more of their kind to the raksha in return for special consideration. These servants either work in groups to raid unprotected settlements just as Fair Folk raiding parties do, or they lure mortals away from safety with honeyed lies or misleading truths. Some of those who do the latter make no secret of whom they serve, holding themselves—and their gossamer-enriched lifestyles—up as an example of the rewards of serving the Fair Folk. Those who judge their marks less naïve keep secret whom they serve until it's too late for the victims to get away.

Creation-born individuals who serve the raksha willingly as stalking horses, Judas goats, spies, recruiters and the like are called ravagers. Many are cold-blooded opportunists who have no regard for their fellow mortals and will gladly hand them over to the raksha for gossamer treasures and a pat on the head. Just as many are terrified, self-loathing victims who do as the raksha command because the only alternative is to feed the raksha's hungers themselves. Some ravagers do their work with no honest conception of whom they serve or what fate they're consigning their fellow mortals to suffer. They've either been duped into working for other ravagers running expansive pyramid schemes, or they perform obscure favors for mysterious Fair Folk patrons that make it easier for said patrons to collect mortal victims. Regardless of how they come to be ravagers, however, their existence is doomed from the moment they fall under the raksha's sway. Those who aren't careful are found out by suspicious (then outraged) mortals who are as likely to lynch them as hand them over to duly designated authorities. Those who are careful never to rouse the ire of their fellow mortals serve the raksha faithfully for years, only to eventually be devoured for sustenance when their masters tire of them. And many of those who avoid either likely fate are driven to suicidal despair by the crimes they've committed against their own kind.

Ravagers have existed all over Creation for millennia, but for the longest time, they were simply individuals who performed similar distasteful jobs. Loose unions or alliances of them came together from time to time, attempting to wring concessions from their masters or bargain on behalf of favored mortal populations that paid for their advocacy. Such organizations never lasted long, however, because the raksha always destroyed them the moment they became tiresome. Some 640 years ago, however, a different sort of organization offered a new kind of service to the Fair Folk. Rather than serving at the raksha's side and venturing into Creation to gather up mortal prey, this organization met the Fair Folk halfway, at Creation's border, to trade mortal victims for gossamer treasures. Intrigued, many raksha accepted this arrangement and learned that they could return their used-up mortal victims in exchange for fresh ones. This organization—which the Creation-born called the Guild—could then sell the spent mortal victims elsewhere in Creation as docile slaves.

Since that time, the Creation-born have become well aware of the Guild's hideous and profitable slave trade with the raksha. Its methods of collecting mortal prey range from the pseudo-honorable—purchasing irredeemable prisoners from nations that can't control them—to the barbaric—raiding isolated villages and clapping every survivor in irons—to the outright vile—breeding new generations of mortal prey on the mindless human livestock the raksha give back to them. Worse offenses abound, and they've been going on for centuries. To see such cold, calculating brutality inflicted on the Creation-born *by* the Creation-born delights the Fair Folk, and they heap priceless treasures on the backs of those Guildsmen with whom they deal. The practice has become so widespread that any raksha with an interest in Creation

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knows of it and can find out how to make contact with a local purveyor of mortal dreams. Some consider having their prey brought to them to be beneath their station, but not every raksha is so staunchly impractical.

The Special Qualities of the Raksha

The special qualities of the Creation-born, such as the permanence of one's shape and the capacity for Exaltation, are widely known and so obvious as to not require exploration. The special qualities of the raksha, however, are mysterious to those who belong to Creation and are worthy of mention.

These qualities represent the powers and weaknesses of the Fair Folk, though the raksha do not necessarily think of them as such. A human being does not consider his ability to move about on two legs or to hop on one foot or to crawl on all fours or even to walk on his hands to be a *power* per se. The capacity simply represents a range of mobility options that enable a person to achieve the normal ends of his unremarkable existence. Likewise, human beings do not hold the fact that they can understand ideas expressed only in those languages that they have been taught to be an especially debilitating weakness. They simply accept this limitation as part of their nature.

In this same way, most raksha don't consider their special qualities remarkable. What makes those qualities seem so special—so fearsome or so inspiringly exploitable—are the perceptions of those who are not raksha.

The Raksha Body

Although they must take shape in order to survive in Creation, the raksha have no natural form of their own. They represent heaps of concepts bound up in formless matrices of desire. As such, the slings and arrows that physical bodies are heir to do not especially concern the raksha. They need neither food nor drink, they do not wither or fail with age, and they never become sick. Even when they create solid shells with which to inflict themselves upon Creation, they are capable of ignoring all mortal frailties. Some raksha do so for efficiency's sake, actively choosing to ignore all such distractions. Others do so out of sheer ignorance, having no idea that such frailties should come from having a physical body. Some few experienced and jaded raksha allow themselves to experience such physical distractions, but as soon as the condition becomes tiresome, the raksha can dispense with the charade and carry on with his existence as before.

The flip side of this coin is that when a raksha passes through Nirakara at the Gateway of Sundraprisha, she need not adhere strictly to the parameters of sentient life set forth in the Primordials' design specifications. That is, she need not build a body that is solely human in shape or one that is limited as humans are limited. She could provide herself natural camouflage tuned to her surroundings if she were so inclined. She could mix humanlike characteristics with those of charming animals. She could decorate her form with accents influenced by the elemental pole at Creation's nearest edge. She could give herself wings, gills, gripping pads, burrowing tentacles or any modification that best serves her purposes in Creation, just as easily as a human picks out the best suit of clothes for a special occasion. The advantages a raksha applies to her physical body when she designs it are mutations, sharing many peculiarities with the changes that exposure to the Wyld inflicts on the Creation-born. A raksha takes her mutations on herself by choice, however, whereas the Creation-born suffer the mutations that are thrust upon them.

The disregard with which the raksha view their unnatural bodies is most in evidence in the Wyld. The Fair Folk take chances and endure dangers that make the Creation-born cringe because they understand that no body-specific condition is truly permanent. Even if one raksha seems to kill another or the vagaries of Wyld terrain thrust a raksha to her doom, the slain one is not literally destroyed so much as convinced by circumstance that she is *very likely* destroyed. If some overriding force—from simple forgetfulness to an exertion of the raksha's better judgment—helps the raksha to realize that she is not destroyed, she is not destroyed after all.

When a raksha is in Creation or facing the Creation-born, however, she cannot afford to be quite so cavalier. The reality of that which derives from Creation overpowers the reality of the raksha, which is the main reason the raksha hold such animosity toward the Primordials and the thing the Primordials made. If one of the Creation-born slays one of the raksha, even if he does so in the Wyld, that raksha is truly slain no matter what she would prefer to believe. The raksha must be doubly careful when Creation-born foes wield objects made of cold-wrought iron. Within that substance is contained the doom of the raksha and the destruction of all their works. Not only can it slay them, but they have very little power to resist the hideous damage it inflicts. Unfortunately for the raksha, iron grows increasingly plentiful the closer one draws to the center of Creation, and the Creation-born are well aware of its effect upon the Fair Folk.

Interaction with Reality

The raksha are not truly creatures or beings as such—certainly not in the way the Creation-born understand those terms. The raksha are, instead, sentient stories and living myths exerting the narrative power of which they are made up on one another and on Creation. Their home is the Wyld, that realm of infinite potential in which pure story best thrives. When they move upon the deeps of chaos or even in the shallows where Creation and the Wyld overlap, they can alter the nature of the fluid reality that surrounds them in ways that best suit their purposes. The acts of doing so can be as simple as opportunistically grandstanding in the currents of environmental mutability or as complex as tailoring the landscape and current events to hew to one's specific desires. The former act is known as performing Wyld stunts; the latter is known as reality shaping.

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Wyld stunts allow the raksha to take advantage of the fluid nature of his surroundings in the inimitable style for which he wants to be remembered. As with the crude actions that Creation-born mortals consider stunts, Wyld stunts augment a raksha's physical actions. Rather than simply spinning in the air or rolling on one shoulder, though, a raksha's Wyld stunts are grand and epic in scope. If the raksha is being pursued through the Middlemarches, for instance, and he leads his pursuers into a familiar field of glass dandelions, he could drag his feet in such a way that a cloud of dandelion seeds rises into the air all around him and encircles him. Surrounded thus, he could take hold of the nearest wind and allow it to carry him away, surrounded by a cloud of scintillating, obscuring, projectile-deflecting glass dandelion seeds. His doing so simulates the effects of a Terrestrial Circle sorcery spell (Stormwind Rider in this case), which is a decent gauge of what Wyld stunts make possible. More complicated stunts can enable the raksha to perform actions simulating higher-circle effects.

Even more impressive than "mere" Wyld stunts is the raksha ability to shape reality directly. In doing so, the raksha takes hold of the malleable reality around him and shapes it to fit the story of his existence. (Creating something thus is often referred to as performing a work of glamour.) Shaping reality is not so much a means of augmenting one's own actions, though, as inflicting one's desired story on others. When raksha come into conflict with one another, shaping is the primary means they employ to overcome one another. Each pits the strength of his story and the intensity of his illusory glamour against that of his opponent. Whichever raksha's tale is more powerful and engrossing becomes the prevailing reality that both opponents accept. Performing works of glamour by shaping reality is accomplished by exerting power through the four Graces that represent the defining aspects of one's identity—excluding the Heart Grace. The type of conflict that a reality-shaping dispute resolves, from outright combat to the subtle interplay of seduction, determines which Graces the aggressor and defender use.

Gossamer

When a raksha performs shaping actions in the Wyld, his manipulation of the malleable surface of reality yields a byproduct of scraps of dreams and ideas. This byproduct is known as gossamer, and it is an infinitely useful substance. From it, a raksha crafts the items with which he girds and arms himself in Creation as well as the items of material worth that he exchanges with willing Creation-born traders for that which he values. Gossamer items are not exactly real, however, and have little effect on or against those with the strength of personality to deny their reality. In most circumstances, though, the substance lends a certain credibility to raksha magic. By channeling it when they perform select Charms, raksha can make substantial certain magical effects in Creation that would not be possible without it.

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The Graces the opponents employ also determine the effects of the outcome of the conflict. Shaping conflict between raksha is rarely fatal, but it is usually decisive. Raksha do not destroy one another in shaping conflict, but they can force opponents to accept undesirable terms of defeat that make the story of the loser's existence subservient to that of the winner.

It is important to note, however, that both the performance of Wyld stunts and the act of shaping reality are not generally possible in Creation. As the raksha originated in the Wyld, the Wyld is where their special qualities come most naturally. In the vast, arid stretches of fixed Creation, the raksha cannot bring their Wyld talents to bear without the use of specific Charms. Only in uncapped demesnes, in settled freeholds and in the marches where the Wyld seeps into Creation are the raksha as free to act as they are beyond the other side of the shinma Nirakara. Likewise, the Creation-born are stubbornly resistant to the effects of raksha shaping even in the raksha's own backyard. A raksha might rearrange to his liking a scene of the story he and a Creation-born foe share, but the effects of that rearrangement are only temporary and illusory. With enough presence of mind and strength of will, a Creation-born opponent can recognize the effects' illusory nature and shatter them. If the Creation-born opponent is one who has had a Grace of his own forged for himself and he has had the proper training in story-weaving, he might even be able to reshape events to suit his own preferences.

Oneiromancy

In addition to their ability to shape reality and create exquisite objects from gossamer, the raksha possess a capacity for oneiromancy—a specialized raksha style of sorcery. The sorcery of the raksha is not like that of the Creation-born, however. Oneiromancy spells manifest not as Essence-fueled exceptions to the fundamental laws of Creation, but more like highly specialized artifacts that function on their own at the raksha's behest. Raksha sorcerers and lorekeepers learn these spells—alternatively referred to as "glamour spells" or in aggregate as effects of "glamour sorcery"—by discovering in the Wyld the defining agglutinations of ideas and concepts of which they consist. (They can also wrest knowledge of these oneiromancy spells from powerful unshaped raksha by defeating them in shaping combat.) Unlike performing Wyld stunts or shaping reality, raksha sorcerers can impose these powerful effects on Creation directly, inflicting disadvantageous or deleterious effects on the Creation-born in broad swaths.

Faithfulness

To say that the raksha all exhibit the special quality of faithfulness is both true and dangerously misleading. The raksha are not true or reliable or trustworthy in any conventional sense of those terms. They are faithful, and to a fault, but only to their own sworn word and only as far as it suits them to be so. Whenever a raksha makes a bargain or offers an oath or swears a vow to conduct herself in a certain way, she exerts a peculiar power through her Staff Grace that incorporates that promise into her identity. She makes that conditional behavior an intrinsic part of her legend and becomes incapable of betraying it. A raksha might be tricked into failing to live up to her sworn word, but she will never do so intentionally while her will is her own.

The most arrogant thinkers of the Creation-born consider this quality a great weakness of raksha character. They believe that if they can only trick raksha into swearing hasty oaths or accepting oaths with hidden loopholes in them, they can gain enviable power from the Fair Folk or earn some foolproof protection against them. Yet while it is true that the Quicksilver Falcons of the First Age possessed the guile and charm to reliably exploit this quality of raksha nature, few Creation-born have demonstrated a similar aptitude for cleverness since that time. The raksha are far more canny and clever than the Creation-born realize. The raksha know themselves far better than the Creation-born ever could, and they understand how to twist this special quality of their nature to their own benefit. Most raksha know better than to swear hasty oaths to the Creation-born, and those who deal with the Creation-born most often are expert at offering bargains with hidden exceptions, clever traps or safe loopholes that serve their own self-interest. The raksha consider it crass to cavalierly disregard the spirit of a bargain in favor of a legalistic twisting of the letter of that bargain, but they are not above crass behavior when circumstances warrant.

The Social Classes of Rakshastan

The social dynamics of Rakshastan are set by the interplay of the varying levels of importance of the raksha who dwell there. The raksha have little need to squabble over natural resources or territory in the Bordermarches or the Middlemarches, for those concepts have little meaning in the Wyld. Instead, points of contention in Rakshastan arise when the dramatic exertions of one raksha impinge upon the ambitions of another, not when one group of raksha wants access to some scrap of land or important geographical feature necessary for their survival and some other group stands in its way. Bickering over life's necessities is a pastime of the Creation-born. The raksha might mimic such confrontations and construct great dramas around such activity, but raksha politics is purely personal and driven by the personalities of its participants.

Put another way, each individual raksha sees his existence as the expression of some great tale—the more grandiose and epic the better. In raksha society, every raksha considers himself either a central figure in the stories of all those around him, a supporting character in the story of a respected peer or a bit-player in some more interesting raksha's saga. The art of playing one's role superbly or rising out of one's role to a better one is what raksha social maneuvering is all about. Within that framework have arisen two basic social classes and four generic ranks that cut across both.

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Those More than Worthless

Below even the low class of the commoners are those creations of glamour and gossamer known as the wee folk. They are less than commoners yet more than pets or beasts of burden. Wee folk can do the work of servants or perform roles akin to very clever tools, but they are best explained as highly intricate toys that are capable of leading their own lives. They exist in infinite variety, tailored specifically to the needs and aesthetic tastes of the raksha who create them, but they mostly fall into one of three broad categories.

The smallest of the wee folk are called manikins. Generally mindless and no more than six inches tall, they rarely serve as more than toys or gaming pieces, playing out miniature dramas for their creators' amusement. Poppets are larger (up to one foot tall) and smarter than manikins and can perform more complex tasks for their creators such as cooking, cleaning or playing musical instruments. They are fully sentient, though usually no smarter than a bright Creation-born child. The largest and most complicated wee folk are homunculi. They range in size from one to three feet tall and are as sentient and intelligent as any larger raksha. These creations often make up the bulk of a raksha's serving staff and can even fight intelligently to defend what their creator deems important.

Raksha Social Class

The primary distinction among sentient raksha is that of class, between the thronging commoners and the elite nobility. The commoners make up the overwhelming majority of raksha dominions and raksha armies, normally going unseen by the Creation-born. They perform the menial tasks required to keep raksha freeholds running and rarely venture into Creation except to keep ahead of a lash wielded by a dominant raksha with dreams of conquest. A commoner who distinguishes himself in some way, playing a crucial role in some better raksha's story, can become a slightly more powerful heroic commoner and rise above the rabble for a time. Even still, most commoners are only barely real as raksha define individual reality. Their Heart Graces are weak and were likely forged for them by superior raksha who needed them for some subservient purpose. The masses of them cannot perform works of glamour to shape reality or perform Wyld stunts. Heroic commoners are slightly more real and can perform works of glamour or Wyld stunts, but unless they work hard to live up to their past heroic deeds, they sink back into the nameless throngs once more.

Above the common rabble stands the raksha nobility. Some raksha nobles were once commoners who made proud names for themselves through hard work and derring do. Other nobles were made of sterner stuff from the beginning and were more powerful and important from the very moment they dreamed themselves into being. They likely forged their own Heart Graces and have the power to forge artifacts from any of their other Graces. The fluid reality of the Wyld is theirs to shape whether through Wyld stunts or grandiose works of glamour. Such raksha are the luminaries of Rakshastan and would just as soon pass away into the formlessness of Pure Chaos beyond Nirakara as allow themselves to descend to the class of commoners—especially if they were once commoners in the past. Nonetheless, noble-"born" raksha hold those once-commoners who have ascended into the ranks of the nobility in high regard and treat them as equals.

Raksha Social Rank

Overlaying the simpler class structure of raksha distinction is the social ranking that informally separates raksha by importance. At the lowest social rank are the nonentities, who exist solely for the pleasure and service of their betters. They have no ambition or desires and are barely real at all. All wee folk are considered nonentities, as are the throngs of nameless commoners who never make any effort to distinguish themselves. Above the nonentities are the talented raksha who rise above the masses. These raksha distinguish themselves from among the commoners with periodic flashes of greatness. They are not necessarily heroes all the time, but they have performed heroic deeds and been recognized as heroic commoners for them. Weak noble raksha who have faded from prominence or who have only just emerged into Rakshastan also dwell at the level of the talented. The talented are known locally and might even be famous in their freeholds, but their fame probably doesn't extend beyond the local sphere. Rare is the merely talented raksha who causes her name to be heard among the Creation-born.

Those talented raksha who acquire a taste for performing memorable deeds and make a habit of it rise in standing to be recognized as the powerful. The powerful are the nobility of Rakshastan and peers of their local realms. One cannot be considered one of the powerful unless she is a noble raksha, and all powerful raksha consider themselves the stars of their own stories. They have ambitions and desires, and they are defined by their efforts to achieve those goals. The powerful are always famous locally and might even be known between freeholds if their exploits compel them to travel widely. Some are recognized among the Creation-born, but only if they take pains to become so. Above the powerful, at the highest raksha social rank, are the rulers of Rakshastan. These entities are not only the stars of their own stories, but central figures in the lives of all those around them. The powerful often define themselves by the service they provide in their rulers' names or by their efforts to finally overcome their current rulers. Raksha rulers are the centers of attention locally and

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are famous among raksha far and wide. To the Creation-born, they are notorious nightmares incarnate.

The Castes of the Raksha

When raksha come into being, they are defined by the interplay of their Graces. The Heart Grace is the defining Grace of a raksha, containing, symbolizing and protecting his identity. The other four Graces represent other aspects of the raksha's nature and protect the raksha's Virtues, keeping the dangerous madness of bedlam at bay. The strongest of those four remaining Graces is called the raksha's Major Grace, and it protects the Virtue for which the raksha most hungers. It is behind this Major Grace that a raksha hides his feeding maw. The nature of one's Major Grace helps determine his function in society, separate from his class or his rank. The distinction determined by function is called a raksha's caste.

Common raksha have only one Major Grace and one feeding maw. They are said to "wield" this Grace, which can be either literal or figurative. Common raksha fit into one of four castes, which are determined by the Major Grace defined somewhat generically as fits the less important class of common raksha. Noble raksha, however—be they noble by design or ascended commoners—are more interesting and complex. They wield two Major Graces, behind each of which is a separate feeding maw. One Major Grace is ascendant, while the other is said to be "shadowed" or "in shadow." The interplay of the ascendant and shadowed Grace further defines a noble raksha's caste, expounding on the generic concept on which common raksha rely. A noble raksha can switch out which of his Major Graces is ascendant and which is in shadow at any time, switching caste as appropriate. Some raksha do so at whim as their fancies guide them. Others do so either when faced with repeated defeat or when they have achieved everything they can as a member of their original caste.

Diplomat

Commoner raksha who wield the Staff as a Major Grace belong to the Diplomat caste and feed on the Conviction of the Creation-born. In them is made manifest the power of the shinma Nirvikalpa—the great unbroken being that defines the principle of communication—the power to bring disparate beings of radically different natures to mutual understanding and bind them together with the social power that the Staff Grace represents. Forging an agreement with the Creation-born that the Creation-born feel compelled not to break is a great victory for a Diplomat since the Creation-born are not intrinsically bound to honor their word as the raksha are.

Courtier

Noble raksha who wield the Cup in the shadow of the Staff belong to the Courtier caste. These raksha thrive in freehold settings at the feet of their rulers, driving the seemingly petty intrigues of raksha courts. Courtiers wield the Cup to make themselves seem necessary to their courts, which protect them from the vagaries of existence outside. Courtiers act vain and self-absorbed (no difficult task), deriving their power from making their presence seem necessary. They are but mere adornments to a raksha court, but fashionable ones that cost those in power precious status when they are not present to be viewed.

Imperial Raksha

Noble raksha who wield the Sword in the shadow of the Staff belong to the Imperial Raksha caste. Theirs is not a hunger for mindless bloodshed, but for widespread conquest won by force. They desire not simply battle, but epic war in which some accord is ultimately at stake. The Imperial Raksha—the general at the head of a conquering army of heroes—is the noble ideal to which commoner Diplomats aspire.

Scribe

Noble raksha who wield the Ring in the shadow of the Staff belong to the Scribe caste. As functionaries, bureaucrats and advisors, they maintain the smooth, peaceful function of the courts in which they dwell. Scribes are loyal and dedicated, content to work behind the scenes to uphold the lawful order that their ascendant Staff Grace represents. Without their hard work, that order would collapse. Thus do they derive their power.

Entertainer

Commoner raksha who wield the Cup as a Major Grace belong to the Entertainer caste and feed on the Compassion of the Creation-born. In them is made manifest the power of the shinma Dharma—which defines the principles of corrosion, ignorance and desire, as well as those principles' perfect opposites, stability, wisdom and altruism. In these raksha is made manifest the power of service that the Cup Grace represents. With it, they make themselves indispensably useful to their betters and inescapably alluring to their victims.

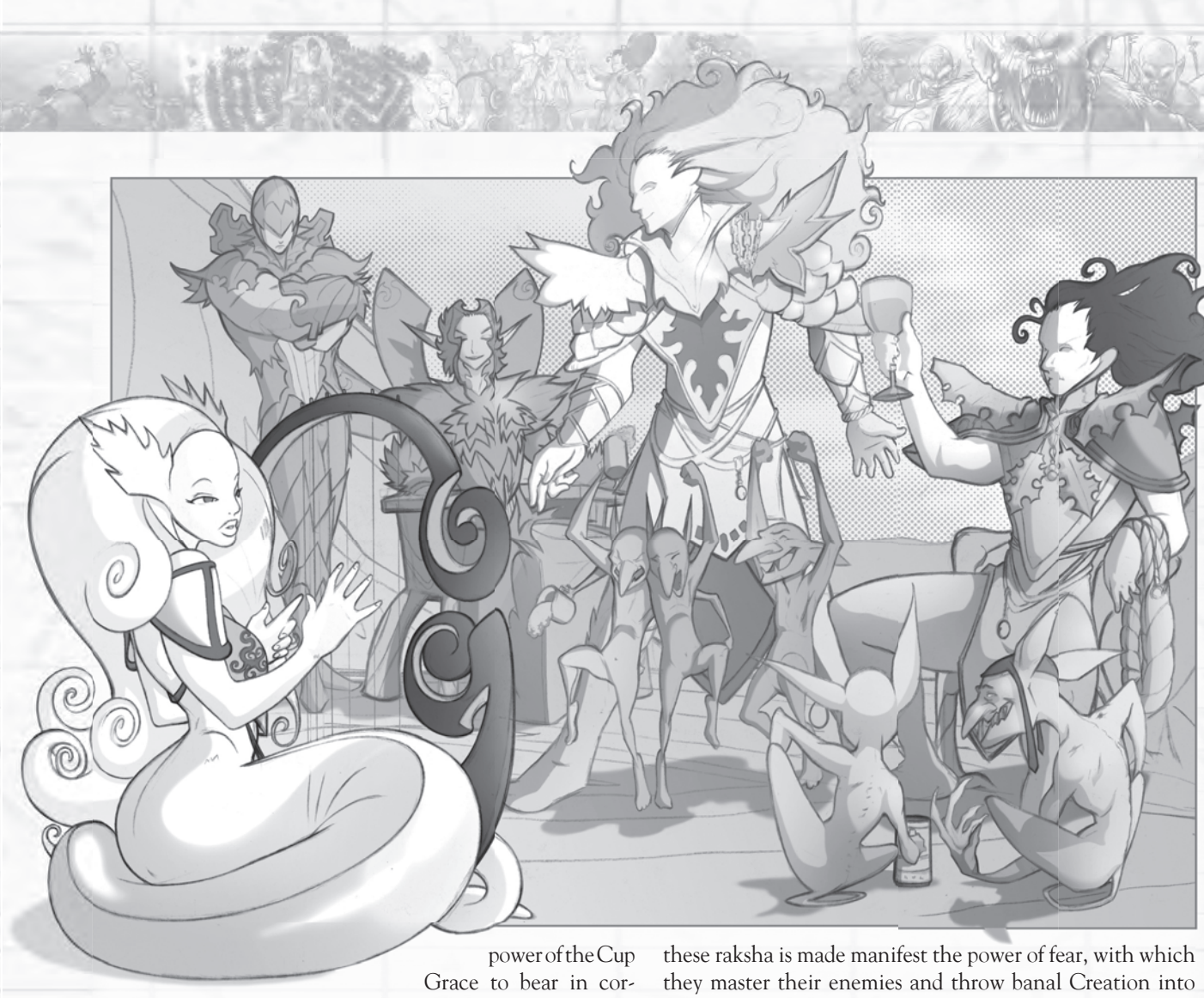
Eshu

Noble raksha who wield the Sword in the shadow of the Cup belong to the Eshu caste. The need that their Cup Grace represents is the primal need for survival, and their Sword Grace is the means to that end. Eshu are tough, rugged and indomitable. Regardless of the hardship—be it environmental, socio-political or somehow self-imposed—the Eshu will overcome it and survive. Within each Eshu is also the desire and ability to see that something greater than himself survives. For this reason, many practice the Entertainer arts of music, storytelling, poetry and craft, carrying with them the traditions of their people or that of the Creation-born their people have conquered and eliminated. As long as the Eshu survives, so also will those arts survive in him.

Luminary

Noble raksha who wield the Staff in the shadow of the Cup belong to the Luminary caste. Their unique understanding of the Staff Grace enables them to bring the corrosive

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power of the Cup Grace to bear in corrupting the existing social order and changing it. They stand in opposition to that which has been established, and their sheer force of personality changes it for the better. They seduce kings and holy men. They inspire celebrities and prophets. Luminaries are despised and distrusted when they arrive yet highly praised and sorely missed when they depart. The Luminary—the dashing corrupter who changes society by challenging it—is the noble ideal to which commoner Entertainers aspire.

Ornamental Raksha

Noble raksha who wield the Ring in the shadow of the Cup belong to the Ornamental Raksha caste. They seek not simply to serve, as their Cup Grace demands, but to please. To them there is no better service, and they devote themselves to it—to the exclusion of all other desires. Ornamental Raksha adorn and entertain the courts of their betters with what can easily be mistaken for an utterly selfless disregard. Yet, they too derive pleasure from their service, basking in the pleasure their presence provides to others.

Warrior

Commoner raksha who wield the Sword as a Major Grace belong to the Warrior caste and feed on the Valor of the Creation-born. In them is made manifest the power of the shinma Nishkriya—which defines the principle of conflict. In these raksha is made manifest the power of fear, with which they master their enemies and throw banal Creation into disarray. It is the raksha of this caste with whom Creation has had the most disastrous and destructive experience.

Anarch

Noble raksha who wield the Staff in the shadow of the Sword belong to the Anarch caste. They represent the savage brutality that the Creation-born fearfully attribute to the Wyld. Anarchs wield the Staff Grace not to shore up the stability of social power that that Grace represents, but to undermine that stability and to end peace. They are adept at finding the bridges and the paths to compromise between opposing forces. They delight in burning those bridges and washing out those paths so that only strife remains.

Cataphract

Noble raksha who wield the Ring in the shadow of the Sword belong to the Cataphract caste. Cataphractoi subsume their sense of self, which the Ring Grace represents, within the greater idea of conflict, as represented by the Sword Grace. They preserve the order of their betters through conflict, acting as knights, bodyguards and other martial exemplars. Never do they seek battle for its own sake or shed blood for their own personal glory. They participate only in those conflicts that serve their superiors. The Cataphract—the knight who goes to war in her ruler's name—is the noble ideal to which commoner Warriors aspire.

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Xia

Noble raksha who wield the Cup in the shadow of the Sword belong to the Xia caste. They devote themselves to the arts of war as a means of achieving personal glory. Their martial might, their skill at the hunt and their panache in the face of danger all make them useful to their rulers. Yet the Xia find glory *only* in combat, so it does not behoove them to strive for victories beyond the short term. They cultivate rivals carefully—always striving to overcome them, but never crushing them utterly. They rush to war with great zeal—carving out victory in limited engagements, but never in pursuit of conclusive strategic goals. In every victory they reap, they are careful to sow the seeds for future conflict.

Worker

Commoner raksha who wield the Ring as a Major Grace belong to the Worker caste and feed on the Temperance of the Creation-born. In them is made manifest the power of the shinma Nirvishesha—which defines the principle of identity—the power of devotion. That which they build or repair is devoted to the greater good of the Wyld and their betters. That which they believe and practice is devoted to the greater good of their identity, which the Ring Grace represents.

Artisan

Noble raksha who wield the Cup in the shadow of the Ring belong to the Artisan caste. They are the geniuses who not only build the wonders of Rakshastan, but design and perfect them. That which they create is not only useful and responsible for helping to uphold the order of the court, but beautiful, priceless, necessary. Artisans construct works of art and utility that their superiors cannot do without. The Artisan—the virtuoso designer whose works astound his raksha patrons—is the noble ideal to which commoner Workers aspire.

Panjandrum

Noble raksha who wield the Staff in the shadow of the Ring belong to the Panjandrum caste. Panjandrums express their identities, which the Ring Grace symbolizes, by constructing social systems based on the inner principles that define them. They do so not out of self-serving pragmatism, but simply because they must. A Panjandrum shapes society around him not because the new society will improve his standing or his existence, but because that is the only method he knows for expressing himself. He includes other raksha in his constructed societies, never seeking to subsume their identities within his own, but ever hoping to harness their identities in service to his own.

Strategos

Noble raksha who wield the Sword in the shadow of the Ring belong to the Strategos caste. They are either the cogs in the machinery of war or the engineers ensuring the reliable operation of that machinery. Strategoi come up with the battle plans that drive raksha armies, and they oversee the implication of large-scale war efforts in service to the army's ultimate goal. They take no pleasure in their victories nor feel any remorse for the suffering of their enemies. Strategoi are dispassionate tenders of the heartless mechanics of warfare.

The Unifying Diversions of the Raksha

In their natural habitat, the raksha have no needs. They require nothing to sustain themselves, so their existence is a simple affair of recognizing their passing desires and shaping the fluidity around them to fulfill those desires. They have no need to seek each other's cooperation in pursuit of their whims, and the infinite bounty of the Wyld provides for them such that they need no social agencies to control access to limited necessary resources. What dangers exist in the depths of chaos to threaten the raksha—primarily older raksha who care nothing for the existence of their lessers—are sufficient to overcome any single raksha, but even those dangers offer no incentive for raksha to band together in social groups. True sympathy for one's fellow beings is alien to the raksha psyche, so seeing a raksha endangered by a more powerful foe usually only convinces raksha witnesses to seek refuge elsewhere or change their behavior to make themselves seem too valuable to destroy. In their natural habitat, nothing unifies the raksha beyond their shared nature *as* raksha.

As one observes those raksha that exist closer to Creation and within Creation itself, however, one detects recurring motifs and patterns of behavior. These patterns bring raksha together in common cause and give them a static frame of reference. These recurring motifs echo throughout the shinma Nirvikalpa—the great unbroken being that defines the principle of communication—to shape the desires of the raksha who indulge in them. Like the Creation-born, the raksha who are interested in Creation band together in social groups defined by proclivity, geography, philosophy and other factors.

Yet, as much as they mimic the social dynamics that bring the Creation-born together, raksha social dynamics are as dreamlike and gossamer-substantial as the raksha themselves. Such patterns in raksha behavior arise unnaturally, as they do not conform to conditions intrinsic to raksha nature. Instead, the first raksha to intensely study the Creation-born and achieve an understanding of them mimicked the behaviors they witnessed, and it pleased raksha in those early adopters' orbits to do likewise. In this way, it can be said, Creation-like behaviors and group dynamics were imposed on the raksha, though the raksha imposed it upon themselves. Nonetheless, their acceptance of this imposition is by no means permanent. What brief, fractured unities they adhere to are only the fancies of the moment. When Creation ceases to hold their interest, or exists no more, they will find better ways to divert themselves.

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Taking Shape

Passing through the shinma Nirakara at the Gateway of Sundraprisha to create a physical body for oneself is a necessity of survival for the raksha in Creation. Beyond that simple necessity, however, taking shape is the defining distinction between the raksha with which the Creation-born are familiar and the unformed vortices of sentient madness that exist beyond the elemental poles in the depths of Pure Chaos. Putting on a physical form symbolizes a raksha's firm commitment, temporary though it might be, to her interest in Creation and the Creation-born. She shares that commitment with every single raksha that has turned its attention toward what the Primordials made, which makes that interest the single broadest unifying diversion the raksha share. If two raksha have no other common ground between them, they can at least point to the fact that they're both interested in Creation and willing to be subject to the rules it imposes on them.

For all the varieties of whim and fancy they express, the reasons raksha choose to turn toward Creation and take shape generally fall into three categories. For most of the raksha, the reason is simple curiosity. From its inception, Creation has been an irritant in the Wyld that can't help but attract the raksha's notice. Time and again, raksha have felt its uncomfortable, calcifying influence and had its notions of relative space and causality thrust upon them. This sensation intrigues them just as it grates against them, forcing its alien order onto them and making them feel small in comparison to it. It's fascinating and awful and beautiful by turns. The Fair Folk care very little for Creation's alleged natural wonders or the rigid patterns to which its Essence flows are shackled, but the irrational passion of its sentient inhabitants is eternally compelling. Whether they're skylarking in what amounts to a vast, roving buffet of delights or they're studying Creation from within in hopes of finding some way to unravel it, most raksha turn toward it because they can't ignore it once it piques their curiosity.

Placing a distant second among the reasons raksha come to Creation is exile from the company of their peers. The raksha have no society and no laws beyond the limits of Creation, but they still intuitively grasp the dynamic of power and weakness. If a raksha offends one of her betters moving through the deeps and her reality-shaping abilities cannot overpower the offended party, she has two options. She can face the one she offended and be consumed by it, or she can flee it altogether and hide until its obsession with her fades. Those who wisely choose the latter can find no better hiding places than within Creation or among the ranks of the Creation-obsessed who have gone before her. The most dangerous unshaped raksha who dwell in Pure Chaos rarely turn toward Creation, and many of those who do so are powerful enough to choose to ignore it. Many exiles are bitterly discontented with their lot and have trouble finding any beauty in Creation whatsoever, but they can be some of the Creation-born's greatest allies against those raksha who want to erode or destroy Creation. (After all, if Creation is destroyed, the exiles will have nowhere to hide.) The rest eventually find some grudging admiration for the least stiflingly banal aspects of Creation. Some even embrace their new safe haven wholeheartedly, going native at the first opportunity.

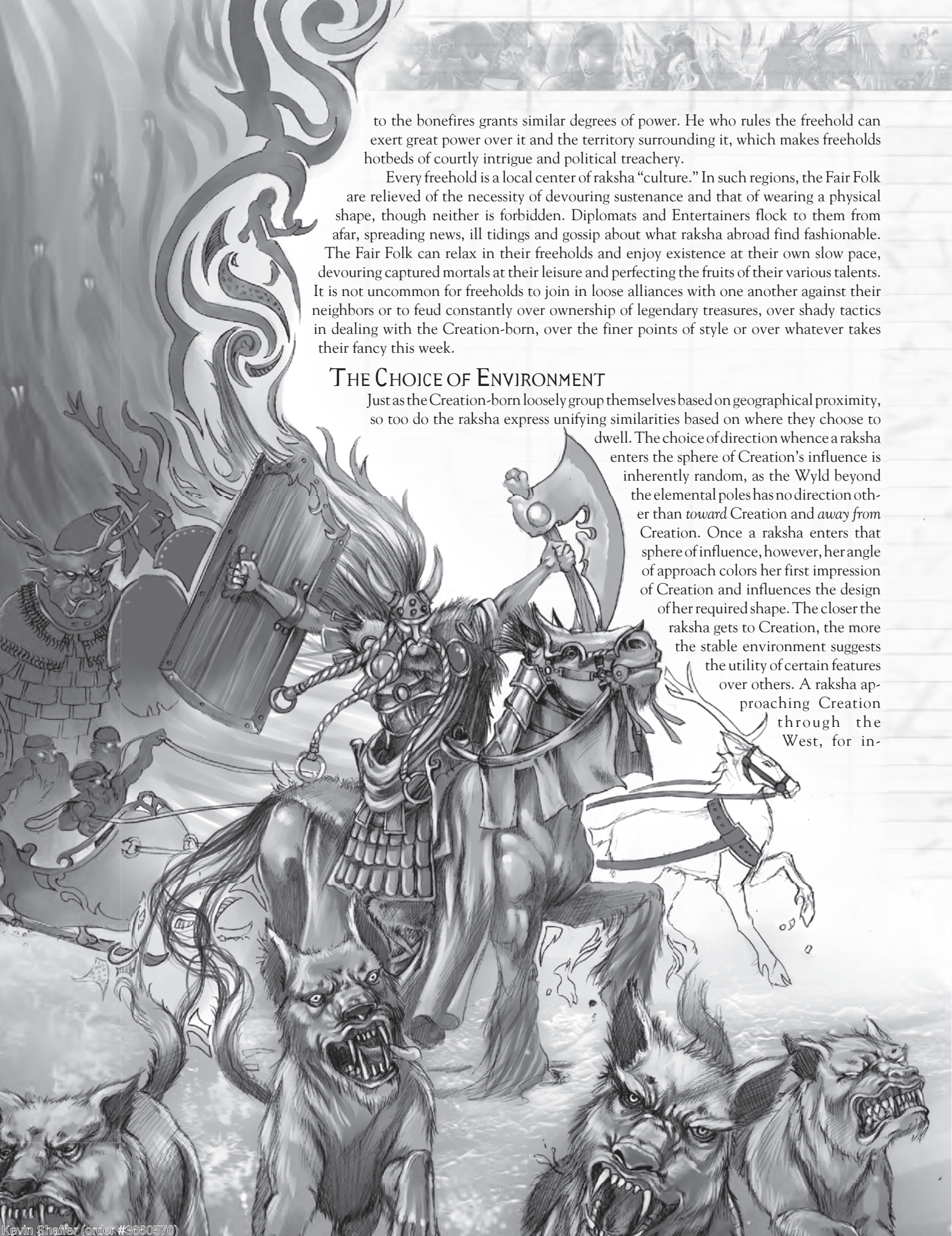
The third and least common reason raksha dwell in Creation is that they had no choice in the matter and were stranded. Perhaps they were forged in Creation by more powerful raksha who abandoned them or were destroyed. Perhaps they swarmed inward toward the Elemental Pole of Earth with the Balorian Crusade but were cut off from retreat when the Creation-born decisively retaliated. Either way, they were forced to pass through Nirakara to escape destruction and have not been able to flee to the Wyld. The numbers of raksha stranded in Creation have dwindled steadily since the failure of the Balorian Crusade, but plenty of survivors managed to make it to freeholds, unclaimed demesnes or areas populated densely enough that they could feed regularly.

Allied Rings and Freeholds

At the personal and local level, certain social phenomena form the most common bonds between the raksha. Individually, raksha are mad conglomerations of hungry Essence, unconcerned with the needs or the existence of their fellows. That said, those who are not individually powerful recognize the practicality of allying with their peers for mutual protection and advantage. The basic personal social unit of raksha society is the ring (not to be confused with the Grace of the same name). A ring represents a small group of like-minded Fair Folk who see the benefit of working together toward some goal that appeals equally to all of them. Membership in rings fluctuates as some raksha lose interest in the group's goals and drift away or others choose to support what the ring is doing. As long as the goals themselves don't change, the ring structure remains cohesive and consistently motivated. All rings are alliances of convenience, however, so the moment the potential amusement inherent in internecine conflict outweighs the convenience belonging to the group offers, a ring is liable to tear itself apart.

At the level just above that of the ring is the raksha social unit known as a freehold. Freeholds are comparable to Creation-born social units ranging in size from kingdoms to church congregations to isolated households. At its heart, every freehold is a local center of raksha power or influence governed by a single ruler. They are founded on uncapped demesnes, in convenient locations in the Middlemarches of the Wyld or even in arid banality of Creation. The raksha use their magic to construct dwelling-places on the demesnes they claim, at the center of which blaze tall silver flames called bonefires. The structures the raksha build up around the bonefires in their demesnes are not manses, but attuning

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to the bonefires grants similar degrees of power. He who rules the freehold can exert great power over it and the territory surrounding it, which makes freeholds hotbeds of courtly intrigue and political treachery.

Every freehold is a local center of raksha "culture." In such regions, the Fair Folk are relieved of the necessity of devouring sustenance and that of wearing a physical shape, though neither is forbidden. Diplomats and Entertainers flock to them from afar, spreading news, ill tidings and gossip about what raksha abroad find fashionable. The Fair Folk can relax in their freeholds and enjoy existence at their own slow pace, devouring captured mortals at their leisure and perfecting the fruits of their various talents. It is not uncommon for freeholds to join in loose alliances with one another against their neighbors or to feud constantly over ownership of legendary treasures, over shady tactics in dealing with the Creation-born, over the finer points of style or over whatever takes their fancy this week.

The Choice of Environment

Just as the Creation-born loosely group themselves based on geographical proximity, so too do the raksha express unifying similarities based on where they choose to dwell. The choice of direction whence a raksha enters the sphere of Creation's influence is inherently random, as the Wyld beyond the elemental poles has no direction other than *toward* Creation and *away from* Creation. Once a raksha enters that sphere of influence, however, her angle of approach colors her first impression of Creation and influences the design of her required shape. The closer the raksha gets to Creation, the more the stable environment suggests the utility of certain features over others. A raksha approaching Creation through the West, for in-

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stance, might find flippers and a long tail more convenient locomotion appendages than would one who came swinging in ahead of the rising sun.

Furthermore, the Creation-born themselves have an influence on the raksha, which varies based on the region in which they live. Scattered mortals in Creation's farthest-flung reaches have different ideas about what forms and behaviors represent alien outsider memes. They contrive cultural expectations of what the raksha are like, and the raksha choose to either affirm these assumptions or play against type. Widely separated Creation-born mortals also develop different standards of beauty and different thresholds of exotic beauty, which the raksha internalize as they approach and pass through the Gateway of Sundraprisha. The more attractive and alluring one of the raksha seems to the locals, the closer she can get to them before they realize what a danger she poses, or the more of them she can lure away from the safety of the flock. The raksha are known Creation-wide as the Fair Folk not because they always uphold their sworn word, but because of how ably they have always adapted themselves to the regional aesthetic tastes of the Creation-born.

The North

The Creation-born call those raksha who admire and enter Creation from the North the Winter Folk, which is a deceptively mild yet apropos appellation for them. Like the harsh Northern winters, these raksha are merciless, humorless and devoid of warmth. They might drowse or stir lamely in their castles or longhouses of glamour-worked ice for weeks, only to suddenly rouse themselves into a frenzied storm of activity from which no mortal is safe. As the blizzard winds rise and the freezing fog slithers out of the Bordermarches, the Winter Folk ride out on hardy elk, reindeer and shaggy horses with packs of omen dogs and arctic wolves at their heels. They tear the dwellings of the Creation-born to the ground and drag away their victims in chains of ice. It is not the mortals' plaintive cries for help or pleas for mercy that excite the Winter Folk's hunger, though. The raksha's hearts are as cold to such things as are the frigid wastes in which they hunt. Instead, it is the promised warmth their prizes' bodies can provide that drives them out into the cold. Be it the body heat of their mortal playthings, the hot blood of their slaughtered victims or the blaze of tenacious will that is required to survive a mortal existence in the North, the Northern raksha crave this warmth above all other delights.

The Winter Folk are every bit as beautiful and intimidating as the frozen Northern expanses throughout which they hunt. Those who do not mimic the range of skin and hair color predominant in the mortal population have skin that is snow white or the glittering blue of Air-aspected jade, with hair of the opposing shade. Some wear a perfectly human seeming marred only by a cow's or fox's tail that they must take pains to hide. At one extreme, their bodies are thickly muscled and shaggily hirsute against the cold. At the other, they are skeletally thin and ragged, like pitiful wretches abandoned to die of exposure. Many Winter Folk dress in impossibly fine garments trimmed in lush fur, clasped in ice and embroidered with precious metals. They carry weapons of ice and stone and gird themselves in intricately wrought armor that rivals the treasures of the First Age. Other Northern raksha dance on the snowdrifts in almost no clothing at all, unaffected by any cold that comes from without.

Only in the brief summer months do the Winter Folk change in temperament. For a time, their cold, pitiless demeanor diminishes as the Fair Folk become relaxed, affable, hospitable or frenziedly ravenous. They do not become friendly with the Creation-born during these warm months, but they can be sociable. Trying to deal with the raksha of the North during the summer is not safe, exactly, but it is at least *safer* than it is throughout the rest of the year.

The East

The East is the most populous direction and, therefore, the one that supports the largest number of Fair Folk. It has also known the influence of the raksha the longest of any region of Creation, as there have always been sentient creatures throughout to capture raksha attention. Stranded veterans of the failed Balorian Crusade had the best chance of surviving in this region as humanity was still its most populous here (despite being diminished by 90 percent after the Great Contagion). Since the beginning of humanity's dominance, the Creation-born of the East have passed down tales of the Fair Folk, and the raksha have long since adapted themselves to best exemplify those tales. They are haughty and careless and omnipresent, lurking just out of reach in the shadows of the nearby trees. Some terrorize and harry their victims day and night until their prey would almost rather be caught than continue the chase. Others lie perfectly concealed in the foliage, waiting for mortals to approach and then snapping them up in cunningly laid traps before their prey ever knew what hit them.

The raksha pioneered the art of taking shape in the East. Today, the raksha honor that accomplishment by upholding the value of appearance over all else. Their bodies are long, lean and agile, with skin in every shade of brown like the average Easterner or the lush green of Wood-aspected jade. Their hair is brown or green or gold and usually quite long, yet unnaturally smooth and rarely tangled or matted. Many intermingle human characteristics with the features of various plants (such as barklike skin or a coif of cherry blossoms) or forest animals (such as stag antlers or proportionally sized dragonfly wings). Some prefer to dress in the baroque finery of haughty noble lords, displaying an obvious image of alluring wealth and imposing power that the Creation-born can easily grasp. Others adorn themselves with gossamer accoutrements forged in the style of natural objects, such as cloaks of flowing

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leaves, armor of steel-hard wood, belts and bracelets of colorful snakes and masks of luminous amber. Still others garb themselves minimally, displaying the awe-inspiring bodies they forged for themselves. Whatever the Eastern raksha feels makes him look the most impressive, that's the appearance he puts forward to the Creation-born. And when he isn't impressing the Creation-born or showing off for his fellow raksha, he leaves no trace of his passing or evidence of his existence.

The South

Those raksha who come into Creation at its south tend to fall into one of two distinct groups, rather than sharing a looser and larger regional identity. The Fair Folk of the South were more broadly similar once upon a time, but a Creation-born fanatic named Ikerre tried long ago to use the Eye of Autochthon to destroy all the Southern Fair Folk and very nearly succeeded. Those scattered groups that survived the cataclysm diverged significantly and have since set two separate trends for how Southern raksha should conduct themselves. For all their differences, however, the Fair Folk of the South do still share one unifying similarity: an abiding passion for the hunt. Unlike the Winter Folk of the North, these raksha hunt not out of desperate need, but because they revel and luxuriate in the hunt's heady joys.

The most numerous and widespread raksha in the South take the forms of cultured raiders who terrorize the Creation-born dwelling in the deserts. These Fair Folk come thundering out of the darkness or the obscuring heat hazes of midday on tall, lightning-fast horses and descend on desert encampments like locusts. They snatch up the young, healthy and beautiful for their amusements, striking down anyone it doesn't please them enough to carry back. To them, the hunt is all about finding a vulnerable mortal settlement in the unforgiving Southern desert, casing it to make sure it's a worthy target and swooping in to have their way with it. The raiders are less concerned with the chase, but its joys are not unknown to them. Tricks of seducing and luring mortals away to Rakshastan are known to them as well, but the raiders find such tactics to be the last refuge of the downtrodden and déclassé. When they aren't hunting, raider Fair Folk find amusement in art, storytelling and trade. They also share a love of inflicting cruel and fatal ironies on captured mortals, which is the basis of their sense of humor.

Elsewhere, on the grassy savannas that stretch across the more temperate reaches of the South, the predominant raksha in evidence are the Lion Folk. They care little for the fineries of civilized life and, instead, devote themselves entirely to the hunt. They gather in loose prides ruled by a single male raksha supported by a handful of powerful females, with assorted hangers-on of both sexes tagging along and sharing in the spoils of the hunt. (A new raksha's sex and associated role in a Lion Folk pride is determined by status and power *before* the raksha passes through Nirakara and informs her aesthetic for the shape she is soon to take.) These raksha primarily stalk and bring down unwary travelers on the savanna, practicing on wild animals or gossamer monsters forged for that purpose. The Lion Folk also creep to the edges of mortal settlements and whisper glorious beguilements to those within. Any mortals who emerge to play the raksha's game, to test their own bravery or even to try to frighten away the Fair Folk are chased to exhaustion and finally brought down, with the Lion Folk singing their praises and honoring their prey role all the while.

Fair Folk raiders can easily be mistaken for Creation-born nomads or bandit troupes at a distance. They deck themselves out in the long, loose-fitting garments common to Creation-born desert travelers, as well as an overabundance of normal-seeming jewelry. Upon closer inspection, their garments might be made of flowing sand, shimmering mirage distortions or rippling smoke. Their jewelry might not be solid but molten and always changing. Some raiders share the natural skin tones and hair colors of the local mortals, but just as many and more have skin the bright red of Fire-aspected jade or shimmering with the eerie translucence of lightning-fried desert glass.

The Lion Folk are more obviously inhuman though more similar in appearance to one another than raksha elsewhere in Creation tend to be. Their bodies are roughly humanoid in shape, though displaying the leonine features whence their name derives. Most have long tails and wicked retractable claws on their hands and feet. Males all have manes—the fuller and darker the better—some shot through with streaks of flame all the way to the tips. The females are sleeker and smaller but just as ferocious and deadly. Their eyes are often gold with vertical slits, and long white fangs glint when they smile. Lion Folk hardly ever wear clothes, and rarely more than ragged loincloths when they do.

The West

Among those Fair Folk who care to gossip about such things, Western raksha have a reputation for laziness and indolence. Many of them spend their idle time in secret freehold grottoes beneath the waves, playing games of courtly intrigue to their hearts' content, rarely venturing outside. Their Workers provide for them and their Entertainers amuse them, and they need nothing more from Creation. Some such places are closer to the Wyld than they are to any Creation-born settlements, representing those locations where the raksha entered Creation for the novelty of it but have little interest in the pursuit of humanity's succulent dreams. Others have been chased away from human settlements since the end of the Balorian Crusade and have chosen not to return to the Wyld until they have salved and redeemed their pride.

It should not be assumed, however, that Western raksha are disinclined to hunt and ravish mortal prey. The dreams of the Creation-born are powerful lures to the Fair Folk, and most raksha are delighted to emerge from their

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secret freeholds to capture strong-willed dreamers. Some Western raksha are so dedicated to doing so that they take up residence on forbidden islands within striking distance of human settlements and attack any boats, swimmers or undefended shores that take their fancy. There is no bargaining with such raksha (as even the Guild has discovered), for to them, anything worth having is worth taking by force. It is these surface-dwelling raksha with whom the mortals of the West are most familiar, but they have no less reason to fear those who dwell beneath the waves.

Raksha who prefer to raid openly above the surface of the Western deeps rarely wear anything more than intricate, full-body tattoos and personalized, hand-carved wooden masks. When they do go clothed, they favor kilts of interwoven fish scales or scanty wraps of seaweed. They carry nets and long tridents, or occasionally, slings and long, serrated knives. Those who want to attract notice and leave memorable impressions on mortal witnesses carry gruesome trophies of previous human victims—most of which are made from those victims' tanned skins and whittled bones. Western Fair Folk who prefer the safety and leisure of their underwater kingdoms appear more refined and richly appointed. They wear diaphanous gowns and robes that float in the lazy currents, crafting fine jewelry from shells, coral, pearls, bubbles and bioluminescent ocean fauna.

Western raksha's hair and skin usually ranges in color from white to blue to green to the infinitely deep black of Water-aspected jade. Some are patterned with iridescent scales or sheen with grating denticles like those on the skin of a shark. They might even have webbed appendages and the suggestions of gill slits along their necks. Western raksha who spend more time under water have more pronounced scales and fins and gills, as well as the occasional powerful tail in place of legs. A few sport toothy suckers on the palms of their hands or even all the way up the insides of their arms. Normally, the closer Western raksha dwell to human settlements and the more time they spend raiding the same, the more human they look (and vice versa).

The Wyld

For all the raksha who dwell in Creation-bound freeholds and demesnes or who live out in the open in Creation, there are many more waiting just beyond the horizons in the Wyld. To be clear, the Wyld in this sense refers to the Bordermarches, the Middlemarches and the Deep Wyld wherein tides of unformed madness overlap the solidity of Creation. This broad and expansive region encircles the world the Creation-born know and insulates it from the indescribable madness that exists outside the boundaries of the elemental poles. Raksha exist in the deeps beyond this threshold, but they have no effect on or interest in Creation. When the Creation-born refer to the Fair Folk that come from the Wyld, they almost always mean those raksha who dwell between Creation proper and Pure Chaos.

Raksha hermitages, camps, castles and kingdoms of all description exist out in the Wyld. The raksha are as safe there from Creation as they are in their Creation-locked freeholds and uncapped demesnes—safer really, because they're harder to reach there and they can easily perform works of glamour or Wyld stunts. They do not rely on the dreams of the Creation-born for sustenance, and need only venture out in search of mortal prey when the temptation to indulge overwhelms them. Raksha need not assume solid shapes in the Wyld, though neither are they forbidden this dalliance with physicality. The closer they exist to Creation's hard edge, however, the more it behooves them to do so.

When Wyld raksha do wear physical forms—if only to distinguish themselves from their strange and powerful unshaped cousins—those shapes tend to resemble those of the Creation-dwelling raksha in the nearest geographical direction. The deeper they are in the marches, though, the less they resemble human beings and the more aspects they take on from the nearest elemental pole. Those that live in the Northern Bordermarches and beyond, for instance, might have broad swan wings on their backs or be coated with a perpetual sheen of frost. They might never willingly let their feet touch the ground, stepping instead on a low fog that accompanies them everywhere. Powerful Lion Folk from the Southern Middlemarches might have radiant manes of pure flame, or their skin might be a patchwork of broken obsidian with veins of luminous magma underneath. Western Fair Folk from remote Wyld kingdoms might look like living coral statues or take perfectly humanoid forms that consist of nothing but pure, rippling salt water. When such raksha come from the Wyld into the cold for the first time, they can have quite an effect on the aesthetic trends practiced by those who have been in Creation longer. For the most part, however, raksha who choose to dwell in the Wyld would rather not travel inward toward Creation's heart unless they're bringing the tides of the Wyld with them as they did at Prince Balor's behest. If they have business in Creation, they prefer to conduct it with proxies or through Diplomats who are more comfortable there.

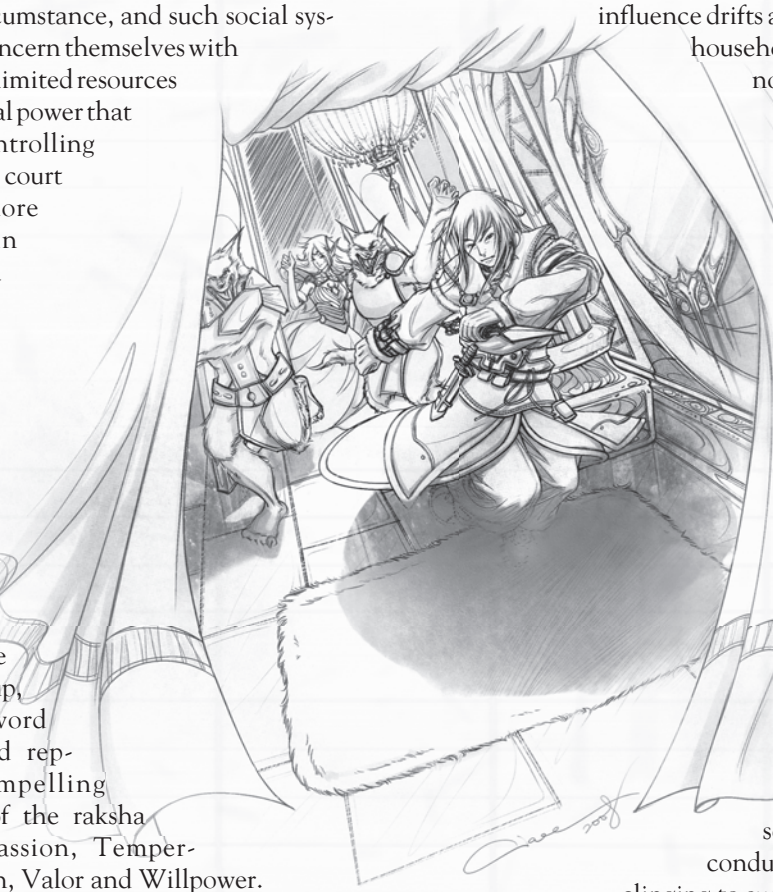
The Courts of Rakshastan

There is a distinction that unifies the raksha across the geographical divides that separate them. That distinction is the membership in a raksha court. The phenomenon of the courts did not always exist, nor was it originally necessary. It arose around the time of the Balorian Crusade when the raksha were scattered and diverged wildly from one another. When the raksha came together to join in the Crusade, they found it very difficult to communicate with one another because they could see so little that lay in common between them. It was the legendary Thief of Words who helped the raksha see that their natures were fundamentally similar enough to form complementary bases for social interaction. The assembled raksha learned to relate to one another on these bases, and from them did the courts slowly agglutinate. Like-minded raksha rings

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gathered in small bands, which allied with each other to form influential households. The households expanded and merged to become courts. This process is fluid and continues even today. Five courts are prominent, but they could be cast down tomorrow and replaced by new ones, just as they replaced those that came before.

Fair Folk courts are similar to the Creation-born organizations of the same name, in that they primarily consist of ambitious individuals who throng around those with power to curry favor and laud their superiority over unaffiliated outsiders. Each is governed by a noble ruler of advanced age and power, supported by a cadre of influential and powerful noble counselors. Yet, membership in a Creation-born court is dictated by fortunate birth and geographical circumstance, and such social systems primarily concern themselves with the allocation of limited resources and the ephemeral power that comes from controlling them. A raksha's court affiliation is more philosophical in nature, serving a purer purpose. Each court exists to uphold the value of one of the five core concepts around which individual raksha define themselves. Those concepts are based in the five Graces—Cup, Ring, Staff, Sword and Heart—and represent the compelling characteristics of the raksha psyche—Compassion, Temperance, Conviction, Valor and Willpower.



To be affiliated with one court is to be opposed to the others, but it does not denote enmity outright. Instead, it gives the raksha an excuse to engage in feuds, intrigue, diplomacy and espionage. Members of opposing courts seek advantage over one another to prove the superiority of their chosen value and to entice like-minded followers to do the same. Little is at stake in such rivalries—as the Creation-born reckon worth—but the interplay provides endless amusement and sows the seeds for the epic, passionate dramas on which the raksha thrive. This amusement is not solely a matter of external conflict, either. The courts provide the raksha common ground, but they do not strip away individuality. One talented raksha's definition of her prized Virtue and her means of espousing its preeminence might be quite different from that of her talented peer. Two nobles, for instance, might uphold Compassion but disagree based on their differing secondary Virtues held in Compassion's shadow. The framework of the court, then, gives them a venue in which to pit their differing interpretations against one another. She whose vision of the Virtue proves more inspiring and more popular gains greater prominence and influence in the court.

The following five courts are those with the most cachet among the raksha at present. Their centers of power are separated widely by geography, but that power is not dependent upon Creation's geography or elemental association in the Wyld. The base of a court's influence drifts as different constituent lesser households rise to power or eminent nobles travel elsewhere.

The Jet Court

Those Fair Folk who belong to the Jet Court are paradoxical creatures. They uphold the Virtue of Temperance, so their only guiding principle is that they never take any philosophy or behavior to extremes. Such raksha are passionate and restless, but detached. Abiding by schedules or rigid codes of conduct is anathema to them, as clinging to such artificial constructs would be intemperate. Showing too much kindness to their mortal playthings is likewise unacceptable, as is displaying an overabundance of loyalty to any cause. Members of the Jet Court gain status by spying on and gossiping against one another to reveal their rivals' secret failures of Temperance. They accrue only what status they cannot modestly turn down. When the purity of one's Temperance is called into question, such is the stuff from which vicious, savage duels are made. Jet Court duels never play out to the death, of course, but the opposing parties are likely to leave the engagement wickedly mutilated and all the more self-satisfied for the experience. It is common

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courtesy for the loser of such a duel to admit that he was never wholly committed to his mistaken point of view. If his profession is convincing enough, witnesses are obliged to consider him the more temperate.

The frigid Northern Wyld is the current center of the Jet Court, though only by default. The noble Luminary called Princess Kyema has ruled there for centuries, though only because none are committed enough to their ambition to usurp her. If anyone were, the Princess's network of spies, her coterie of rumormongers and her virtuosity at the art of blackmail would undermine that ambition forthwith. Kyema does not advertise this fact or take undue pride in it.

More information on the Jet Court can be found in **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. II—The Wyld**, pages 80–82.

The Lapis Court

Raksha of the Lapis Court uphold the Virtue of Compassion, especially as it pertains to their prized Creation-born mortals. They love and protect these mortals with a possessiveness that borders on (and occasionally annexes) obsession. Nowhere are mortals treated better by the Fair Folk than they are in the grasp of Lapis Court raksha. Unfortunately for said mortals, such concepts as compassion, love, protection and good treatment are all defined in the raksha's terms. They are no less doomed than any other mortals taken by the Fair Folk, no matter how much they might believe they enjoy their captivity. Lapis Court raksha passionately duel one another over perceived mistreatment of their slaves, but their conflicts are not those of savior versus oppressor, but rather that of two dogs snarling over the same scrap of hog's ear. Plus, as quick as a Lapis Courtier might be to call another out for mistreating or stealing her pet mortals, she still treats the offender with all due understanding and civility. Compassion demands it of her. Should self-appointed mortal or Exalted "rescuers" attempt to take away those whom the raksha prize, no such civility or understanding is required.

The Imperial Raksha ruler Neshi of the Double Whips serves the Lapis Court as its leader. She holds court in a sprawling encampment of gossamer tents in the Far South.

More on the Lapis Court can be found in **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. II—The Wyld**, pages 116–117.

The Pearl Court

Willpower is the prominent value associated with the Pearl Court. Its members are recreational solipsists, according value only to those who can best impose their will upon others. To that end, they rise early every day to drill and train themselves incessantly to improve the qualities in which they take the most pride. They practice art, warcraft, oratory and a thousand other pastimes with exclusive determination and pit their talents against one another constantly in spectacular duels. Duels in the Pearl Court are rarely fatal but are always conclusive, proving to all witnesses which raksha is superior to the other in the disputed circumstance. The winner is lauded and envied and inevitably challenged over his pride of place; the loser obviously lacked the will to win and descends into well-deserved self-loathing.

The Pearl Court is based in a shimmering pearl castle that travels the Western Wyld on the back of a thoroughly dominated aquatic behemoth. Its master is the Panjandrum noble Judge Nehemeth, who never moves from her enormous pearl throne except to answer the challenges of would-be usurpers. She is, by turns, fickle and obstinate, demanding that her courtiers adhere unswervingly to her strict code of ever-changing laws and unwritten customs. Those whom she leads chafe under these onerous restrictions, fantasizing about the day they can finally crush her in a duel and impose their own will on the court just as she does.

More on the Pearl Court can be found in **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. II—The Wyld**, pages 96–98.

The Opal Court

Raksha who owe allegiance to the Opal Court uphold the Virtue of Valor. Their exemplars are shameless, outspoken, heroic and short-tempered to a fault, though they consider it no fault. To them, it is not enough to simply be brave but to prove and reaffirm their bravery as often as they can to objective outsiders. Doing so usually involves finding foes who appear equally matched with them or just slightly tougher and challenging them to some sort of contest. Suitable foes for Opal Courtiers include ferocious wild animals (for the hunt), brave mortals (for raiding), civic-minded Exalted (for warfare) and raksha of other courts (for dueling). Raksha of the Opal Court never pick on foes who are obviously weaker, for such actions are no demonstration of Valor. Likewise, they rarely challenge foes who are obviously many times their superior. They would not back down if such a foe offered them a challenge, nor would they retreat if they realized that they were in over their heads, but they don't instigate hopeless conflict. It's depressing.

The ruler of the Opal Court is a Strategos named Prince Japhthia. By his wisdom, his raksha rarely duel with members of their own court. The more of themselves they kill or incapacitate through injury, he tells them, the fewer they have available for hunts or for raids or to take to war. Opal Court raksha encourage their mortal slaves to exercise their aggression on one another instead, both to work out internal disputes vicariously and to enflame the Valor they best prefer to devour. Japhthia descends from Prince Balor of the Terrible Gaze and plots to re-ignite the crusade his forebear conceived and failed to finish. His base of power lies far away in the East, within striking distance of the Hundred Kingdoms.

More on the Opal Court can be found in **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. II—The Wyld**, pages 132–134.

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The Ruby Court

The Ruby Court is the raksha court of Conviction, although that Virtue has been little in evidence of late. Previously, the stereotype of the Ruby Courtiers was that they were all pushy, overzealous hardheads who gave their word freely and challenged to fatal duels anyone who dared even hint at contradiction. Never would they swerve or surrender. As allies… well, a little of the raksha of the Ruby Court went a long way. As rivals and enemies, however, they were treasures to be hoarded and cultivated. Their adherence to the tenets of Conviction made their passions legendary and awesome.

Today, the Ruby Court is inexplicably diminished. Some heroes still shine with the glory of the bygone days, but the court is not the force it once was. Those who know the court well lay the blame for this at the feet of its Xia ruler, Duke Aral. He lives up to his convictions in a manner befitting his station, including the troublesome belief that raksha whose dreams and motives differ should be tolerated and respected. It might have been better for the court if one of his many dissatisfied rivals had overthrown him now, but the endless plotting to usurp him so amuses them that they can't bear for it to end just yet. So instead, they while away the days in their Southeastern fastness accomplishing little that is worthy of respect.

More on the Ruby Court can be found in **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. II—The Wyld**, pages 115–116.

The Church of Balor

Above the courts and stretching across the vast breadth of Creation and the Wyld marches that surround it is a centuries-old social diversion that gains ever more popularity among the raksha every day. It is the Church of Balor, and membership in it brings diverse raksha of all stripes together. Better still, it provides them a social distinction that transcends class, caste, geography and court. The Church can even bridge the gap between the shaped and the unshaped.

The Church of Balor is not exactly a true church, nor does it represent an authentic religion like those with which the Creation-born are most familiar. It lionizes no single god or pantheon of them or even the nameless principle of divinity. The closest things the raksha recognize as timeless, perfect beings beyond the understanding of any given individual are the shinma, and those entities are equal parts abstraction and essential motivation. Worshiping or praying to them would be a waste of time.

Nor does the Church offer any hope of divine or karmic justice to the downtrodden or propose a post-mortem reward for a lifetime of adherence to its principles. The only benefit the Church of Balor espouses to justify its existence is that if it achieves its holy aims, the raksha will enjoy an existence as free and formless and fluid as they did in the period between Time Not and the inception of Creation. Yet, many of the Church's strongest supporters have come to understand that striving toward a goal is just as pleasurable, if not more so, than achieving it. It would not be impossible to conceive of them sabotaging the Church's efforts to prolong those same efforts.

The Ideals of the Church of Balor

As the name suggests, the Church venerates the memory of its martyred namesake, Prince Balor of the Terrible Gaze. Wielding the horrific grass-cutter scythe Ishiika and leading an army of Cataphractoi, behemoths and countless raksha hordes, this ruler Anarch ignited a crusade that all but overwhelmed Creation. Were it not for the actions of one divinely lucky Dragon-Blooded woman, Creation would have come unraveled and the purity of the Wyld would have reigned once more. Alas, the Creation-born drove the hordes back, and Prince Balor was slain on the field by the princesses Incarnadine and Viridian, wielding a Creation-forged weapon. That the Crusade continued despite its leader's death is a testament to its righteousness, regardless of the fact that it ended shortly thereafter in crushing defeat. Those who align themselves with the Church still recognize and defend that righteousness and claim that the best means of commemorating it is to re-ignite the fires of crusade when the time is right. Creation has been far too stable these seven centuries since the first Balorian Crusade, but now, the Scarlet Empress is gone, the Dragon-Blooded are in disarray, and the Celestial Exalted are re-surging among human masses who have been inculcated to fear and despise them. Creation is erupting into chaos and is undefended, which means that now is a perfect time for a second Crusade.

Dogma

Thief of Words allegedly spelled out the founding ideals of the Church of Balor shortly after Prince Balor's death. That legendary raksha negotiator's stolen words first legitimized the Balorian Crusade, and it would not have been proper for him to renounce the affair once it came unraveled. Instead, he disseminated worshipful tales of the circumstances of Prince Balor's death in such a way as to make the martyr seem a noble, worthy figure in the eyes of every raksha caste. His efforts were most easily received by the Warriors, who were already well acquainted with Prince Balor's many acts of valor. The story that best sums them up today is the Testament of the Sword. To the Entertainers, Thief of Words explained that Prince Balor actually laid down his grass-cutter scythe when Incarnadine and Viridian confronted him, out of compassion for their motives, as well as for those of their agent provocateur, Princess Melusine. This story is known today as the Testament of the Cup. To the Workers, Thief of Words framed Prince Balor's sacrifice as the ultimate act of balance to perfectly temper his bloodthirsty rampage. So powerful was this sacrifice, the story goes, that the unflappable Duke of Mirrors was moved to take up the fallen Prince's battle standard. This story is collected today in the Testament of the Ring. The

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Troubling Inconsistencies

How is it that Thief of Words could know the circumstances of Prince Balor's death and know what motivated he and his murderers? How is it that a raksha consumed with Valor could commit a final act that could so wonderfully motivate raksha of all the other castes and ranks? Is it even true that Thief of Words is the author of the Testaments, as popular opinion suggests? These teachings have been passed from raksha to raksha so many times that only circular tradition stands to authenticate their veracity.

Devout raksha brush off these seeming inconsistencies as distractions from what makes the Church interesting. Nay-sayers who wish to undermine the Church's influence latch onto the inconsistencies with relish, claiming that the Church's foundation is built on a shifting sand of lies. Unfortunately, those legendary raksha who could clear up the misunderstandings—such as Thief of Words, the Duke of Mirrors, Princess Melusine, the murdering sisters or Prince Balor himself—are all either dead or centuries missing.

Diplomats needed little convincing by Thief of Words that the sisters Incarnadine and Viridian had no choice but to bring Prince Balor down at the threshold of his goal, lest his conviction die out as he accomplished his goal. This lesson is today preserved in the Testament of the Staff. To those who were still undecided even after these tales began to spread, Thief of Words had one last tale to tell. He needed only to point to the blasted heath where Prince Balor fell, which also destroyed his murderers and poisoned the ground. This place is holy ground, consecrated by the power of Prince Balor's outrage that his formidable will had been denied. Thief of Words spread this story as the Final Testament of the Heart.

To become a member of the Church of Balor, a raksha must accept the truth of the Final Testament and at least one of the others—presumably the one that most closely hews to the adherent's caste. He must make a profession of faith to that effect as well. Finally, he must swear an oath to someday "take up the Prince's standard" and march into Creation to resume the martyr's crusade. At its core, belonging to the Church of Balor requires nothing more than that profession and that oath. In practice, the raksha usually ornament their faith with as much more pomp and ceremony as they can get away with. Some force catechumens to recite each of the Testaments and to study apocryphal testaments and philosophical treatises penned since the founding of the Church. Some encourage catechumens to undertake a vigil at a freehold parish or to venture into Creation itself for a forced fast. The traditions of acceptance into the Church are as varied all throughout Rakshastan as are the raksha themselves, and they change as clerical leadership or the fashion of the times dictates.

So too do the practices of worship change as whims and trends shift. Some Balorian churches hold elaborate pageants of devotion, entertaining their congregations with long hymns, extensive liturgies and resounding sermons on the value of right behavior. Expensive sacrifices are extorted from faithful adherents and the acts of legendary historical figures are praised and emulated. Other Balorian churches put less stock in ceremony and focus their efforts on quiet study of the Testaments and rapid conversion of non-believers. In some places, the Church exists as nothing more than shared sympathies passed between subtle believers isolated in anti-Balorian freeholds. Worship in the Church of Balor is a multifaceted gem that mesmerizes and inspires the raksha to great acts of passion—not the least of which is spent in schismatic infighting between raksha who espouse opposing or even mutually exclusive acts of reverence.

The Balorian Calling

At a fundamental level, the Church of Balor exists not exactly to honor Prince Balor's memory or to rally fanatical Fair Folk to its nascent Second Crusade. The unvarnished truth is that it gives the raksha something to do and something to get excited about. Even the most devout raksha understand this fact, but they are so wrapped up in the trappings of the Church that they don't care. The Church gives them an excuse to feud, to preach, to march, to duel and to belong—a novel, alien delight for the raksha—so they give themselves over to it with abandon. Such devoted raksha are said to be answering the Balorian Calling, which comes either from within their own hearts or from charismatic peers. Most who answer the Calling remain at the level of passive followers, dallying with their fellow faithful until either the novelty wears off or belonging to the Church no longer proves advantageous. Those who are moved to take a more active response to the Balorian Calling normally fall into three main categories.

The Clergy

The most devoted Balorian raksha are those who rise to the level of the clergy. They learn all the Testaments by heart and interpret them to suit local mores and fashionable trends. They pen apocryphal testaments or religious theses that clarify and expound upon the original Testaments, explaining away seeming inconsistencies or ignoring them. It is the body of the clergy that determines local worship customs, from liturgies to acceptable hymns to the lionization of notable worshipers. Any practice that glorifies Prince Balor or makes a congregation ready for the Second Crusade has been either devised or vetted by the clergy, which functions in equal parts as theocratic bureaucracy and haut monde.

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The structure of the clergy is decentralized and widely varied. The local level usually consists of a priest and her retinue of acolytes, who base their operations in a single church ranging in size from house-sized sanctuaries to coliseum-sized cathedrals. Regions with several allied churches might have bishops who regulate the operations of each church to promote consistency. Regions with very large Balorian populations, such as the Eastern Middlemarches, might be further grouped under archbishops and cardinals, though that level of organization is highly unstable and in no way mandated by the founding philosophies of the Church. Any hierarchical structure that exists between Balorian churches above the level of the priest just represents a network of trendsetters or a web of popular influence that drives worship fads.

Those who hear the Calling and follow it into the Balorian clergy are usually ambitious, bored and/or frustrated noble raksha. Few of them rise to the ruler rank in their freeholds, though faerie theocracies in which all citizens pray around the bonefire and pursue none but Balorian aims are not unheard of. Most members of the clergy are the powerful or the talented, wielding important influence locally but giving way to their true rulers. This particular calling most appeals to raksha of the Entertainer caste, especially Luminaries—who set the standards for worship—and Ornamental Raksha—who lead their faithful followers by example. Workers also make dependable, if uninspired, clerics—especially the Artisans, who craft the tools and temples of worship and the wondrous, inspirational war machines of the coming crusade. Few Diplomats take up the roles of local priests, but Balorian Scribes usually know the local rites and practices well enough to fill in when local priests' responsibilities call them away.

Missionaries

While the clergy exists in those places where the Church of Balor is established, accepted and in favor, those who accept the Balorian Calling of the missionary must venture into those places where it is not. Missionaries must learn the teachings of the Testaments as well as any priest, for they are priests themselves, but they are not expected to be as competent at extrapolation or interpretation of those texts. Their job is to spread the influence of the Church and to drum up support for the Second Crusade. This latter responsibility has become ever more important now that Creation's defenses seem crippled.

It is also the missionaries who are called upon to venture first into Creation ahead of the Second Crusade. It falls to them to locate uncapped demesnes or tear down inhabited manses to establish

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mission sanctuaries on those sites. Enough missionaries working together can establish religious freeholds across several demesnes and link them in meandering chains. When those chains are strong enough, the raksha in the Middlemarches can surge forward along them, towing the unformed madness of the Wyld behind them. This tactic is called a breakthrough, and laying the groundwork for one is a sacred duty of Balorian missionaries.

Talented and powerful raksha are best suited to the missionary existence, as they have the strength to travel far and wide but lack the responsibilities that tie rulers down. Heroic commoners can also be missionaries, but their tasks usually involve little more than heralding the arrival of a more powerful noble missionary or making contact with raksha in remote locations who are already predisposed to the Balorian cause. This Calling primarily appeals to raksha of the Diplomat caste. Courtier raksha spread the teachings of the Testaments to freeholds in the Wyld, planting the seeds of Balorian sympathies in the ears of the powerful. Imperial Raksha lead the faithful into Creation or into hostile Wyld freeholds, converting non-believers at spear point. Scribes are less inclined to spread the faith on their own, but they often accompany more highly motivated missionaries in a supporting capacity. Outside the Diplomat caste, Panjandrum Workers make able missionaries, as they inform their society-building efforts with imported Balorian ideals. Eshu Entertainers also occasionally take on the role of missionary, proving to even those most hostile anti-Balorian dissidents that the power of the Church can endure despite all opposition.

Templars

The role of the templar gains in popularity as the Second Balorian Crusade comes to seem ever more inevitable. This Balorian Calling is not so much about spreading the teachings of the Church or winning over non-believers as it is about serving Prince Balor's memory in a new crusade. Some templars aid missionaries in converting new worshipers and some devote themselves to defending established churches against hostile outsiders, but they are usually older followers and stand in the minority. Most templars are excited raksha newer to the faith who see it as the best road to glory in the upcoming conquest of Creation. They staunchly avow the authenticity of the Testaments and do their best to live by the ideals espoused in the ones that best suit their ascendant Graces, but they don't preach. Most of their time is spent training for combat and planning for war. In the esteem of non-Balorian raksha, the templars are held as alternately the most short-sighted, the most devout, the most foolish and the most righteous members of the Church of Balor.

Unsurprisingly, this Calling appeals primarily to raksha of the Warrior caste. Anarchs flock to it, emulating their hero and inspiration. The Xia contingent of templars is numerous as well, consisting largely of priests who are sick of words and now demand decisive action. Most of the raksha who serve the templar cause are Cataphractoi, just as was the case during the first Balorian Crusade. Directing them from established strongholds and captured Creation-locked freeholds will be the Strategoi of the Worker caste.

This gallant, righteous Calling is open to free-willed raksha of all ranks. Commoners and the talented are aware that they have less power to bring to the conflict, but if they acquit themselves ably enough, they could either find themselves elevated in rank or die bravely and well as heroic martyrs of whom Prince Balor would have been proud. The powerful and the rulers of the templar Calling see themselves as the captains and generals of the Second Crusade with nothing less than the fate of raksha existence on their shoulders. They will unravel Creation this time or be destroyed in the attempt. They won't surrender or retreat as their forebears did, no matter what the Creation-born cook up to fight back against them. Riding behemoth war machines, leading hordes of the faithful and ushering in the incomparable unshaped, the templars will make sure that this Second Age is Creation's last.

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CHAPTER TWO
LORDS OF CHAOS

To the Fair Folk who voluntarily shaped themselves to enter Creation, the unshaped are elder cousins prone to bitter feuds over imagined slights. To those Fair Folk who were born into Creation fully shaped, the unshaped are nightmare creatures of chaos who despise them for the accident of their birth. To all Fair Folk, the unshaped are beings to be admired and feared, placated and avoided. Simultaneously predator and prey, an unshaped can bring destruction to an entire freehold of shaped raksha, even as shaped raksha quest against it for the mighty artifacts that can be wrested from its Graces. This dynamic epitomizes the unshaped, the true Lords of Chaos.

On the Nature of the Unshaped

The unshaped, like every other aspect of the Deep Wyld, are not easily categorized. Each is a unique being, and most are inconsistent even in defining their own inherent qualities. Broadly speaking, the unshaped can be categorized on a continuum according to how aware of and affected by Creation each particular unshaped is. The purest Chaos Lords, as their shaped brethren sometimes call the unshaped, are those that dwell in the deepest, most chaotic parts of the Wyld and are either oblivious to Creation or simply pay it no mind at all. These unshaped are truly beings of chaos, with no definable characteristics that persist from one story from the next. Theoretically, a shaped Fair Folk could quest against a Chaos Lord in one story, leave and then return in the following story without even realizing she was interacting with the same unshaped raksha.

Those unshaped raksha who interact with Creation to some degree cannot help but be affected by it. As an unshaped comes to understand Creation's view of linear time, it is compelled by that understanding to arrange its own internal sense of time in a linear manner. As it begins to understand spatial relationships, it finds itself bound to organize its own interior space according to ideas such as "up/down" and "left/

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right." Despite, or possibly because of, the effects that interaction with Creation have on unshaped raksha, those who become tainted by that interaction usually become obsessed with Creation. Some are obsessed with its destruction, while others are simply obsessed with understanding why Creation affects them as it does. Raksha in this category who still retain an unshaped status are those whose obsessions have not yet driven them to cross the shinma Nirakara through the Gateway of Sundraprisha and actually visit Creation firsthand as a shaped raksha… so far at least.

Most Chaos Lords with whom shaped raksha interact dwell in the Deep Wyld, just close enough to monitor Creation. A few dwell in the Bordermarches, and still more haunt the Middlemarches. At least one unshaped, the City of Formlessness Constrained, actually exists within Creation, trapped during the Scarlet Empress's fatal counterstrike within a hastily constructed defensive freehold. A majority of those Chaos Lords with whom the shaped raksha interact have antagonistic relationships with Creation. Among those who disdain or even despise Creation and its abhorrent shaped nature, this antagonism extends to shaped raksha, who such unshaped generally view as traitors and unnatural abominations.

Characteristics and Traits of the Unshaped

Unshaped raksha do not have Intimacies. Instead, a Chaos Lord has a set of behaviors and beliefs known as Imperatives that perform the same function as Intimacies. Each unshaped has one Imperative for each of its Graces. All unshaped raksha have the same Motivation—to maintain unshaped existence and to act on the raksha's Imperatives. An unshaped raksha also begins with two dots in each of its Graces. An unshaped raksha's Graces can exceed five, and the number of dots an unshaped has to spend on its Graces is determined according to the following chart.

Raksha Virtues

Unshaped Status	Grace Dots	Grace Cap
A weak unshaped	8	5
A moderately powerful unshaped	12	7
A very powerful unshaped	15	9

The Graces of an unshaped do not take the form of petty trinkets like those of the shaped raksha. Instead, each Grace manifests as a separate subsidiary intelligence in a manner not dissimilar from the way Third Circle demons serve as subsidiary intellects to the Yozis. These subsidiary raksha are referred to as Emanations. All unshaped raksha have at least five Emanations, one for each Grace, and each Emanation exists to facilitate one of the raksha's Imperatives. Some unshaped have more. Unshaped are not limited to only one Grace of each type, and they can forge new Graces other than the normal five. An unshaped, however, can have only one Fountainhead, Glory, Stronghold or Throne Room, and only one Emanation can control each of them. If an unshaped possesses some kind of customized Grace, it may, at the Storyteller's discretion, have the capacity to affect a freehold in some way comparable to a Fountainhead, Glory, Stronghold or Throne Room.

Although an Emanation is not truly an independent raksha from a metaphysical standpoint, it effectively mimics the traits of a noble raksha with a Heart Grace rating of 4. Mechanically speaking, each Emanation has the traits of a shaped raksha. In most cases, an Emanation has no consistent form and appears to be unshaped herself, manifesting as an elemental effect, a physical manifestation of some abstract concept or simply a miasma of Wyld energies. An Emanation might appear to observers as a hurricane sweeping across the waypoint, a region where everything (including the observer) is colored bright-blue, a never-ending and extremely dissonant symphony, a burning forest, a mobile bloodstain or simply a writhing mass of… something observers are incapable of defining in any way. That said, some Emanations maintain a fondness for particular coherent forms that they maintain through shaping actions, and of course, any Emanation can shape herself into any form she wishes in the Wyld. An Emanation that shapes itself into a form comparable to one of the shaped raksha is indistinguishable from such beings to mundane senses, but supernatural vision can discern an Emanation's true nature. All raksha intuitively know whether they are talking to an Emanation or another shaped raksha.

A few Emanations actually do possess true shape, typically those who facilitate Imperatives that reflect an overwhelming fascination with Creation as opposed to contempt for it. Such an Emanation wears a consistent identity, as if he were an unshaped himself who had passed through the Gateway of Sundraprisha, and these shaped Emanations often maintain Assumption Charms (but *never* permanent mutations of any sort). Generally, an unshaped's other Emanations are antagonistic toward their shaped brethren who are living avatars of the unshaped's conflicted views on shaped existence. An Emanation, whether shaped or unshaped, is incapable of leaving the freehold that defines the greater unshaped raksha. It calcifies immediately upon doing so, even if it leaves to enter the Wyld.

Each of an unshaped raksha's Graces begin with a rating equal to its corresponding Virtue, and these Virtues also determine the power level of the corresponding Emanations. Other than its Virtues and Graces, an unshaped raksha does not have any of the traits associated with shaped raksha. An unshaped raksha has no body and no Physical Attributes. Since it can act only through its Emanations, it has neither Mental Attributes nor Social Attributes nor any Abilities of its own. If an Emanation is slain by a Creation-born through any means other than attacks that can permanently destroy spirits, it re-forms over the course of one week. If permanently slain through such magics, the unshaped loses that Grace completely and suffers the usual effects of bedlam unless

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the unshaped had more than one Emanation representing that Grace.

Eventually, the unshaped's Heart Emanation can replace a destroyed Grace Emanation through Ecstatic Reproduction Style (see p. 203), and the newly forged Emanation will have the same starting traits as its predecessor. The difficulty for forging a noble suitable for serving as an Emanation is 11. If an unshaped raksha's Heart Emanation is permanently destroyed, the unshaped itself ceases to be, and the freehold dissolves into an empty waypoint (or into an uncapped demesne in Creation).

From a player's perspective, an unshaped is not really a character at all. Rather it is a quasi-sentient location. The "ruler" of this location is the dominant Emanation (or Emanations, if two or more of them rule jointly), which represents the Imperative the unshaped currently considers most important. This ruling Emanation serves as the unshaped's guiding intelligence. An unshaped raksha that is ruled by its Sword Grace may be viewed as a particularly warlike dominion, while one ruled by its Cup Grace might be seen as a less combative and more decadent domain. The ruling Emanation is usually the Heart Emanation, but it may be any Emanation with its associated Grace rated 5 or higher. The ruling Emanation can change over time, either because external events cause the greater unshaped raksha to reprioritize its Imperatives or because one or more of the Emanations themselves make war on the ruling Emanation and usurp its authority. From an external perspective, then, an unshaped raksha's goals and motivations can change either as a result of external stimuli or for internal, seemingly random reasons.

For example, it is said that the unshaped known as Unborn from Blood was once ruled by its Heart Grace, She Who Births Colors, who was content to merely watch Creation from afar, as she represented Unborn from Blood's Imperative of "contemplate the totality of Creation." Yet Unborn from Blood's Sword Grace, Isingwethe, represented the competing Imperative of "undermine the principles of causation that ensure Creation's stability." He chaffed under She Who Births Colors' passive nature and eventually launched a successful war against her Arcane Redoubt, merging it with his Stronghold and enslaving She Who Births Colors as his concubine and advisor. In this way, Unborn from Blood's Sword Emanation achieved dominance over his fellow Emanations, and Unborn from Blood itself moved to a more aggressive posture against Creation.

The Unshaped as a Freehold

To outside observers, an unshaped raksha is best viewed as a mobile, quasi-sentient freehold (see pp. 139-145) ruled by

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a coterie of powerful noble raksha, each of which represents a discrete aspect of the freehold's personality. Most unshaped raksha freeholds possess all the unique properties with which a freehold can be invested: an Arcane Redoubt, a Fountainhead, a Glory, a Stronghold and a Throne Room (see pp. 139-143). Weaker unshaped might lack one or more of these characteristics but will always have an Arcane Redoubt.

Typically, the freehold's Arcane Redoubt is controlled by the raksha's Heart Emanation, its Fountainhead is controlled by the Ring Emanation, its Glory by the Cup Emanation, its Stronghold by the Sword Emanation and its Throne Room by the Staff Emanation. That general rule is not carved in stone, however. The Emanations are individuals and frequently have competing agendas, and it is not uncommon for one Emanation to conquer and subjugate the domain of another for her own usage. Allied Emanations can also swap domains for a time.

The size of the freehold that represents an unshaped raksha defaults to 10 waypoints (5 plus the unshaped raksha's Heart Grace). The unshaped raksha can extend its control over (10 x [the unshaped raksha's Sword Grace]) adjacent waypoints. If the freehold includes a Stronghold, its general can rearrange the waypoint structure of the entire freehold under the normal rules for Strongholds (see p. 142).

Emanation Traits

An unshaped raksha's Emanations are built using the standard character creation rules for noble raksha found in Chapter Three, except as follows. First, each Emanation has a Heart Grace of 4. As with all noble raksha, each Emanation has two feeding Graces, and an Emanation that knows the Charm Gaping Virtue Mouth is presumed to have three feeding Graces. For the unshaped's Virtue Emanations (i.e., the Cup, Ring, Staff and Sword Emanations), the primary feeding Grace *must* be the same as the one for which the noble serves as Emanation. The other feeding Grace can be any of the other three Graces, but the raksha will never invert its feeding Graces—a Cataphract who acts as the Sword Emanation for an unshaped will never become a Strategos. A Heart Emanation can have any feeding Graces and is capable of inversion under appropriate circumstances. Regardless, each Emanation also has an Essence rating equal to the Grace it represents or a rating of 4, whichever is higher. Finally, each Emanation normally begins a significant experience point bonus: 100 experience points for each Emanation of a weak unshaped, 200 for each Emanation of a moderately powerful unshaped, and 300 for each Emanation of a very powerful unshaped. An Emanation's Virtues are capped at the same level as the greater unshaped raksha of which it is a part.

An Emanation has Intimacies as normal for a noble raksha character, but its Motivation is invariably defined by the Imperative associated with the Grace that the raksha represents, and its Intimacies are at least informed by that Imperative. For example, the Golden Mirror is ruled by its Heart Grace, Orchinast, who exists to fulfill the Golden Mirror's Heart Imperative of "destroy the individuality of others." That Imperative also serves as Orchinast's own Motivation. Among her Intimacies is a desire to collect faces. She suffers under a self-imposed geas that compels her to perform any task or answer any question for a visitor who freely and voluntarily offers his face for her collection. In this manner, Orchinast robs intruders of their own individuality by replacing each intruder's face—his defining physical characteristic—with a featureless mask.

Each Emanation rules a particular part of the territory represented by the greater unshaped raksha. The ruling Emanation typically controls both the largest portion of the unshaped's body and also the most interior portion. Any Emanation can rearrange the waypoints under her direct control as a reflexive shaping action, but only the Emanation who rules the Stronghold can rearrange the entirety of an unshaped raksha's body. All Emanations typically have large retinues, and the forces and area under an Emanation's personal dominion might range from the equivalent of a large street gang in a small neighborhood to a mighty nation supported by an army of legions. As is typical for any freehold, the waypoints under an Emanation's control can be stretched to a maximum of 30 miles each in diameter when traversed by Creation-born. There is no limit to the size of a waypoint when there are no Creation-born present to inflict a fixed definition of time and space upon it.

Unshaped as Antagonists

Existing as mobile waypoints, the unshaped float through the ether of the Wyld, going where they wish and doing what they will. Usually, unshaped raksha do not pose much of a threat to Creation or even other Fair Folk within the Wyld. Usually. For every rule, there is an exception, however,

Naming Conventions and the Unshaped

When the Fair Folk are driven to name an unshaped, they often refer to the name for the greater unshaped and the name of its ruling Emanation interchangeably. For example, the City of Formlessness Constrained is currently ruled by its Heart Emanation, Swar, and so, those who speak of it might refer to it as Swar, the City of Formlessness Constrained. This rule is not a hard-and-fast one, but simply a practice of convenience. Names are, after all, a means of imposing identity and shape, and most names applied to unshaped raksha are inventions of shaped raksha who encounter them or of the unshaped's own Emanations. It's not as though the City of Formlessness Constrained is capable of answering to that name or any other except through Swar or another of its subsidiary selves.

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and under some circumstances, an unshaped raksha has the potential to become a serious danger to other Fair Folk or even to entire courts.

Wyld Storms

As an unshaped raksha meanders through the Deep Wyld, the waypoints that make up its territory overlap with those waypoints through which it passes. Most of the time, this overlap presents no danger to raksha who inhabit such waypoints. The natural inertia of an unshaped raksha's course will cause it to avoid occupied waypoints automatically. Unshaped raksha usually dwell on the periphery of those Wyld places that are home to the shaped raksha. Unfortunately, from time to time, a shaped raksha will have the misfortune of drawing an unshaped raksha's attention. For example, any use of the Endless Yawning Void or Sorrowful Firmament Resonance Charms will attract the attention of any nearby unshaped raksha. Also, a raksha who botches a Sword-shaping roll to initiate a quest against an unshaped raksha might so enrage the unshaped one that it pursues her into an occupied waypoint.

When the territory of an unshaped overlaps with an occupied waypoint, the clash of dreams results in what savants call a Wyld storm. Unrestricted possibility rains down on any unfortunate caught within the storm, and chaos lightning strikes at the chains of causality with impunity. Any waypoint caught within the area of a Wyld storm effectively becomes a region of Pure Chaos, even if it was previously considered a part of the Bordermarches. Additionally, all raksha caught within a Wyld storm suffer an external environmental penalty on all shaping actions based on the power level of the unshaped whose presence triggered the storm: a -3 penalty for weak unshaped, a -5 penalty for moderately powerful unshaped, a -7 penalty for very powerful unshaped. If the external penalty reduces a raksha's shaping successes to below zero, the shaping action is automatically considered a botch.

Although a Wyld storm is most dangerous to the waypoints that it occupies, it can also disrupt surrounding waypoints and even Creation itself. Any waypoint adjacent to one that is the site of a Wyld storm sees its own Wyld energies increase dramatically. Surrounding areas of Deep Wyld become Pure Chaos, while the Middlemarches become Deep Wyld, and the Bordermarches become the Middlemarches. If an unshaped enters an occupied waypoint that is part of the Bordermarches (a very rare thing, as unshaped find being so close to Creation to be both unwholesome and damaging), its presence can cause the Wyld to surge out into a 30-mile-deep tidal wave of Chaos that washes over Creation. For the duration of the storm, the affected area of Creation becomes a part of the Bordermarches. As the unshaped moves back away from Creation, the Wyld recedes, leaving behind tainted lands.

Unshaped as Rival Courts

Unshaped who dwell near shaped raksha freeholds often develop antagonistic relationships with them and their inhabitants, although such relationships are limited by the fact that the unshaped can act only through its Emanations, who cannot leave the unshaped's waypoint body. Emanations who possess Charms that allow them to create raksha offspring (such as Ecstatic Reproduction Style and Akshata Sexual Methodology), however, can create true shaped raksha who can enter the Wyld and even Creation at their masters' behest. Many unshaped have politically active Emanations who flood surrounding waypoints with diplomats, traders and spies in hopes of influencing them in some beneficial manner. More diabolical unshaped send their slave raksha out to achieve darker objectives, such as revenge against raksha who angered the unshaped in the course of a questing, punishment of raksha leaders who are insufficiently attentive to whatever goals the unshaped finds compelling, or even intelligence-gathering missions into Creation in hopes of finding the means of its destruction.

When an unshaped raksha acts in this way, its actions can be interpreted through the Mandate of Heaven rules for Dominion Conflict (see the **Exalted Storytellers Companion**, pp. 141–145). Generally, Dominion Conflict is impractical in the Wyld. The boisterous and chaotic tenor of raksha politics (and its attendant shaping actions) is unsuitable for the stately and subtle manipulations of the Mandate of Heaven, although a fairly stable (in terms of material if not political integrity) raksha court might be susceptible to Dominion actions. More commonly, unshaped raksha take Dominion actions against Creation-born territories at the edge of the Wyld to advance some long-term scheme against Creation.

To the extent that it is necessary to define an unshaped raksha's traits for Dominion action purposes, such traits are defined as follows. The unshaped has a Magnitude equal to its Essence, which typically ranges from 4 (for very weak unshaped) to 8 (for the most powerful unshaped who dwell in Pure Chaos). Its Military trait is equal to its Sword Grace. Its Culture is equal to its Cup Grace. Its Government is equal to its Ring Grace. Its Abilities and Virtues are determined by its Magnitude pursuant to the chart on page 134 of the **Exalted Storytellers Companion**. Unshaped dominions begin with five bonus points per dot of Magnitude. These points can be spent pursuant to the chart on page 136 of the **Exalted Storytellers Companion**.

Questing Against the Unshaped

The relationship between the unshaped and their shaped kin is a peculiar one. Most unshaped have a burning hatred for shaped raksha, regardless of whether the raksha was born shaped or else consciously chose to pass through the shinma Nirakara. This hatred exists despite—or possibly because of—the fact that unshaped are in many ways dependent on shaped raksha and even on Creation, though unshaped raksha are loath to ever admit this dependency. As a creature of unfettered chaos,

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unshaped raksha cannot naturally improve themselves in a consistent manner. In the realm of Pure Chaos, an unshaped might be unimaginably powerful one day and a weak stripling the next, since the very idea of classifying one's power and comparing it to that of others requires a shaped perspective. Only through observation of shaped beings in relatively structured circumstances can an unshaped gain a perspective on shaped existence that allows it to evolve coherently without actually assuming a shaped existence itself.

Or to put that into terms that a player can more easily use: The only way an unshaped raksha can gain and spend experience is through interacting with shaped beings (preferably shaped raksha) under controlled circumstances. Raksha refer to these controlled circumstances as *quests*.

Questing is a mutually beneficial activity whereby shaped raksha enter the domain of an unshaped raksha and engage some or all of its Emanations in ritual shaping combat. The benefit of questing for the shaped raksha is that if the quest is successful, the raksha acquires the raw materials for a three-, four- or five-dot adjuration, behemoth, oneiromancy spell or treasure. The benefit for the unshaped, regardless of the success or failure of the shaped raksha's quest, is that the unshaped gains a certain amount of experience to apply to its Emanations, thereby making itself more powerful against future intruders. As a side benefit, if the quest actually *fails*, the unshaped also gains some measure of control over the questing raksha, whether through ravishment, incumbrance or vexation. Such is the risk for shaped raksha who dare to challenge their betters.

The Structure of a Quest

Regardless of the personalities involved, all raksha quests follow the same basic formula. First, the intruding raksha (whether an individual or an entire ring) must issue a challenge. Bound by custom and ancient oaths, the Chaos Lord responds by allowing the challenger into its territory. The challenger must then pass a series of tests, which typically involve shaping battles against the unshaped's Emanations. The number of tests varies according to how many raksha are involved in the quest and how powerful they are. A single noble raksha of moderate power might face as few as two challenges, while a fairly powerful ring of raksha might face seven or more. No unshaped will ever entertain a challenge from a commoner raksha or from a Creation-born (even one armed with a Grace of his own) unless she is part of a ring that includes at least one noble raksha.

The order of tests is flexible, and the challenger should never be entirely sure which test he is currently undergoing. After the last battle, the challenger receives his reward, typically his choice of a powerful adjuration, behemoth, oneiromancy spell or treasure. Losing a test at any point ends the quest for the challenger, resulting in him suffering ravishment, incumbrance or vexation, as appropriate, and then being expelled from the unshaped's territory. A raksha can initiate a quest only once per story.

The Challenge

A quest begins when the challenging raksha enters a waypoint adjacent to one controlled by the unshaped to be challenged. The challenger announces his presence through a Sword-shaping action with a difficulty of 3 to 5, depending on to the reward sought. If the Sword-shaping action is unsuccessful, the unshaped may ignore the challenge or, on a botch, attack the challenger. If the roll simply fails, the challenger may still attempt to enter the territory of the unshaped… if he's feeling suicidal. Outside the formal context of questing, unshaped waypoints represent extremely hazardous territories for even experienced nobles, and shaped raksha captured by an Emanation have none of the protections guaranteed by the protocols of the quest.

If the Sword-shaping roll succeeds, the challenger may enter the unshaped waypoint, bypassing any defenses the unshaped has against intrusion. From there, he passes through multiple waypoints on a clearly defined path that eventually leads to the unshaped raksha's Heart Emanation. Along the way, the challenger must face a variable number of tests, each of which culminates in a shaping battle against one or more Emanations. These tests are narrative in character and scope, and the challenger must overcome physical obstacles, defeat terrible villains or rescue virtuous innocents as the overarching narrative of the quest dictates. Usually, each test will end with the narrative defeat of the Emanation associated with that test. If the total number of tests exceeds five, however, one or more Emanations might "dramatically escape to fight another day" after being defeated, only to return for subsequent tests fully refreshed and eager for some contrived revenge.

Cup Tests

A Cup test is typically associated with the concept of Desire and with the Virtue of Compassion. Such a test might require the raksha to steal some valuable treasure, to free a fair princess cruelly locked away by a horrible monster, to resist seduction at the hands of a beautiful but cruel succubus, to rescue an ally who has somehow appeared in the waypoint in the hands of a dire enemy or simply to show affection for someone truly hideous and see their inner beauty.

Within the context of a Cup test, the unshaped's Cup Emanation most often manifests as some type of victim to be rescued—a princess locked up in a tall tower or chained to a rock as a sacrifice for an advancing behemoth. In such tales, the Emanation (upon being defeated in shaping combat) might thank her rescuer with a kiss before turning into a swan and flying away. If there are more Cup tests to come, she might be kidnapped again and spirited away to some other waypoint to be rescued again later. Sword Emanations frequently "guest star" in Cup tests of this nature.

In other narratives, the Cup Emanation might be a temptress who seeks to pull the challenger away from the path of virtue into some horrible trap or a seemingly friendly ally who is secretly plotting against the challenger. In such tales,

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the exposed Emanation must be defeated in some idiomatically appropriate manner, which could involve killing her, depending on the narrative structure of the test. (Ruthlessly cutting down a seductress just for trying to get into the challenger's pants might seem a little overkill, after all.)

If the challenger loses a Cup test at any stage of the quest, the quest ends with the challenger being ravished appropriately and expelled from the unshaped's territory.

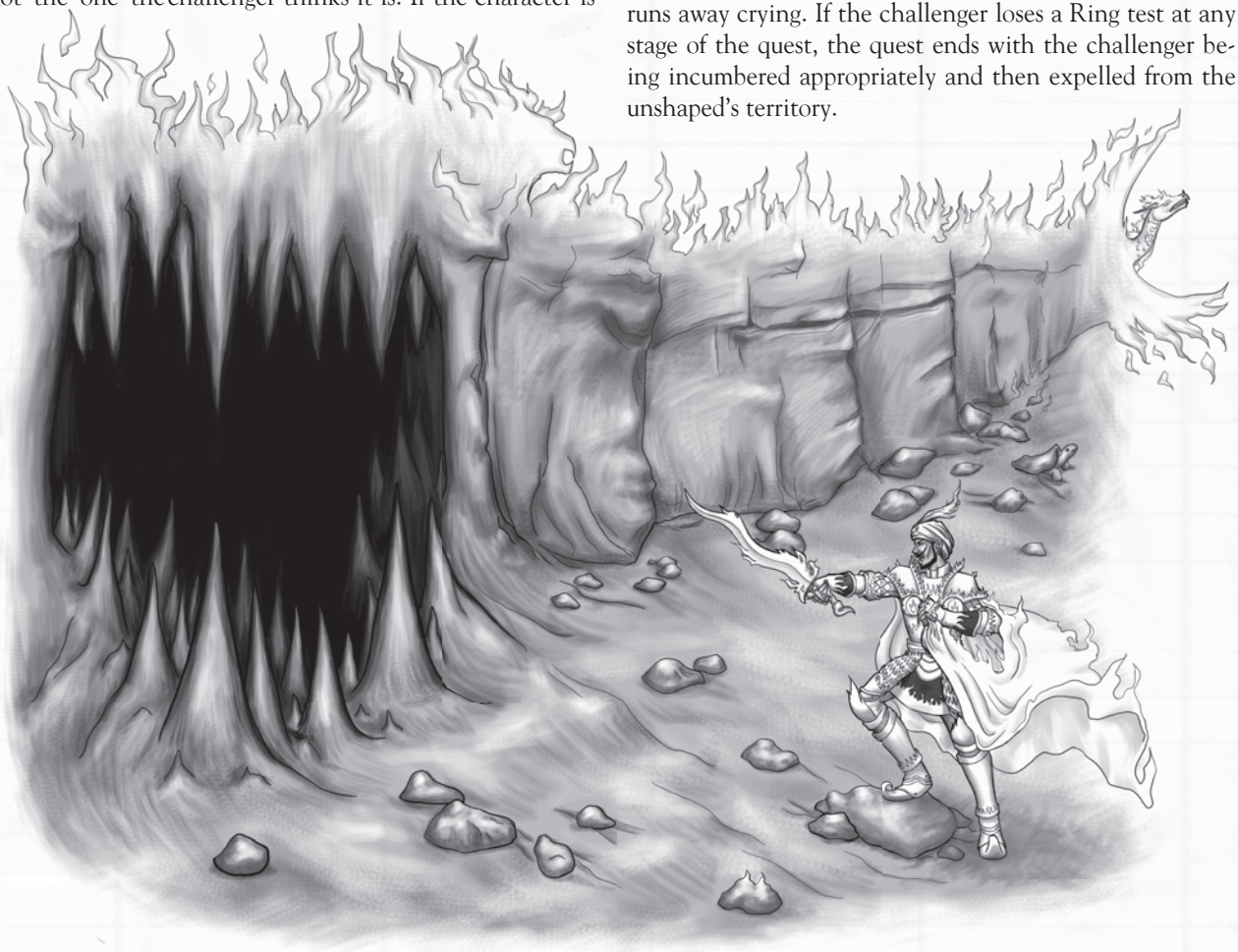
Ring Tests

A Ring test is typically associated with the concept of Purpose and with the Virtue of Temperance. Such a test might require the raksha to either resist some powerful temptation or to give into it in a suitably epic way (such as an eating contest against fire, for example). Other tests might seek to undermine the challenger's Purpose in some way, such as by forcing a Sword-based character to win a challenge non-violently or requiring a Cup-based character to overcome an obstacle of a non-social nature.

Within the context of a Ring test, the unshaped's Ring Emanation most often manifests as some type of trickster character who seeks to subvert the challenger's Temperance and Purpose by provoking her to anger or appealing to her vices. Sometimes, however, the vice to be resisted is not the one the challenger thinks it is. If the character is experienced at questing against the unshaped and tries to simply avoid anyone who looks like he might be a Ring Emanation, the Emanation might change tactics and offer up tricks that actually facilitate the quest (such as offering the raksha a jug of wine that, when drunk, shrinks her down in size so that she can get through a tiny crack in a nearby wall).

In other Ring tests, the Ring Emanation might be a more direct character, such as a stern puritan who seeks to physically punish the challenger for some perceived (or genuine) character flaw. For example, if the challenger is a Sword-based raksha who typically relies on violence as a first response, the Ring Emanation might be a powerful Cataphract who cannot be defeated in battle but who is incapable of ever standing against one who preaches non-violence. Similarly, characters who rely too heavily on personal artifacts or favored shaping weapons might find themselves in a waypoint incumbered so that anyone who enters it is compelled to strip nude as a pre-condition to any fight.

It is rarely necessary to kill a Ring Emanation in the course of a Ring test. Since Ring Emanations typically play the role of trickster characters, all the challenger needs to do is outwit or embarrass the Emanation somehow as a consequence of the shaping battle, and the Emanation runs away crying. If the challenger loses a Ring test at any stage of the quest, the quest ends with the challenger being incumbered appropriately and then expelled from the unshaped's territory.



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Staff Tests

Staff tests are associated with the concept of Interaction and with the Virtue of Conviction. As one might expect, Staff tests involve elements of the other three tests in a social milieu in which the narrative elements of desire and conflict combine to divert the challenger from the purpose of her quest. A Staff test might superficially resemble a Cup, Ring or Sword test, but victory does not simply come from rescuing a single innocent victim, resisting the temptations of a trickster or besting a single villain. Rather, the victim, the trickster and the villain conspire to snare the challenger in a story that leads him away from his true goal—the unshaped's Heart Grace.

Staff tests are the type most likely to involve multiple Emanations working in tandem. The Staff Emanation might serve as victim, villain, trickster or some other dramatic role, and he can call upon the services of any other Emanation to act as needed. The trick in a Staff test is that the goal is not really to defeat the Staff Emanation or any other Emanation involved. Instead, it is to realize that, unlike the other tests, the victory condition is simply not what it appears to be at first blush.

For example, the challenger might begin a Staff test with a hideous crone informing him that he must rescue a princess before he can leave this waypoint. As he explores the waypoint, he hears the cries of a beautiful maiden calling for help from a tall tower guarded by an ogre. After slaying the ogre and penetrating the tower, he learns that the beautiful maiden is actually a mere strumpet who seeks to seduce and betray him. The actual princess he must rescue is the crone, who was cursed by ugliness and decrepitude, and he must figure out how to restore her true form in order to be victorious.

If the challenger loses a Staff test at any stage of the quest, the quest ends with the challenger being ravished, incumbered or vexed as the Emanation wishes, then expelled from the unshaped's territory.

Sword Tests

Unsurprisingly, Sword tests are usually the most direct and the most violent of questing tests. A Sword test is typically associated with the concept of Conflict and with the Virtue of Valor. More often than not, these tests are simply straightforward fights against some great monster or mighty warrior. Somewhat less commonly, the narrative structure of the quest might require the challenger to find the leader of a mighty army and either call her out for one-on-one combat or assassinate her in her sleep within the heart of the army's encampment. Occasionally, a Sword test will not include any concrete "villain" at all but will instead pit the challenger against deadly environmental effects or require her to overcome her fears in some manner.

Within the context of a Sword test, the unshaped's Sword Emanation almost always manifests as the villain of the narrative, even if just a rampaging monster. Sometimes, most often in the case of unshaped with a particularly visceral hatred of shaped raksha, the Sword Emanation will not assume physicality, but will instead attack the challenger as a deadly storm, a searing desert heat, an earthquake or some comparable disaster. When the Sword Emanation manifests as a villain or monster, the test usually ends with the challenger killing him. Defeating an environmental condition is somewhat more challenging but usually involves surviving the condition through some suitably impressive or dramatic means, at which point the condition itself ends.

If the challenger loses a Sword test at any stage of the quest, the quest ends with the challenger being vexed appropriately and expelled from the unshaped's territory.

The Reward

Upon completing the final test, whatever it is, the challenger soon finds her way to the Arcane Redoubt at the core of the unshaped and encounters the Heart Emanation that dwells there. The victorious raksha must then make a successful shaping attack against the Heart Emanation. The Heart Emanation can defend itself normally but cannot initiate a shaping attack of any kind against the challenger *unless* the challenger's shaping attack botches. If the attack merely fails, the challenger can continue to attack as long as she is able.

If the challenger succeeds in ravishing, incumbering, snaring or vexing an unshaped raksha's Heart Emanation, she can demand that it yield to her a three-dot oneiromantic spell, adjuration, treasure or behemoth, as appropriate. Alternatively, the challenger can demand that the Heart Emanation improve a three-dot (or higher) artifact she already possesses by one dot. For example, if the challenger already possesses an anugraha oath (Artifact •••), he can demand that the Heart Emanation augment it into a tirobhava oath (Artifact ••••). Only quests against the most powerful and dangerous unshaped have any chance of raising a five-dot artifact to the N/A level.

Special Rules for Questing

Players use the normal shaping battle rules to resolve the mechanical aspects of questing tests. As a result, a challenger can reduce any of an Emanation's Grace health tracks to zero. Doing so, however, does not inflict any negative consequences on the Emanation herself. She might be forced to quit the field, whether for the duration of the quest or simply until needed again in some other narrative capacity, but a Virtue Emanation cannot be ravished, incumbered, snared or vexed. This is because, appearances to the contrary, an Emanation is not truly a raksha at all, but is simply the projection of the unshaped raksha's inner nature. As such, it is possible to affect Emanations at all only because of the willingness of the unshaped to submit to the rules of the quest.

If the challenger loses any of the tests that are part of his quest, he is subject to ravishment, incumbrance or vexation, whichever is appropriate to the Emanation that

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defeated him (or any of the three in the case of a Staff Emanation). Psychological problems caused by ravishment or incumbrance typically cause the challenger to act in accordance with the Imperative the Emanation represents. For example, Nine Rabbits Slayer, the Ring Emanation of the Golden Mirror, is obsessed with understanding the concept of love. Accordingly, he usually incumbers those he defeats in questing battles to explore some aspect of that emotion. Examples might include: "You must try to seduce every innocent you encounter," or, "You must seek the affections of someone you think will never love you." Swar's Imperative of escaping Creation so dominates the City of Formlessness Constrained that all of the City's Emanations seek to bind challengers into the unshaped service to use as agents in Creation. Unlike the other Emanations, Sword Emanations usually seek to vex away Graces to forge into artifacts for the Emanations to use in future quests or else to vex away whichever of the intruder's possessions might be most useful to the Emanation's Imperative.

Regardless of the quest's outcome, the unshaped raksha gains a powerful benefit in the form of new experience. For every mote of Essence spent by a Fair Folk within an unshaped waypoint as part of a quest, the unshaped gains one experience point. The unshaped also gains three experience points for every point of gossamer spent. This accumulated experience is then divided equally among the Chaos Lord's Emanations. The unshaped also gains the material benefits of any artifacts or Graces vexed away from raksha who fail in their quests, to say nothing of failed challengers enslaved through ravishment or incumbrance.

In addition to the potential rewards



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for all parties, questing also carries certain rules of engagement. First, if an unshaped permits another raksha to enter its territory on a quest, it can never kill her outright and can never vex away her Heart Grace or more than two Graces of any sort. Second, the unshaped cannot cheat. Each test must have a clearly defined "victory condition," and if the challenger meets that condition, she passes the test, even if the challenger cleverly satisfies the condition of the test in a way that the unshaped did not anticipate. Similarly, the number of tests cannot change after the quest has begun, nor can the unshaped change the nature of the tests once they are set up (although it need not let the challenger know what the tests are).

Multiple Challengers

The challenger may bring assistance with her on a quest. In fact, an entire ring can participate in a quest. Within each test, however, one and only one raksha must be designated as the quest-leader, and only that raksha's attacks can damage the health tracks of the Emanation responsible for that particular test. Allied raksha can engage in shaping actions freely, and they can initiate shaping attacks against other Emanations who assist in the test, but the Emanation actively overseeing each test can be injured only by the raksha who is actually being tested at that time. The Emanation can ravish, incumber or vex other raksha as he wishes, but such effects (and the shaping damage that causes them) fade instantly if the quest-leader for that test defeats him. If he defeats the quest-leader, however, any damage or shaping effects he inflicts on her or any other raksha present are applied normally.

The preceding rules apply only to the actual tests. The rules for the final shaping attack against the Heart Emanation function slightly differently. Any or all of the raksha who participate in the quest can make attacks against the Heart Emanation. The Heart Emanation can defend himself, but cannot make any attacks unless one or more of his attackers botches.

Recovery Time

The act of providing a reward for a victorious challenger weakens the unshaped considerably. For a period of time after the conclusion of the quest, the Grace used to provide the reward is reduced by one point, and the Emanation associated with that Grace loses one dot from *each* of his Virtues, Graces and Essence. This period of debility lasts for one month in the Bordermarches, one week in the Middlemarches and one day in the Deep Wyld. In the realm of Pure Chaos, there is no period of debility at all. Yet, for unshaped who reside within freeholds in Creation, this damage does not heal *at all*. A successful questing essentially mutilates the unshaped until it can return to the Wyld. Unshaped in this dire circumstance, such as the City of Formlessness Constrained, try to avoid accepting quests and usually try to conceal even their existence from shaped raksha, lest they be strip-mined of all their power by their rapacious kin.

Lords of Chaos

The unshaped raksha are a diverse lot, as one might expect from creatures of impossibility incarnate. That said, here are four unshaped raksha representing a cross section of the general kinds of unshaped a Fair Folk character might expect to encounter.

The Golden Mirror

The Golden Mirror dwells in the deeps beyond the Elemental Pole of Fire, although it occasionally wanders as far as the Middlemarches. Once, long ago, the Golden Mirror was mortal enemy of the Duke of Mirrors, and when he disappeared during the First Balorian Crusade, the Golden Mirror wept bitter tears of molten gold and liquefied baby's breath. Its heart broken (metaphorically) by the loss of one it hated so fiercely, the unshaped swore to dedicate its existence to preserving the Duke's loving memory by cruelly destroying everything he cared about. Since then, the Golden Mirror has watched Creation intently, and it watches still, hating everything about Creation that the Duke loved, and loving everything about Creation that might have played a part in the Duke's disappearance.

Indefatigable Wanderer—Way Emanation

Imperative: To set all Creation-born on the path to Pure Chaos

The youngest of the Golden Mirror's Emanations, Indefatigable Wanderer was forged shortly before the Balorian Crusade and charged with plotting the unshaped raksha's path through Creation. Indefatigable Wanderer sent out scores of raksha offspring to lay the groundwork for a breakthrough that would allow the Golden Mirror to manifest within Creation as a desert of burning sands that would have encompassed the entire Blessed Isle. Before this grand scheme could be enacted, however, the Scarlet Empress turned the Realm Defense Grid against the crusaders and drove them from Creation.

Alone among the Golden Mirror's Emanations, Indefatigable Wanderer does not hate the Creation-born, but pities them. This, of course, makes him even more dangerous to Creation-born who cross his path, for he considers it an act of charity and mercy to lead any Creation-born he can into the depths of the Wyld to become one with it. Among Indefatigable Wanderer's retinue are a number of Creation-born mortals so hopelessly mutated by their time in the Wyld that they can no longer survive in Creation. Such is the blessing that Indefatigable Wanderer would bestow upon all Creation-born if he could.

Indefatigable Wanderer rarely maintains any stable appearance. Usually, he immerses himself within the landscape architecture of the waypoints he controls, rearranging the layout so as to make it as confusing as possible to visitors. He sometimes manifests instead as an enormous garden maze or subterranean labyrinth. If motivated to interact directly with visitors, he often shapes himself into a roughly humanoid form resembling a puzzle or hand-drawn maze brought to life.

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The Way Grace

The shinma Nirupadhika represents space and location. It is omnipresent and yet cannot be found anywhere. In this way does everything else in the Wyld have a singular place to be. Simultaneously compressed to nothingness and stretched to infinity, Nirupadhika makes travel within the Wyld a possibility.

Nirupadhika represents one of the other shinma a raksha might tame, in the process forging a new type of Grace and developing both a new species of shaping action and combat and a new cascade of Charms to accompany them. In this case, Way-shaping actions or attacks either facilitate or inhibit travel. A character whose Way health track has been reduced to zero by a Way-shaping attack is said to be *bewildered*. Raksha without a Way Grace are treated as Creation-born by such attacks.

Once the raksha has successfully bewildered his victim, he may name one location that the victim is thereafter incapable of ever finding on her own. Attempts to navigate to this location under her own power automatically botch. Furthermore, even if the victim is led to the named location, she suffers feelings of confusion and dread while in that location, inflicting an internal penalty on all of her actions while within the named location equal to the Essence of the raksha who bewildered her. Bewildered beings recover in a manner similar to ravishment (i.e., exclusively through magic). The location a victim may be barred from seeking within the Wyld can be as big as 100 waypoints or the number of waypoints under control of a single raksha, whichever is smaller. In Creation, the location can be as large as a small country with an area equal to (the raksha's Way Grace x 100) square miles. The raksha can also bewilder a waypoint. Anyone who enters a bewildered waypoint suffers an internal penalty equal to the raksha's Essence on all shaping rolls to attempt to leave that waypoint. The time it takes to move from that waypoint to any other is doubled.

Charms of the Way either modify Way-shaping actions or attacks or else grant the raksha special travel-related powers. Examples of Charms of the Way are found beginning on page 77. The commoner caste associated with the Way Grace is the Guide. The options for different noble castes who possess a Way Grace as a feeding Grace are beyond the scope of this chapter, but Indefatigable Wanderer is a Vagabond, with an Ascendant Way and a shadowed Cup. The Guide Abilities are: Integrity, Linguistics, Sail, Stealth and Survival. Way raw damage is based on (Wits + weapon bonus). Way DV is based on (Dexterity + highest Way Ability + weapon bonus) divided by 2. Way soak is (Wits + Willpower). Way-shaping uses the following shaping weapons: Entanglement, Extras, Hunting Clans, Milieu, Personal Prowess.

Koleromense, the Last Mirage—Cup Emanation

Imperative: To drain Creation of its waters and thus its life

Koleromense is an Ornamental Raksha consumed with ennui and a sense of utter futility. She was forged into existence after the death of the Golden Mirror's prior Cup Emanation in the aftermath of the Balorian Crusade—he was drowned in a torrential flood unleashed by the Scarlet Empress when she repelled that corner of the Golden Mirror back into the Wyld. Koleromense was born in the aftermath of the Golden Mirror's momentary fear of death through drowning, and she still retains a horror of water to this day. Her hydrophobia is made worse by her acceptance of the reality that there is simply too much water in Creation to ever dry away. Even if such a feat were within a single unshaped's powers, there are too many watery unshaped in the West who would stand against her if she tried it.

Unable to abandon her Imperative or to even abandon her Cup in favor of her Ring (which would at least let her accept her fate with some equanimity), Koleromense wanders the deserts of the Golden Mirror listlessly in the form of a drifting illusory oasis that lures quest-seekers in to their dooms. Even in this, she is too blasé to succeed most of the time. When she does, she ravishes her victims to fear or hate water.

The Temple of Searing Heat—Staff Emanation

Imperative: To spread worship of the Wyld among the pagan Creation-born

The Temple of Searing Heat is an Imperial Raksha who usually manifests as a golden temple in the desert full of frenzied, nearly dehydrated worshipers devoted to the Golden Mirror and to the Wyld itself. The Temple is full of blasphemous idols in impossible shapes that invoke first horror and then a mad devotion in those who see them. At one point the Temple had a close alliance with Merik the Crimson Lion, before the Sword Emanation was seduced away by the feckless Nine Rabbits Slayer. The Temple hates Nine Rabbits Slayer for his inconstant nature and with the capricious manner in which he experiments even with his fellow Emanations. Secretly, the Temple fears the Eshu, and worries that she may be the next to fall before his obsession with love. The Temple of Searing Heat has no interest in love, only slavish devotion.

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Merik the Crimson Lion—Sword Emanation

Imperative: To love all that exists, and in doing so, conquer it

Merik the Crimson Lion is a powerful Eshu who acts as a knight-errant in the service of Orchinast. He loves the Golden Mirror's Heart Grace and seeks nothing more than to win her love in return. Only after he has done so will the Crimson Lion devour her, for it is his belief that love is merely another form of ritual combat, albeit a highly untraditional one. Merik's love for Orchinast began as an obligation—Nine Rabbits Slayer impetuously incumbered Merik to act as Orchinast's lover centuries ago as a joke. Since then, Merik has become enamored of the idea of experiencing unrequited love, and he shaped himself to permanently feel that emotion toward the aloof Heart Emanation. In this way, the Golden Mirror wrought a change in itself and in its own views on conflict and conquest. Before that moment, love played no role in Merik's Imperative.

Merik usually manifests in a humanoid form but has no favored appearance. Regardless of the form he wears, a flaming lion will somehow be evident—as a *mon* on his armor, as a behemoth weapon or simply as a background feature. Sometimes, Merik will actually assume the form of a flaming lion, but he generally prefers a consistently humanoid form. Proud, haughty and perhaps a bit thick, Merik is that aspect of the Golden Mirror most likely to take direct action, particularly in the form of grand but pointless romantic gestures that are as likely to undermine his plans as advance them.

Nine Rabbits Slayer—Ring Emanation

Imperative: To understand love and master its use as a weapon

A precocious and somewhat bawdy Artisan who sees romance as his medium and emotional connections as his canvas, Nine Rabbits Slayer is fascinated, if not obsessed, with the idea of love—simultaneously a powerful source of inspiration for some Creation-born and a crippling weakness in so many others. Convinced that mortal love can be a powerful weapon in the Fair Folk arsenal, Nine Rabbits Slayer has set himself to comprehending it in every form it takes. Most commonly, he experiments on the Creation-born, sending out minions and offspring to capture mortal barbarians in the South and drag them back to the Golden Mirror, where they spend years trapped in bizarre quasi-romantic melodramas for Nine Rabbits Slayer's edification. The Artisan is not above practicing on his own kind, however. It was he who first incumbered Merik the Crimson Lion to act as a love-struck suitor for Orchinast, an experience Merik enjoyed so much that he worked a permanent change in his own nature and that of the greater unshaped.

Nine Rabbits Slayer has many shaped raksha offspring that he has sent out into Creation with directions to experience love in all its forms, from the sublime to the debased. He often chooses to psychically experience their lives with his Reflected Glory Charm. When Nine Rabbits Slayer incumbers others, he most commonly does so to manipulate their ability to experience love in some manner. He has a number of oneiromantic spells forged from stolen Cup Graces, many of which have effects designed to engender unrequited love in others.

Nine Rabbits Slayer usually manifests to others in a form calculated to appeal to the sexual or romantic ideals of one or more of his visitors. He often favors the shape of a virile hunter (or huntress) whose identity is suggested by the presence of nine rabbit pelts attached to his (or her) belt. When he adopts an abstract form, he takes the shape of an extremely romantic location, such as an idyllic grotto or rose garden. He has even been known to shape himself into a bordello full of his offspring and minions shaped into the form of concubines and catamites.

Orchinast—Heart Emanation and Ruling Emanation

Imperative: To destroy the concept of individuality

Orchinast is the guiding intelligence of the Golden Mirror, and she rules it completely. Her dominance is due in large part to the fact that the other four Emanations are all in love with her, though that love takes a different and unpredictable form for each of them. Some raksha who have studied the Golden Mirror believe that Orchinast was once the unshaped's Cup Emanation who somehow supplanted and devoured the prior Heart Emanation. Although this theory has no concrete proof supporting it, Orchinast is thought to be a Luminary and is known to rely heavily on Cup-shaping when she does battle with others.

Orchinast most commonly shapes herself into a perfect copy of the person with whom she interacts, save that the body is nude, female and made of golden fire. In fact, it is said that she *must* do so when interacting with others through some geas inflicted on her at some point in her past. First-hand information on Orchinast is frustratingly sparse, mainly because those who meet her rarely escape with their communicative abilities intact. Secondhand information mainly comes from her fellow Emanations, and much of it is contradictory. Merik the Crimson Lion says that she assumes the appearance of her visitors so that they are not broken by the power of her beauty. Nine Rabbits Slayer mocks her reflective nature, saying that she lacks both a true identity of her own and the self-assurance to forge one for herself. For this same reason, she is obsessed with bartering for the identities of others.

Orchinast labors under a curse, possibly self-imposed, which compels her to answer one question for anyone willing to voluntarily sacrifice his own face. Against anyone who freely agrees to such a bargain, Orchinast can make a Staff-shaping action that permanently strips away the other's face, replacing it with a featureless mask. If the bargain is entered into freely (truly freely—no magical coercion allowed), the bargainer permanently loses his sight, his sense of smell and taste, and his speech. Yet he gains the ability to "see

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without eyes" through a form of echolocation. More importantly, he no longer needs to eat, drink or even breathe. The bargainer also suffers a -5 penalty on all social rolls that turn on facial appearance and automatically fails all social rolls that turn on his verbal communication skills.

Raksha can accede to this bargain, and while they retain the ability to shape their own forms, no such raksha can ever shape himself into a form with recognizable facial features or one capable of speech. Creation-born are susceptible to this power as well. As long as he consents, a Creation-born's natural Glamour Resistance will not protect him from having his face stripped away.

In exchange for adding a face to her collection, Orchinast is bound to answer any one question put to her by the bargainer. Her knowledge is expansive. Orchinast has a nearly boundless knowledge of the Wyld, and her knowledge of Creation, formed through millennia of observation and thousands of raksha spies, is nearly as great. Her proximity to the Elemental Pole of Fire and her attunement to it make her aware of anything that happens in Creation if a fire of any size is nearby. It is well known that Orchinast has sent her offspring to act as envoys to raksha courts across the South. What is not commonly known is just how numerous and far-flung her offspring are. An agent of Orchinast lurks in nearly every freehold in Creation or the Wyld, most of whom are not even consciously aware of their loyalty to the unshaped.

Salt That Cuts

Far away in the West, past the point where sea and sky become one, roams the unshaped known as Salt That Cuts. Only the most clever or reckless raksha quest against Salt That Cuts, as its name is well chosen. It is part of the nature of this Chaos Lord that the smoother a surface is, the deeper it cuts, and few things are as still and flat as the ocean's surface past the boundaries of Creation. Water cuts sharper than the keenest blade, and every other flat surface cuts just as deeply. Unusually for an unshaped, Salt That Cuts has no single ruling Emanation. Long ago, the unshaped's five Emanations, united in their hatred of Creation, swore powerful oaths of fellowship consecrated by 10 oath-children, collectively known as the Ten Ubiquitous Blades. While these oath-children endure, the five Emanations remain unified in an alliance called the Blood-Spilling Covenant. How unfortunate that one of them has fled the domain of the Salt That Cuts to forge her own destiny in Creation.

Exquisite Laceration—Cup Emanation

Imperative: To cut out the heart of Creation

Exquisite Laceration is not merely the Cup Emanation of Salt That Cuts, it is also the source of the unshaped's most defining characteristic—its razor-sharp watery

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surface. The strange property of Salt That Cut's domain, which permits dull and yielding surfaces to cut like adamant, is the result of Exquisite Laceration's constant shaping efforts designed to make the unshaped as inhospitable as possible. Exquisite Laceration hates all Creation-born and hates shaped raksha nearly as much. Consequently, it constantly strives to make the unshaped's environments as painful as possible for all such intruders.

The use of the word "it" in describing this Emanation is deliberate—Exquisite Laceration rejects gender as one of Creation's most hateful limitations and will never assume a gendered or even recognizably humanoid form under any circumstances. Most commonly, the Eshu is recognizable as a region within Salt That Cuts where the seas look like liquid moonsilver and the salt air is seasoned with the coppery scent of blood. Occasionally, it instead manifests as a torrential rainstorm whose every droplet is a stiletto blade.

When any shaped being enters its territories, Exquisite Laceration generally seeks to ravish him in a manner calculated to make the intruder even more vulnerable to Salt That Cuts' painful environment. It ravishes the victim's Conviction to make him unable to bear the sight of beings in pain, his Temperance to make him unable to resist despair and his Valor to make him fear the slicing waters that are everywhere in this domain.

Exquisite Laceration has a multitude of minions in its service—principally pelagothropes and blood elementals—but it has no children other than the four oath-children it helped sire as part of the Blood-Spilling Covenant.

Adrigal, the Duchess of Tides—Ring Emanation

Imperative: To guide the path of Salt That Cuts through the deepest parts of the Wyld

The Duchess of Tides is this unshaped's Ring Emanation and the keeper of its Fountainhead. She regulates the passage of waters within the territories of the unshaped, and the other Emanations and indigenous raksha rely on her shapings to travel easily from waypoint to waypoint. Because of Adrigal, Salt That Cuts is truly self-aware in its own right instead of merely acting through the awareness of its subsidiary selves. That said, the intellect created through the unshaped's Fountainhead is subservient to Adrigal and the other Emanations.

The Duchess most commonly manifests as a series of rolling tides or crashing waves in which a woman's face can be seen. Sometimes, she appears in rainstorms, or rather, does not appear—her silhouette appears as a human-shaped hole in the rain, as if the rain were bouncing off an invisible woman. Most commonly, Adrigal incumbers intruding Fair Folk to serve Salt That Cuts in some way. If any Creation-born falls into her clutches, she will instead incumber him to pursue some extremely dangerous task. Most commonly, she will incumber such an intruder to pass through Exquisite Laceration's territories in such a way that the intruder is more vulnerable to the Cup Emanation's slicing environment.

Currently, this Panjandrum conceals a secret that might seriously endanger her position among the other Emanations. Sagacious Embryonic Wanderer, the unshaped raksha's Staff Emanation, has sent their oath-child, Judge Nehemeth, into the Middlemarches where, through her powerful birthright, she has become the ruler of the Pearl Court. After all these centuries, Adrigal still does not know why Sagacious Embryonic Wanderer has done this, but she believes that the Blood-Spilling Covenant will shatter if news of his actions reaches the other Emanations. For centuries now, she has concealed the truth of the situation with a minion she has forged to look like Judge Nehemeth. She knows that the other Emanations will discover the truth eventually and fears their reaction.

Sagacious Embryonic Wanderer—Staff Emanation

Imperative: To extend the oceans of the Wyld into Creation's territories

The Courtier Sagacious Embryonic Wanderer is this unshaped's Staff Emanation and the vizier of its Throne Room. Although the Blood-Spilling Covenant demands that the five Emanations share equal authority, Sagacious Embryonic Wanderer is perhaps the first among equals. The wisest and most cunning of the Emanations, the Wanderer represents the part of Salt That Cuts that most directly conspires against Creation. Unfortunately, his stratagems are too indirect for the tastes of the unshaped's Cup, Sword and even Heart Emanations. For example, he has given one of his oath-children, Judge Nehemeth, ownership of all of her Graces and sent her out (in a shaped form, no less) into the Bordermarches to assemble a court to use as a future cat's-paw against Creation. Any of those three actions violates the precepts of the Blood-Spilling Covenant. All three of them will shatter the covenant and most likely lead to either Exquisite Laceration or Crushing Depths attempting a coup against the rest of the covenant.

Sagacious Embryonic Wanderer generally manifests in a most disturbing form—as a rainstorm of tiny, male embryos falling from the heavens onto the heads of those who intrude into his domain. When he wishes to communicate, the falling babes avoid the intruder. Instead, they pool on the ground or waters at the intruder's feet and speak in unison the words of the Wanderer. When the Wanderer snares his enemies, he is equally as likely to ravish, incumber or vex them on subsequent attacks. Pragmatic and adaptive, the Wanderer varies his combat strategies according to what best advances his long-term objectives.

Simbora, the Golden Trident—Sword Emanation

Imperative: To be the deadliest thing in all the seas

Simbora, also called the Golden Trident, is the only one of the unshaped raksha's Emanations to wear a consistent (though still unshaped) form. The Cataphract most commonly

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appears as an orichalcum siaka-man, but occasionally, he wears the form of a golden shark, a handsome warrior in a stylish naval uniform or simply as the weapon that bears his name—a golden trident capable of moving and striking under its own power. Simbora very rarely assumes an abstract or immaterial form, as he enjoys interacting socially with those he seeks to kill.

Simbora represents the reality that the sea is a killer. Within the context of the unshaped's psyche, the Cataphract also represents the Chaos Lord's awareness of its own lethality and brutality. Simbora enjoys combat and killing and seeks to demonstrate that nothing in all the seas of the Wyld can stand before his trident. Needless to say, it is difficult for Simbora to prove his superiority over the sea creatures of Creation since he cannot leave the territories of Salt That Cuts. Therefore, the Golden Trident will support nearly any stratagem that stands a chance of extending the Wyld's reach into the Western Ocean. Although unaware of Sagacious Embryonic Wanderer's machinations within the Pearl Court, Simbora likely would not care overmuch *unless* Exquisite Laceration or Crushing Depths offered to move Salt That Cuts into a more aggressive posture against Creation in exchange for his support against the Wanderer.

In shaping combat, Simbora usually vexes away his enemy's Sword Grace, behemoths and then martial weapons. The latter two he mainly collects for sentimental reasons. He normally re-forges captured Sword Graces into customized behemoths, which he then sends into Creation to look for challengers worthy of him. These behemoth servants seek out worthy combatants, engage them and then attempt to lead them back to Salt That Cuts to fight Simbora. Simbora currently has agents all across the Western Ocean seeking information on the Lunar Leviathan, whom the Golden Trident thinks might be his most glorious challenge of all.

Crushing Depths—Heart Emanation

Imperative: To sink all that is beneath her waves

The Heart Emanation of Salt That Cuts is the most difficult for Creation-born to perceive (should one be so unfortunate as to enter her domain), for by the time he perceives her at all, it is usually far too late to survive her embrace. Crushing Depths, as her name implies, manifests as a crushing pressure capable of slaying all but the hardiest of Exalted, as if the Creation-born were trapped thousands of feet below the ocean's surface. Like Exquisite Laceration, Crushing Depths hates shaped beings. Like Simbora, she is haughty and jealous toward those who defy her obvious superiority. Unlike them both, her hatred toward her fellow raksha is as great as her hatred of the Creation-born. The goal of Crushing Depths is to flood not just all of Creation but all of the Wyld as well, crushing all that is within her cold embrace and subsuming it all into an ocean of infinite depths, lightless and lifeless save for that which Crushing Depths deems worthy to swim through her territories.

This was not always the goal of Crushing Depths. Before the Blood-Spilling Covenant, she was a different creature, one that was inimical to shaped existence but not nearly so hostile to her fellow raksha. Crushing Depths readily agreed to the covenant, believing along with her fellow Emanations that unity would only strengthen the unshaped raksha they jointly serve. She does not understand why actually joining this covenant and abandoning her own sense of initiative to the will of the group should have affected her so deeply. She does not understand why joining the covenant should drive her mad. She only knows that it has. And while madness is not necessarily looked upon unfavorably by the Fair Folk, most insane raksha do not seek to devour the entirety of the Wyld along with Creation. Although Crushing Depths would never admit it, her current Imperative has much in common with the schemes that led the Primordials to forge Creation in the first place.

The Whisperer in the Leaves

If an explorer continues east past the Elemental Pole of Wood for about three and one-half adventures and then turns south for six or seven nightmares, he will hear soft murmurs in the jungle foliage around him. Look though he might for hidden speakers, he'll never find them, for in this place, it is the leaves and branches of the jungle itself that speak terrible truths and exquisite lies. This jungle is the domain of the Whisperer in the Leaves. Dominated by Semiramis, She Who Emerged from the Lost Seed, this unshaped is fairly benign in its dealings with both questing Fair Folk and with Creation. For the most part, the Whisperer's Emanations all respect and cherish life, include the strange and static life of the Creation-born. They just wish to introduce a bit more diversity into Creation in the form of a population explosion of Wyld mutants. The ultimate goal of the Whisperer is not to destroy the Creation-born, but merely to see that all Creation-born are so infected with the Wyld that every shaped being bears the marks of mutation and constantly seeks more such mutations within the Wyld's loving embrace.

The Whisperer's domain is unusual for an unshaped raksha in that its movements take it quite near Creation. Although the unshaped could not survive more than a few moments inside Creation's borders, it often moves close enough to the Bordermarches for its Emanations to stage Dominion Conflict attacks against Creation-born settlements at the fringes of reality.

Honeyed Words Speaker—Cup Emanation

Imperative: To make all the Creation-born love the Wyld as she does

Of all the Whisperer's Emanations, Honeyed Words Speaker is the most sympathetic to the mortals of Creation (as opposed to Creation as a whole). Honeyed Words Speaker fancies herself not just the voice of the Whisperer in the Leaves, but of the Wyld itself. Her songs and poems instill

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in others a longing for the majesty of the Wyld, and she teaches these songs to her raksha offspring, whom she then sends out into Creation to spread her love and her gospel. Honeyed Words Speaker ravishes those who intrude on her, but only lightly. Most commonly, she ravishes an intruder's Temperance to instill Wyld addiction within him. She also makes free use of Addiction Charms and has several custom Charms that augment the effects of Wyld addiction.

Honeyed Words Speaker usually takes the form of a green-haired Eastern woman of sublime beauty, but sometimes, she manifests instead as an enormous cloud of rainbow-hued butterflies, entrancing in their movement.

Nhogg, He Who Cuts at the World Tree—Ring Emanation

Imperative: To subsume Creation into the Eastern Wyld

The only Emanation who does not share the unshaped raksha's general enthusiasm for Creation, Nhogg realizes that he is outnumbered and outgunned by his peers. That has not deterred him, however. Nhogg's ultimate goal is the utter destruction of the Elemental Pole of Wood. He believes that the destruction of the Eastern Pole will destabilize Creation and effectively "tip it off balance" so that it quite literally falls into the Wyld. Whether Nhogg's calculations are correct or not, he knows that his fellow Emanations, besotted as they are with the idea of converting the Creation-born into Wyld mutants, would never support a plan that has a strong likelihood of undermining the life cycle of Creation. And so, Nhogg moves in secret.

The Ring Emanation most commonly takes the form of an immense fey beast, usually some five or 10 times the size of a normal specimen. Occasionally, he takes the form of a gigantic woodsman with flesh of petrified wood who bears an ax more suitable for a noble warstrider than a man. Unable to influence the Whisperer in the Leaves to move near enough to the Elemental Pole of Wood for him to stage any sort of attack, Nhogg now seeks an alliance with the Deathlord known as the Dowager of the Irreverent Vulgate in Unrent Veils. Millennia ago, the one who would become the Dowager occasionally came to Nhogg's domain, and Nhogg, between furious battles and passionate lovemaking, taught her many secrets about creating Wyld diseases. Just a few centuries ago, the Dowager applied some of what Nhogg taught her in conjunction with even fouler blasphemies whispered to her from the Well of Udr, and Creation was nearly undone as a result. Today, Nhogg sends his minions and servants out into Creation to seek the Dowager in hopes of somehow renewing their ancient relationship. Many of these envoys also carry with them Wyld-tainted diseases such as Grinning Fool Death and Green Rage Fever, gifts from Nhogg to his former lover.

Nhogg has little patience with intruders into his domain. Those he finds valuable in some way, he incumbers to serve him. Those he does not, he infects with some hideously contagious Wyld plague then incumbers them to spread it far and wide across Creation.

Shaper of the Ever-Changing—Staff Emanation

Imperative: To atone for (imaginary) past sins against the Wyld

A curious specimen, even by the standards of unshaped Emanations, Shaper of the Ever-Changing labors under the peculiar belief that he is actually a Solar Exalt won over to the service of the Wyld. The original Shaper of the Ever-Changing was a Twilight Caste Solar who lived several millennia before the Usurpation. His true name unknown (at least to raksha history), the Twilight was dubbed Shaper of the Ever-Changing by the Fair Folk of the day due to his frightening puissance with the Wyld-Shaping Technique and Wyld-Cauldron Technology Charms. At the start of the Balorian Crusade, the Whisperer's prior Staff Emanation, presumably as some sort of twisted morale-boosting exercise, shaped himself into the physical likeness of the Shaper of the Ever-Changing. Now, however, he actually believes himself to be that same Solar, except that this version has been "converted to the majesty of the Wyld" and seeks to reshape all of Creation back into the Wyld whence it sprang.

In keeping with his assumed identity, the raksha Shaper of the Ever-Changing has not only passed through the Gateway of Sundraprisha, he has also activated the Assumption of Dreams and Passion Charm and supplemented it with the Hiding the Wyld's Touch Charm (allowing him to pass convincingly as a Solar Exalted). All of the Shaper's "Solar Charms" are actually shaping actions and attacks designed to mimic the relevant Solar Charm, but they otherwise follow all the rules of normal shaping actions and combat. The Shaper himself appears to be a balding Easterner with piercing eyes, garbed in robes of spun orichalcum. After snaring another, the Shaper will typically ravish, incumber or vex the victim as he desires, but he will always pretend to have done so by means of Solar Social Charms. A visitor will have no chance of penetrating the Shaper's false identity as a mad First Age Solar unless her (Perception + Essence) exceeds 10 (the Shaper's Intelligence, boosted by his Unassailable Tower of Intelligence Charm).

Jubal the Hunter—Sword Emanation

Imperative: To become the greatest hunter in existence

Unlike the Sword Emanations of many other unshaped, Jubal is less interested in martial conflict than in demonstrating his personal prowess. A powerful Xia, Jubal lives for the hunt, and he knows that there is no quarry more exciting, more dangerous, than Creation-born. When Jubal hunts a Creation-born, he hunts something that can actually, truly *kill* him. That fact electrifies Jubal to the core of his being.

Jubal's form is malleable but consistent—he always wears a shape resembling that of the last Creation-born he killed. Whether that quarry was an animal or a human being,

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Jubal will skin it and wear its pelt stretched across a muscular, 12-foot-tall frame. The Hunter knows all the Charms associated with the Assumption of Bestial Visage, and all of his minions appear as beastmen, simultaneously in honor and mockery of the Lunar offspring who are among Jubal's most constant quarries.

Like the majority of his peers, Jubal has no wish to destroy Creation. Instead, he wishes to subsume it wholesale into the Wyld, with the living Creation-born kept on reservations and in hunting preserves so that they will retain their lethality against the Fair Folk. When he vexes a raksha quarry, he usually steals a Grace or two but then generously offers to give them back if the raksha can return with some suitably deadly Creation-born for him to hunt. When he vexes Creation-born, he strips them of their physical possessions, leaving them as naked prey for his hunt.

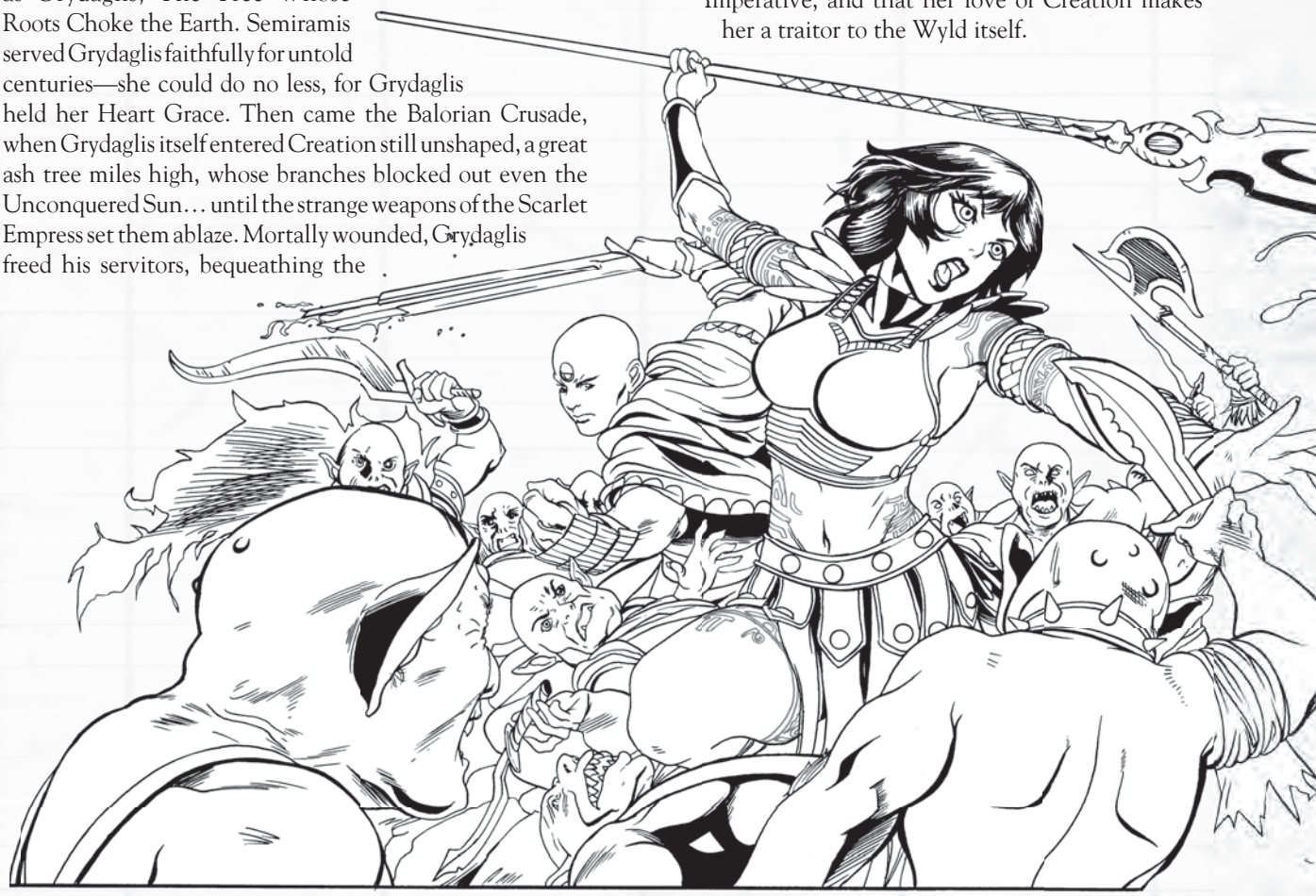
Semiramis, She Who Emerged from the Lost Seed—Heart Emanation and Ruling Emanation

Imperative: To protect Creation from the unshaped

Semiramis is not merely the Heart and Ruling Emanation of the Whisperer in the Leaves, she is also the mother of her own siblings. Long ago, Semiramis was a lesser being, a shaped raksha birthed by the all-but-forgotten Chaos Lord known as Grydaglis, The Tree Whose Roots Choke the Earth. Semiramis served Grydaglis faithfully for untold centuries—she could do no less, for Grydaglis held her Heart Grace. Then came the Balorian Crusade, when Grydaglis itself entered Creation still unshaped, a great ash tree miles high, whose branches blocked out even the Unconquered Sun… until the strange weapons of the Scarlet Empress set them ablaze. Mortally wounded, Grydaglis freed his servitors, bequeathing the Graces he held to their rightful owners, Semiramis among them. Most of Grydaglis's servants wept mightily and swore revenge against the Creation-born for the Chaos Lord's death, but Semiramis was not among them. She realized that, by slaying Grydaglis, the Creation-born had given her a freedom she had never known. Her newfound love for Creation was born of that debt of gratitude.

The shaped raksha called Semiramis fled back to the Wyld and crossed through the shinma Nirakara, and in that way, a raksha who had been born with shape became an unshaped raksha. The new Chaos Lord's Heart Emanation modeled herself on the shaped being Semiramis had once been, and its other Emanations evolved to match Semiramis's views on Creation. Only Nhogg, the unshaped's Ring Grace and the seat of its self-image as a raksha, has antipathy for the Creation that freed it from captivity.

Semiramis typically shapes herself into a form closely resembling a nature goddess. Some have noted that her most customary form looks quite similar to depictions of Gaia. Her enemies among the other unshaped find that shape particularly unsettling, both for Gaia's role in the birth of Creation and for Gaia's relationship with Grydaglis. Eons ago, Gaia and Grydaglis were lovers, to the extent that such a relationship can exist among two such beings. These critics also whisper that this ancient connection is the source of Semiramis's Imperative, and that her love of Creation makes her a traitor to the Wyld itself.



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Swar, the City of Formlessness Constrained

At the dawn of the Balorian Crusade, it was called the Devouring Hammer, so great was the Chaos Lord's hatred of Creation and loyalty to Prince Balor. Unfortunately for this unshaped raksha, its zeal exceeded both its wisdom and its puissance. When the Scarlet Empress unleashed torrents of cold iron from the skies against the invading Fair Folk, the Devouring Hammer was the first to feel the blow. Struggling in the face of death, the unshaped found a hiding place while the Empress's retaliation moved on to other targets. Seizing upon an abandoned war manse, the Devouring Hammer tore its structure apart, repurposing it into a freehold and concealing its waypoint body within. Since the day of its cowardly withdrawal, the Devouring Hammer has been trapped within its hiding place. The unshaped remains invisible to the Realm Defense Grid while it remains within the freehold, but it will be destroyed almost instantly if it attempts to leave. Humbled by its self-imprisonment and humiliated by its failure, the Devouring Hammer ceased to be, and in its place was born the captive Chaos Lord known as the City of Formlessness Constrained.

Today, the City of Formlessness Constrained manifests as a great city buried under the Northern ice, which mortals of the Haslanti League have mistakenly identified as the ruins of a First Age city they call "Old Crystal." In conformity with this new identity, the Chaos Lord has reconfigured its internal architecture so that all of its waypoints resemble portions of a First Age city. In so doing, the Chaos Lord's goal is to lure treasure-seeking mortals to its environs, so that they can be enslaved and then sent forth to do the City's will—that the Realm Defense Grid be disabled so that the City of Formlessness Constrained may return to the Wyld.

The City's ruling Emanation is its Heart Grace, Swar, and Swar rules the other Emanations with an iron fist. The Chaos Lord's obsession with escaping Creation dwarfs all of its other Imperatives so thoroughly that its other Emanations are subservient to the point of being willing slaves to Swar's agenda.

The City contains a total of 50 waypoints whose arrangement and structure are totally under Swar's control. Creation-born visitors may be forgiven for thinking that the City is no more than a mile or so in diameter. The unshaped raksha's complicated waypoint structure is more obvious to raksha, but Creation-born who seek to travel directly to the tower at the City's center will simply find themselves transported to some other area (representing an adjacent waypoint to those able to perceive such things). Swar favors a tight defensive package for its waypoint structure, usually arranging itself into a 4x5 grid of waypoints that comprise the City's outer barrios, topped and bottomed by two 3x3 grids that represent its subterranean and administrative levels, and surrounding a central tower that is 12 waypoints tall.

Although the City actively seeks to summon outsiders to its freehold in hopes of finding agents it can use against the war manses that imprison it, in doing so, the unshaped plays a dangerous game. The City does not dare submit to questing by lesser Fair Folk and, in fact, lives in fear of raksha who seek to quest against it. Cut off as it is from the Wyld, the City can neither recover from a successful quest nor even spend experience acquired through questing to improve itself. Repeated questing by shaped Fair Folk will eventually reduce the City to mindless impotence, and the Chaos Lord is bent on escaping Creation before that point no matter what the cost.

Swar—Heart Emanation and Ruling Emanation

Imperative: To escape its prison and return to the Wyld

The City's Heart Emanation might as well be its only Emanation. All of the unshaped's other Imperatives take a distant second to escaping Creation. Swar has no definable form or gender, and those who reach its hiding place in the central tower discover only a roiling cloud of madness and hate so intense that it damages the sanity of lesser Creation-born who reach it. If confronted directly by outsiders, Swar relies heavily on Staff-shaping attacks to bend them to its will. Having bound its fellow Emanations to serve its Imperative, Swar has arranged the City's infrastructure to make it almost impossible to reach its Arcane Redoubt without first defeating each of the other Emanations. These other Emanations focus their shaping attacks on weakening intruders so that they are more easily bound into service to Swar. Ideally, Swar seeks to draw newly Exalted Solars into its web. Lunars (and to a lesser extent Sidereals) are immune to being enslaved by the City, Dragon-Blooded are usually smart enough to know when they are hopelessly outclassed, and mortals could never achieve Swar's ultimate objective of deactivating the Realm Defense Grid.

The Prince Malevolent—Cup Emanation

Imperative: To enslave others to Swar's will

Situated in the waypoints that represent the City's service oubliette, the Prince Malevolent regulates those aspects of the City's body that, in a mortal city, might be characterized as "infrastructure." The streets, the sewers, the hidden machinery that makes city life possible—all of these contain the Prince Malevolent. When the Prince directly involves himself with intruders to the point of manifesting a perceptible presence, his hand can be perceived in the sound of steam whistles and klaxons, the sight of glowing red machinery and alarm signals, and other signs of danger and malfunction. In shaping combat with intruders, the Prince will seek to ravish an enemy's Conviction with two commands: the character cannot bear to leave the City for a year and a day without the leave of Swar itself, and the character cannot bear to harm the City or see it attacked.

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The Dancing Mask—Ring Emanation

Imperative: To be free of all limitations on what is possible

When the City of Formlessness Constrained was called the Devouring Hammer, its Ring Emanation was a being of wondrous chaos. Contemptuous of Creation's static existence, the Dancing Mask kept the Devouring Hammer's interior full of delightful miracles and perpetual impossibilities. After its long captivity began, when the Devouring Hammer was refashioned into the image of a First Age city, the Dancing Mask was compelled to restrain its natural exuberance. As a result, the Dancing Mask is now most obvious by its absence—intruders who enter the Ring Emanation's territories often feel like unwelcome visitors who sense that all conversation ceased just before they entered a room. Compelled by circumstances to conceal his raksha nature, the Dancing Mask constantly maintains strange miracles and swarms of prodigies just outside the sight of outsiders.

Embittered by its situation, the Dancing Mask usually keeps to the City's Fountainhead. If moved to engage intruders, its arrival is heralded by impossible disruptions of natural laws—gravity reverses itself, buildings spontaneously collapse on inhabitants, air becomes flammable. In shaping combat, the Dancing Mask seeks to incumber its victims first into defending the City and maintaining its secrets and then to seek out and either deactivate or destroy the war manses that keep the City bound in Creation. It relies heavily on ranged attacks, especially if its targets have demonstrated that they are beings capable of harming it in direct combat.

The Keeper of the Tower—Staff Emanation

Imperative: To return to his former position of dominance over the other Emanations

The Keeper of the Tower is the lawgiver for the City of Formlessness Constrained. That role was more prominent when the Keeper played it for the Devouring Hammer, for the Hammer had an extensive and diverse body politic, and the Keeper's role in maintaining societal order made him nearly the equal of Swar in importance. Now, Swar's rule is uncontested, and while the Keeper chafes under his secondary status, he obeys Swar's commands because he agrees with the Heart Emanation's goals. It doesn't hurt that the Keeper also fears the intensity of Swar's obsessions, for if the Keeper did turn his powers against Swar in any way, he would almost certainly risk destruction at the hands of his fellow Emanations.

The Keeper's presence is signaled by the arrival of runes and sigils that crawl across every surface, announcing to intruders which rules and laws they have violated and the terrible punishments to which they are subject. Formless, his presence is also noticeable as an oppressive feeling of guilt and despair that washes over those who would challenge him and, less abstractly, by the appearance of red flames that generate no heat and by the sound of the Keeper's litany bones, which echo down every corridor. After snaring his victim, the Keeper will next seek to ravish her in the same manner as the Prince Malevolent before vexing her in the same manner as Him Who Hurls Axes.

Him Who Hurls Axes—Sword Emanation

Imperative: To return to the Wyld and seize control of the Balorian Crusade

The most direct and obvious of the City's Emanations, Him Who Hurls Axes is also the most tangible of them—typically manifesting as a swirling tornado of bladed and razor-sharp objects. Nearly mindless after centuries of captivity, Him Who Hurls Axes would rampage through the City constantly, leaving naught behind but ax-scarred ruins, save for the constraining influence of the Keeper of the Tower, whose laws and imprecations dispel the worst of his temper. The bloody right hand of Swar itself, Him Who Hurls Axes unleashes his fury against intruders who present a serious threat to the City, especially raksha invaders who, if permitted, would bring about the Chaos Lord's undoing. Against raksha, Him Who Hurls Axes typically seeks to vex away cysts and pennants, without which such raksha are trapped within the City's confines. Against others, the Sword Emanation targets hearthstones and artifacts, thereby softening up intruders for the City's other Emanations.

The Fox Cataphract—Second Sword Emanation

A mystery even to Swar itself, the Fox Cataphract is apparently an embryonic secondary Sword Emanation. Despite his name, the Fox Cataphract is not a true Cataphract—he is a heroic commoner Warrior who seems likely to soon open a second feeding maw and become a noble, if not an Emanation. Currently, the Fox Cataphract has no Heart, but the Emanations suspect that some forgotten geas or other binding will compel one of them to grant him a Heart when the time is right. When that day comes, the Fox Cataphract will likely also open a second feeding maw and become a Xia, a Cataphract or an Anarch. His facile and fluid personality has demonstrated the traits of all three.

Swar does not know where the Fox Cataphract came from, whether Swar or some other Emanation created him or, if he is a forgotten oath-child, exactly what oath he represents. Afraid of what forgotten truths the Fox Cataphract represents, the City's other Emanations leave him alone and hope he does not, in some mysterious way, represent the City's undoing. It is unknown whether the Fox Cataphract is capable of leaving the City to enter Creation.

Worst of all, the Fox Cataphract is fully shaped, an egregious insult against the City that its Emanations sullenly tolerate. He typically wears the Assumption of Fire Shape and knows most of the Charms from the Elemental Influence Charms cascade. He manifests as a powerfully built foxman with fur of blue flames, clad in gossamer armor and bearing a terrible gossamer sword. The Fox Cataphract can engage in shaping combat with only his Sword, but he can defend with any of his Graces. He usually focuses on vexing

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his enemies, targeting their Graces over other possessions. He has a significant collection of Wyld artifacts forged from stolen Graces, but none are rated higher than 3.

Charms of the Unshaped

Theoretically, an unshaped raksha has access to every Charm in this book and more. Because unshaped raksha act only through their Emanations, however, they generally do not make direct use of these Charms themselves. The one exception is The Gateway of Sundraprisha, which permits an unshaped raksha to become a shaped raksha. If and when a raksha crosses through Nirakara at the Gateway of Sundraprisha and becomes a shaped raksha, it incorporates appropriate Charms into its new shaped identity from the panoply of Charms at its disposal.

An unshaped raksha's Emanations possess whatever Charms the unshaped applies to them through the creation process and later in response to questing. An Emanation may know a Charm that carries the Shaped-Only keyword and incorporate it into items or beings that he has forged, but he cannot use such Charms on his own form unless he is truly shaped. In addition to the Charms listed in Chapter Six, an Emanation may possess any of the Charms listed here (all of which carry the Unshaped-Only keyword).



General Unshaped Charms

The Gateway of Sundraprisha

Cost: None; **Mins:** Heart 1, Essence 1; **Type:** Simple

Keywords: Unshaped-Only

Duration: Until terminated

Prerequisite Charms: None

Only technically considered a Charm at all, this power is really more of a plot device. Crossing through the shinma Nirakara at the Gateway of Sundraprisha has no cost. When the unshaped raksha's ruling Emanation activates this Charm, the Chaos Lord's Heart Grace is reduced to 4. All of its other Graces shatter, and each of its Emanations other than its ruling Emanation dies instantly. All of the waypoints under the unshaped's control collapse and are sucked into the ruling Emanation, and a new shaped raksha coalesces around it. The unshaped raksha's power condenses into new Graces and forms a coherent matrix of Wyld energy. Although the unshaped has wide latitude in choosing the ultimate structure of its shaped form, it is limited by a specific template that, as a practical matter, follows the guidelines for character creation outlined in Chapter Three.

In other words, activating this Charm allows the unshaped to "create a noble raksha character" under the normal character-creation rules for making noble characters, subject to the following modifications. First, the newly shaped raksha, as stated previously, has

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a Heart Grace of 4. Second, he automatically gains four free dots in the Birth Background. Finally, for every dot by which the unshaped raksha's original Heart Grace was reduced to reach the four-dot level, the shaped raksha gains 10 additional bonus points. The unshaped raksha has the option of reducing its Heart Grace to 3, gaining 10 more bonus points, but unshaped raksha never reduce themselves to below that. The advantages of 10 extra bonus points are simply not worth becoming a commoner, even a heroic one.

Once the Charm is activated, the unshaped becomes a shaped noble raksha for all purposes. He can use Assumption Charms and even acquire permanent mutations. He can enter Creation with appropriate protection. He can use Charms that have the Shaped-Only keyword on himself. As long as the raksha does not gain any permanent mutations, he retains the option of ending this Charm and becoming unshaped once more. To do so, the raksha must enter an unoccupied waypoint in the Deep Wyld, obtain ownership over it, and succeed in a Cup-shaping roll against a difficulty equal to his own permanent Essence. If the roll is successful, the raksha becomes unshaped once more. A raksha with a permanent mutation of any sort is incapable of passing back through the Gateway of Sundraprisha.

Even after becoming unshaped again, the raksha does not necessarily become the same unshaped he was before. Instead, the unshaped raksha possesses a new Heart Grace (rated at 5) whose Emanation is based on the personality and appearance it had while shaped, rather than that of the prior Heart Grace. The unshaped also acquires four new Graces, each of which is initially rated at 2, and the unshaped can distribute a number of dots equal to (the permanent Essence of the prior shaped raksha + 5) among those Graces. As the unshaped does so, four new Emanations come into existence, each of whom has the traits of a noble raksha with a Heart Grace of 3, plus 10 experience points per dot of permanent Essence the raksha had while shaped. The unshaped's Heart Emanation retains all of the shaped raksha's former memories but has little emotional connection to them. The other Emanations have no memories of shaped life.

Any shaped raksha character without permanent mutations can pass back through the Gateway of Sundraprisha and become unshaped. By doing so, however, the raksha ceases to be a playable character. Furthermore, even if a player's raksha character becomes unshaped and then becomes shaped again, the re-shaped character is a completely new character unrelated in anyway to the prior shaped life except through shared history. Basically, for a shaped raksha, crossing back through Nirakara is suicide in every way that matters.

Reflected Glory

Cost: 5m, (2g); **Mins:** Ring 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Unshaped-Only
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Ecstatic Reproduction Style, Akshata Sexual Methodology

An Emanation, bored with the surfeit of pleasures available in the Wyld, sometimes seeks inspiration in other quarters. This Charm permits an unshaped Emanation to experience shaped existence through the eyes of any shaped raksha created by her through the use of either of the prerequisite Charms of Reflected Glory. At a cost of five motes, the Emanation can experience her offspring's life wherever he travels in the Wyld. If the offspring journeys into Creation, the Emanation must expend two additional gossamer to experience his life.

Father's Commanding Voice

Cost: 3m, (1g); **Mins:** Ring 5, Essence 5; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Unshaped-Only
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Reflected Glory

Once the Emanation has forged a sensory link with one of his offspring with Reflected Glory, this Charm permits communication, even from an Emanation in the Deep Wyld to a shaped raksha in the heart of Creation. If the shaped offspring *is* in Creation, communication costs one gossamer in addition to the normal Essence cost.

Extravagant Birthday Reward

Cost: 10m, 2wp, (2g); **Mins:** Ring 6, Essence 5;
Type: Simple
Keywords: Unshaped-Only
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Father's Commanding Voice

With this potent Charm, an Emanation can unleash powerful agents into the Wyld or Creation. The Emanation must already have Reflected Glory and Father's Commanding Voice active to activate this Charm, paying 10 motes and two Willpower for an offspring in the Wyld (plus two gossamer if the offspring is in Creation). While Extravagant Birthday Reward is active, the Emanation's child can draw upon the Emanation's spiritual and metaphysical resources, allowing her to spend the Emanation's Essence, Willpower, gossamer and even Virtue channels in place of her own.

Behemoth-Guiding Ghost Whisper

Cost: 5+m, 1wp, 1+g, (2g); **Mins:** Sword 5, Essence 5;
Type: Simple
Keywords: Unshaped-Only
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Reflected Glory

Similar to Father's Commanding Voice, this Charm allows an Emanation to send a behemoth into other waypoints or even Creation, to see through its eyes and to command its movements and actions. At a cost of five motes and one Willpower, the Emanation can send a behemoth into any nearby waypoint either to act as a scout or to permit a Sword-shaping weapon against a raksha to be found there. In the latter case, the Emanation can use the behemoth to make a ranged Sword-shaping attack. Each Sword-shaping attack made in this way costs two motes and one gossamer per attack.

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Additionally, if the Emanation adds two gossamer to the activation cost, the Emanation can send the behemoth into Creation. The Emanation can perceive through the behemoth's senses, and it will obey his commands. Each scene in which the behemoth attacks Creation-born or damages physical objects of Creation costs two motes and one gossamer. A behemoth sent into Creation through this Charm is treated as a permanent work of glamour (assuming it wasn't already) and does not provoke Glamour Resistance.

Charms of the Way

These Charms are known to Indefatigable Wanderer, the Way Emanation of the Golden Mirror, and may be learned by any of Golden Mirror's other Emanations or by any being who possesses a Way Grace (see p. 66).

Forging the Way Grace

Cost: 10m, 1g; **Mins:** Staff 0, Essence 1; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Forging the Heart Grace

As per Forging the Cup Grace (see p. 201) except that this Charm forges a Way Grace. The benefits and drawbacks of having a Way Grace are outlined on page 66.

Perfect Reckoning Technique

Cost: 4m, 0g; **Mins:** Way 3, Essence 1;
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: None
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

With Nirupadhika acting as her guide, no raksha need ever fear being lost again. By spending four motes, the raksha can instantly plot a perfect course to any location in the Wyld she has ever visited. Even if she knows nothing about the desired location except for its name, she can navigate to it with a successful Way-shaping action. The player rolls (Wits + Survival) for the raksha to find a location within a waypoint or (Wits + Sail) for her to locate a location one or more waypoints away. The raksha must know an actual name for the location. It is not enough to ask, "Where is Neshi of the Double Whips?" Instead, the raksha must be able to ask, "Where is the Tower of Singing Crystal?" If the location to be sought is shielded by Charms or other magic designed to obscure its location, the raksha's player must succeed at an appropriate roll with a difficulty equal to the Essence of the being who concealed the location or the number of successes obtained on any roll for concealment, whichever is higher.

Any raksha who knows this Charm also gains the following innate power in Creation.

Innate Power (*Cost:* 4m): This innate power duplicates the preceding effects in Creation. The raksha can reflexively plot a course for any location she has ever visited or plot a course with a dice roll to any location for which she knows the name. If the location is in the West, the raksha must roll (Wits + Sail). In any other direction, the roll is (Wits + Survival). This power affects only the raksha and does not provoke Glamour Resistance.

Hound of Land and Seas

Cost: 8m, 1wp, 1g; **Mins:** Way 3, Essence 1;
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: None
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Perfect Reckoning Technique

For Nirupadhika, location is merely a subset of identity, and "where one is" is a factor that helps define "who one is." By spending eight motes and one Willpower, the raksha can trail someone through the trackless wastes of the Wyld. The raksha must have met the quarry at least once or else hold one of her possessions, and he must begin tracking from some place he knows she has been. Then the raksha's player must roll (Wits + Survival) as a Way-shaping action. If the quarry to be sought is shielded by Charms or other magic designed to obscure her location, the raksha's player must make an appropriate roll with a difficulty equal to the Essence of the being who concealed the location or the number of successes obtained on any roll for concealment, whichever is higher.

Any raksha who knows this Charm and spends one gossamer in conjunction with an Assumption also gains the following innate power in Creation.

Innate Power (*Cost:* 8m, 1wp): When active, this power duplicates the effects of the Unshakeable Bloodhound Technique Charm (see **Exalted**, p. 211). This power affects only the raksha and does not provoke Glamour Resistance.

Trackless Dreamscape Movement

Cost: 5m, 1wp, 1g; **Mins:** Way 3, Essence 1; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: None
Duration: One tale or one day
Prerequisite Charms: Hound of Land and Seas

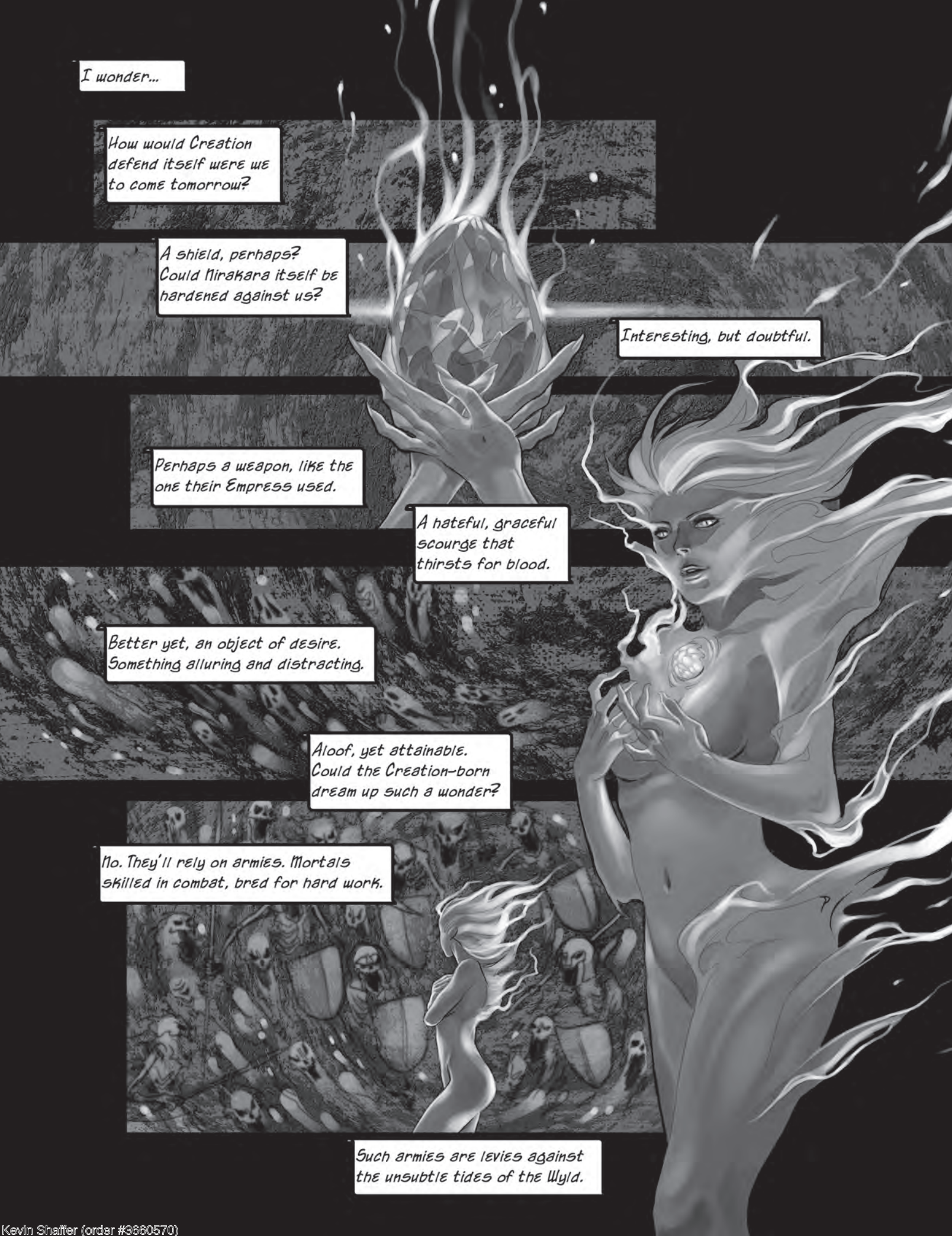
Having learned to determine where he is, the raksha can now conceal that information from others. By spending five motes and one Willpower, the raksha can conceal his current location and movements from the use of either Perfect Reckoning Technique or Hound of Land and Seas, as well as other comparable magics. In the Wyld, a raksha who activates this Charm is invisible to all attempts to scry his current location or to track him from waypoint to waypoint. Against Charms or stunts, this power instead increases the difficulty of all rolls to scry or track the raksha by an amount equal to his (Way + Stealth).

Also, any raksha who knows this Charm and spends one additional gossamer in conjunction with an Assumption also gains the following innate power in Creation.

Innate Power (*Cost:* 8m, 1wp): When active, this power duplicates the effects of the Trackless Passage Charm (see **Exalted**, p. 211).

Glamour Resistance: The benefits of this power automatically fail against Creation-born whose (Perception + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Stealth.

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CHAPTER THREE
CHARACTER CREATION

In most ways, a raksha character is created through the same process as every other type of **Exalted** character, with only a few changes in the mechanical process to reflect the unique properties of the Fair Folk. Raksha characters, however, do differ from any other type of character in one crucial detail. All other characters in the **Exalted** setting are unique beings with their own unique Motivations, personalities and memories. A raksha is not a being like that—not really. Instead, a raksha is actually an incoherent and incomprehensible mass of seething chaos that—for some impenetrable reason of its own—*pretends* to be a unique being with its Motivation, personality and memories. The first step in understanding and creating a raksha character is to understand that everything about that character is a deception engineered to facilitate an interaction between a shaped being of Creation and an entity so far removed from Creation as to be utterly beyond mortal comprehension.

Step One: Character Concept

The first step in creating a Fair Folk character is to come up with a character concept. For most characters in **Exalted**, character concept often simply means "what your character does for a living." The concept can be something as mundane as merchant, priest or soldier or as flamboyant as conquering warlord, Guild spymaster or Voice of the Unconquered Sun. Yet raksha don't "do" anything for a living. Their lives are roles, parts they've undertaken in the improvisational drama that defines their existence. With that in mind, define your character's concept as the role she has chosen to play in her dealings with others—sexy ingenue fit for a romantic comedy, bullying antihero, martyred protagonist in a passion play, to name a few. Remember also that your raksha character is always the central character of her own story.

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Birth

Raksha are not exactly born in the way that mortals are. They have no biological parents, nor any sort of childhood. Shaped raksha spring into existence fully grown and are immortal unless slain. Some were once unshaped raksha who took a shaped form for reasons of their own. Others were forged by two other raksha as part of an oath-swearing ceremony. Still others were fashioned by the hand of raksha nobles to serve as minions. They were courtiers and slaves who later won, stole or were awarded freedom and status as a true raksha.

How did your shaped raksha character come into existence? If he was once unshaped, why did he shape himself into a static form? Or does he even remember? More information on the unshaped can be found beginning on page 56.

If your raksha is an oath-child, who are her "parents," and what oath did they swear to each other over your still-forming body? What oath was sworn in your name as a condition of your birth that binds you still? Do either or both of your parents hate you for the oath you represent? The process for oath-born raksha is explained under the Akshata Sexual Methodology Charm on page 203.

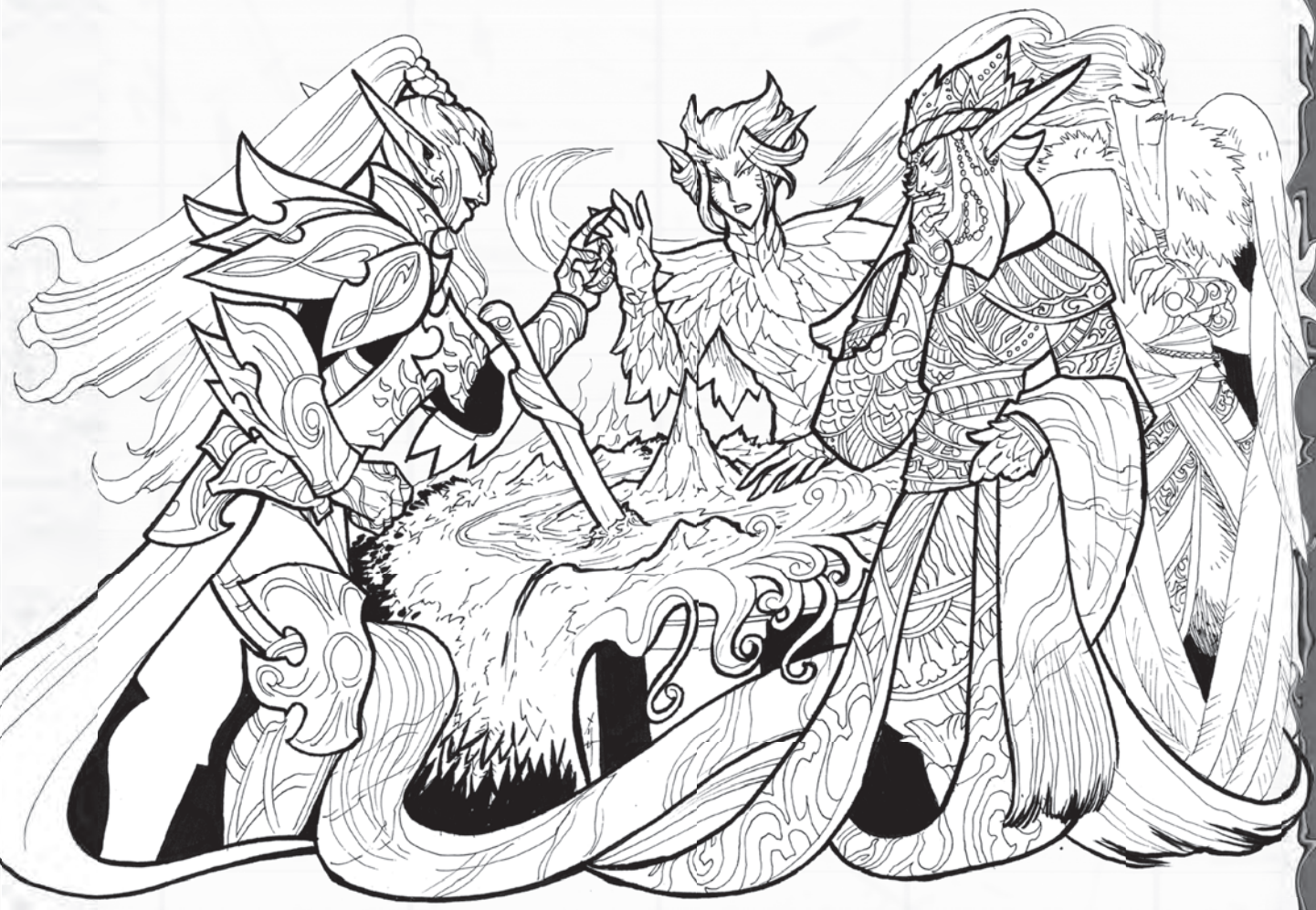
If your raksha was born as a minion, who was his creator raksha? Was she an unshaped or a shaped raksha? Why did she create him? How did he win his freedom? Is his creator okay with that, or does she hunt him to this day?

Caste

All shaped raksha have an affinity for at least one of their four Graces. This affinity describes the raksha's place in Fair Folk society. Commoner raksha each favor one Grace and belong to one of four castes: Diplomat, Entertainer, Warrior or Worker. Noble raksha each favor two of the Graces, one of which is ascendant and the other shadowed. As a consequence, all noble raksha castes combine the qualities of two commoner castes. These 12 noble castes are discussed more fully beginning on page 103.

Philosophy

The shaped raksha of Creation are the descendants and inheritors of the five great and terrible raksha who led the Balorian Crusade. Although those five are no more, their memories and imperatives live on in four informal philosophies that represent the dominant viewpoints among shaped raksha on what their purpose in Creation should be. The philosophies are informed by the four Virtues, but



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it is not necessary for a raksha to have a particular Virtue at a high rating to pursue a given philosophy. It is perfectly possible for a cowardly raksha to believe in the precepts of the Church of Balor and to venerate Valor in the abstract without actually having a high Valor.

The Church of Balor: The Church of Balor is the closest thing to a religion among the Fair Folk. It exists to commemorate the martyrdom of Prince Balor on the bloody stone of Creation. Those who follow the teachings of the Church are motivated by an utter hatred of Creation and its denizens. Many members of the Church go so far as to adopt the trappings of militant and inquisitorial religions among the Creation-born, calling themselves templars and abbots as appropriate. Others eschew such frippery: *"Religion is a dream of Creation. What use have we for it?"* Raksha of the Church of Balor seek to undo Creation, though many are more enamored of the *idea* of destroying it and would be heartbroken if they ever succeeded in winning their holy war. Regardless of caste, members of the Church of Balor prize Valor in the abstract, for it is only through battle that victory over Creation can be achieved and glory gained.

The Glittering Train: Once consisting solely of the courtiers of Princess Melusine, the Glittering Train includes those raksha who see value in the Creation-born… as food. These raksha love the succulent dreams of Creation's denizens and would never consider returning to Pure Chaos and abandoning their endless feast of passion. Regardless of caste, members of the Glittering Train prize Compassion in the abstract, for Compassion (when viewed through the strange lens of raksha philosophy) permits the raksha to consume emotion with the finesse of a connoisseur.

The Duchy of Mirrors: Named for the Duke of Mirrors, the Duchy is the spiritual home of those raksha who have realized, whether in horror or delight, that they have gone native. These raksha have played the part of a shaped raksha living among Creation-born for too long, and they now have much more in common with the mortals around them than with any unshaped monstrosity from the Deep Wyld. Raksha of the Duchy of Mirrors usually live near or even among humans, and they are the raksha most likely to be allied with Creation-born characters. Regardless of caste, raksha of the Duchy of Mirrors prize the Virtue of Temperance, for only Temperance can permit a raksha to live in peace with the people of Creation.

The Hungry Wolves: The Hungry Wolves follow the dreams of the sisters Incarnadine and Viridian. The goals of a Hungry Wolf are… whatever he wants them to be at the moment. Some seek to undo Creation, others seek to ravage it, and still others wish to prowl among it. Regardless, all Hungry Wolves do as they wish and reject the suggestion that they owe duty to anything save their own egos. Ironically, given their inconstant nature, Hungry Wolves prize the Virtue of Conviction, regardless of caste. In their case, the Hungry Wolves simply see devotion to one's sense of self as the highest measure of Conviction.

Dreams of Immortality

In the Wyld, raksha are absolutely immune to anything less real than themselves—Wyld creatures, Wyld mutants, Wyld hazards and other raksha with lower Essence ratings. Such things can harm or even kill a raksha, but such injuries are naught but dreams to such beings and can be wished away with a simple shaping action (see pp. 116-120). Raksha can be permanently harmed or even killed only through the actions of the Creation-born, other raksha of equal or higher Essence, or (at the Storyteller's discretion) certain extremely powerful Wyld phenomena.

Noble raksha, heroic commoner raksha and Creation-born for whom a Grace has been forged can use shaping actions offensively through the medium of shaping attacks (see pp. 120-133). Commoner raksha cannot initiate shaping attacks, nor can Creation-born without Graces except through the medium of Charms such as Wyld-Cauldron Technology.

Motivation and Intimacies

In principle, Motivation and Intimacies work for Fair Folk just as they do for Creation-born. In practice, they are, like every other aspect of his shaped existence, just an act, another part of the persona the raksha has crafted for himself. Any raksha can change any of his Intimacies at the start of a new story (or a new tale, in the Wyld) with the expenditure of one Willpower point, and a raksha who exists in the Wyld without wearing an Assumption can change his Motivation at the same cost. Motivations are more durable for Fair Folk who dwell in Creation. A raksha who has activated an Assumption Charm cannot change his Motivation while that Charm is active. A raksha who has a permanent mutation can never change his Motivation (except as Creation-born do), but can still change his Intimacies as normal.

Step Two: Attributes

Fair Folk nobles begin with each Attribute at three dots instead of the normal one dot common to most Creation-born. The inhuman perfection with which these beings are shaped transcends the mortal concept of perfection.

Commoner raksha (including heroic commoners) are much less impressive. Each commoner raksha begins with each Attribute at zero dots. If a raksha does not begin with at least one dot each in Intelligence and Wits, the character is mindless. If the raksha does not begin with at least one dot in Perception, the character is insensate. If the raksha does not begin with at least one dot in Dexterity,

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the character is incapable of movement. If the raksha does not begin with at least one dot in Stamina, the character is incapable of existing in Creation under any circumstances. A raksha character may begin with no dots in Strength, Charisma or Manipulation without any inherent penalty other than simply having no Attribute dice for relevant rolls. A raksha with an Appearance of 0 gains an effective rating of 5 on all social rolls pertaining to intimidation, but automatically fails all other social rolls absent the use of Charms or stunts.

Whether noble or commoner, a raksha begins with 10 dots to divide up among her primary Attributes, seven dots to divide up among her secondary Attributes and four dots to divide up among her tertiary Attributes. The raksha cannot add more than four dots to any given Attribute during character creation (whether with Attribute dots or bonus points). A noble cannot have a starting Attribute above 7, and a commoner raksha cannot have an Attribute above 4. Some mutations (such as Large, see **Exalted**, p. 288) or Charms (such as Glorious Hero Form, see p. 217) defy this limitation.

Step Three: Abilities

Abilities begin at 0. Each of the commoner castes has five Abilities associated with it, and five additional Abilities are considered "Casteless."

- **Diplomat (Staff) Abilities** are skills related to intrigue or travel: Linguistics, Occult, Ride, Socialize and Thrown.
- **Entertainer (Cup) Abilities** are skills related to subterfuge and entertainment: Investigation, Larceny, Medicine, Performance and Stealth.
- **Warrior (Sword) Abilities** are the physical and social arts associated with warfare: Archery, Martial Arts, Melee, Presence and War.
- **Worker (Ring) Abilities** are skills useful at shaping Essence and worlds: Bureaucracy, Craft, Integrity, Lore and Resistance.
- **Casteless Abilities** are skills not associated with any of the four commoner castes: Awareness, Athletics, Dodge, Sail and Survival.

A commoner raksha has a natural affinity for all of the Abilities associated with her caste. Those Abilities are called *Caste Abilities* and can be purchased with bonus points and experience points at a lower cost. In addition, a commoner raksha may choose one Ability as a *Favored Ability*, which receives the same bonus and experience point costs as her Caste Abilities.

A noble raksha has a natural affinity for the Abilities associated with both of his subsidiary castes. He can choose any five of the 10 Abilities associated with his two castes as Caste Abilities. A noble raksha can also choose three Favored Abilities. Caste and Favored Abilities have the same bonus and experience point costs for noble raksha as they do for commoner raksha.

A raksha character begins with one free dot in each of her Caste Abilities, and two free dots in each of her Favored Abilities. The raksha's player has 25 dots to divide among her Abilities but cannot allocate more than three dots to any given Ability without spending bonus points. The free dots applied to Caste and Favored Abilities do not apply to this cap, so Caste Abilities can start as high as 4 and Favored Abilities as high as 5 before the application of bonus points. A raksha can choose to make one of her Caste Abilities into a Favored Ability, but doing so confers only the benefits of it being a Favored Ability—the raksha cannot gain three bonus dots to an Ability by making it both Caste and Favored.

A raksha can increase any Favored Ability to 7, any Caste Ability to 6 and any other Ability to 5 with bonus points or experience. Both commoners and nobles can purchase specialties. Commoners pay one bonus point to gain three points of specialties. Nobles gain only one point of specialties per bonus point spent.

Step Four: Advantages

Commoner raksha begin with no free Background points and must purchase such Backgrounds with bonus points. Noble raksha begin with 10 dots of Backgrounds. All raksha have access to certain new Backgrounds, which are described in the following chapter beginning on page 96.

Virtues, Graces and Lures

Like the Creation-born they sometimes emulate, raksha are driven by emotions and desires, as represented by the four Virtues: Compassion, Conviction, Temperance and Valor. Every raksha begins with one free dot in each of these Virtues. All raksha have six dots to allocate among them. The player must pick one of his character's Virtues—which need not be his primary one—and choose a Lure for it. The Lure represents a situation that implicates that Virtue more than others and affects how often the raksha enters bedlam (see pp. 99-101).

All raksha have four additional Traits known as *Graces*, each of which is associated with one of the Virtues. Each Grace is a representation of the associated Virtue, which can be manipulated by other raksha through shaping actions and Charms. A commoner has one Major Grace, which determines his caste. A noble has two Major Graces, with one in the shadow of the other, which determines his caste.

The Cup is the Major Grace of the Entertainer and is associated with Compassion. The Ring is the Major Grace for Workers and is associated with Temperance. The Staff is the Major Grace for Diplomats and is associated with Conviction. Finally, the Sword is the Major Grace of Warriors and is associated with Valor. A commoner raksha begins with a rating in her Major Grace equal to the Virtue associated with it and a rating of 1 in every

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other Grace. A noble raksha begins with a rating in each of his Major Graces equal to its associated Virtue and a rating of 1 in the other two Graces. Whether the raksha is a commoner or a noble, her player can spend bonus or experience points to raise a Grace *or* spend points to raise a Virtue and thereby raise its associated Grace.

All raksha also possess a fifth Grace, the Heart Grace, but its value is fixed: 1 for a commoner raksha, 2 for a heroic commoner, 3 for a noble raksha, 4 for a powerful noble (200+ experience points) or 5 for an unshaped.

A raksha begins with a number of Intimacies equal to his Compassion.

Charms

Raksha, like the Exalted, have access to magical powers called Charms. Most raksha Charms are designed to facilitate shaping actions, but many have effects in Creation as well. Fair Folk Charms are not based on Attributes or Abilities, but on Graces. A raksha character begins with eight Charms, at least five of which must be selected from Charms associated with her Major Graces. All raksha also begin with one free Assumption Charm (see pp. 156-161). The Birth Background also allows a raksha to begin with certain additional free Charms.

Step Five: Finishing Touches

A raksha's Willpower is equal to the sum of his two highest Virtues. Noble raksha and heroic commoners begin with an Essence of 2. Both of these traits can be raised with bonus points.

A raksha has only a Personal Essence pool, which is equal to (Essence x 10). Raksha have the normal seven health levels—one -0 level, two -1 levels, two -2 levels, one -4 level and one Incapacitated level—plus any gained from the raksha Ox-Body Technique Charm (see p. 191).

Noble and commoner raksha have 15 bonus points that can be spent at any point during character creation. Heroic commoners possess an additional 18, for a total of 33 bonus points.

Spark of Life

Now come the final touches. What does your raksha character look like? What are her habits and quirks? What are her Intimacies? Who are her enemies and rivals? Why does she do the things she does? There are other questions to answer as well:

- **Ambition:** What goals do you have for your shaped existence? What would satisfy you? Do you want power in the courts or the freeholds, do you have a vision for Creation, or do you just want to destroy everything?
- **Milieu:** Where do you live? What is your little corner of Rakshastan like? Do you have access to a freehold? Do you and your allies control a freehold? If so, describe its environment, culture and style. Do you live in a world of vicious court intrigue or never-ending battle? Do you live in a freehold near the Middlemarches, gripped in fear of the horrors of the Deep Wyld? Or do you live in an isolated Wyld zone separated from Rakshastan by the cold sterility of Creation? Do you participate in the politics of one of the courts, or do you stand aloof from them?
- **Feeding:** How do you survive in Creation? Are you a prisoner, trapped in the walls of your freehold, or do you walk among the Creation-born, whether openly or secretly? Are you a muse who inspires mortals so that you can feed from their creativity? Are you a ravisher who destroys his victims through psychic rape? Do you plan to roleplay feeding on mortals, or do you just want to keep a herd of mortals and ignore the details? If the latter, how will you regain Essence when traveling in Creation.
- **Group Dynamics:** How do you interact with the other characters? Who are your rivals? Who are your lovers? What oaths bind you? Why have you chosen the others to share the stage with you in your drama within the Wyld?
- **Definition:** What is the core of your being, the one part of you that stands fast even in the ever-changing Wyld? What are the laws that govern your nature? What makes one human habit appeal to you and another repulse you? Even if you don't know these answers, do you care enough to even frame the question?

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Noble Character Creation Summary

Character Creation Process

• Step One: Character Concept

Choose concept, ascendant caste, shadowed caste and Motivation.

• Step Two: Attributes

Note that all Attributes begin with **three dots** before you add any. You cannot increase an Attribute above 7 without acquiring Mutation Charms.

Prioritize the three categories: Physical, Social, Mental (10/7/4).

Choose Physical Attributes: Strength, Dexterity, Stamina

Choose Social Attributes: Charisma, Manipulation, Appearance

Choose Mental Attributes: Perception, Intelligence, Wits

• Step Three: Abilities

Select five Caste Abilities from the 10 Abilities associated with the character's two castes.

Select Favored Abilities (3; can be Abilities associated with the character's castes, but cannot be an Ability you have selected as a Caste Ability).

Add one dot to all Caste Abilities.

Add two dots to all Favored Abilities.

Choose Abilities (25—during this phase, Favored Abilities are capped at 5, Caste Abilities at 4 and all other Abilities at 3).

• Step Four: Advantages

Choose Backgrounds (10—none may be higher than 3 without spending bonus points) and Virtues (6).

Note Graces—Major Graces (the two associated with the character's castes) are equal to their associated Virtues, and Minor Graces (the other two) begin with one dot.

Choose Charms (8, plus one free Assumption Charm and any free Charms gained through the Birth Background. At least five must be associated with Major Graces).

• Step Five: Finishing Touches

Record Essence (2), Willpower (the sum of your two highest Virtues—can be raised above 8 with bonus points), Essence pool (Essence x 10) and health levels (7, plus any gained from Charms).

Bonus Points

Bonus points (15) may be spent at any point during character creation. Bonus points can be spent to raise a Favored Ability to 7, a Caste Ability to 6 and any other Ability to 5.

Castes

- **Diplomat:** Raksha who act through words, customs, bindings, law and etiquette.
  Caste Abilities: Linguistics, Occult, Ride, Socialize and Thrown
  Feeding Virtue and Major Grace: Conviction and the Staff
- **Entertainer:** Raksha who act through desire, passion, performance, seduction and manipulation.
  Caste Abilities: Investigation, Larceny, Medicine, Performance and Stealth
  Feeding Virtue and Major Grace: Compassion and the Cup
- **Warrior:** Raksha who act through conflict, violence, terror, aggression and military action.
  Caste Abilities: Archery, Martial Arts, Melee, Presence and War
  Feeding Virtue and Major Grace: Valor and the Sword
- **Worker:** Raksha who act through devotion, efficiency, conformity, obedience and craftsmanship.
  Caste Abilities: Bureaucracy, Craft, Integrity, Lore and Resistance
  Feeding Virtue and Major Grace: Temperance and the Ring
- **Casteless Abilities:** Athletics, Awareness, Dodge, Sail and Survival

Virtues

- **Compassion**—Relating to others and protecting one's Intimacies.
- **Conviction**—Being driven toward fulfilling one's Motivation.
- **Temperance**—Balance and an appreciation for consequences.
- **Valor**—The drive to change the world.

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Noble Character Creation Summary

Graces

- **Cup**—Desirability and the appearance of sanity.
- **Ring**—Self-awareness and self-mastery.
- **Staff**—Mastery of the social milieu.
- **Sword**—Dominance and advancement of the self.
- **Heart**—Existence.

Backgrounds

- **Allies**—Aides and friends who come to your assistance.
- **Artifact**—Weapons, armor, tools, monsters and spells crafted from the Wyld.
- **Birth**—Powers deriving from the circumstances of your creation.
- **Familiar**—A bestial companion.
- **Freehold**—A place of Wyld power to which you have access.
- **Gossamer**—Income derived from either the distillation of the Wyld or the harvesting of dreams.
- **Manse**—A place of power and Essence to which you have access.
- **Retinue**—Command over a horde of commoner raksha.
- **Style**—The panache with which you shape the Wyld and Creation alike to your will.

Bonus Points

Trait	Cost
Attribute	4
Ability	2 (1 if a Favored or Caste Ability)
Background	1 (2 if the Background is being raised above 3)
Specialty	1
Virtue	3
Major Grace	3
Minor Grace	5
Heart Grace	—
Willpower	2
Essence	10
Charm	7



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Commoner Character Creation Summary

Character Creation Process

• Step One: Character Concept

Choose concept, caste and Motivation.

• Step Two: Attributes

Note that all Attributes begin with **zero dots** before you add any. You cannot increase them above 4 without acquiring Mutation Charms.

Prioritize the three categories: Physical, Social, Mental (10/7/4).

Choose Physical Attributes: Strength, Dexterity, Stamina

Choose Social Attributes: Charisma, Manipulation, Appearance

Choose Mental Attributes: Perception, Intelligence, Wits

• Step Three: Abilities

Note five Caste Abilities.

Select Favored Ability (1—you can convert a Caste Ability into a Favored Ability if you wish).

Add one dot to all Caste Abilities.

Add two dots to all Favored Abilities. This is not cumulative with the Caste Ability benefit if you have upgraded a Caste Ability into a Favored one.

Choose Abilities (25—during this phase, Favored Abilities are capped at 5, Caste Abilities at 4 and all other Abilities at 3).

• Step Four: Advantages

Choose Virtues (6).

Note Graces—Major Grace is equal to its corresponding Virtue, and Minor Graces start at one dot.

Choose Charms (8, plus any free Charms gained through the Birth Background. At least five must be associated with your character's Major Grace).

• Step Five: Finishing Touches

Record Essence (2), Willpower (the sum of your character's two highest Virtues—can be raised above 8 with bonus points), Essence pool (Essence x 10) and health levels (7, plus any gained from Charms).

Bonus Points

Bonus points (15) may be spent at any point on a commoner raksha during character creation. Heroic commoners instead get a total of 33 bonus points. Bonus points can be spent to raise a Favored Ability to 7, a Caste Ability to 6 and any other Ability to 5.

Castes

- **Diplomat:** Raksha who act through words, customs, bindings, law and etiquette.
  Caste Abilities: Linguistics, Occult, Ride, Socialize and Thrown
  Feeding Virtue and Major Grace: Conviction and Staff
- **Entertainer:** Raksha who act through desire, passion, performance, seduction and manipulation.
  Caste Abilities: Investigation, Larceny, Medicine, Performance and Stealth
  Feeding Virtue and Major Grace: Compassion and the Cup
- **Warrior:** Raksha who act through conflict, violence, terror, aggression and military action.
  Caste Abilities: Archery, Martial Arts, Melee, Presence and War
  Feeding Virtue and Major Grace: Valor and the Sword
- **Worker:** Raksha who act through devotion, efficiency, conformity, obedience and craftsmanship.
  Caste Abilities: Bureaucracy, Craft, Integrity, Lore and Resistance
  Feeding Virtue and Major Grace: Temperance and the Ring
- **Casteless Abilities:** Athletics, Awareness, Dodge, Sail and Survival

Virtues

- **Compassion**—Relating to others and protecting one's Intimacies.
- **Conviction**—Being driven toward fulfilling one's Motivation.
- **Temperance**—Balance and an appreciation for consequences.
- **Valor**—The drive to change the world.

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Commoner Character Creation Summary

Graces

- **Cup**—Desirability and the appearance of sanity.
- **Ring**—Self-awareness and self-mastery.
- **Staff**—Mastery of the social milieu.
- **Sword**—Dominance and advancement of the self.
- **Heart**—Existence.

Backgrounds

- **Allies**—Aides and friends who come to your assistance.
- **Artifact**—Weapons, armor, tools, monsters and spells crafted from the Wyld.
- **Birth**—Powers deriving from the circumstances of your creation.
- **Familiar**—A bestial companion.
- **Freehold**—A place of Wyld power to which you have access.
- **Gossamer**—Income derived from either the distillation of the Wyld or the harvesting of dreams.
- **Manse**—A place of power and Essence to which you have access.
- **Mentor**—A patron and instructor, usually a noble raksha.
- **Retinue**—Command over a horde of commoner raksha.
- **Style**—The panache with which you shape the Wyld and Creation alike to your will.

Bonus Points

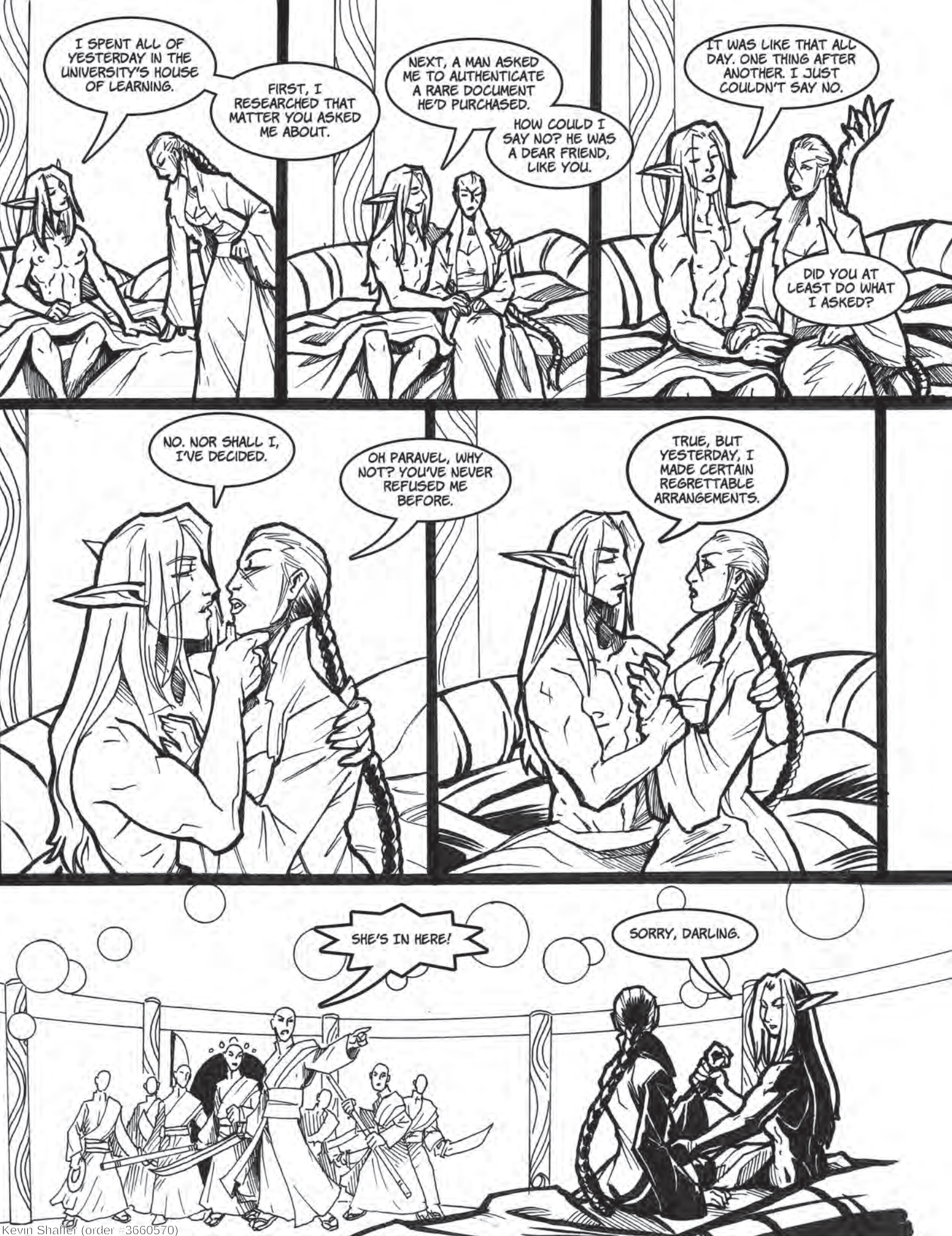
Trait	Cost
Attribute	4
Ability	2 (1 if a Favored or Caste Ability)
Background	1 (2 if the Background is being raised above 3)
Specialty	Three specialties per 1 bonus point
Virtue	3
Major Grace	2
Minor Grace	5
Heart Grace	—
Willpower	2
Essence	10
Charm	7



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CHAPTER FOUR
TRAITS

Except where noted in this chapter, the traits function just as outlined in **Exalted**. Attributes, Abilities, Willpower, Virtues, Essence and the like are handled exactly as they are in that book.

New Craft

Craft (Glamour)

Raksha use the term *glamour* to represent the physical manifestation of shaping effects. With Craft (Glamour), a raksha can shape Essence and dreams as he wishes, forging anything from the clothes on his back to the entire world around him. Most Charms that allow the raksha to create something (or somebody, in the case of minions) call for some type of Craft (Glamour) roll. Players of cunning raksha can also roll (Perception + Craft [Glamour]) for their characters to recognize the shaping effects of their peers.

Graces

A raksha's five Graces are manifestations of her four Virtues and her Willpower—except that's a lie. It is more accurate to say that the raksha's Graces create and protect her Virtues and Willpower. When a raksha is born (through whatever means), that raksha is initially a soulless, emotionless thing. The act of forging Graces for this ambulatory nothing serves to create simulacra of Virtues and Willpower, which thereafter become parts of the raksha's evolving personality as long as they exist and continue to function. This is the reason that raksha suffer the curse of bedlam. When a raksha has exhausted all the channels of a Virtue, she has also temporarily exhausted the associated Grace's capacity to convincingly fake that aspect of the Creation-born psyche. With one facet of its false self denuded, the raksha cannot help but be exposed as the alien thing it is.

The raksha's spiritual focal point is his Heart Grace, the delicate puzzle box that opens to reveal the raksha's sense of self. A raksha without a Heart Grace is little more than a gossamer automaton. The four Graces include the Cup, which contains the sweet nectar of the raksha's Compassion; the Ring, which wraps around itself to symbolize Temperance; the Staff, the manifestation of the raksha's Conviction, which he

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leans upon in his long travels through the Wyld; and finally, the Sword, the unstoppable weapon of his Valor.

All true raksha possess a Heart Grace unless it has been lost, stolen or given away. A raksha for whom no Heart Grace exists at all is not truly a raksha, but rather a minion. Commoners must choose one of the Graces as a Major Grace, which defines a commoner's caste. Nobles choose two of Graces as Major Graces, and a noble's caste is a synthesis of two commoner castes. Those Graces not chosen as Major Graces are referred to as Minor Graces.

Any Major Grace has a rating equal to the Virtue to which it is tied. The raksha's Minor Graces typically begin existence with a rating of 1, but they can be improved over time to a maximum equal to the attached Virtue. Each Grace contains a number of channels equal to its rating. These channels represent the Grace's damage track for purposes of noting damage taken from shaping attacks. The Grace traits are independent from the Virtue traits upon which they are based. Losing a channel of one's Sword Grace due to a shaping attack will not affect his Valor channels in any way, nor will spending Willpower to channel Valor affect his Sword channels.

Forging Graces for Others

A raksha who knows the appropriate Charms can forge a Cup, Ring, Staff or Sword Grace for any consenting creature, including Creation-born. Consent, in this case can be compelled through magical effects or through ownership of the creature's Heart Grace, if she has one. A raksha can

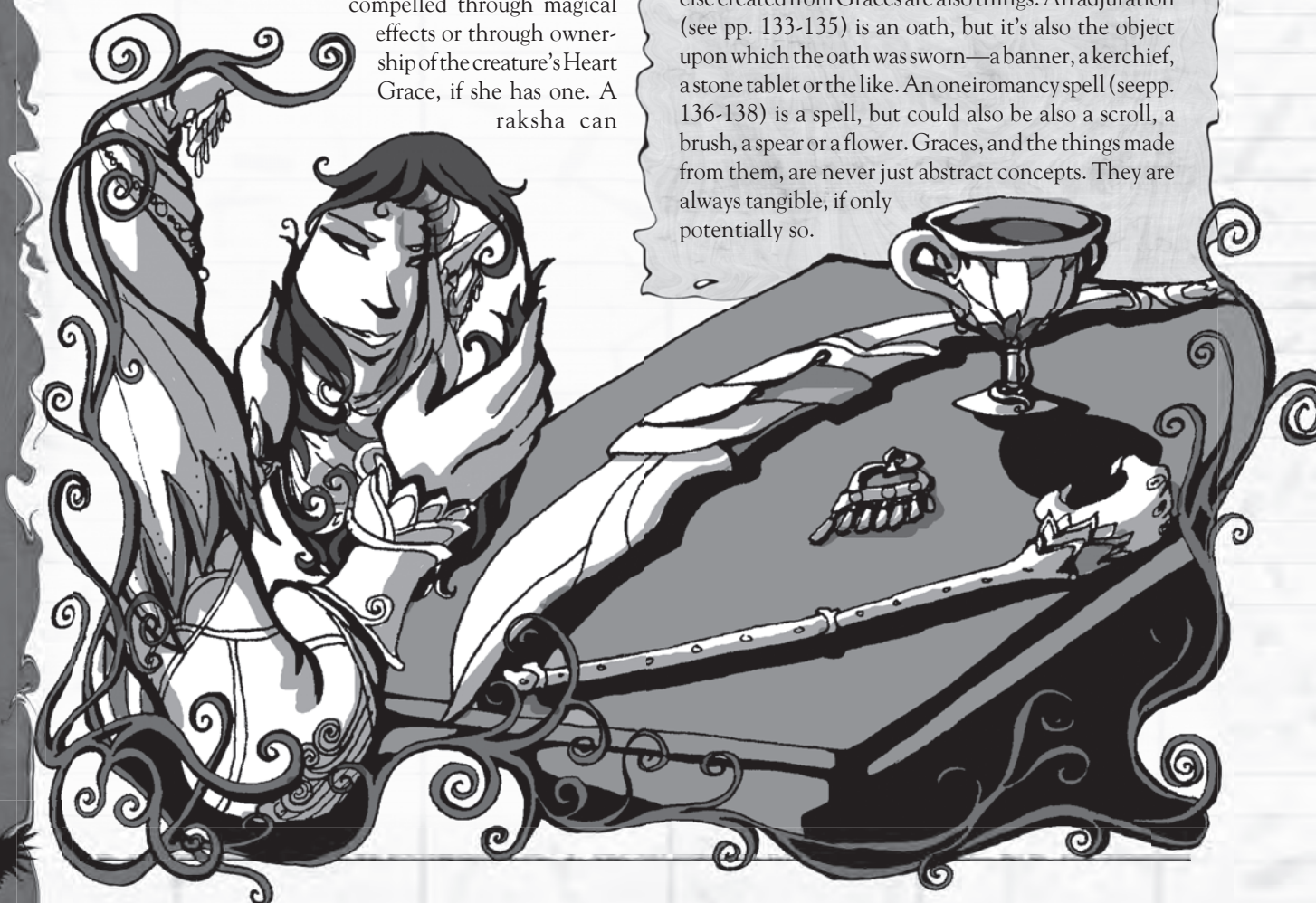
Graces Are Not Just Traits

Graces are things.

Each Grace is a knot of gossamer manifesting as an object. A raksha who possesses Cup, Ring, Staff, Sword and Heart Graces literally owns five trinkets. The smallest could as small as a literal ring, sized for a child's finger, while the largest could be as large as suit of armor. Generally, the Graces manifest as what one might expect—a cup, a ring, a staff, a sword—but such is not always the case. Often the manifestation is more symbolic. A Cup Grace might manifest as a basket or anything else used for carrying, while a Ring Grace might exist as a belt or a crown. A Heart Grace most commonly manifests as an adamant egg, but it could conceivably be in any form.

A Grace is indestructible in the manner of an attuned artifact of the magical materials, and each Grace has the traits of fine equipment (see **Exalted**, p. 365) with bonus traits determined by the raksha's Essence. The Heart Grace has additional qualities (see p. 93). Mundane equipment has little use in Rakshastan, however, and most raksha in Creation store their Graces Elsewhere (see p. 118).

Adjurations, behemoths, oneiromancy spells, treasures (all described in Chapter Five) and anything else created from Graces are also things. An adjuration (see pp. 133-135) is an oath, but it's also the object upon which the oath was sworn—a banner, a kerchief, a stone tablet or the like. An oneiromancy spell (seepp. 136-138) is a spell, but could also be also a scroll, a brush, a spear or a flower. Graces, and the things made from them, are never just abstract concepts. They are always tangible, if only potentially so.



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forge a Heart Grace for a minion but not for a Creation-born. Such beings already have a sense of volition encoded into their natures by virtue of their existence as beings of Creation. Likewise, a raksha cannot forge a second Grace for a being who already has one of a particular type.

When a raksha forges a Grace for another being, the recipient instantly gains a corresponding Grace trait, initially rated at 1, and the appropriate shaping damage track. The recipient also gains the capacity to perform shaping actions in the Wyld and can thereafter perform shaping actions appropriate to the acquired Grace. If the recipient is an Eclipse Caste, a Moonshadow Caste, a Lunar of any caste (including Casteless Lunars) or a Fae-Blood, he gains the power to learn raksha Charms for which he meets the requirements. The costs for such Charms are calculated according to the cost for Eclipse Castes to learn non-Solar Charms. (An optional rule, available solely at the Storyteller's discretion, may permit any Creation-born who acquires a Grace to purchase Charms for which she meets the requirements.)

A being must have Heart 2 or higher to perform shaping attacks appropriate to any Grace she has. Sentient Creation-born are considered to have the equivalent of Heart 2, and any Creation-born for whom a Grace has been forged can make appropriate shaping attacks. If capable of learning raksha Charms, she can also learn Charms of the Heart for which she meets the requirements. A Creation-born with Essence 5 or higher has the equivalent of Heart 3 for purposes of shaping combat and Charm prerequisites. Creation-born may *never* learn Charms that carry the Assumption or Unshaped-Only keywords (see p. 153).

As mentioned before, each forged Grace manifests as a minor Wyld artifact that has the indestructibility associated with the magical materials but none of their material bonuses. The *bearer* of a Grace is the being for whom the artifact was forged and to whom it is sympathetically linked. The *maker* of a Grace is the one who originally forged it. The *owner* of a Grace is the one who is currently attuned to it. The *possessor* of a Grace is the one with current physical possession of the artifact. All of these titles can theoretically belong to the same person. The owner can loan out or even give away a Grace, but in the Wyld, it cannot be stolen from its owner except through a successful shaping attack that vexes the owner (see p. 125) or through the actions of a Creation-born.

Once the maker forges the Grace, he also becomes both the owner and the possessor and is instantly attuned to it. Possession can pass to anyone to whom he freely gives the Grace (including the bearer) or to anyone who successfully steals it. Ownership comes with attunement, which requires six consecutive scenes of handling and the commitment of one mote.

Being physical objects, Graces are susceptible to theft or even destruction. If one raksha steals a Grace from another, most commonly through Sword-shaping actions, he gains a measure of power over her. A raksha who acquires ownership (as opposed to mere possession) of a Grace belonging to another raksha can inflict the appropriate bedlam curse on her as outlined beginning on page 99. A raksha who acquires ownership of another raksha's Heart Grace can absolutely command her in all things. Just stealing the Grace isn't enough to confer such authority, however. The thief must attune to the stolen Grace and become its new owner first.

It is impossible to steal a raksha's Heart Grace unless the thief is already the owner of that raksha's Sword Grace. The owner of a Grace has the option of simply destroying it, an action that takes no effort at all. Destroying a Grace inflicts bedlam on the affected raksha permanently (or until a new Grace is forged). Destroying a Heart Grace destroys the affected raksha utterly.

The Heart Grace

The Heart Grace is the most important of all the Graces, for no raksha can have any sense of individual volition or purpose (or even imagine doing so) without it. A raksha minion without a Heart Grace is essentially an automaton with no will of her own. Such beings cannot exist save at the sufferance of their masters. A Heart Grace is indestructible only while its emotional core is sacrosanct. If a raksha who possesses all four Graces loses them all to other raksha who then remove their protection, his Heart Grace becomes as fragile as brittle glass.

The Heart

The Heart Grace channels the raksha's Willpower and Essence, thereby allowing her to exist as something independent of another raksha's fancy.

X	You exist at the sufferance of a greater being's imagination. You have no Willpower and no Motivation. You are most likely an extra.
•	You have Motivation, Willpower and volition. You can take shaping actions and have appropriate Shaping DV ratings, but you cannot initiate shaping attacks. Most commoner raksha have this level of Heart.
••	You are a heroic commoner raksha, able to make shaping attacks.
•••	You are a raksha noble.
••••	You are a powerful raksha noble and one of the leaders of your society.
•••••	You are an unshaped raksha.

The Cup Grace

The Cup represents the concept of Desire, made manifest in the raksha's capacity to empathize with and understand the imperatives of other beings. It symbolizes concepts as disparate as passion, longing, corruption, sex, parasitism and artistry. It is the weapon the slave uses to chain his master. Those raksha who draw upon the Cup's power offer service, but on their own terms. It allows the Entertainer to say: *"I can please you… for a price. I can love you… but you must love*

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me more. I can give you everything I have… but know that by doing so, I will only leave you even more unsatisfied."

To be an Entertainer is to be an agent of the Cup. The Warriors cannot defeat every adversary, no matter how great their strength. The Workers cannot solve every problem, no matter how great their intellect. The Diplomats cannot bind every enemy with words and treaties, no matter how great their guile. The Entertainer fears nothing, for in time, all things will come to know and love her.

The Cup

The Cup Grace is the font of the raksha's Compassion and represents Desirability. Those who offer up the Cup use it to invoke empathy in others. Raksha use it to feed upon the Compassion of others and to undermine their Temperance.

X	You care nothing for any being you encounter. The very idea of empathy baffles you. You may be alluring or repulsive, but even your lovers cannot hope to understand your ways.
•	Your motivations and charms are comprehensible but disturbing. You are incapable of inspiring love or compassion in others except through magic or deception.
••	You are skilled at feigning emotional resonance. You are not demonstrably insane by human standards. Sometimes, people become comfortable around you without you actively trying to deceive them about your true nature.
•••	Strangers often come to trust you fairly quickly. Creation-born and raksha alike take comfort in your pleasant nature and attractive demeanor.
••••	You are naturally harmonious and seemingly kind. You attract passionate lovers, devoted friends and even doting adoptive parent figures with ease.
•••••	You are enemy to none and friend to all. Animals come up to you to be petted. Mortals routinely fall madly in love with you. Nearly any being you encounter finds you at least likeable, if not attractive.

The Ring Grace

The Ring Grace represents Purpose. The Heart Grace creates the raksha's sense of identity, but the Ring defines it. The Heart gives the raksha self-awareness, but the Ring provides her with a motive for action. A raksha is not truly self-aware, in the sense of being aware of her own thought processes, until she has developed a Ring Grace. It allows the Worker to say: *"This is what I do and, thus, who I am… My works will live on after I am gone, and should my works attain perfection, I shall be immortal… My creations reflect my purpose and, therefore, my soul."*

To be a Worker is to be an agent of the Ring. The Warriors define themselves by their battles but have no purpose during peacetime. The Entertainers define themselves by their desirability, but they have no purpose without others with whom they can interact. The Diplomats define themselves by their understanding of the law, but they cannot bear to face the truth of Pure Chaos. The Worker defines himself by his purpose, which he also defines for himself. Thus, he can never fail.

The Ring

The Ring Grace is the source of the raksha's Temperance and his sense of Purpose. Those who invoke the Ring use it to make manifest the inner desires of their own Hearts. Raksha use it to feed upon the Temperance of others and to limit the range of their Valor.

X	You are nameless—nothing but someone else's dream. You are a thinking soap bubble that will one day pop. When you are gone, nothing of any lasting importance will remain.
•	You have shaped yourself according to the generic mandates of raksha existence. When you are distracted, elements at the fringes of your identity fray like an old cloak.
••	Your sense of self compels you to action. Your sense of integrity is comparable to that of the typical Creation-born.
•••	You are a tower of stability in the Wyld.
••••	Your workings establish laws and mandates that constrain those around you. You are inviolate despite that which others seek to impose upon you.
•••••	You are complete. You are all that you require. If everything that was or is or will ever be passes on, you will continue, immutable and perfect.

The Staff Grace

The Staff Grace represents Interaction. The Cup Grace permits the raksha to become a servant to others. The Staff Grace lets him treat with others as equals. The Ring Grace gives the raksha purpose, but the Staff allows her to share that purpose with others. The Staff Grace orders raksha society not through the clumsy brutality of the Sword, but through rituals and taboos, through restrictive social conventions and carefully orchestrated riots. It allows the Diplomat to say: *"We are all part of a whole, whether we like it are not… Our interactions with one another, for good or ill, define the sea of culture in which we raksha must swim… Through our diplomacy, civility and the value of our oaths, we strengthen our unity and degrade our barbarous enemies."*

To be a Diplomat is to be an agent of the Staff. The Warriors interact with others only through their violence. The Entertainers interact with others only through their obsequiousness. The Workers rarely interact with others at all, focusing only on their self-centered impulses. The Diplomat alone forges society from anarchy, creating synergy and fashioning something more than just himself.

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The Staff

The Staff Grace is the source of the raksha's Conviction and his need for Society. Those who invoke the Staff use it to create alliances and establish the means by which Rakshastan can be more than just an infinity of disparate raksha. Fair Folk use the Staff to feed upon the Conviction of others and to delineate the acceptable contours of their Compassion.

X	You are alien to other beings you encounter. They are not even people in any sense of the word—merely dream constructs in the play that is staged in your imagination. You have no connection to them that is not forged artificially through Charms or stunts.
•	You understand that the phantoms you see before you consider themselves to be people and at least claim to have an identity separate from your own, as baffling as that seems.
••	You understand that you are not alone and that those you encounter may have agendas of their own that you can facilitate or balk as you wish.
•••	You coldly appreciate the motivations even of your enemies.
••••	You recognize that others have desires of their own, albeit desires not congruent with your own.
•••••	You can comprehend the needs and wants of those you meet and can calculate how to incorporate the agenda of another into your own plans.

The Sword Grace

The Sword Grace represents Conflict. The Cup Grace enables those who cannot defend themselves to choose slavery. The Staff Grace lets those who cannot fight their own battles gain allies. The Ring Grace grants purpose, but no means of effectuating it. Only through the power of the Sword can a raksha exist on her own terms. It allows the Warrior to say: *"Through the strength of my character is my will made manifest… If I am your better, it is fit that you should obey me… If I am your lesser, it is inevitable that I will eventually supplant you."*

To be a Warrior is to be an agent of the Sword. The Warrior cares not if others desire her. She cares not if others respect her traditions. She cares not if others admire the purity of her vision. Why should she care what others think, when she can control their actions through her prowess, and, in so doing, make all other dreams subordinate to her own?

The Sword

The Sword Grace is the source of the raksha's Valor and her lust for Conflict. Those who invoke the Sword use it to enact their will bluntly by way of brute force, forging their own dreams by denying the same privilege to all who would oppose them. Fair Folk use the Sword to feed upon the Valor of others and to overwhelm their Conviction.

X	You are meek. You are nothing and no one.
•	You are capable of inflicting harm.
••	You can kill, and those things that know you have the power to bring them death will either avoid you or prostrate themselves before you.
•••	You are an architect of fear and destruction. Even your allies tremble at your approach.
••••	You are a thing that others dread, a nightmare of blood and terror made manifest. Your enemies beg for mercy that they know will never come.
•••••	You are beautiful and terrible. All who know of you bow at your command.

Expanded Backgrounds

Except where noted here, all Backgrounds listed in **Exalted** function for raksha as they do for the Solar Exalted.

Artifact

The raksha seldom concern themselves with the banal artifacts prized by the Creation-born. Their artifacts are great works of glamour born of the shaping of Graces—oneiromantic spells, behemoths, adjurations and the tools of the Ring. In order to acquire a major artifact, the raksha must win it from the unshaped through questing. To reflect the array of petty spells, behemoths and other treasures of their existence, the raksha have an adjusted Artifact Background.

X	None.
•	Poor. You possess a pair of one-dot artifacts.
••	Normal. You possess four dots of artifacts, at least two of which must be one-dot artifacts.
•••	Well equipped. You possess seven dots of artifacts, including at least four one-dot artifacts.
••••	A prince's treasure. You possess 12 dots of artifacts, including at least five one-dot artifacts and no more than one four-dot artifact.
•••••	A king's ransom. You possess 15 dots of artifacts, including at least five one-dot artifacts and no more than one five-dot artifact. You probably possess at least one artifact won through questing against an unshaped.

Backing, Contacts and Influence

Raksha may possess these Backgrounds both in Creation (for example, in the form of backing from, contacts with and influence over the Guild) or in the Wyld (which might provide connections in a court or in a particular freehold). Otherwise, these Backgrounds work as they do for the Creation-born.

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Cult

As with Solar Exalted, no raksha in Creation can start a series with a Cult rating higher than 2. A raksha may not have a cult consisting of other raksha. Fair Folk gain no benefit at all from the worship of others of their kind, even assuming they could some how obtain such worship.

Familiar

The familiars of the raksha are less likely to be beasts of Creation and more likely to be minor Wyld hazards such as poppets, manikins and homunculi. If the familiar is a beast of Creation, use the trait as outlined in **Exalted.**

X	No familiar.
•	A small creature the size and ferocity of a cat, such as a manikin.
••	An impressive pet (Hazard • or so) such as a poppet, a small Wyld creature or an unusually useful manikin.
•••	A powerful, dangerous pet (Hazard •• or so) such as a homunculus. Alternatively, a manikin, poppet or Wyld creature with useful non-combat abilities. In either case, the familiar can share its senses with its owner.
••••	A very intelligent creature (Hazard • but with meaningful non-combat abilities and the power to share its senses with the raksha).
•••••	As the four-dot level, but the creature can represent Hazard ••.

Followers and Resources

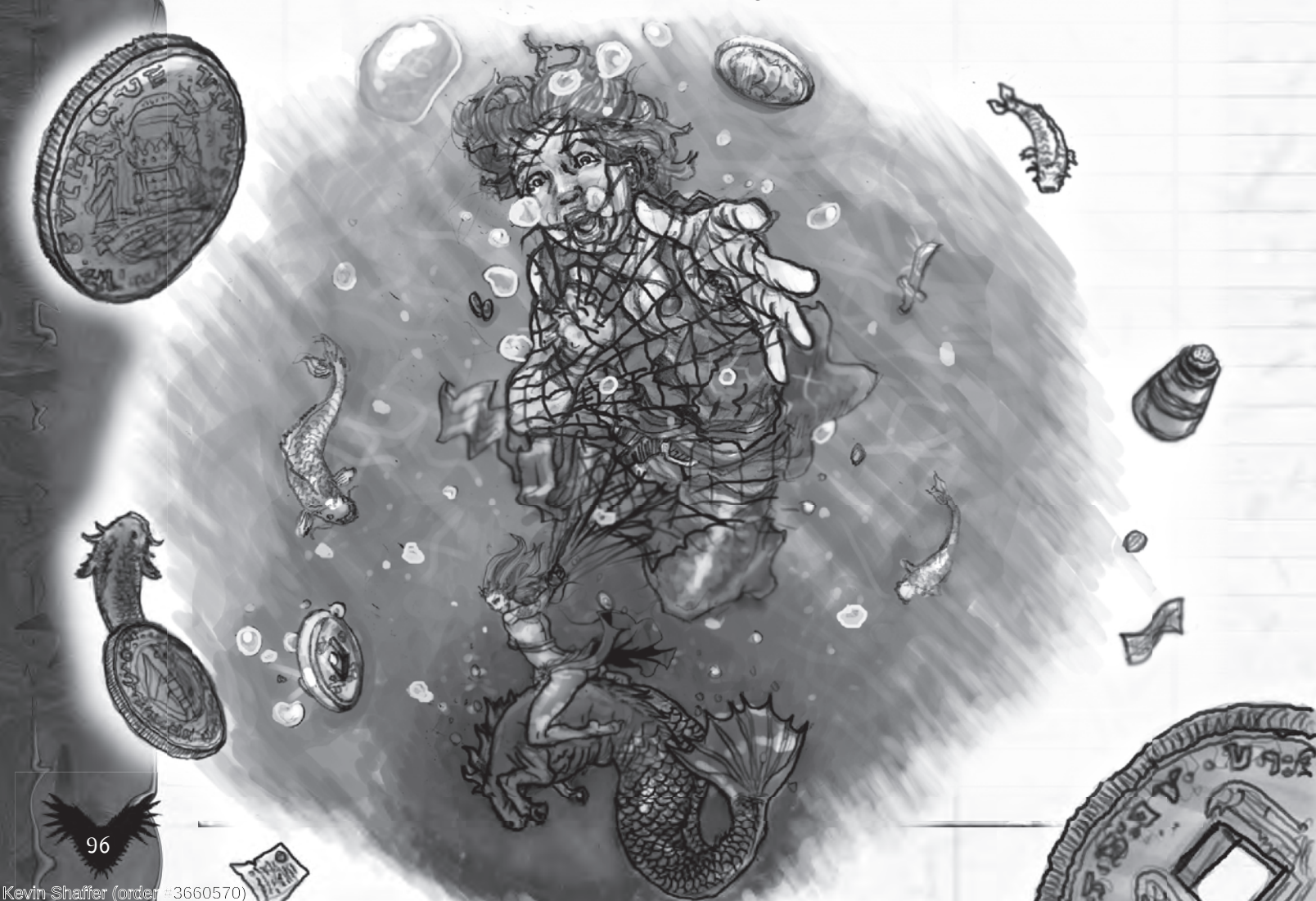
Raksha rarely use these Backgrounds except for those who reside almost exclusively in Creation. More commonly, raksha use the Retinue Background in place of Followers and the Gossamer Background in place of Resources.

Manse

Raksha lack the skills or inclination to construct manses, but they can possess both manses and demesnes. While in either a manse or a demesne, a raksha regains Essence as if he were in the Wyld. A raksha who carries a hearthstone can endure in Creation without an active Assumption Charm (see pp. 156-161), but he does not gain the normal powers of improved Essence recovery or the special power innate to hearthstones.

New Backgrounds

In addition to the ones common to the Creation-born, the Fair Folk have access to the following additional Backgrounds.



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Birth

A raksha can come into existence in one of three ways. Either he is forged as a minion for another raksha, he is forged as an oath-child, or he is previously an unshaped raksha who crosses the shinma Nirakara through the Gateway of Sundraprisha to become shaped. Raksha created as minions or as commoner oath-children can achieve self-determination and even rise to the level of noble (somewhere around the time the raksha reaches 200 experience points). Raksha who were forged as noble oath-children or who shaped themselves typically begin their existence with certain Charms built into their forms automatically. This Background lets the character begin play with certain Charms that are acquired automatically without spending Charm slots.

X	You begin with one free Assumption Charm. You are still a commoner.
•	You also begin with Ravishing the Created Form. You might have been forged as a commoner (who might or might not have risen to noble status) or as a commoner oath-child.
••	You also begin with Banquet of Crumbs. You might have been forged as a commoner (who might or might not have risen to noble status) or as a commoner oath-child.
•••	You also begin with Essence-Forging Art and Awakened Dream Manufacture. It is unlikely that you began life as a commoner, but not impossible.
••••	You also begin with all five Forging the (Grace) Grace Charms. You are likely an unshaped raksha who has taken a shaped form or else a noble of considerable experience.
•••••	You also begin with Gaping Virtue Mouth and Ecstatic Reproduction Style. You are almost certainly an unshaped raksha now wearing a well-crafted shaped form.

Freehold

You have access to one or more freeholds. Freeholds play a role in raksha life similar to that which manses play in the lives of Exalted. A freehold is a place of power shaped through raksha Charms into one or more waypoints under the control of the freehold's raksha master. A raksha can fashion a freehold either in the Wyld or at an uncapped demesne in Creation. Freeholds do not yield hearthstones, but they do confer benefits to raksha who are attuned to them in the form of cysts and pennants. The effects of these benefits are more fully explained on page 140. In addition to its material benefits, this Background also has a diplomatic function. A raksha's Freehold Background rating also determines how many freeholds she is permitted to freely enter without special permission from those other freeholds' masters.

X	You do not have access to any freeholds. Why not?
•	You are permitted to reside in a level-1 or level-2 freehold.
••	You hold a pennant from a level-1 or level-2 freehold and have permission to enter one or two others.
•••	You hold a pennant from a level-3 or level-4 freehold, or you share dominion over a level-1 or level-2 freehold with other raksha and can negotiate for possession of its cyst. You have permission to enter most of the freeholds in the local raksha territory.
••••	You hold pennants from several freeholds (and need not fear being harmed if one of your patrons withdraws her protection). You also hold complete dominion over a level-1 or level-2 freehold or share dominion over a level-3 or level-4 freehold. In either case, you have total control over one cyst.
•••••	You have total dominion over a level-3 or level-4 freehold or share dominion with others over a level-5 freehold. In the latter case, you also possess pennants from one or two other freeholds for emergencies. In either case, you possess a cyst.

Gossamer

The Fair Folk care nothing for the gaudy diamonds and vulgar gold so beloved by the Creation-born. The currency of the raksha lies in gossamer, the stuff of crystallized dreams and congealed chaos. Both the fuel for many raksha Charms and a potent shaping weapon in its own right, gossamer is the only wealth the Fair Folk covet. A raksha can acquire this precious substance from several sources. The raksha might have access to a place in the Wyld where it naturally accrues. She might have the loyalty of several Workers who tithe it to her. She might have access to mortals with particularly vivid dreams.

Each dot of the Gossamer Background translates into an amount of gossamer the character receives at the start of each story. Since it is trivially easy for a raksha to forge gossamer into other materials valued by the Creation-born, each level of the Background also translates into an effective Resources rating for use in Creation. Finally, the shaping weapons of the raksha each have a gossamer cost. A raksha can afford any shaping weapon she desires if her Gossamer rating is at least one dot higher than the weapon's cost. If the item is an exceptional one, add one to its gossamer cost. If the item is perfect, add two to its gossamer cost. A raksha character cannot begin the game with more than one item of superior equipment per dot of Gossamer, even if she might be able to afford more. (For more information on superior equipment, see p. 365 of **Exalted**.)

In addition to its other uses, the Gossamer Background controls the number of Assumptions and mutations with which a character can begin play, as explained under the

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description of the Assumption and Mutation keywords on page 153. A character with no points in this Background cannot begin play in Creation, as she cannot afford the cost to activate an Assumption Charm.

The Gossamer Background does not include gossamer acquired during the story through Charms, trade or other means.

X	None. You have no source of gossamer beyond what wits and hard work can win for you during the story.
•	You begin each story with one extra gossamer. You have Resources ••• in Creation. Mortals envy your extravagant wealth, but your raksha peers dismiss you for your poverty. For games set in Creation, you are limited to a single Assumption Charm at start.
••	You begin each story with three extra gossamer. You have Resources •••• in Creation. You can provide magical raiment for your minions and live like a king among the Creation-born. In the Middlemarches, this is the minimum respectable wealth rating. For games set in Creation, your total starting Assumption and Mutation Charms cannot require more than three gossamer.
•••	You begin each story with six extra gossamer. You have Resources ••••• in Creation. You can bribe nobles to your cause or exercise great control over raksha politics. If starting in Creation, your shape is a formidable one, starting with Assumption and Mutation Charms that cost up to six gossamer.
••••	You begin each story with 10 extra gossamer. You have Resources ••••• in Creation and can make up to three Resources ••••• purchases per story without diminishing your rating. You are wealthy enough to purchase commoner Heart Graces outright. In Creation, you are an invader to be feared and can begin with Assumption and Mutation Charms that cost up to 10 gossamer.
•••••	You begin each story with 20 extra gossamer. You can make an unlimited number of Resources ••••• purchases, although the extravagance of your lifestyle might attract unhealthy attention from the Wyld Hunt or the Sidereal Exalted. You trade mortal dreams with the ease of a peddler. You are a terrifying beast of legend to the Creation-born and can begin games set in Creation with Assumption and Mutation Charms costing up to 20 gossamer.

Retinue

It is the nature of the raksha to enslave their inferiors. The Sword demands that the raksha prove her dominance over others. The Staff demands that she surround herself with a society worthy of her participation. The Ring demands that she acquire servants to effectuate her purpose. The Cup demands that she be adored.

The Retinue Background determines how many Fair Folk are bound into service to the raksha, whether commoner or heroic commoner. In addition, the Background allows a character who possesses an oneiromancy spell or a behemoth to have a special kind of servant to attune them on his behalf. For a spell, such a servant is called a "lorekeeper." For a behemoth, he is called a "handler." A raksha character can begin play with one lorekeeper or handler per dot in this Background.

In order to maintain a retinue easily, the raksha must have a Gossamer Background rating equal to or better than her Retinue rating. For each point by which the raksha's Retinue exceeds her Gossamer, roll one die at the beginning of each story. For each die that does not roll a success, the raksha effectively loses one dot of Retinue due to "financial difficulties" until the beginning of the next story.

X	You have no raksha servants. You are most likely an itinerant wanderer, a young noble who has not yet started a household or simply a commoner yourself.
•	You are served by up to five commoner raksha, including one lorekeeper or handler.
••	You are served by a personal staff of up to 25 commoner raksha, including two lorekeepers and/or handlers.
•••	You are served by a significant retinue of up to 100 commoner raksha, including three lorekeepers and/or handlers.
••••	You command a veritable army of 200 commoner raksha, including up to two heroic commoners whose Heart Graces you possess (assuming you purchase an Artifact rating high enough to justify such possessions). Up to four of your servants may be lorekeepers and/or handlers.
•••••	You command a legion of 300 commoner raksha and five heroic commoners whose Heart Graces you possess (assuming you possess an Artifact rating high enough to justify such possessions), including five lorekeepers and/or handlers.

Style

The magic of the raksha, especially in the Wyld, is the power of narration. Narrative magic lets one who walks in the Wyld shape reality according to her dreams and wants. The more interesting and compelling a character the raksha chooses to portray, the more likely it is that the Wyld will conform to the story she seeks to tell.

Mechanically, this aspect of the Wyld is represented by easier access to stunt dice. Specifically, for raksha characters, it is governed by the Style Background, which represents just how cool the character is. Simply put, the raksha's

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Style Background creates a pool of extra stunt dice that are under the control of the raksha's player rather than the Storyteller. In Creation or in tainted lands, the raksha's player can add up to one die from this pool to any action. In the Bordermarches, Middlemarches, uncapped demesnes and freeholds, he can add up to two dice. Deeper into the Wyld, he can add up to three. There is no difference between stunt dice added by way of this Background and stunt dice awarded by the Storyteller—both function just the same and can allow the raksha to recover Essence or Willpower on a successful roll. The Storyteller remains free to grant stunt dice and should always have the opportunity to do so before the player spends from his Style pool. Regardless of the source of the stunt dice, the player can never add more than three stunt dice to any single roll.

X	None. For a creature of dreams, you are remarkably unimaginative and lacking in self-confidence.
•	You are bold, and your actions are epic in their scope. You gain a stunt pool each story equal to your highest feeding Grace.
••	You bend probability and causality to your charm and vivaciousness. Your stunt pool is now equal to the sum of your two feeding Graces (or all of them for characters with more than two feeding Graces). If you are a commoner raksha, your stunt pool is equal to the sum of your feeding Grace and your Heart Grace.
•••	Your success is a constant in an inconstant world, and when you set yourself to a purpose, you cannot be denied. Once per scene, you recover a number of dice spent from your stunt pool equal to your highest non-feeding Grace.
••••	Your Wyld nature is a source of strength and constancy. Regain all of your spent stunt dice whenever you enter bedlam.
•••••	You move effortlessly between the static tendencies of Creation's fixed character and the possibilities inherent in your birthright as a raksha. While in Creation, you may undertake a number of Wyld stunts per story equal to your lowest non-feeding Grace (see "Wyld Stunts" on p. 119). Each Wyld stunt performed in Creation costs one gossamer. Also, if the Wyld stunt targets the mind, body or soul of a Creation-born, the Wyld stunt is considered a work of glamour. Any Creation-born whose (Integrity + Essence) exceeds whichever Attribute the raksha used in the roll being stunted is automatically immune to the harmful effects of the attack by virtue of her Glamour Resistance. (Glamour Resistance is explained more fully on page 149.)

Disadvantages

Raksha suffer from five inherent weaknesses. Bedlam is a condition of temporary insanity in many ways similar to the Limit Break suffered by Exalted. Raksha risk bedlam whether in Creation or the Wyld. Calcification is a form of permanent destruction that can be inflicted upon Fair Folk caught in Creation unprotected. Cold iron has the power to inflict aggravated damage on Fair Folk, to protect Creation-born from raksha magic and to dispel most works of glamour. (Cold iron and its effects on the Fair Folk are discussed more fully on p. 149.) Certain Charms and magical powers treat raksha as "unholy," as described under the Holy keyword on page 183 of **Exalted.** Finally, raksha are particularly susceptible to being bound into oaths.

Bedlam

A raksha can mimic the emotions and attitudes of the Creation-born, but this deception is possible only through the artificial Virtues granted by his Graces. When the emotional potency of a Virtue is exhausted, the raksha stands revealed as the alien thing he truly is. The raksha know this revealed state as bedlam.

Like the Creation-born, a raksha can channel each of his Virtues a number of times equal to the Virtue's rating. Also, certain effects—Charms such as Chaotic Soul Sledgehammer, ravishment or the hostile use of a Grace against its recipient by its current owner—can reduce Virtues or otherwise strip a raksha of channels in a Virtue. Whenever a raksha has no remaining channels in a particular Virtue, he suffers the bedlam curse associated with that Virtue. When (or if) the raksha emerges from bedlam, he regains all spent channels of the associated Virtue. It is possible for a raksha to suffer more than one bedlam curse at a time. In such a case, any penalties associated with the curses stack.

Lures

Temptation is built into the core of each raksha. Each Fair Folk has a specific condition known as a *Lure* that is associated with her highest-rated Virtue. If the raksha has two or more Virtues tied for highest-rated, her player chooses the one to which the Lure is attached. A Lure represents a situation appropriate to the Virtue in which the raksha *must* channel the relevant Virtue if she is capable of doing so. A Lure can compel a raksha to channel the associated Virtue only once per scene. A Lure does not compel the raksha to channel her Virtue if she does not act in accordance with the condition the Lure represents.

For example, a raksha with the Compassion Lure of *"Always give help when asked"* must channel her Compassion whenever she gives her aid in response to a request. If she avoids all situations where another might ask her for help or she makes a point of always denying aid to those who ask for it, she can avoid the effects of the Lure. If, however, she finds

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herself in a situation wherein her player must roll her Compassion to avoid the relevant situation and gets any successes on the roll, she must spend Willpower as normal to resist the impulse to give aid and thereby surrender to the attached Lure.

Compassion (The Curse of Hubris)

The Curse of Hubris strikes those raksha who have exhausted all of their Compassion channels. Victim of this curse lose the capacity to appreciate the feelings or even existence of other living beings except as potential agents or enemies of themselves. A raksha under this curse suffers a +2 difficulty to all social rolls meant to influence or understand the feelings of others. The raksha also suffers a +2 difficulty to shaping rolls involving the Cup or the Staff.

The raksha, caught in the grip of contemptuous sociopathy, cannot recover from this curse until she has committed a number of deliberately cruel and regrettable acts equal to her Compassion. In this context, "regrettable" means that the raksha's cruelty actually puts her at risk of personal suffering or undermines her long-term agenda. Torturing a perfect stranger might not constitute a regrettable action, but torturing a beloved servant or humiliating a dangerous rival might.

Common Lures: Giving help when asked. Experiencing romantic love. Creating beauty. Serving justice. Aiding the helpless or innocent.

Conviction (The Curse of Alienation)

The Curse of Alienation strikes those raksha who have exhausted all of their Conviction channels. Victims of this curse lose the ability to see how the goals and needs of others might complement their own and often view even allies as inconveniences (at best) or enemies (at worst). A raksha under this curse suffers a +2 difficulty to all social rolls meant to influence or assist others. The raksha also suffers a +2 difficulty to shaping rolls involving the Ring or the Staff.

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A raksha suffering this curse commits bizarre, self-destructive acts that cut him off from the social power that protects raksha from one another. The cursed one cannot recover until he has betrayed himself a number of times equal to his Conviction. In this context, "betrayal" means an intentional act that inflicts self-suffering. The raksha might deliberately inflict lethal damage upon himself, or he might destroy his precious artifacts. Often, raksha under this curse suffer it for years until their enemies take advantage of this alienated state to pit the raksha against his own self-interests.

Common Lures: Seizing power over another raksha. Fighting against difficult odds. Making commitments or oaths. Standing by friends or allies in their time of strife.

Temperance (The Curse of Namelessness)

The Curse of Namelessness strikes those raksha who have exhausted all of their Temperance channels. For the duration of the curse, the raksha becomes a virtual amnesiac, unable to remember her name, let alone which oaths bind her. Those oaths still do bind her, of course—she just can't remember what they are. A raksha under this curse also suffers a +2 difficulty to all Lore rolls due to her amnesia.

While this curse lasts, the raksha forgets the self-imposed boundaries that define her and instead surrenders to excessive folly. She cannot recover from this curse until she has committed a number of acts of regrettable excess equal to her Temperance. In this context, "regrettable excess" means that the raksha engages not just in selfishness, but in acts of hedonism and debauchery that in some way undermine her ultimate goals or her sense of self.

Common Lures: Resisting a certain type of temptation, be it drugs, sex, dancing, et cetera. Refusing a properly phrased request for aid. Concealing one's true views. Answering a question honestly.

Valor (The Curse of Meekness)

The Curse of Meekness strikes those raksha who have exhausted all of their Valor channels. Victims of this curse lose the capacity to assert their own needs and desires over their surroundings and fellow creatures. A raksha under this curse might be gripped by crippling paranoia, bashful timidity or sniveling servility. Regardless, for the duration of the curse, the raksha must spend a point of Willpower to enter into any sort of combat, whether physical, shaping or even social. When the raksha has spent a number of Willpower points equal to his Sword, the curse ends.

Common Lures: Acts of heroism. Opposing superior beings. Fighting in duels. Standing fast in the face of terror.

Willpower (The Curse of Stubbornness)

The Curse of Stubbornness is always active. Raksha do not possess channels for their Willpower as they do for their Virtues. Instead, whenever a raksha spends Willpower to resist unnatural mental influence, he automatically loses one channel in whichever Virtue is appropriate to the situation. For example, in resisting a fear-based compulsion to flee the scene, a raksha might lose a channel in his Valor. On the other hand, if he resists a hypnotic command to attack a loved one, he might be forced to sacrifice a channel in his Compassion (because of his love for the prospective target) or his Conviction (because of his determination to resist domination).

Calcification

The Fair Folk are not natural to Creation, and its rejection of their Wyld nature is reflected in the bane of calcification. For a raksha to exist in the cold, sterile environs of Creation, she must spend Essence, often at a prodigious rate. A raksha present in Creation wearing an Assumption Charm automatically loses one mote per day fending off calcification, unless she carries a pennant from a freehold (see p. 140). Carrying a pennant completely negates the daily Essence loss. For raksha present in Creation without an active Assumption, the rate of Essence-loss changes to one mote per scene. For unshaped raksha, it is one mote per tick. In neither case can carrying a pennant negate this loss. When a raksha has expended all of her temporary Essence resisting calcification, she loses *permanent* Essence dots at the same rate she lost temporary Essence. When the raksha has lost her last dot of permanent Essence, she suffers calcification and ceases to exist as a raksha. The exact form of calcification varies. Some raksha turn to stone or amber or pillars of salt, while others explode into glass shards or great piles of dried leaves or flower petals. According to some tales, a calcified raksha is instantly and permanently reborn as a mortal with an Essence of 1, although such an outcome occurs only at Storyteller discretion. Generally, however dramatic the effect, calcification means that the raksha is effectively dead as a character.

Raksha Oaths

To a raksha, one's word is sacrosanct, not merely as a matter of personal honor, but as one of structural integrity. Due to an inherent quirk of raksha narrative magic, when one of the Fair Folk gives his word, he is bound to it in a way that most Creation-born are not. Some unshaped even insist that the power of the Eclipse Caste oath was one stolen from the Fair Folk by the ancient Solars, no matter how improbable that might seem. When a raksha voluntarily swears an oath and then breaks it, he suffers an automatic botch at a time of the Storyteller's choosing based on the nature of the oath broken, just as if he had broken an oath sanctified by an Eclipse or Moonshadow Caste. Of course, some oaths are more binding than others, especially where the preternatural cunning of the Fair Folk is in play, and a clever raksha can evade the limitations imposed by most casually sworn oaths with minimal difficulty.

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As a practical matter, a raksha can get around the spirit of an oath freely sworn with a natural or shaping dice roll that suffers an external penalty equal to the Essence of the being to whom the oath was sworn. Naturally, this makes it trivially easy to trick one's way out of an oath sworn to a mortal in Creation or even to a commoner raksha. Oaths that are hastily sworn—whether by a slip of a player's or Storyteller's tongue rather than deliberate decision-making—are even easier for raksha to evade. Such oaths inflict no penalty on dice rolls to circumvent them. A clever player can, however, use the existence of such an oath against the one who made it, using it to compel the oath-swearer's actions through social combat, gaining bonus dice on all relevant social rolls equal to the Essence of the one against whom the oath was sworn. Raksha are not bound by oaths they are compelled to swear through the use of Charms.

Finally, the Wyld itself infuses some particularly powerful or compelling oaths with narrative magic, bringing the oath to life in a sense. Known as adjurations, these oaths essentially actively *want* raksha to swear to them, and are willing to bargain with those who so swear. When a raksha swears on an adjuration, he gains certain inherent magical powers associated with the adjuration helpful in fulfilling the oath's purpose. Adjurations are discussed more fully on pages 133-135.

The Castes

There are four commoner castes among the raksha, one for each of the four Graces. Diplomats draw their strength from the Staff Grace and feed upon the Virtue of Conviction. Entertainers draw upon the Cup Grace and feed on the Virtue of Compassion. Warriors favor the Sword Grace and feed on the Virtue of Valor. Workers draw upon the Ring Grace and feed on the Virtue of Temperance.

Each of the 12 noble castes favors two Graces. One of those Graces is the raksha's primary Grace and is called the ascendant Grace. The other is referred to as the shadowed Grace. The noble's fundamental nature is based primarily on the ascendant Grace but is strongly informed by the accompanying shadowed Grace. In certain situations, most commonly as a result of some personal catastrophe, the noble will invert his nature, causing the ascendant Grace to become shadowed and vice versa. When confronted by such a situation, the raksha's player must roll to see if such an inversion takes place. The player rolls dice equal to each of the raksha's two Major Graces. If the shadowed Grace gets more successes than the ascendant Grace, it becomes the new ascendant Grace, the previous ascendant Grace is reduced to a shadowed Grace, and the raksha's caste inverts. If the shadowed Grace successes are less than or equal to the ascendant Grace, the noble's caste remains the same.

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Diplomat

The Diplomats represent the glue that binds all raksha together. The shapers and keepers of raksha society, Diplomats forge common ground between beings so alien as to defy comprehension even by one another. The tool of the Diplomat is the Staff, which bears his weight during his long journeys from one court to the next. To the raksha, the Staff symbolizes the law of the Wyld, and raksha oaths are often sworn on ceremonial staves.

Those Diplomats who live in Creation are attracted to its diversity. True, Creation does not have the infinite possibility of the Wyld, but despite the limitations of shape, the Creation-born do somehow seem to form a dazzling variety of cultures, traditions, societies and taboos. Diplomats active in Creation often insinuate themselves into complex social hierarchies, most commonly the Guild. Others become fascinated by the concept of religion and seek to form cults to venerate themselves. While raksha can gain Essence through the Cult Background, those who seek such worship are drawn mainly to the challenging role of portraying a deity in a world that despises the Fair Folk.

Those Diplomats who hate Creation do so for one reason—it lies. The Creation-born are capable of swearing an oath and then not fulfilling it, usually without any repercussions whatsoever. Those Creation-born who defy taboos or cultural norms risk ostracism and worse, but even the possibility of such defiance is abhorrent to many Diplomats. Worst of all, Creation itself shows little consideration for the importance of raksha oaths, and some Fair Folk who travel in Creation find that circumstances beyond their control conspire to make them break sworn oaths no matter how much they wish to keep them. This, say the Diplomats, is unacceptable.

Caste Traits: Diplomats are masters of intrigue, espionage, travel and manipulation. Their Caste Abilities include Linguistics, Occult, Ride, Socialize and Thrown.

Grace and Virtue: Diplomats feed on Conviction. They favor the Staff Grace and its associated Charms, which channel Conviction to effectuate diplomacy. Through the Staff, the Diplomats create the society in which the raksha live.

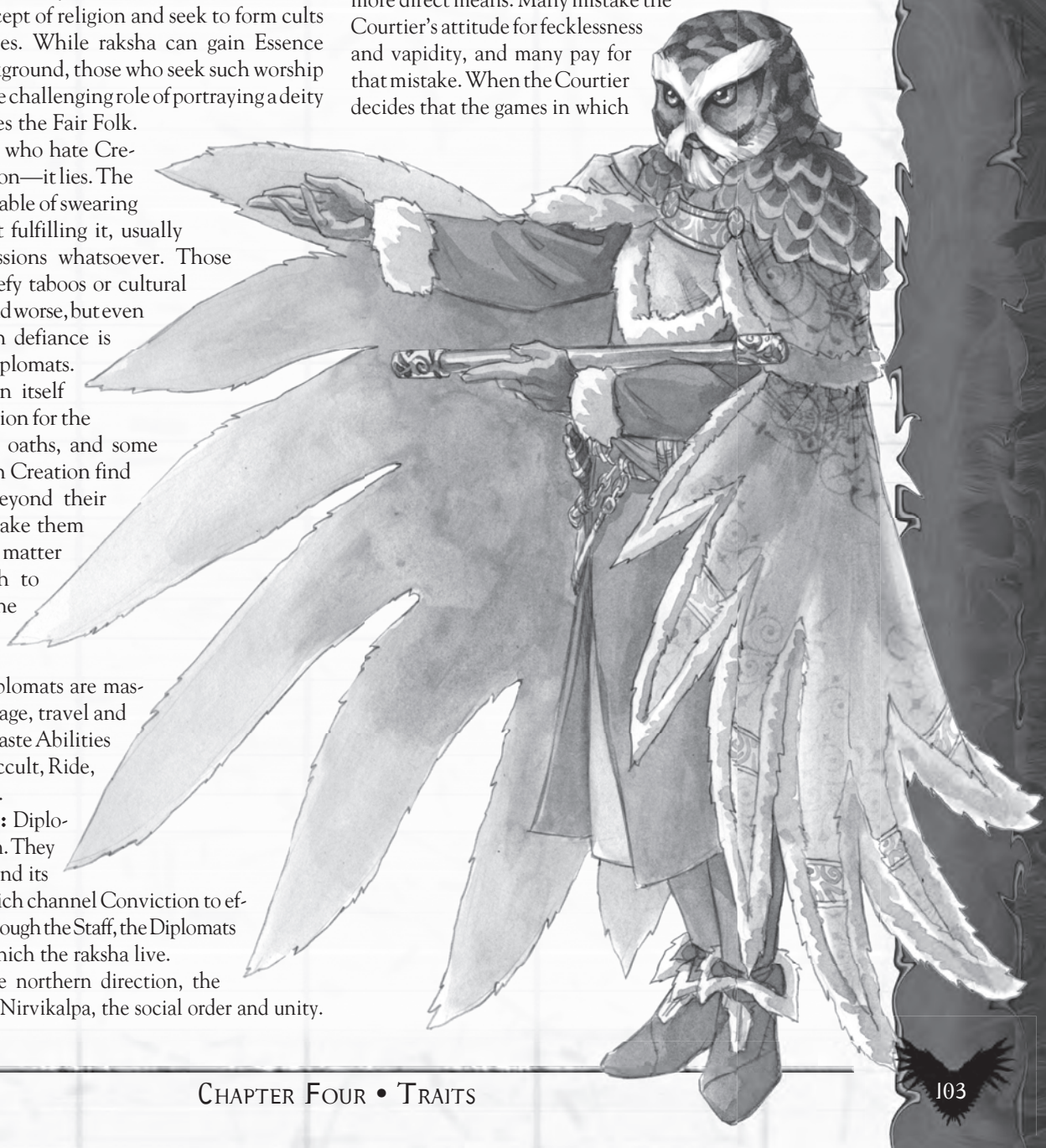
Associations: The northern direction, the color blue, the shinma Nirvikalpa, the social order and unity.

Sobriquets: Beguilers, Constraining Storms, Culture Dancers, Poison Knives, Rajanya, Shapers of Law, Silent Chains, Summit and Chasm Folk, Tulpa

Ascendant Diplomats

Courtier (Shadowed Entertainer)

The Courtier is an agent of the Staff but draws upon the Cup. A dazzling social butterfly, he plays the games of court intrigue with panache and gusto. But while those games of power and seduction invigorate him, he never lets them distract him from what is truly important—the integrity of the court itself. The Courtier's loyalty to his lady is absolute, at least until that lady is brought low by other forces. Those who endanger the court through their machinations and ego are a threat to the very fabric of raksha society and must be undone, whether through censure, public humiliation or more direct means. Many mistake the Courtier's attitude for fecklessness and vapidity, and many pay for that mistake. When the Courtier decides that the games in which



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he plays undermine the integrity of his social group, the vapid socialite reveals the iron core of the stalwart Diplomat he truly is.

Inversion: The Courtier's loyalty to his court is without question, but it often can't survive betrayal by the court itself. If a Courtier suffers a serious social setback or humiliation as a result of his loyalty to the social group, he might abandon his group loyalty and devote himself to his own advancement, even at the expense of his peers. In this way, the Courtier becomes a *Luminary*.

Imperial Raksha (Shadowed Warrior)

The Imperial Raksha combines the practical diplomacy of the Staff with the ruthless militarism of the Sword. She is the mailed fist beneath the velvet glove of raksha politics. As the saying goes, warfare is politics by other means, and the Imperial Raksha excel at that form of politics. The goal of any Imperial Raksha is to expand the reach and influence of the society to which she belongs by dominating all rival polities. In this way, the ties that bind the Fair Folk are made stronger and more durable. If that strength and durability comes at the cost of occupation forces or even genocide, it's a small price to pay for unity in the face of the raksha's many enemies. For all her military acumen, the Imperial Raksha is always a diplomat first and a soldier second. Her goal isn't "victory," but "success," which may be defined by a truce, a peace treaty or possibly even surrender if it is with favorable terms.

Inversion: The Imperial Raksha serves her society before her own ambition, but what if that society is no longer worthy of her devotion? In such a case, the raksha might choose to place her own views on "how things should be" above the opinions of her commanders and her lords alike. Whenever the social group on whose behalf an Imperial Raksha fights undergoes a significant shift in its social policies or political leadership, the raksha might choose to abandon her loyalty to that society and even seek to tear it down in favor of one more to her liking. In that way, the Imperial Raksha becomes an *Anarch*.

Scribe (Shadowed Worker)

A synthesis of the Staff and the Ring, the Scribe is a factotum of the law and a cog in the machinery of raksha culture. A servant of the Staff through and through, each Scribe sees himself as not so much a solo Diplomat, but as a loyal member of the diplomatic corps. His purpose is to exercise his skills in the service of expanding the web of connections that bind all raksha into a single people. Unlike his inverted antithesis, a Scribe attaches great value to his bureaucratic acumen because of the role it plays in preserving social order instead of seeing bureaucracy as a good in and of itself. The Scribe is loyal to his superiors provided that they are loyal to the bureaucracy in which they serve. As the name implies, Scribes identify with the written word, the magical means by which ideas are affixed into permanence. The quill is the weapon of the Scribe, and it is far mightier in his hands than any sword.

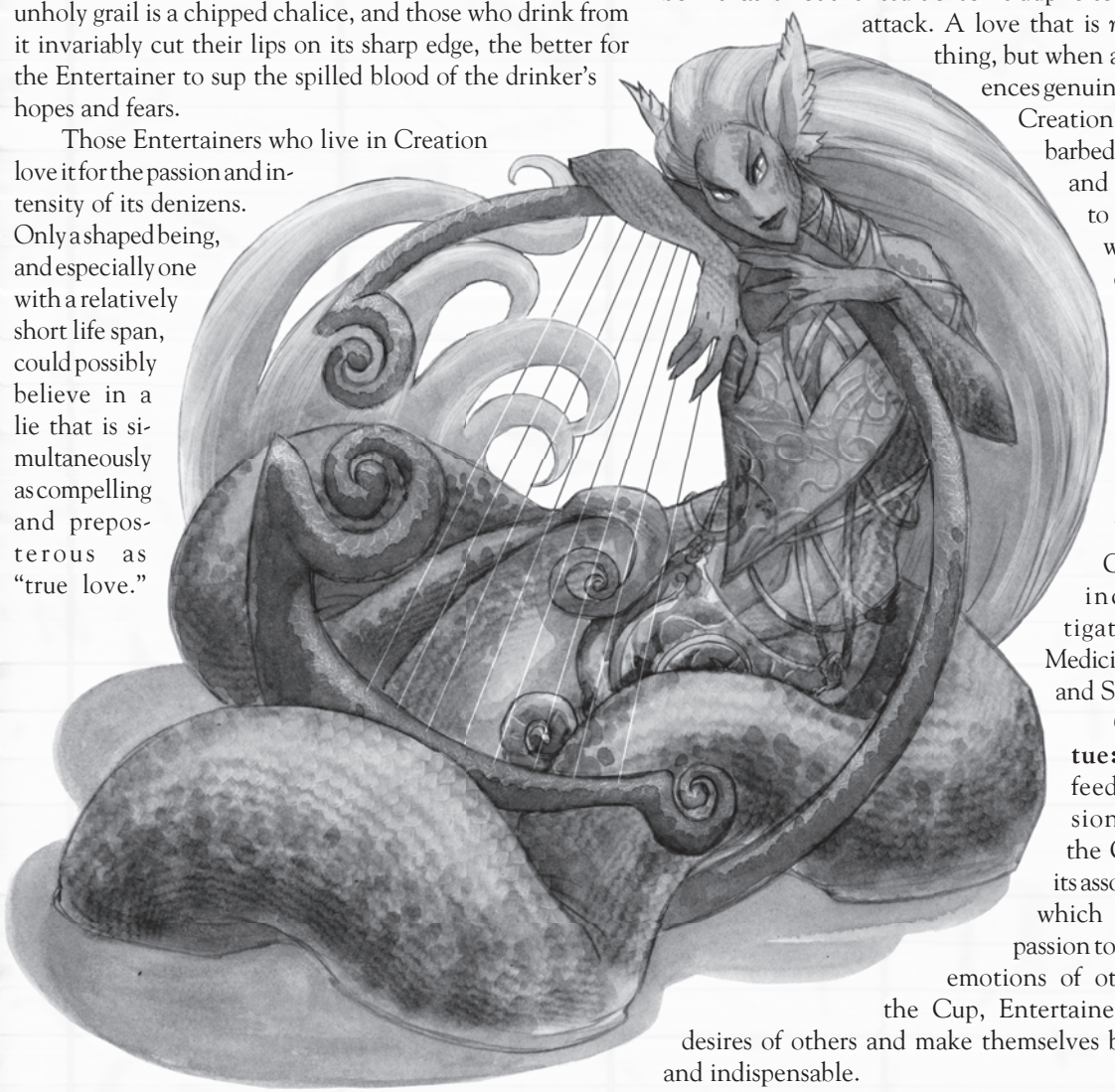
Inversion: The Scribe applies his learning to advance his society rather than himself because, like all good bureaucrats, he recognizes his own place as a cog in the machinery of society. Sometimes, however, a Scribe suddenly realizes the awesome power that even the most minor of bureaucrats holds if he's willing to be sufficiently petty. When a Scribe confronts irrefutable proof that his bureaucracy is flawed or even pointless, he might realize that his office has no true value save for whatever he can extract from it. In this manner, the Scribe becomes a *Panjandrum*.

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Entertainer

The Entertainers instill desire in other raksha and, in so doing, motivate them to action. To such beings, the purpose of Fair Folk existence is to love and be loved… especially the latter. Entertainers bring joy to the raksha, but they also bring obsession, corruption and denial. The tool of the Entertainer is the Cup from which all passion flows. This unholy grail is a chipped chalice, and those who drink from it invariably cut their lips on its sharp edge, the better for the Entertainer to sup the spilled blood of the drinker's hopes and fears.

Those Entertainers who live in Creation love it for the passion and intensity of its denizens. Only a shaped being, and especially one with a relatively short life span, could possibly believe in a lie that is simultaneously as compelling and preposterous as "true love."



While the raksha can always ravish one another, their tawdry affairs and petty assignations never seem as *real* as the pure, wholesome love of a Creation-born farm boy willing to betray everything he ever cared for in exchange for an Entertainer's kiss. Entertainers in Creation seek out mortals who will love them without restraint, whether the guests at a raksha-operated bordello or the barbarian worshipers of a Fair Folk fertility goddess.

An Entertainer who despises Creation usually does so because, while the Creation-born might utterly love her, Creation itself never will. These Entertainers neither understand nor accept that Creation as a whole is simply not capable of experiencing love in the way that the Wyld can when exposed to an Entertainer's Charms. Her most seductive wiles and profane dances are so utterly beneath Creation's notice that it does not even care enough to reject her. Even worse, a raksha who walks in Creation and interacts with its people suffers a terrible vulnerability—she might, on rare occasions, experience a love for a Creation-born that is not the result of some duplicitous Cup-shaping attack. A love that is *real*. It is a rare thing, but when a raksha experiences genuine love for one of Creation's bastards, it is a barbed hook in her soul and a mortal insult to all Entertainers which cannot be countenanced.

Caste Traits: Entertainers act through subterfuge, misdirection and manipulation. Their Caste Abilities include Investigation, Larceny, Medicine, Performance and Stealth.

Grace and Virtue: Entertainers feed on Compassion. They favor the Cup Grace and its associated Charms, which channel Compassion to manipulate the emotions of others. Through the Cup, Entertainers inflame the desires of others and make themselves both irresistible and indispensable.

Associations: The western direction, the color black, the shinma Dharma, corruption and dissolution.

Sobriquets: Beckoning Folk, The Desirable, Heart-Eaters, Lananshee, Pleasure Toys, Shudra, Transforming Passions, Unmakers

Ascendant Entertainers

Luminary (Shadowed Diplomat)

The living intersection of the Cup and the Staff, the Luminary is the life of the party and the belle of the ball. Every eye is always on her, every tongue spreads her reputation, whether as ingénue, benefactress or court jester. And if anyone dares to challenge her status as the fairest, most

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generous, most amusing or most desirable, she will see to their undoing personally. The Luminary's chief interest lies in using and abusing raksha society to advance her own position—all others be damned. She generally works within the milieu of the Fair Folk court structure, using charm and guile to disarm and discomfit her rivals. Yet she is not above more blunt measures such as betraying those rivals to the Wyld Hunt or other Creation-born threats or simply manipulating thickheaded Warriors into slaying them. The Luminary's delicate appearance, whether as a coquettish lady or a ribald harlequin, hides a viper whose honeyed words are venomous. If the Luminary must tear down the entire edifice of the court to which she belongs in order to make a pedestal for herself, it is negligible price to pay.

Inversion: Despite her intrinsic selfishness and flightiness, even a Luminary can know regret and shame. If a Luminary's plans to advance her own position seriously undermine the stability of the entire court in some way, she might feel an uncustomary pang of guilt. For a time, she will devote herself wholeheartedly to the needs of the group, sacrificing even her own ambitions. For a time, anyway. In this way, the Luminary becomes a *Courtier*.

Eshu (Shadowed Warrior)

The Eshu, like all Entertainers, lives to tell a story. Unsurprisingly for an agent of the Cup and the Sword, the Eshu's tale is one of violence carefully arranged into an art form. Eshu quest into the most dangerous parts of the Wyld and return to proudly display the scars of their victories and the trophies of their conquests. These raksha regularly combine their martial prowess with some other artistic medium. One Eshu becomes a master storyteller who hypnotizes the crowd with his daring tales. Another is a bloodstained poet who reduces his readers to tears with his verses about the futility of war (though that does not stop him from seeking out future battles for inspiration). Still others are smiths who forge their own weapons of destruction, each of which sings a song of bloodlust whenever drawn from the scabbard. Eshu go where they will and collect glory where they can, and none can balk them in their expeditions.

Inversion: When an Eshu enters battle, it is with a clearly defined and achievable goal in mind: escape, either victorious or at least alive, with a good story to tell. For some Eshu, such tales are no longer for the telling, and the fights become all too personal. When an Eshu faces an enemy who provokes utter hatred, that enemy's value as a source of inspiration ceases. Instead, the enemy's true value is as fuel for the white-hot flame of the raksha's Valor. This enemy need not be an individual. Societies or even the totality of Creation can provoke sufficient hate in an Eshu's heart to trigger inversion. When that happens, the Eshu becomes a *Xia*.

Ornamental Raksha (Shadowed Worker)

Her Ring utterly drowned in deep waters of her Cup, the Ornamental Raksha exists, not even to serve, but to be a mere decoration for her master. As the name implies, such raksha are mere ornaments, with no purpose save that defined by their beauty and savoir faire. The Ornamental Raksha crafts herself to provoke delight in others according to another's perception of beauty, not her own. Having defined herself by another's standards, the Ornamental Raksha rarely offers any strong opinions of her own as to what the appropriate standard of beauty might be. It is enough that she meets it, however others define it. Having divorced herself of all internal criteria for measuring her self-worth, the Ornamental Raksha is calm and serene, seeking only to please others.

Inversion: Purpose is important to all raksha of the Ring, including Ornamental Raksha. For one who defines her purpose as merely "to exist for others," the realization that these other beings are unworthy of the pleasure she provides can be a bitter pill. When confronted by some terrible event that provokes her ego and requires her to act according to her own wants, the Ornamental Raksha might find hidden reserves of self-worth and an artistic viewpoint of her own that is just as valid as the views of those who surround her. When this realization comes, the Ornamental Raksha could become an *Artisan*.

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Warrior

The Warriors are both the legendary heroes and legendary villains of the Wyld. While Diplomats govern raksha society, the Warriors are the engines that drive it. They provide the endless conflict that gives meaning to Fair Folk existence. Where there is no conflict, there is only stagnation. Only through conflict can the raksha evolve. The tool of the Warrior is the Sword, which is both the attacking weapon that brings change while cutting away that which is no longer valued and the defending weapon that preserves that which is still necessary.

Warriors who seek battle in Creation do so because it represents the truest test of a Warrior's courage. In Creation, a Warrior can die. Not be slain in an ultimately irrelevant shaping contest, but really and truly die. For some Warriors, the possibility of death brings with it a new appreciation for the value of one's life, and the heady forbidden thrill of a near-death experience intoxicates many Warriors more than the strongest of ales or the sweetest of dreams. Warriors in Creation often set themselves up as warlords over local Wyld barbarian tribes, whom they lead into conflict against Dragon-Blooded or similar forces. Some Warriors, especially Warriors skilled at appearing human, insinuate themselves into Creation-born mercenary outfits, silently gleaning Valor from the mortal combatants around them.

Ironically, Warriors who hate Creation do so for the exact same reason—Creation and its denizens can kill them. In fact, compared to the difficulty of acquiring a raksha's Sword and Heart Graces and using them maliciously, a Creation-born can slay a raksha with ridiculous ease. Warriors who define themselves by their Valor and by their capacity to provoke fear must themselves know fear of death as long as Creation stands. To the proud Warriors of the Fair Folk, this represents a slur on their collective honor that cannot stand.

Caste Traits: Warriors pursue the art of conflict in all its forms, social as well as physical. Their Caste Abilities include Archery, Martial Arts, Melee, Presence and War.

Grace and Virtue: Warriors feed on Valor. They favor the Sword Grace and its associated Charms, which channel Valor to overcome adversity. Through the Sword, the Warriors inspire fear to dominate their enemies.

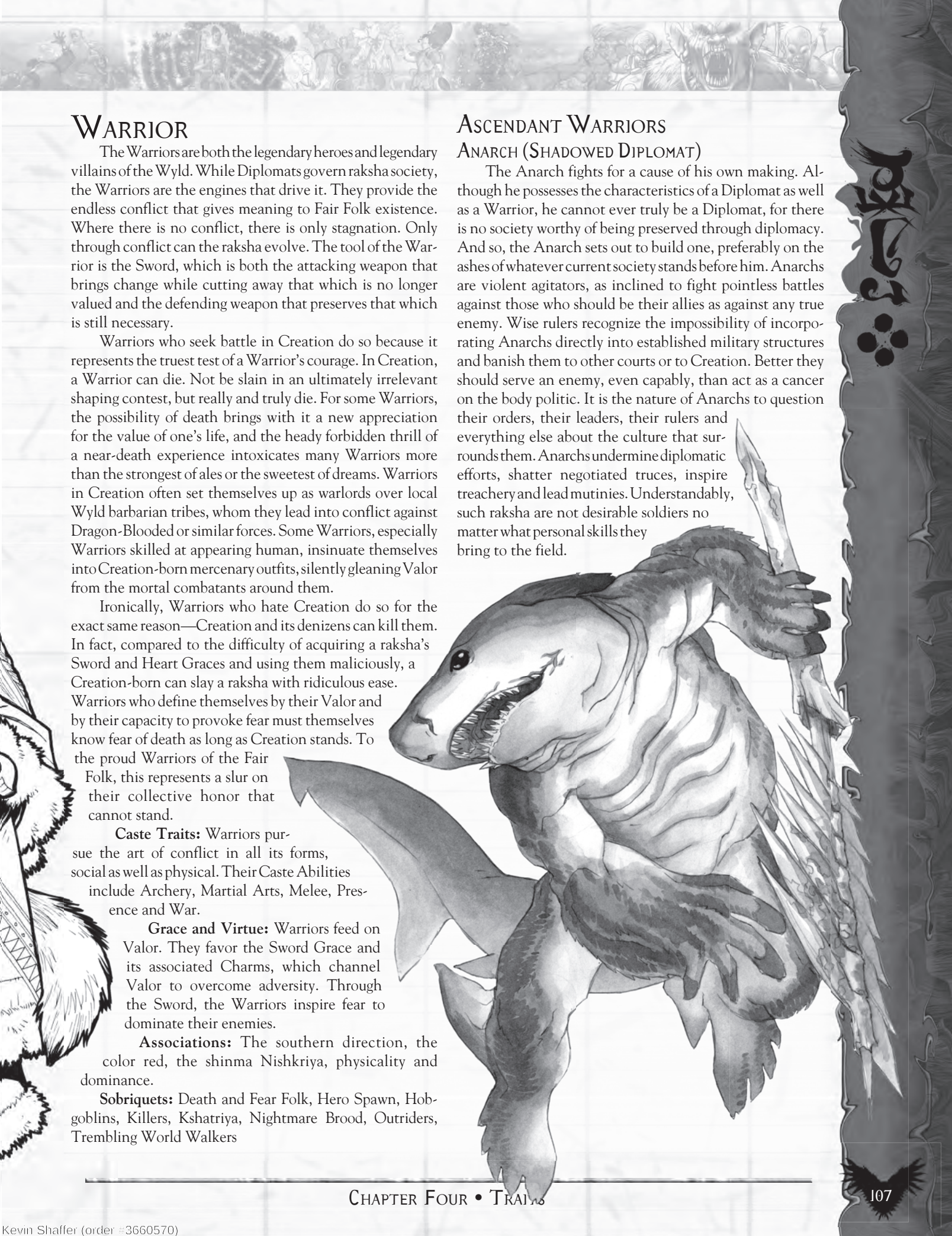
Associations: The southern direction, the color red, the shinma Nishkriya, physicality and dominance.

Sobriquets: Death and Fear Folk, Hero Spawn, Hobgoblins, Killers, Kshatriya, Nightmare Brood, Outriders, Trembling World Walkers

Ascendant Warriors

Anarch (Shadowed Diplomat)

The Anarch fights for a cause of his own making. Although he possesses the characteristics of a Diplomat as well as a Warrior, he cannot ever truly be a Diplomat, for there is no society worthy of being preserved through diplomacy. And so, the Anarch sets out to build one, preferably on the ashes of whatever current society stands before him. Anarchs are violent agitators, as inclined to fight pointless battles against those who should be their allies as against any true enemy. Wise rulers recognize the impossibility of incorporating Anarchs directly into established military structures and banish them to other courts or to Creation. Better they should serve an enemy, even capably, than act as a cancer on the body politic. It is the nature of Anarchs to question their orders, their leaders, their rulers and everything else about the culture that surrounds them. Anarchs undermine diplomatic efforts, shatter negotiated truces, inspire treachery and lead mutinies. Understandably, such raksha are not desirable soldiers no matter what personal skills they bring to the field.



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Inversion: The Anarch is a slave to his need for chaos and conflict and cannot abide the status quo… usually. Every now and then, however, the Anarch suffers the bane of his existence: success. An Anarch who actually succeeds in substantially altering his society through the power of his violence (or alternatively, who is simply persuaded that this is the case) might decide that the new society is one that deserves preservation. Having found something finally worth fighting for instead of against, the Anarch becomes an *Imperial Raksha*.

Xia (Shadowed Entertainer)

In every time, in every place, in every life, eventually some blood must be shed. Where possible, Xia will be the ones to shed that blood. Unlike Eshu, who are warrior-artists, each Xia is an artist whose sole medium is battle. Some are gladiators barely aware of the cheering crowds after a perfectly executed kill. Others are generals who leave their opposites slack-jawed at the brilliance of their stratagems. The Xia will fight for honor, for dignity, even for food, but she will never truly fight for victory, for victory means the cessation of hostilities. To a Xia, a nemesis permanently slain is an irreplaceable treasure lost forever. Xia often mourn their fallen enemies more than their fallen allies.

Inversion: A Xia hurls herself into battle without fear because conflict brings meaning to her life. Implicit in that is the idea that no conflict can actually end that life. If confronted with someone or something that might actually be able to kill her, a Xia might break and abandon her subtle death wish for a more restrained form of conflict. Such a Xia becomes an *Eshu*.

Cataphract (Shadowed Worker)

Soldier and Worker both, the Cataphract is the dream of a soldier given shape, a raksha carved into the form of a knight-errant, an officer or a cold-blooded murderer. Brutal but effective, Cataphractoi have no true loyalty to any cause. They fight because they fight—that is the way of their caste. Cataphractoi go to war not out of a cause or even truly because of their orders, but simply because it is war, and that is where warriors go. Having defined himself as a living weapon, the Cataphract cannot be but what he is. Cataphractoi serve as bodyguards, as elite troops, as warrior-servants of more powerful nobles, but wherever they go, it will be someplace where they anticipate the likelihood of battle and at least the possibility of death. No Cataphract would ever accept the raksha equivalent of a desk job.

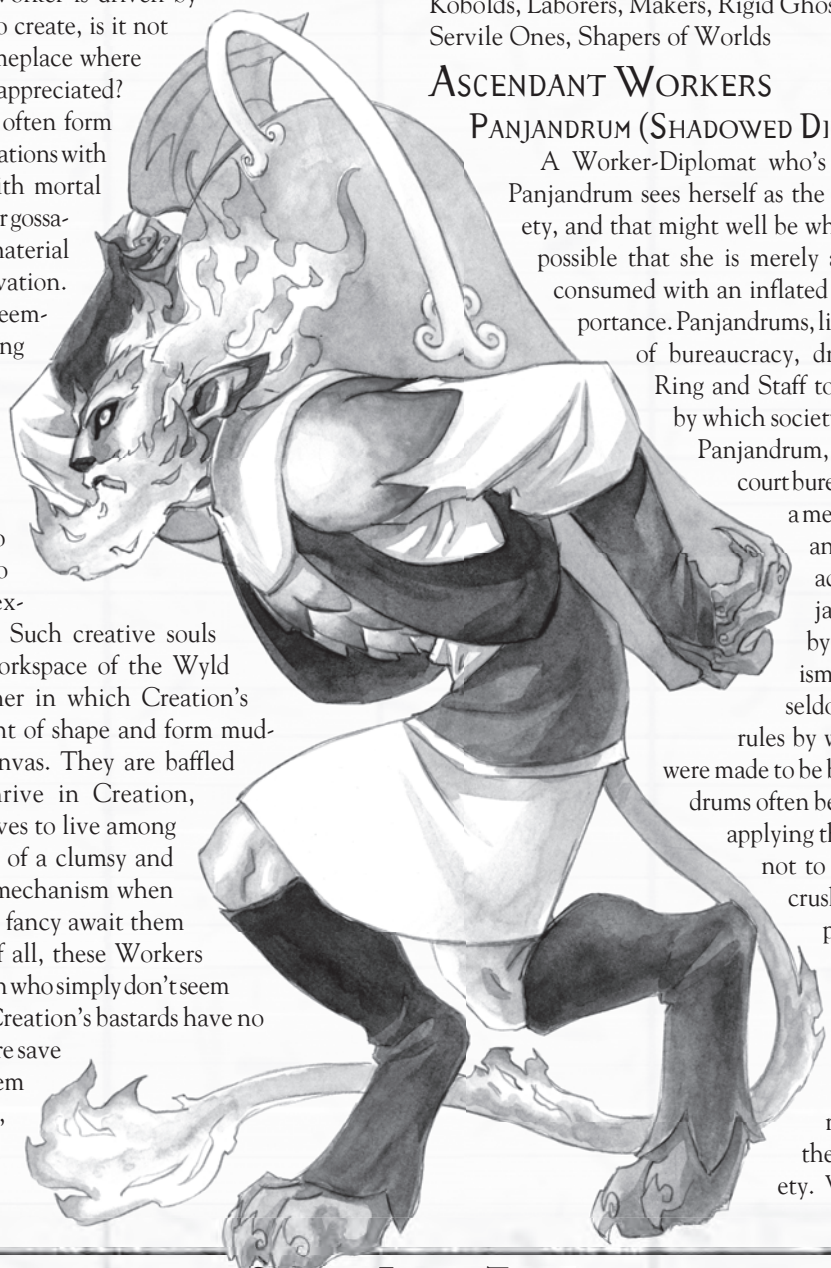
Inversion: The Cataphract acts as he does because he sees no purpose for his actions save for the purpose for which he was born—to fight. Sometimes, however, even the coldest of Cataphractoi can find a purpose other than conflict for its own sake. Sometimes, the spectre of doom, not just for a Cataphract, but for those he pretends to love, drives the raksha to do more than just make war. When this happens, the Cataphract becomes more than just a fighter. He becomes a planner, a general, a being with motives more complicated that *"Fight. Kill. Win."* When that awakening happens, the Cataphract becomes a *Strategos*.

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Worker

The Workers are the foundation of raksha society, and like so many foundations, their most common viewpoint consists of looking up at all those who walk over them. This is not a slur on the Worker caste, and few of them would ever think it so. The simple fact, however, is that raksha of the other castes define themselves by the goals they seek to fulfill and the desires they seek to manifest. Workers define themselves simply by what it is that they do and how well they do it. The Workers' symbol is the Ring, the circle that completes itself, the ourobouros defined by its own self-consumption.

Workers who love Creation do so because its people are so easily impressed by their arts. Even the simplest gossamer works, those most nobles would not deign to touch, seem like priceless artifacts to credulous mortals. For all their temperate natures, Workers are as susceptible to vanity as any others of their kind are. If a Worker is driven by his sense of purpose to create, is it not best that he do so someplace where his creations are best appreciated? Workers in Creation often form mutually beneficial relations with the Guild or even with mortal potentates, selling their gossamer trinkets for vast material riches and personal ovation. Others hide behind seemings of humanity, posing as local mask-carvers or swordsmiths, with the mortals around them oblivious to their true natures.



Workers who despise Creation do so because its very existence mocks them. Such creative souls prefer the infinite workspace of the Wyld and detest the manner in which Creation's grotesque arrangement of shape and form muddies their infinite canvas. They are baffled by Workers who thrive in Creation, condemning themselves to live among the gears and pulleys of a clumsy and decaying clockwork mechanism when engines of dream and fancy await them in the Wyld. Most of all, these Workers hate the Creation-born who simply don't seem to know their place. Creation's bastards have no intrinsic caste structure save what is forced upon them by an accident of birth, and even then, the Creation-born don't accept their status but perpetually dream of becoming something more. To the Workers, these dreams are, in some ways, even more chaotic than the Wyld. A raksha Worker knows and accepts the purpose for which he exists. A Creation-born rarely does. Clearly, the system in which such beings exist is flawed and in dire need of replacement.

Caste Traits: Workers are masters of the creative arts. Their Caste Abilities include Bureaucracy, Craft, Integrity, Lore and Resistance.

Grace and Virtue: Workers feed on Temperance. They favor the Ring Grace and its associated Charms, which channel Temperance to define their understanding of their own societal role. Through the Ring, the Workers aspire to the heights of creative artistry.

Associations: The inward direction, the color white, the shinma Nirvishesha, creation and insight.

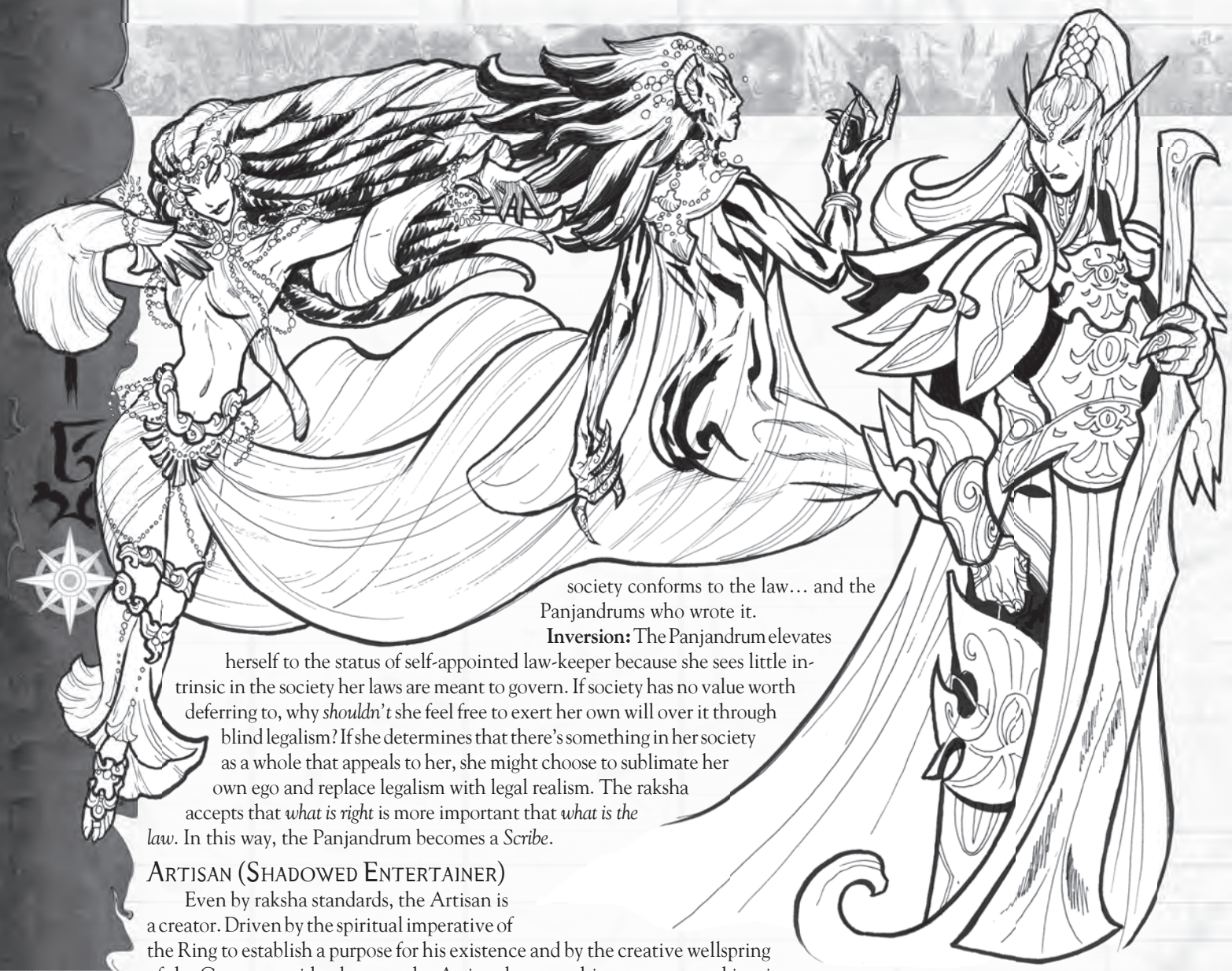
Sobriquets: Chaos Ants, Circle and Forge Folk, Jathita, Kobolds, Laborers, Makers, Rigid Ghosts, Ring People, The Servile Ones, Shapers of Worlds

Ascendant Workers

Panjandrum (Shadowed Diplomat)

A Worker-Diplomat who's mostly Worker, the Panjandrum sees herself as the architect of her society, and that might well be what she is. It is equally possible that she is merely an officious popinjay consumed with an inflated sense of her own importance. Panjandrums, like Scribes, are masters of bureaucracy, drawing equally upon Ring and Staff to create a mechanism by which society can flourish. For the Panjandrum, this mechanism—the court bureaucracy—ceases to be a means to advance society and becomes a means to advance herself. Panjandrums are fascinated by bureaucracy and legalism, but as a consequence, seldom recognize that the rules by which they live really were made to be broken. Such Panjandrums often become regal monsters, applying the full force of the law not to secure justice, but to crush those who deny the primacy of law. Others become capricious judges who grant leniency to allies and draconian penalties to enemies. Such raksha care not for the law's effect on society. What matters is that

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society conforms to the law… and the Panjandrums who wrote it.

Inversion: The Panjandrum elevates herself to the status of self-appointed law-keeper because she sees little intrinsic in the society her laws are meant to govern. If society has no value worth deferring to, why *shouldn't* she feel free to exert her own will over it through blind legalism? If she determines that there's something in her society as a whole that appeals to her, she might choose to sublimate her own ego and replace legalism with legal realism. The raksha accepts that *what is right* is more important that *what is the law*. In this way, the Panjandrum becomes a *Scribe*.

Artisan (Shadowed Entertainer)

Even by raksha standards, the Artisan is a creator. Driven by the spiritual imperative of the Ring to establish a purpose for his existence and by the creative wellspring of the Cup to provide pleasure, the Artisan becomes his own muse and inspires himself to ever greater heights of creativity. Whether virtuoso, artiste or craftsman, the Artisan has mastered techniques for pleasing others through his own proficiency. The things he crafts become treasures to the Fair Folk inspired by his work.

Inversion: All Artisans are geniuses, but all too many geniuses are not recognized by the fickle masses. To an Artisan, whose purpose is defined by invoking pleasure in others through his art, rejection can be a crushing blow and can lead him to doubt the validity of his own artistic license. When confronted by a rejection of one of his works, the Artisan might be forced to face the possibility that he isn't part of the avant-garde but merely a deluded hack who would be better served cutting the fabric of his vision to the fashion of the times. When this occurs, the Artisan becomes an *Ornamental Raksha*.

Strategos (Shadowed Warrior)

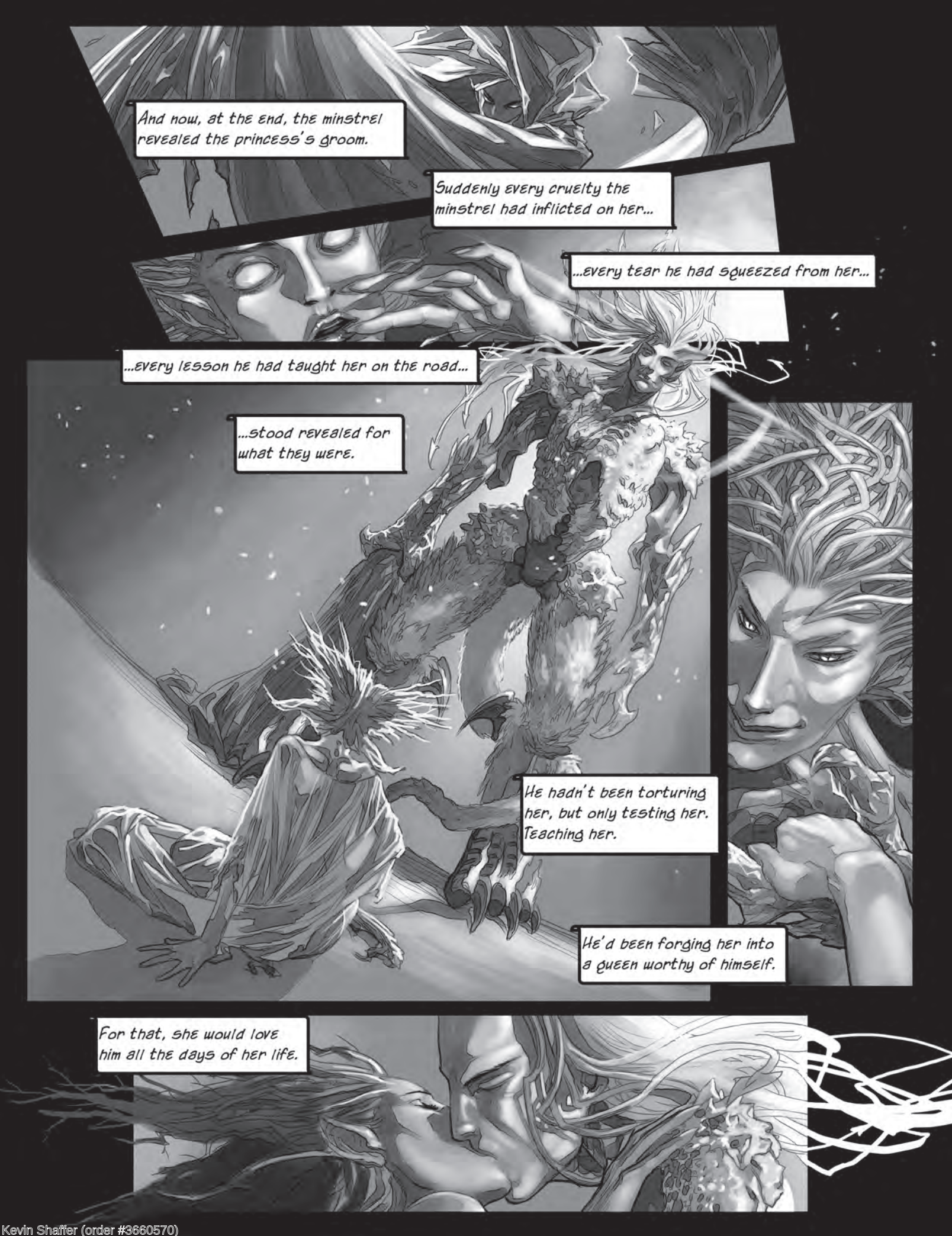
A Worker with a distinctly martial bent, the Strategos serves the needs of society but invokes the violence of the Sword in doing so. Warfare is the game of kings, and Strategoi play it well, whether as knights-errant charged with court security or paladins of Balor who will lead the next crusade against Creation. For the Strategos, warfare *is* a game, and like all games, it must have rules. Strategoi support a strong chain of command to a degree surprising to others, given their kind's intrinsically chaotic nature. They don't defy their commanders, nor do they brook defiance from their subordinates. The watchword of the Strategos is duty—to commander, liege, and the Wyld itself. Workers at their core, these raksha find purpose in battle and growth through conflict. With military precision, the Strategos perfects herself into the ultimate engine of war.

Inversion: The Strategos draws her sense of purpose from the structure of the military to which she is attached. She sees herself as part of a whole, the good right arm of a greater body under the command of her superiors. If that body fails, then so might her sense of purpose. If a Strategos' unit suffers a major military setback as a result of incompetence on the part of her commanders or bad execution on the part of her subordinates, the setback might shatter her faith in the unit's tactical and moral superiority. Losing faith, she turns inward, abandoning fealty to tried-and-true military tactics in favor of relying exclusively on the one person the raksha can trust—herself. In this way, the Strategos becomes a *Cataphract*.

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CHAPTER FIVE
REALITY SHAPING

The supernatural powers of the raksha stem from their ability to manipulate the fate and substance of their surroundings. The Primordials used the same magic to forge Creation out of chaos, and many other beings use it today to many different ends. Collectively, this manipulation is called shaping magic, and in other books, its presence as part of an effect is signified with the Shaping keyword. But while other beings use shaping through Charms or spells, raksha in the Wyld perform shaping magic innately.

There are two types of shaping effects that fall under the rubric of Fair Folk reality-shaping: shaping actions and shaping attacks. Shaping actions generally include any action by a raksha (or by any other being with an appropriate Grace) to magically alter the characteristics of the Wyld or its inhabitants. Shaping attacks represent a subset of shaping actions that are specifically meant to inflict shaping damage on the health tracks of a raksha's Graces and, in so doing, affect the raksha's fundamental nature. Shaping attacks are treated differently from other shaping actions in terms of timing and dice mechanics and are discussed separately beginning on page 120.

Common raksha can make shaping actions but not shaping attacks. Only heroic commoners and noble raksha can make shaping attacks.

The Structure of the Wyld

Before one can understand the innate shaping powers of the raksha, one must understand the environment in which they exercise those powers, and the manner in which they experience that environment.

Space: Waypoints and Journeys

In Creation, distance is definite and measurable. In the Wyld, things are not so. In Rakshastan, where the formed existence of Creation unravels into the unformed existence of chaos, two kinds of locality exist: waypoints and journeys. A waypoint is a place of variable size—anywhere from a single

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room to a miles-wide stretch of forest—wherein events can occur. A journey is a connection between two waypoints. The interior of a waypoint resembles space in Creation, but while the Charms of the Creation-born can impose momentary meaning on a journey, without that influence, a journey is dreamlike and impressionistic. In some senses, characters traveling across the Wyld don't move through journeys at all—they move directly from one waypoint to the next, and hallucinate memories of a passage between the two that puts the transition in context.

Waypoints and journeys most often arrange themselves in a rough three-dimensional grid with each waypoint connecting to the nearest six others. Storytellers interested in varying from this structure can create interesting terrain by creating waypoint maps with non-standard layouts. It need be no more difficult than drawing a number of circles on a piece of scrap paper and connecting them with lines. (The "up" and "down" journeys can most often be safely ignored.)

When the Creation-born journey from waypoint to waypoint in an unspoiled expanse of Rakshastan, their very presence imposes a more concrete spatial arrangement on the Wyld. For Creation-born, one journey usually corresponds to approximately 30 miles. This is not always the case. In some areas of the Wyld, waypoints are few and far between and journeys between them take longer. In others, waypoints are more densely packed and more quickly accessible. Some freeholds of the raksha are made from many waypoints placed close together. For example, in a freehold shaped like a manor house and grounds, the house by itself might be a single waypoint, but a raksha who desires an isolated room might define one of the freehold's waypoints as a single chamber within the manor. In this case, journeying from the manor waypoint to the chamber waypoint involves traveling barely any distance at all… unless the interior waypoint's master shapes some sort of spatial anomaly into existence to protect his sanctity. Even if two waypoints manifest as adjacent rooms, shaping effects can make sure that crossing from one to the next still represents the equivalent of a 30-mile journey.

Subject to normal variance, a traveler moving outward from Creation will pass through 20 waypoints of the Bordermarches, 60 waypoints of the Middlemarches and another 20 waypoints of the Deep Wyld before reaching the Pure Chaos beyond Rakshastan—the true Wyld. In Pure Chaos, no waypoints normally exist, and anyone who wishes to travel further must venture through the drifting waypoint bodies of the most distant unshaped. What lies beyond, none can say—if anything can be said to "exist" beyond at all.

Time: Tales and Abstract Ticks

Games centered around Creation-born characters generally express time (from most precise measurement to least) in *ticks*, *actions*, *scenes*, *downtime* and *stories*. When the raksha interact with each other away from the disruptive influence of the Creation-born, they experience a more fluid and often leisurely passage of time. Games involving raksha in the Wyld generally express time in *abstract ticks*, *shaping actions*, *tales*, *downtime* and *stories*.

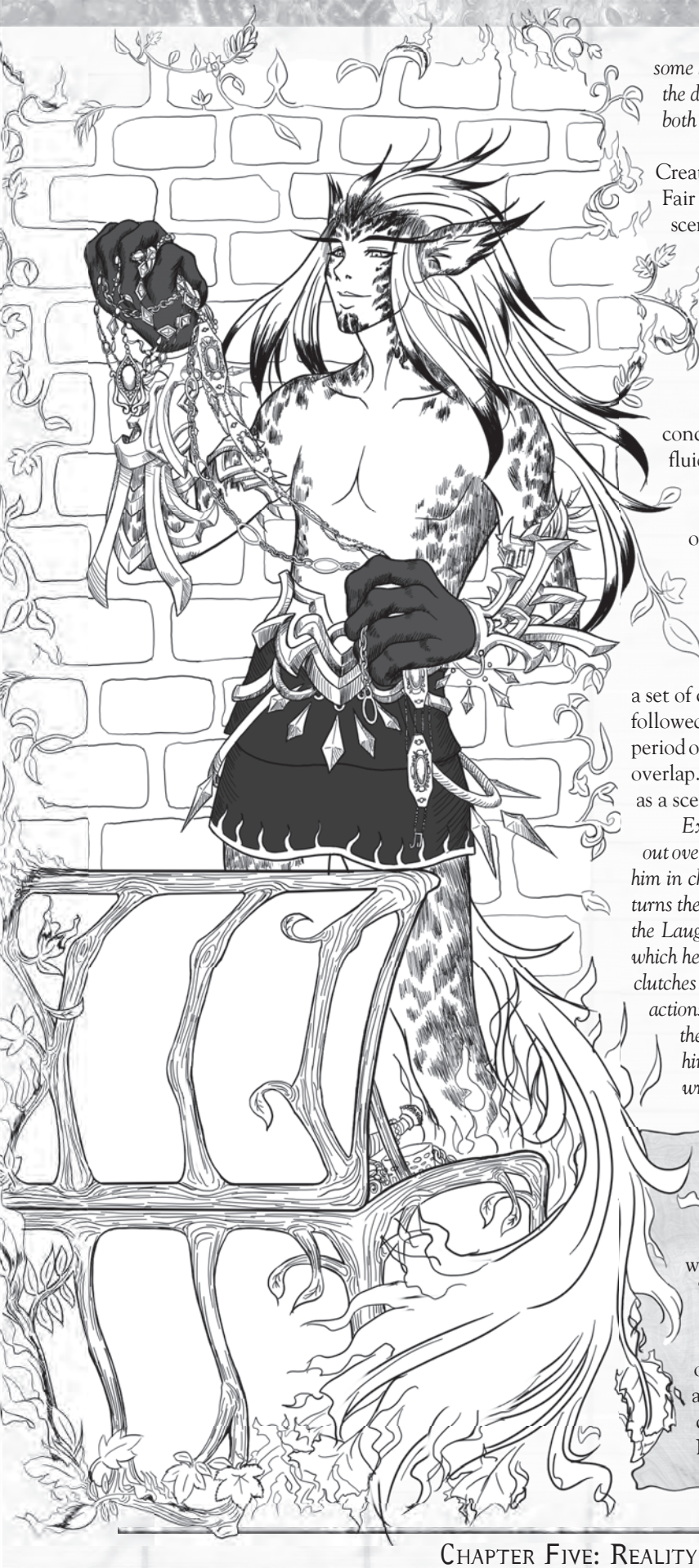
> **Huh?**
>
> Think of waypoints and journeys as spatial equivalents to scenes and downtime. During a scene, important things can happen, and players examine the events of their characters' lives moment-to-moment. During downtime, existence is more abstract, and anywhere from hours to years of a character's life can pass by with only the vaguest definition. Another way to think of a journey is like a montage in a movie—no dialogue and no scenes that advance the plot, just establishing shots and jump-cuts that connect the preceding and following scenes.

These expressions of time within the Wyld are fluid and prone to overlapping. Generally, an *abstract tick* is usually longer than a long tick and takes about four minutes, but it can be as short as a regular tick in Creation. A *shaping action* is much longer than a regular action. A Speed 5 shaping action takes about 20 minutes (five abstract ticks of four minutes each), comparable to a single scene in Creation. But just as a scene in Creation can last much less or much more than 20 minutes, so a shaping action can take as much or as little time as the players' descriptions demand. Because shaping actions correlate to a scene in Creation, the shaping actions of multiple raksha in the same location can blend and overlap.

From a Storytelling standpoint, a shaping action represents a raksha relating the story of what is going to happen over the course of the following scene (as that term would apply if the characters were in Creation instead of the Wyld). Absent interference by other characters, the shaping action takes as much or as little time as it takes for the raksha's narrative to play out. If other raksha intervene with competing narratives of their own, their cooperative tale lasts as long as they continue to interact. The first raksha's shaping action continues, however, either until his chosen narrative is in place or until there ceases to be any chance of it coming into being.

Example: The Laughing Boy seeks to break into a safe and abscond with the valuables within. If the safe is located within Creation, the theft most likely takes place over the course of a single scene, with the Laughing Boy most likely performing several actions in the course of his burglary. In the Wyld, however, the entire theft consists of a single shaping action by the raksha burglar, who weaves the tale of his intrusion, his perfect stealth, his dexterous penetration of the safe and his daring escape, all as part of a single shaping roll. If the Laughing Boy's shaping action is unopposed, his theft cannot help but be successful. On the other hand, if he is opposed by the shaping actions of another raksha, say Cahlenna, the Storyteller might require an opposed shaping roll of

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some kind, since that Cataphract's tale of heroically capturing the daring thief and the thief's tale of evading capture cannot both be true at once.

Much to the raksha's chagrin, the presence of Creation-born forces a more orderly view of time on the Fair Folk, spontaneously creating temporal durations of scene length that raksha can neither compress nor expand through shaping actions. **In the presence of the Creation-born, raksha can perform one shaping action per scene, regardless of that shaping action's Speed in abstract ticks.** A shaping action, no matter what that action is, conceptually represents the same idea as a scene within Creation, and Creation-born visitors cannot help but impose that concept upon the Fair Folk and interfere with the raksha's fluid experience of time. Once a raksha has performed a shaping action in front of a Creation-born, *no matter what it is*, he is barred from performing a subsequent one until the scene changes.

Raksha shaping effects with durations too long to be measured in shaping actions are sometimes measured in *tales*. A tale is the shaping equivalent to a scene just as an abstract tick is the shaping equivalent of a regular tick. It's a period of time in which a set of connected events occurs, and is often preceded and followed by periods of downtime. It also represents the time period over which the shaping actions of multiple raksha can overlap. Although a shaping action lasts roughly for as long as a scene, a tale is the thematic equivalent to a scene.

Example: Cahlenna's fable of victorious justice has won out over the Laughing Boy's deceitful fictions, and she has bound him in chains. Now, she weaves a new story, one in which she turns the thief over to her superiors for a fat reward. Meanwhile, the Laughing Boy refuses to admit defeat and weaves a tale in which he skillfully pockets the Cataphract's keys and escapes her clutches. Although these proposed actions represent new shaping actions, they are all part of the same tale, which ends only when the Laughing Boy has escaped, when Cahlenna has turned him over to her superiors or when some other narrative event wraps up the current tale and begins a new one.

When Season Meets Tale

It might seem like the fuzzy nature of duration in the Wyld can cause problems when the raksha interact with the Creation-born. This need not be the case. It's no more difficult to determine when a tale is ended as it is to judge the end of a scene. On first glance, many of the concepts in this chapter might seem new and unfamiliar, but they've been deliberately constructed to parallel concepts found in the **Exalted** core rulebook.

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In the same way that the default scene is 20 minutes long, and the default journey between waypoints is 30 miles, the default tale lasts for one season of Creation's time, and Charm effects that have a listed duration of one tale will usually terminate at the end of one season, if not earlier. Generally, most tales are much shorter than a season, but effects such as "she will wear the body of a hag until she receives true love's kiss" might last much, much longer. A tale is an abstract term, and like a scene, ends when the Storyteller says it does.

Shaping Actions

A shaping action is the mechanical expression of a raksha's ability to manipulate the fate and substance of the Wyld around him. Almost every action a raksha performs in the Wyld will be a shaping action, for while the raksha can choose to experience time and events as the Creation-born do, they cannot affect themselves or each other in any permanent way without engaging in shaping magic.

Shaping actions are broadly categorized into four groups. Cup-shaping creates scenes of desire and addiction and uses Social Attributes and the Abilities associated with the Entertainer caste. Ring-shaping creates scenes of environmental interaction and uses Mental Attributes and Abilities associated with the Worker caste. Staff-shaping creates scenes of social interaction (or the avoidance thereof) and uses Charisma, Appearance and Intelligence, as well as the Abilities of the Diplomat caste. Finally, Sword-shaping creates scenes of violence or physical exertion and uses Physical Attributes and the Abilities of the Warrior caste.

It is important to note that when the player of a raksha incorporates an Ability into a shaping roll, his character is not *literally* using that Ability. To the raksha, each Ability not only represents a type of skill or activity, it also represents a narrative concept derived from an understanding of the shinma. In Creation, the Lore Ability might allow a character to research for information in a library. Incorporated into a shaping action in the Wyld, the Lore Ability might allow a raksha to *create* a fully stocked library from thin air.

Fantasies

The simplest of shaping actions is the creation of a fantasy. It is also the most versatile shaping action and, to Creation-born, often the most terrifying. A raksha who shapes a fantasy twists the fabric of the local Wyld and anything within it into whatever she wants. She can call up an army of a million hobgoblins. She can create a fortress leagues tall. She can create a feast substantial enough to feed every mortal in Creation. She can cause lightning bolts to rain down on her enemies or compel them to fight to their deaths. She just can't create anything with substance.

A shaped fantasy is no more real than a hallucination. The whole of a fantastic army will fall before a six-year-old boy armed with a stick. No matter how vast the fortress, a blind beggar could breach the walls. A raksha is fully capable of shaping the fantasy of a five-mile-long silver spike appearing from nowhere and impaling an attacking Lunar, but the Lunar can simply pull himself off the spike. Though his body might appear to bleed, he is not truly injured.

Creating a fantasy requires a shaping action roll (Cup-, Ring, Staff- or Sword-shaping, as the player wishes). One success is all that is required to create nearly anything the raksha can imagine, although more successes make it harder for another raksha to alter a fantasy in some way. A single fantasy shaping action is sufficient to create millions of

The Shaping Keyword

The people of Creation have various defenses against effects that use the Shaping keyword (which can include Sidereal astrology, some Charms and spells, as well as the warping effects of the Wyld). Raksha reality-shaping always possesses the Shaping keyword and these effects—such as the Solar Charm Integrity-Protecting Prana—defend against raksha reality-shaping where appropriate. Integrity-Protecting Prana, for example, defends against any shaping effect that alters the user's mind, body, spirit or traits. It defends against the internal penalty inflicted by a fantasy (see p. 117), even though an internal penalty is not an alteration of a character's traits, because it's an attack on the defender's mind.

These defenses protect only against permanent glamour and mutation during the process of creation or mutation. Standard defenses against shaping cannot unmake mutations or undo established permanent glamours.

Because *all* raksha magic technically fits under the definition of the Shaping keyword given on **Exalted,** page 183, that definition is expanded upon with regard to the Shaping keyword as it applies to Charm descriptions in this book. See page 153.

Default Shaping Rolls

Cup-shaping	[Charisma, Manipulation or Appearance] + [any Entertainer Ability]
Ring-shaping	[Perception, Intelligence or Wits] + [any Worker Ability]
Staff-shaping	[Charisma, Appearance or Intelligence] + [any Diplomat Ability]
Sword-shaping	[Strength, Dexterity or Stamina] + [any Warrior Ability]

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individual beings, to completely reshape the environment of an entire waypoint, to compel the actions of other beings or even to simply kill another being outright. The player of the raksha creating the fantasy decides what he wishes to create, with a description as vivid or as simplistic as he wishes, from "I want a tyrant lizard to defend me" to "I want this waypoint to become a perfect copy of Nexus, inhabited by perfect copies of its citizens." Ultimately, however, none of these results are anything more than illusory.

When someone comes into contact with a fantasy, she has three options: to alter it, to submit to it or to ignore it. If one raksha wishes to *alter* the fantasy of another, she must make a shaping roll (of any type) with a difficulty equal to the number of successes rolled by the player of the fantasy's original creator. If the new raksha's roll is successful, she can shape the fantasy away entirely or alter or delete any of its details she dislikes. Powerful raksha rulers often reinforce their fantasies with Charms and exact heavy penalties on those who would challenge their rule by capriciously disrupting those fantasies. A Creation-born cannot alter a fantasy in any way unless he is capable of shaping actions.

Example: It is the will of Princess Kyema of the Jet Court that her white silk robes should never stain under any circumstances, lest she suffer indignity before her courtiers. This fantasy of hers is supported by the prodigious eight successes her player got on a Staff-shaping roll (Charisma + Socialize). The player of anyone who actively sought to mar her stunning garments in any way would need to get at least nine successes on a shaping roll of his own for his character to do so.

Any character can choose to *submit* to a fantasy. By acting in accordance with the terms of a fantasy, the character gains a one-die bonus to all rolled actions and may explicitly act in ways that normally would not make sense. A raksha can shape a fantasy of a battlefield where mighty warriors dash through the air on the barrages of arrows in flight, and any character present can then run along flying arrows.

Any character capable of stunts or Charms can seek to *ignore* the effects of a fantasy and will suffer only minor resistance, no matter how mighty the fantasy seems. To do so, the player's character must spend one Willpower point, which allows the character to oppose the fantasy for one tale (or one scene, if Creation-born are present). As long as the character uses a stunt or Charm, she can ignore the fantasy's effects. In any action she takes in opposition to an existing fantasy, however, she suffers an internal penalty equal to the shaping raksha's Essence.

Example: Rose is an outcaste Terrestrial Exalt whose husband was just kidnapped by a raksha noble. When the Dragon-Blood goes to find him, he's being held in an armed encampment of 10,000 hobgoblins, but the entire encampment is a fantasy. Rose's player spends a point of Willpower, and describes as Rose fights her way into the encampment to free her spouse. The description is sufficient to qualify as a one-die stunt, so she automatically succeeds in defeating 5,000 hobgoblins through swordplay. When she gets to her husband, she finds him tied to a pole with real rope. Her player rolls (Dexterity + Larceny) to untie the rope while fending off the army, and suffers an internal penalty to the Larceny roll equal to the shaping raksha's Essence (in this case, 3), as she resists the effect of the army trying to distract her. The roll succeeds, and she and her husband together fight their way back out of the remaining 5,000 hobgoblins.

The raksha who kidnapped her husband is merrily amused by the demonstration of Creation-born prowess and ponders what scenario to inflict upon Rose next.

Raksha can explicitly dictate the actions of others through shaped fantasy. For example, a raksha can shape the fantasy of a real character and a real monster fighting one another, assuming both are present. Even if neither is usually hostile to the other, the character and monster will join battle, unless the player of each spends a Willpower point to resist. Even so, if they do resist, for the rest of the scene each will suffer an internal penalty equal to the shaping raksha's Essence for any action other than fighting each other, but will gain a one-die bonus to any action that does involve fighting each other.

Regardless of how many successes were rolled on the original shaping roll, a character can reflexively negate any of his own fantasies, but not those over which a rival raksha has seized control. If a character creates a new fantasy that contradicts an existing one (and gets enough successes to overcome the difficulty of the prior one), the new fantasy takes over, and the contradictory elements of the old fantasy fade away. A raksha who designs his fantasies to work with preexisting fantasies rather than against them faces no special difficulty in doing so.

Alterations and Restorations

In the Wyld, raksha appear as they wish. A raksha can use a shaping action to change her superficial appearance, such as the color of her skin or eyes, the shape of her teeth or body, her number of limbs. A raksha who wants wings can shape wings for herself. None of these alterations provide *any* mechanical benefit, and they are just illusion. The exception is raksha who have taken on permanent form to more easily move about in Creation (see "Permanent Mutations," p. 151). They have inescapable elements of form they cannot change, though they may mitigate the effects of this with stunts.

No matter what form a raksha seems to take with the aid of shaped alterations, her interactions with other characters are governed by her traits. A raksha can use a shaping action to make herself appear impossibly beautiful, but her Appearance trait won't change. Onlookers will intuitively sense the true appearance within, and even if she commands those onlookers to treat her as if she were beautiful through a shaping effect, they could ignore her beauty at the cost of a single Willpower point. Similarly, she can make herself appear freakishly strong and weave fantasies that allow her to lift tremendous weight, but the dice in her damage pools remain a function of her Strength. Growing extra limbs doesn't provide her with extra attacks. Growing wings without the

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use of the Charms Gossamer Wing Flight (see p. 216) or the Wings abomination (see p. 215) doesn't provide her with the meaningful benefits of flight, such as the ability to fly out of reach of other characters, to make flyby attacks or to travel overland with increased speed.

Even taking an improbably unusual form, such as a flock of doves or a particularly intelligent shade of blue, provides no mechanical benefit. Characters who wish to interact with raksha in such forms can stunt methods of interaction that make sense. If a raksha takes the form of a shade of blue and a Solar attacks it, perhaps the Solar's player can describe the attack as reflecting sunlight off her daiklave's blade to disrupt the blue with a flash of yellow. If the player is having trouble imagining suitable stunts, just assume the character is doing something effective. Mechanically, these interactions are always resolved as if the raksha has a normal humanoid form.

A raksha can also use an unrolled shaping action to change her Intimacies or Motivation under the rules outlined on page 82. She can also shape away any effect inflicted by other raksha or Wyld-native fauna and not backed by shaping combat. This includes damage and death. One raksha killed by another in the Wyld may shape himself alive again, and a raksha compelled by another raksha's social attack to develop an Intimacy may shape away inconvenient emotional ties.

The actions of the Creation-born are real even within the Wyld. Those whom the Creation-born kill stay dead. Those whose passions they enflame, they enslave. Things that they steal remain stolen. Wounds they inflict last between stories. Oaths sworn to the Creation-born are binding on the Fair Folk's Essence even after the weave of events unravels. Unwanted Intimacies concerning Creation and the Creation-born that are inflicted on them by the actions of a Creation-born must be shed as if the raksha were Creation-born herself—they cannot be merely shaped away. In many ways, the Fair Folk are as helpless against the ensnaring influence of Creation as the average Creation-born is helpless against the machinations of the raksha.

No Body

Raksha sometimes lose their bodies, whether taking a shaping action to abandon all pretense of shape or by the effects of another raksha's shaping action. Whether a raksha reaches this state by being "killed" by another or whether the shape abandonment is voluntary, as discorporate conglomerations of Essence the rules treat such raksha in all ways as simply dematerialized. A Creation-born who uses a power that grants perception of dematerialized spirits on such a bodiless raksha sees the raksha as it truly is—an amorphous conglomeration of Essence, its feeding maws hungry for sustenance.

Having no body has no effect on a raksha's ability to perform shaping actions, including shaping combat.

Evocations

Anything a raksha owns (see "Charm Concept: Hold, Possess, Own Et Al." on p. 126, and "Charm Concept: Ownership," **Exalted**, p. 238), she can dismiss to Elsewhere or summon into her presence with a diceless shaping action called an evocation. In the Wyld, a single evocation can call forth any number of a raksha's possessions, or dismiss just as many.

Raksha in Creation who wish to duplicate the effects of an evocation shaping action must use a Charm such as Elemental Evocation (see pp. 163-164) or Emotional Evocation (see p. 167). If a possession is a permanent work of glamour capable of entering Creation without an Evocation Charm, the raksha can send it Elsewhere or retrieve it reflexively at a cost of one mote. A raksha cannot banish one of her own possessions from Creation if it's being deliberately guarded by the Creation-born.

Established raksha can assume they possess any desired quantity of ordinary crafted objects available for evocation—doors, clothing, weapons, sturdy cabinets, slaves, musical instruments and so forth. A raksha's Heart Grace binds her possessions to her, including her objects, servants, Graces and artifacts. Creation-born characters can sever this bond by stealing something and keeping it away from the raksha for one full tale or season. Generally, raksha can steal one another's possessions only through vexation (see p. 125).

Other Shaping Actions

Raksha can survey the waypoints around where they stand. As a Ring-shaping action, the raksha's player makes a roll of (Perception + Awareness). Success lets the character identify major features—shaped and unshaped raksha, freeholds, wandering behemoths and so forth—as far as 20 waypoints away. With one success, she can identify known raksha and freeholds and roughly assess others' movements and condition. Three or more successes give data equivalent to a close but quick visual examination.

Raksha can hide from each other. As a Staff-shaping action, raksha characters can oppose a shaping action to survey the Wyld with a shaping action to hide. The player of the deceptive character rolls (Intelligence + Stealth).

Raksha can slide waypoints along the interface between Creation and Rakshastan. As a Ring-shaping action, when standing upon a waypoint directly adjacent to Creation itself, a raksha can spend a point of .Willpower, and the raksha's player can roll (Intelligence + Craft [Glamour]) at a -2 external penalty. For every success the player rolls, the raksha may slide her location 100 miles along the edge of Creation while in the same waypoint, up to a maximum of 1,000 miles. Fae-Blooded mortals with Graces can perform similar feats of mobility.

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Wyld Stunts

Shaping actions aren't the only means by which the raksha alter the fabric of the Wyld. When experiencing existence in the moment (typically in the presence of Creation-born), they perform Wyld stunts. A Wyld stunt is much like a regular stunt—it adds dice and grants motes or Willpower in accordance with its detail—but also increases the difficulty of a roll and provides an extra effect if the roll succeeds. An effect as potent as Terrestrial Circle sorcery or Shadowlands Circle necromancy increases a roll's difficulty by two. If the effect is as potent as Celestial Circle Sorcery or Labyrinth Circle Necromancy, it increases the roll's difficulty by four. Effects that emulate the Solar or Void Circles increase difficulty by nine.

Wyld stunts suffer limitations. For most raksha (the exception being those with Style •••••; see p. 99), they function against only the Graceless native fauna of the Wyld or any Wyld mutant with the Wyld Assimilation affliction (see **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. II—The Wyld**, p. 147). They also suffer the same limitations as regular stunts in that if repeated too often, they cease to be stunts. Raksha rarely repeat themselves when performing such improvised magic.

Example: Neshi of the Double Whips comes upon a Guild caravan besieged by a tribe of Wyld-assimilated mutants. Wishing to gain the caravan's favor, Neshi plucks a handful of flowers and scatters the petals before her, creating a great cloud of razor-sharp blossoms. This is a stunted Thrown attack, but in its effect against the mutants, it resembles Death of Obsidian Butterflies. Neshi's player makes a (Dexterity + Thrown) roll at +2 difficulty (though she also gains a two-die bonus for the stunt). The roll succeeds, and the petals tear the mutants to ribbons.

Neshi would be unable to perform this attack against members of the caravan, as they are not vulnerable to her instinctive manipulation of Rakshastan's fabric. Should she try something similar against them, it would be resolved as a Thrown attack using the traits for an inexpensive non-magical thrown weapon, and her player would have to perform a flurry to attack more than one target at a time. The mortals are unaware of this limitation, however, and take the demonstration of power as Neshi intended it.



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Shaping at the Edge of Creation

The shaping rules assume a significant Wyld influence on the region by default. The difficulty of shaping is increased in places where the Wyld is thin. Performing shaping actions in the Bordermarches, when rolls are required, inflicts a -2 external penalty (already factored into the roll to shift waypoints). Shaping in an uncapped demesne inflicts an external penalty equal to (6 – demesne's level). Storytellers can just treat the demesne as Bordermarches if establishing the demesne's level would be too much bother.

Shaping Combat

Shaping combat is a type of competitive shaping contest engaged in by the raksha, resolved through a system similar to **Exalted**'s normal combat mechanics. Its participants shape fate and events into fantasies and traps, attempting to make each other's stories subservient to their own. It measures time in abstract ticks (see p. 114), uses Join Shaping Battle to determine order of action (see "Join Shaping Battle" under "Actions in Shaping Combat") and judges the success of attacks by comparing successes on attack rolls against the defender's Defense Values. For timing, it uses the same 10-step resolution as is explained beginning on page 145 of the **Exalted** core rulebook. Where it differs is in its scale, in the variety of possible actions it offers and in the effects it inflicts.

Raksha who share freeholds frequently make shaping attacks against each other, but very rarely pursue shaping battle to its end. Most shaping combats are tests in which one raksha performs a shaping attack against another to judge relative strength. The other might counterattack or merely erect a defensive Charm. At this point, both combatants usually let the matter drop. Few Fair Folk take a single shaping attack personally—it's just the way of freehold society. A raksha generally pursues a shaping combat to its end only if she's sure of victory.

Outside freeholds, this is not the case. Raksha exist who prey on their fellows, hiding in the Wyld, collecting Graces from or incumbering those who cross their path. As such, few raksha travel more than 10 waypoints away from their home freeholds without an entourage, and look askance at any raksha who claims no freehold as his home. Even the Fair Folk understand safety in numbers.

What's This For?

Shaping combat is for games where all the players' characters are raksha and no Creation-born are involved, or games where most characters are raksha but one or more are Creation-born such as Lunars, Eclipses or Moonshadows who've had Graces forged for them. It offers a more abstract play experience than normal for **Exalted**. Instead of stunting sword strokes or acrobatics, the players stunt the creation of whole worlds and societies, and characters hurl such constructs at their foes, trapping them in webs of emotion, society, obligation or military force. Through shaping combat, the raksha struggle endlessly for domination over their peers and safety from their enemies—in Rakshastan, often one and the same.

In games where Creation-born are involved, the shaping combat system presented here needs no use. Rather, the Storyteller's knowledge of the system, the behaviors it encourages and the incentives it offers the Fair Folk, will influence her actions behind the scenes. Nigh-endless shaping combat between the raksha defines their society, and whenever a Creation-born visits with the raksha in the Wyld, she's likely to intrude upon a shaping combat already in motion. Such conflicts are most easily resolved through Storyteller fiat, as **Exalted**'s normal time frame will often lead characters to enter a shaping combat already in effect and leave before its conclusion—or end it prematurely through their actions. **In games where some players portray raksha and others play Creation-born without Graces, Storytellers are advised to use this system frugally, as the players of the Creation-born are unlikely to be amused twiddling their thumbs while raksha characters engage in shaping combat.**

Types of Shaping Combat

The raksha engage in four different kinds of shaping combat, one per Grace. Each has different adherents, different strategies, different tactics and different consequences.

Cup Combat

Cup-shaping births phantasmagoria of transformation and pleasure. Raksha exercise the Cup to shape environments of indulgence, where no want goes ungratified and unexpected twists stave off ennui.

The Cup emulates Compassion and is associated with the Social Attributes. Its color is black, and its direction West. Raksha in the Wyld travel west to seek contests of the Cup.

A Cup contest targets the victim's self-discipline. Defeat in a Cup-based contest hardens an enemy's heart, undermines his convictions, leaves him trapped in the throes of passion or induces mind-wracking terror. The raksha induce addiction in their patrons and insanity in their enemies, devouring the motes of Essence ravishing them frees.

Ring Combat

Ring-shaping forges the Wyld's wonders. It crafts intricate, precision-built dreamscapes with innate natural laws.

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This is the Ring's greatest strength… and its greatest weakness. Its orderly dreamscapes are self-sufficient and quite compelling, but that very constancy makes it more difficult for Ring-shapers to generate the wild, random sweeps of fancy that overwhelm the mind of a shaping opponent.

The Ring emulates Temperance and is associated with the Mental Attributes. Its color is white, and its direction inward. Raksha in the Wyld turn their focus inward in introspection and calm when seeking contests of the Ring.

A Ring contest is an exercise of law, both intricate interactions of the natural laws of created dreamscapes and the laws of the raksha's nature. The purpose of a Ring contest is to suborn others' natures to one's own, to force them to accept the primacy and authority of one's own purpose and to bind others' efforts to the support of that purpose by imposing incumbrances, burdens and duties on them. As the denizens of the Wyld see it, Creation wages a war of the Ring on every raksha who enters it, on every being born into it and, to a lesser degree, on every unshaped who views it from beyond.

Staff Combat

Staff-shaping crafts social milieus. Raksha wield the Staff to populate their dreamscapes and to create the very society of the Fair Folk themselves. The laws, customs and taboos of the raksha are not inherent to them as much as forged through the power of the Staff. The Diplomats of the Fair Folk weave webs of deceit to snare their victims and peers in inescapable nets of obligation, taboo and interdependency.

The Staff emulates Conviction and is associated with Charisma, Appearance and Intelligence. Its color is blue, and its direction north. Raksha in the Wyld travel north when seeking the great courts of their kind.

A Staff contest has two stages. First, the raksha seeks to trap his target in obligations and taboos to cripple her efficacy. Then, the raksha strikes against his helpless target's soul, either ravishing her, imposing incumbrances on her or seizing her possessions.

Sword Combat

Sword-shaping weaves the course of war. When raksha play the game of Swords, armies march. Heroes and monsters struggle. Fair Folk die, laid low by the blows of their enemies, only to rise again as mournful wraiths, shambling zombies or deathless warriors. Blood flows, raitons feast, and cries echo across the Wyld's battlefields.

The Sword emulates Valor and is associated with the Physical Attributes. Its color is red, and its direction south. Raksha in the Wyld travel south when they wish to find battle.

A Sword contest targets the physical possessions of a target. Defeat in a Sword-based contest allows a raksha to strip away the target's artifacts or Graces.

Actions in Shaping Combat

The raksha engage in shaping combat by performing actions analogous to those performed by the Creation-born in regular combat.

Activate Charm/Power/Combo (Varies/Varies)

Raksha activate their Charms, powers and Combos in the same manner as Solars, under the same restrictions. See page 142 of **Exalted**.

Aim (3/-1)

Shaping combat resolves the Aim action exactly as regular combat resolves it. See page 142 of **Exalted**.

Attack (Varies/-1)

Much like in regular combat, shaping attacks involve 10 discrete steps, fully explained on page 145 of **Exalted**. Noted here are only the steps that resolve differently in shaping combat than in regular combat. Steps Three, Four, Five, Six, Nine and Ten resolve similarly enough in shaping combat as to require no particular explanation here. Shaping attacks are dealt with in more detail in their own later section.

Attune Grace (6/None)

Characters might wish to attune to the Graces of other raksha, either Graces in their raw form or forged into various shaping artifacts, such as adjurations, behemoths, oneiromantic spells and treasures. **To attune a Grace, a character needs to take six Attune Grace actions, one after another. No more than one Attune Grace action can be placed in a single flurry.**

Flurry (Varies/Varies)

Shaping combat resolves flurries exactly as regular combat resolves them. See page 143 of **Exalted**.

Guard (3/None)

Shaping combat resolves the Guard action exactly as regular combat resolves it. See page 143 of **Exalted**.

Inactive (5/Special)

Being inactive in shaping combat functions identically to being inactive in regular combat. See page 143 of **Exalted**.

Join Shaping Battle (Special/None)

Join Shaping Battle is resolved in the same manner as Join Battle, save that for each participant, the dice pool is the sum of feeding Graces. Common raksha are at significant disadvantage when entering shaping combat against nobles.

Journey (3/None)

Movement in shaping combat is resolved differently than in regular combat. Within the same waypoint, range is irrelevant. All characters on the same waypoint can attack each other with equal ease. Even if one raksha appears to be 10 miles away from his enemy, that will not prevent him from closing in to make a Melee attack if that is the means by which he works his shaping magic. The only move that matters is when a raksha moves from one waypoint to the next. To move from one waypoint to another during shaping combat, a raksha must take a Journey action. A raksha who takes a Journey action can move from her current waypoint to any adjacent waypoint. A raksha may take only one Journey action as part of a flurry.

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Ready Shaping Weapon (5/None)

A character who wishes to attack another in shaping combat must have a shaping weapon ready. For these purposes, unarmed attack modes such as milieu or society count as weapons. Shaping weapons with the N tag can be readied reflexively, with an effective Speed of 0, but only on the character's action. A character who has a shaping weapon and wishes to ready another automatically stows her currently equipped weapon as part of readying her next, unless she seeks to wield two at once (see p. 127).

Actions with No Shaping Equivalent

The Dash, Jump and Move actions (and certain miscellaneous actions such as coordinating attacks or rising from prone) have no equivalent in shaping combat.

Step One: Declaration of Attack

When making a shaping attack, the attacker must declare what sort of attack she is using—Cup, Ring, Staff or Sword. Her player must calculate the dice pool for the attack, which will vary according to the sort of attack the character wishes to use.

Cup Attacks

Raksha can create addictive, paradisiacal milieus and subversive dreamscapes of madness. These worlds, designed for their emotional impact, have profound effects even on Exalts.

The dice pool for a Cup-shaping attack is as follows:

(Manipulation + [Highest Entertainer Ability] + [Weapon Accuracy])

With Investigation, raksha shape scenes of mysteries, secrets and misdirection. With Larceny, they misdirect their enemies. With Medicine, they turn foes into dependents. With Performance, they create milieus designed to evoke a raw emotional response. With Stealth, they produce minimalist scenes, simplified dreamscapes where a concept or two plays out against an empty void. Generally speaking, a raksha's player can describe a shaping attack using the guidelines for any Entertainer Ability, regardless of which contributes to her attack dice pool.

Ring Attacks

Raksha can build intricate Wyld-driven world-mechanisms from interwoven threads of dream and nightmare. Relentless chains of logic power these mechanisms, creating an expanding web of surety from a small number of well-chosen principles. Such worlds submit the unquestionable proposition and the inexorable conclusion that both residents and witnesses of the Ring-shaping are subject to the laws of those worlds.

The dice pool for a Ring shaping attack is as follows:

(Intelligence + [Highest Worker Ability] + [Weapon Accuracy])

With Bureaucracy, raksha construct or alter socioeconomic principles. With Craft (Glamour), they fashion or alter the physical environment of their dreamscapes. With Integrity, they protect or reinforce the composition of the worlds they've shaped. With Lore, they devise the metaphysics, the simulated history and the natural laws of their shaped worlds. With Resistance, a raksha shapes herself, bolstering the structure of her own Essence pattern. Generally speaking, a raksha's player can describe a shaping attack using the guidelines for any Worker Ability, regardless of which contributes to her attack dice pool.

Staff Attacks

Raksha can mold a strict social framework or disordered hurly-burly of mercurial loyalty.

The dice pool for Staff-shaping attacks is as follows:

(Intelligence + [Highest Diplomat Ability] + [Weapon Accuracy])

With Linguistics, the raksha shape civilizations motivated first and foremost by open communication, be they blissful

I Attack with Investigation?

As with shaping actions, any Ability can conceivably be used as part of a shaping attack. This is because an Ability, as far as the raksha are concerned, doesn't just represent technical proficiency with some type of activity as it does for a Creation-born. To the Fair Folk, an Ability also represents an understanding of the narrative implications of that activity as it pertains to the story-shaping nature of raksha magic. An Entertainer who is skilled at Investigation is proficient at solving mysteries through the mundane application of that Ability, but she is equally as proficient at using the very idea of "Investigation" as an artistic element in her shaping effects. In that context, Investigation is used not to gain information for the one making the roll, but to *create* information calculated to entrance or befuddle the target of the shaping attack.

Players should not get bogged down in questions of whether a particular Ability makes logical sense as a method of delivering an attack. All that matters is whether the concepts and ideas implicated by that Ability make sense with regard to the narrative situation the raksha seeks to create. The default assumption is that the player of a raksha making a shaping attack will always use the highest rated Ability associated with that type of attack. The player may, however, choose to use a lower-rated Ability if it fits the situation particularly well and increases the likelihood of getting stunt dice. The descriptions of how the various Caste Abilities facilitate different types of shaping effects provide rough guidelines of how such stunts might work.

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utopias or primitive tribes of savages. With Occult, raksha shape civilizations motivated largely by strange and unfathomable laws. (Raksha may always employ Occult when shaping genuine Fair Folk societies rather than artificial ones shaped from fancy.) With Ride, raksha shape civilizations driven by the necessities of long-distance travel and trade with faraway lands. With Socialize, they shape civilizations motivated by protocol, well-mannered politics and the art of deceit. With Thrown, they shape civilizations motivated by the art of the assassin—that is, by ruthless politics and an utter disregard for life. Generally speaking, a raksha's player can describe a shaping attack using the guidelines for any Diplomat Ability, regardless of which contributes to her attack dice pool.

Sword Attacks

Raksha can shape stories of combat, warfare and similar physical conflicts.

The dice pool for Sword-shaping attacks is as follows:

(Dexterity + [Highest Warrior Ability] + [Weapon Accuracy])

With Archery, the raksha shape scenes of long-distance warfare. With Martial Arts, they shape scenes of physical conflict, decided by strength or skill alone. With Melee, they shape scenes of regimented and graceful combat—armies marching in glittering armor, complex stratagems and elegant duels. With Presence, they shape scenes of glory, resplendence and the triumph of morale and high spirits. With War, they shape scenes of leadership—drowning the foes in minions, monsters or servants. Generally speaking, a raksha's player can describe a shaping attack using the guidelines for any Warrior Ability, regardless of which contributes to her attack dice pool.

Step Two: Declaration of Defense

The raksha have five Shaping Defense Values, one per Grace. In general, the Cup, Ring, Staff and Sword DVs are all analogous to Parry DVs, while the Heart DV resembles a Dodge DV. When a shaping attack cannot be blocked, the Cup, Ring, Staff and Sword DVs are inapplicable against that attack. When a shaping attack cannot be dodged, the Heart DV is inapplicable against that attack.

Calculate a character's Shaping Defense Values as follows:

Cup DV = ([Manipulation + Highest Cup Ability + Weapon Defense] ÷ 2)

Ring DV = ([Intelligence + Highest Ring Ability + Weapon Defense] ÷ 2)

Staff DV = ([Intelligence + Highest Staff Ability + Weapon Defense] ÷ 2)

Sword DV = ([Dexterity + Highest Sword Ability + Weapon Defense] ÷ 2)

Heart DV = ([{Willpower ÷ 2} + Dodge + {Essence, if Essence is rated at 2+}] ÷ 2)

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Noble Raksha always round all fractions up, while commoner raksha (including heroic commoners) always round all fractions down.

Each of the first four DVs can defend against only attacks of its type—i.e., the Cup DV can defend against only Cup-shaping attacks, while the Sword DV can defend against only Sword-shaping attacks. The Heart DV can defend against shaping attacks of all four Graces.

Note: While each shaping weapon can make only one sort of shaping attack, a raksha wielding a shaping weapon applies that weapon's Defense bonus to *all* of her Cup, Ring, Staff and Sword DVs.

Step Seven: Calculate Raw Damage

When calculating the base damage of a shaping attack, use the following formula:

Base Cup Attack Damage = (Manipulation + Weapon Damage)

Base Ring Attack Damage = (Perception + Weapon Damage)

Base Staff Attack Damage = (Charisma + Weapon Damage)

Base Sword Attack Damage = (Strength + Weapon Damage)

To determine the raw damage of a shaping attack, take the base damage and add the successes from the attack roll, as in normal combat.

Step Eight: Apply Soak

Each raksha has four shaping soak ratings, one for each type of shaping damage, as follows:

Cup Soak = (Appearance + Willpower)

Ring Soak = (Wits + Willpower)

Staff Soak = (Appearance + Willpower)

Sword Soak = (Stamina + Willpower)

Shaping soak subtracts from raw shaping damage in the same way that soak in regular combat subtracts from raw damage. It cannot reduce a shaping attack's rolled damage dice below the attacker's Essence.

The Willpower component of shaping soak functions as armor. A shaping attack with the *piercing* quality halves the victim's Willpower for the purpose of soak.

Shaping combat has no equivalent to Hardness.

Damage, Health and Healing

Raksha have four shaping health tracks, one each for the Cup, Ring, Staff and Sword Graces. Each has a different number of shaping health levels, as follows:

Cup Health Track = (Compassion + Cup)

Ring Health Track = (Temperance + Ring)

Staff Health Track = (Conviction + Staff)

Sword Health Track = (Valor + Sword)

The consequences of filling a shaping health track completely with damage vary according to the type of attack. **Note: Shaping combat has no equivalent to wound penalties.**

•Entanglement

Entanglement is a special form of shaping attack, available as a mode of attack for all Graces save the Ring, and equivalent to regular combat's grappling (see **Exalted**, p. 157). That is, it is a form of shaping attack that, if deployed successfully, both restrains the target and permits the attacker to continue harming him. A successful entanglement also allows the attacker to "throw" her enemy—i.e., the attacker can invoke some sort of narrative effect that compels the one who is entangled to leave the waypoint.

Entanglement is most easily performed using Cup-shaping. Staff and Sword entanglement attacks suffer a -1 Accuracy penalty (already figured into the entanglement weapon traits at the end of this chapter.). A character in control of an entanglement who chooses to break the hold can move her target a distance of only one waypoint. Crushing and holding function as they do in a normal grapple.

Once established, an entanglement effect can inflict only the sort of damage appropriate to the way in which it was inflicted. For instance, a character cannot entangle a foe with Cup-shaping and then switch over to Sword-shaping without breaking the entanglement and establishing a new one.

Cup Entanglement: The dice pool for a Cup entanglement attack is ([Charisma or Manipulation] + [Entertainer Ability] + Weapon Accuracy). Cup entanglements often take the form of emotional attacks that drain the target's resolve or compel him to flee the raksha's presence in shame over his brutality.

Staff Entanglement: The dice pool for a Staff entanglement attack is ([Charisma or Intelligence] + [Diplomat Ability] + Weapon Accuracy). Staff entanglements bind the target in obligations and legal duties that prevent him from acting freely. They often drive the target away through censure, ridicule and, occasionally, a torch-bearing lynch mob.

Sword Entanglement: The dice pool for a Sword entanglement attack is ([Dexterity or Strength] + [Warrior Ability] + Weapon Accuracy). Sword entanglements bind and restrain the target through brute force or environmental traps. If the target is ejected from the waypoint, it is most often through an act of violence.

At the end of every tale, a raksha heals one level of Cup, Ring and Sword damage. She heals her Staff damage completely.

Losing a Cup Combat

A raksha with a Cup health track full of shaping damage is *ravished*. Ravishing an opponent leaves him unable to exert that Virtue in a situation the attacker names. A

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raksha who successfully ravages an opponent gains 10 motes from the act of ravishing. **Unlike a mortal subject to the Charm Ravishing the Created Form (see pp. 176-177), a ravished raksha does not lose a Virtue dot or dot of permanent Willpower**.

If the attacker ravishes her victim's **Compassion**, she eliminates his empathy for a specific target of the attacker's choice. To act courteously toward the target for a scene costs one Willpower. Actively cooperating with the target costs the victim Willpower equal to his Cup rating.

If the attacker ravishes her victim's **Conviction**, she designates an event he can no longer stand to observe, such as "innocent blood being shed" or "harm befalling the raksha Dilari of the Sea Foam." To passively observe that event for a scene costs one Willpower. To actively participate in the event costs the victim Willpower equal to his Cup rating.

If the attacker ravishes her victim's **Temperance**, she designates a passion he can no longer rein in, such as wrath, desire or melancholy. To control the passion for a scene costs one Willpower. If actively goaded, reining in the passion costs him Willpower equal to his Cup rating.

If the attacker ravishes her victim's **Valor**, she designates something for him to fear, such as darkness, the ravisher herself or the stuff of shaped reality. To face that terror for a scene costs one Willpower. To attack, challenge or otherwise actively engage it costs Willpower equal to his Cup rating.

Ravishment is equivalent to maiming to the raksha. By themselves, commoner raksha can no more heal from ravishment than a mortal could regrow a lost limb. Noble and heroic commoner raksha recover more easily. They can recover from ravishment five tales after the ravishment takes place by spending gossamer equal to 10 times the ravished Virtue.

A raksha who has been ravished cannot be ravished again or make Cup-shaping attacks against others until she heals at least one level of Cup damage.

Losing a Ring Combat

A raksha with a Ring health track full of shaping damage suffers an *incumbrance*. The attacker names a task with the following limitations:

- It must be possible.
- It cannot conflict with another prior incumbrance.
- It cannot damage the victim permanently.
- It must be a task, not a behavior. That is, the victim will be bound to perform a service (either a specific, one-time service or some service to be performed regularly) or to provide some sort of good (either a specific item or regularly produced goods).
- The victim need not expend irreplaceable resources on the task.

If a valid task later becomes impossible or comes into conflict with a prior incumbrance, the victim suffers nightmarish remorse and withdrawal for three tales, which imposes a -4 internal penalty on all actions. Thereafter, the incumbrance fades.

A victim can defy an incumbrance for one scene at a cost of one Willpower. If he wishes to make it more difficult to fulfill an incumbrance in the future, he must spend Willpower equal to his Ring instead. If he wishes to break an incumbrance totally, he must spend Willpower equal to his Ring a number of times equal to the Ring of the raksha who incumbered him.

Possible incumbrances include:

- Tithe to me 10 percent of your accumulated gossamer every month.
- Quest against an unshaped raksha and bring me an anugraha oath.
- Come to all of my parties and act as my court jester.

There is no limit to the potential cruelty of an incumbrance, though pragmatism usually makes it so that noble raksha are incumbered only lightly. Nobles, after all, have greater reserves of Willpower and are more likely to have an agenda of their own with no time to satisfy the needs of others. Accordingly, nobles are much more likely to spend Willpower until they are free of a baleful incumbrance. Commoners are almost always someone's slave and have neither the resources nor the incentive to fight against incumbrance. Accordingly, they are usually occupied day and night.

A raksha who has been incumbered cannot be incumbered again until she heals at least one level of Ring damage, nor can she make Ring-shaping attacks against others.

Losing a Staff Combat

A raksha with a Staff health track full of shaping damage is *snared*. When targeting a snared raksha with further Staff attacks, an attacker can choose to have such attacks inflict Cup, Ring or Sword damage instead. The victim ceases to be snared when her Staff Grace heals. Until then, she cannot make Staff-shaping attacks against others.

Losing a Sword Combat

An attacker who fills a victim's Sword health track with shaping damage *vexes* her victim. Vexing lets the attacker seize one or more of the artifacts, possessions, waypoints or even Graces the target owns. On a successful vexation, the attacker has the option of seizing *one* of the following:

- One of the victim's Graces. **If a raksha owns his own Heart Grace, an enemy can vex it away only if she's already attuned to his Sword Grace.** (See the Attune Grace action, p. 121.) This protection lapses if the Sword Grace breaks. In Rakshastan, the only way for one raksha to permanently destroy another is to vex away a victim's Heart Grace and destroy it—no easy task.
- Up to five dots worth of artifacts owned by the victim.
- Up to the victim's Sword in non-Grace, non-artifact possessions (including waypoints to which the victim is attuned.)

A raksha who has been vexed cannot be vexed again until she heals at least one level of Sword damage, nor can she make Sword-shaping attacks against others.

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Charm Concept: Hold, Possess, Own Et Al.

To *hold* an object is simply to hold it in one's hand (or similar appendage). One need no more than pick up an object to hold it.

To *possess* an object is to count it among one's possessions, as defined by the sidebar on **Exalted** page 238. For the raksha, the chief method of claiming possession over another's things (including Graces) is to vex them away in shaping combat. Raksha can also voluntarily transfer possession of something to others. Unlike the raksha, Creation-born can come to possess objects merely by holding them.

To *own* an object is to attune to it and access its supernatural power, usually by committing motes to it. Each raksha, however, has five artifacts that she need not commit motes to attune—her Graces.

The fourth category of authority applies only to Graces. The five Graces of Shikuzi the Weaver are Shikuzi's Graces, and will remain Shikuzi's Graces even if other raksha hold, possess or own them. Accordingly, he is said to *bear* those Graces, even if he does not possess them, even if he has never even seen them.

Sometimes, for some objects, all these categories of authority can apply to different individuals. For instance, if Sallow Scales, a raksha commoner, has his Cup Grace vexed away by Dilari of the Sea Foam, Sallow Scales remains the bearer of that Cup Grace, but Dilari possesses it. If upon forging Sallow Scales' Cup Grace into an oneiromantic spell (see p. 136) in the shape of a scrap of sharkskin parchment, Dilari has her lorekeeper attune it for her, Sallow Scales remains the bearer of that Cup Grace, but Dilari possesses it and Dilari's lorekeeper owns it. If the Solar Exalt named Swan visits Dilari's library and picks up the spell up to examine it, Sallow Scales is the bearer of the Grace, Dilari possesses it, her lorekeeper owns it, and Swan holds it.

If Swan absconds with it, he will come to possess it in time. Once he possesses it, he can attune it and become its owner. Doing so would break Dilari's lorekeeper's attunement. But even should Swan hold, possess and own the spell, Sallow Scales will ever remain the Cup Grace's bearer. At no point during any of this will Sallow Scales lose access to his Cup Charms, nor will his Cup rating diminish.

Other Targets

Although the raksha are generally the only creatures capable of making shaping attacks, they're not the only things capable of suffering a shaping attack's effects.

Shaping Attacks Against the Creation-Born

The Creation-born, too, can suffer the effects of shaping attacks, though they have no Shaping Defense Values or shaping health tracks. Instead, a raksha makes a shaping attack against a DV of 0 and calculates the attack's raw damage as normal. If the raw damage exceeds the Creation-born's (Willpower + Essence), the Creation-born suffers the full effect of ravishment, incumbrance, snaring or vexation. Otherwise, the Creation-born suffers no effect from the attack at all. Shaping combat Charms that effect a victim's shaping soak affect the size of this value, and piercing shaping attacks halve the Creation-born's effective Willpower. Dragon-Blooded characters receive a +2 bonus to their (Willpower + Essence) total for this purpose; Sidereal and Lunar Exalted receive a +4 bonus; Solar, Abyssal, Infernal and Alchemical Exalted a +6 bonus, all added following any penalties. The following exceptions apply:

- When the effects of ravishment dictate a ravished Creation-born must spend Willpower equal to the rating of his Cup as a result of ravishment, but the Creation-born has no Cup Grace, he need spend only two points.
- Ravishment is a Crippling effect. Effects that cure Crippling effects can cure the effects of ravishment.
- For purposes of vexation, treat all Creation-born as having Sword 1. Creation-born treat vexation essentially as an automatically and perfectly successful robbery.
- A Creation-born character can be ravished, incumbered, snared or vexed at most once each per scene.

Shaping Attacks Against Waypoints

Characters can target waypoints with shaping attacks. Waypoints have no natural resistance to shaping, so it takes only a single success on a shaping roll to inflict damage upon them. Waypoints also have no damage tracks, and suffer the full effects of ravishment, incumbrance or vexation upon even a single damage success. Raksha can use the various forms of shaping damage to assert long-term possession over a waypoint and the events that transpire there.

Ravishing a waypoint harms its capacity to feed raksha. A lone ravishment removes the essence of Compassion, Conviction, Temperance or Valor from a waypoint. To those who feed only on the damaged Virtue, that waypoint is as barren as Creation—they do not respire Essence normally there, and they lose motes or dots of Essence per day as if they were in Creation. Raksha gain only a single mote from ravishing a waypoint and only when they feed on previously undamaged Virtues. Waypoints recover from the effects of ravishment irregularly if at all. Waypoints ravished of all four Virtues can easily fall into the influence of Creation.

Incumbering a waypoint dedicates that waypoint to a set purpose. Those who enter or pass through the waypoint suffer its incumbrance for the duration of a scene, if it is a

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valid binding on the characters. That is, an incumbrance on a waypoint won't affect a raksha who enters it if that incumbrance would violate any of the limitations on incumbrance with regard to him (i.e., it must be possible, it cannot conflict with prior incumbrances, etc.). **Players of those journeying to an incumbered waypoint are entitled to a reflexive (Perception + Awareness) roll for their characters to notice any incumbrances on the journey's destination before embarking.**

Waypoints cannot be **snared**.

Vexing a waypoint claims dominion over it. A raksha must commit three motes to each waypoint he claims, but as long as the commitment lasts, a portion of his spirit resides there. This effect alerts him to all Sword-shaping attempts made within the waypoint, allows him use applicable Sword defenses against shaping attacks made against the waypoint and lets him make Sword-shaping actions as if he were present in the waypoint.

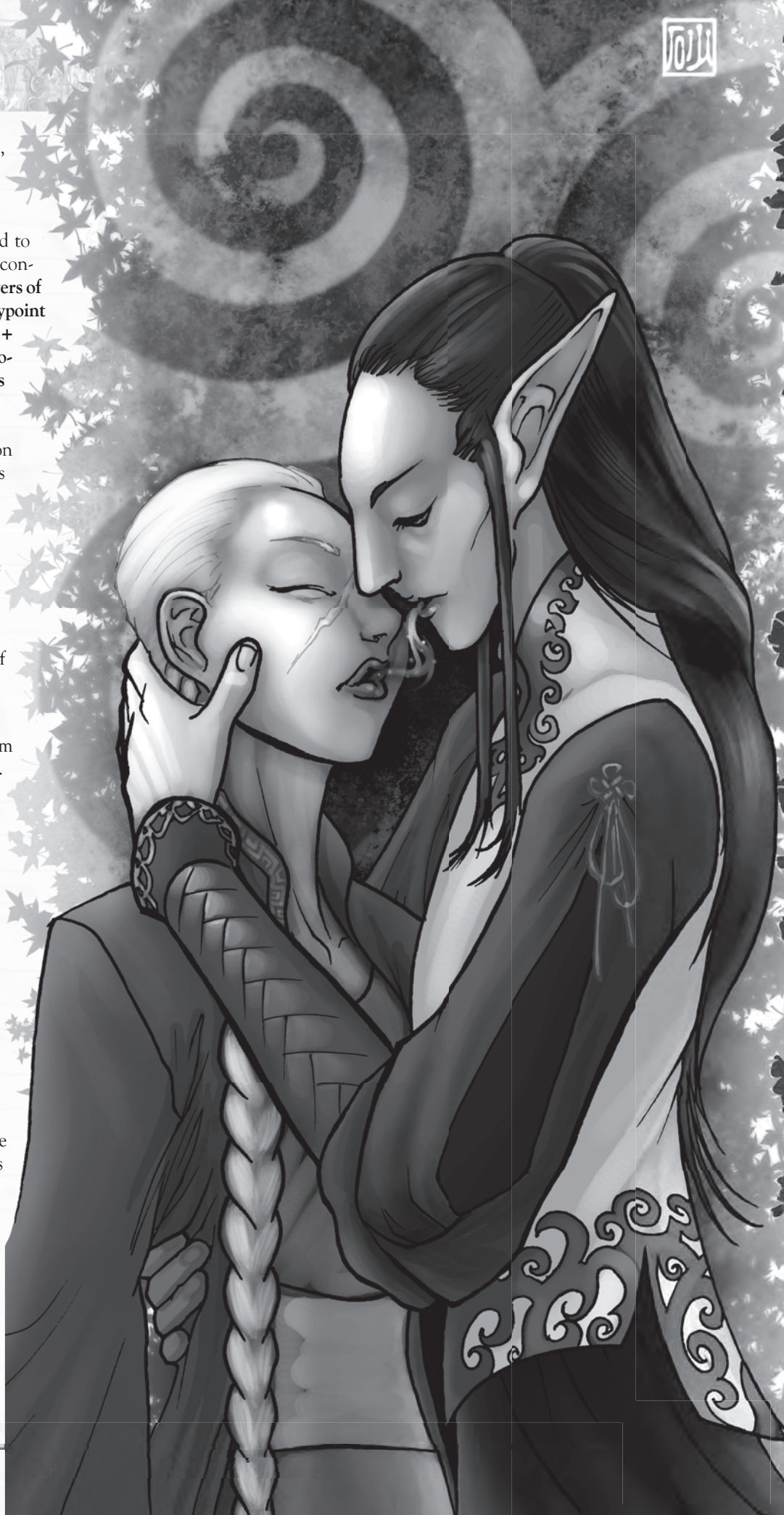
Shaping Weapons

By various means, chief among them the Charm Crafter's Arsenal (see p. 195), the Raksha create weapons with which to fight shaping battles with their foes. Raksha without that Charm can trade gossamer in exchange for shaping weapons. A shaping weapon's Cost refers to the Gossamer Background, not Resources. Shaping weapons can be of superior quality, just as mundane equipment can (see **Exalted**, p. 365).

Normally, raksha wield only one weapon at a time. A character wielding two shaping weapons simultaneously suffers a -1 internal penalty to the Accuracy and Defense of both weapons, but may benefit from the higher of the two Defense scores. If she flurries, she may attack with each weapon up to its rate. Weapons with the N tag can only be wielded singly.

Weapons of the Cup

Raksha predominantly use Cup-shaping weapons to invoke emotional responses and deceptions. Although they are "weapons" of a sort, these things create pleasure in those they "harm" as often as they create pain. Cup-shaping weapons often focus on



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Stunts in Shaping Combat

Most of the fun of shaping combat is in the stunts—describing elaborate scenarios in which to trap one's opponent—and for most players, it shouldn't be difficult to make a two-die stunt out of every shaping attack. That said, stunts are no more necessary in shaping combat than in regular combat. Players having creative off days should feel free to fall back on the default shaping attacks for each Grace if inspiration fails to take root. Shaping combat emulates conflict between alien conglomerations of Essence and inhuman skill, but players need not be the former, nor possess the latter.

Tag Key

E = Entanglement Enhancer. This weapon can be used only to make entanglement attacks.
G = Gossamer. This weapon consumes one gossamer per attack or flurry.
N = Natural Weapon. This weapon can be readied as part of another action.
P = Piercing. This weapon halves the target's Willpower for purposes of soak (round down).

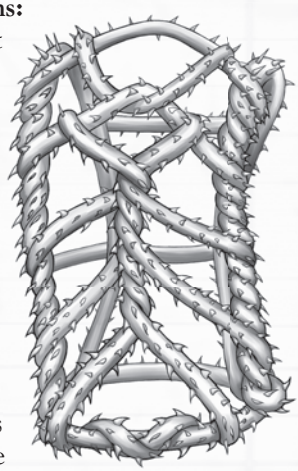
entanglement, as Entertainers bind their victims in silken threads and chains of passion. Common tropes for a Cup-shaping attack include: mazes, intrigue and secrecy (Manipulation + Investigation); misdirection and deception (Manipulation + Larceny); calming influences and healing environments (Manipulation + Medicine); music, oratory and other artistic expressions (Manipulation + Performance); or minimalist settings where the Entertainer and her quarry play their scene without distraction (Manipulation + Stealth).

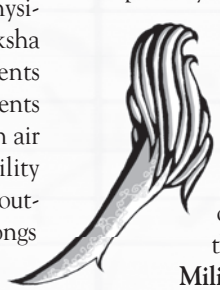
Cup Entanglement (Unarmed Attack): The raksha ingratiates himself with his victim, entrancing her with nothing more than his own style and panache.



Figment: This shaping weapon may have nearly any form that its crafter can imagine (or, in some cases, no physical form at all). Raksha artisans model figments after innocuous elements of dream that lend an air of corrosion and hostility to their surroundings, such as out-of-place objects or discordant songs that catch in the mind. One figment might be a simple melody the raksha has mastered which fixates those who hear it. Another might be a forbidden tome left sitting on a table, compelling those who encounter it to open it and absorb its blasphemous themes. As ubiquitous as it might seem at first glance, a figment corrodes Virtues by its presence and interferes with the proper functioning of the spirit. Shaping attacks made with figments often center around these elements.

Harness of Razored Dreams: Made from interlaced heart thorns, a harness of razored dreams is a garment worn by the Entertainer that tears into the soul of a raksha entangled by its wearer. There is, of course, no need for the Entertainer to grapple or even touch the victim in order to gain the benefit of this weapon. Its effects are conferred by virtue of the effect it has on its wearer's soul, and the jagged emotions it calls forth make tearing free an especially difficult and painful proposition.





Heart Thorn: The barb of a heart thorn catches on the soul, opening its target to an influx of dangerous emotion. When not in use, a heart thorn manifests as a simple silver spine, but in its reflection can be caught anything from the presence of a deity to the appearance of a loved one's face. It is these reflections the thorn plunges into the spirits of its targets.

Milieu (Unarmed Attack): The raksha weaves a seductive narrative from the environment around her victim and from the circumstances in which he finds himself.

Cup Weapons

Name	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Cost	Tags
Cup Entanglement	6	+0	+0	—	1	—	N, E, P
Figment	5	+1	+3	+3	3	•	—
Harness of Razored Dreams	6	+1	+7	—	1	•••	E, P
Heart Thorn	6	+0	+5	+1	2	•	—
Milieu	5	+1	+0	+2	3	—	N

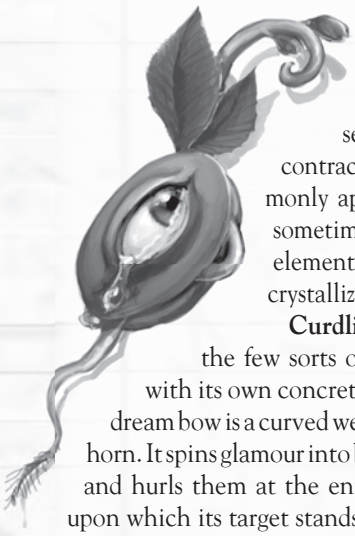
Kevin Shaffer (order #3660570)

Weapons of the Ring

Ring attacks focus on manipulating the world around the target to force his behavior, throwing obstacles in his path that he must overcome. The default description of a Ring-shaping attack invokes environmental effects to deter enemies such as "my enemy's forces bog down in a murky swamp" or "it is the nature of this realm that all weapons grow burning hot in their wielders' hands."

Like archery weapons and Strength in regular combat, Ring weapons often impose a maximum on an attacker's Perception trait for the purposes of calculating the damage pool. When using the rules for superior equipment to create an exceptional Ring weapon (or an exceptional commandment lens Staff weapon; see below), a +1 spent on Range increases the weapon's range by two waypoints, and a +2 spent on Range increases the weapon's range by four waypoints.

Cosmos Seed: A speck of perfect order suspended in the strata of the Wyld, a cosmos seed imposes law on dreams. If fed gossamer, it exudes a silvery light—light that falls not around itself, but upon its target. In this silver glare, raksha find themselves more easily bound by rules, contracts and taboo. Cosmos seeds commonly appear as literal seeds, although sometimes they are made out of exotic elements such as gold, lightning or the crystallized breath of a dying infant.



Curdling Dream Bow: One of the few sorts of shaping weapons with its own concrete shape, a curdling dream bow is a curved weapon of ebony and horn. It spins glamour into bolts of Essence, and hurls them at the environment upon which its target stands.

Raw Will (unarmed attack): Raksha with a Ring Grace may bombard their enemies with raw will, though such attacks can reach across no journeys. **A raksha attacking in this manner may spend one gossamer to increase a single attack's Accuracy by one and Damage by six.**

Shaping Lens: To use this metal circlet, a raksha must stretch gossamer over the void in its center. Refracting the wielder's will and insight through that gossamer, the lens directs controlling intents toward its target. **Attacks made with a shaping lens treat the target's Willpower as doubled for the purposes of calculating soak.**



World Heart: World hearts are metal eggs, filled with a mist that is the essence of an unformed, potential world. By the recitation of the name of some powerful entity of the Wyld—a behemoth, a distant unshaped or an aspect of the shinma—and by feeding gossamer into the egg, a raksha can call forth the laws, principles and substance of that world, binding her target in alien social mores.



Weapons of the Staff

Weapons of the Staff focus on the manipulation of shaped societies. The default description for an unarmed Staff-shaping attack using society is along the lines of "I cause society itself to shun her for her sins" or "I snare him in arcane social customs." Some Staff-shaping weapons permit ranged attacks. Those that do have a maximum Charisma instead of a maximum Perception, as is the case for ranged Ring-shaping weapons.

Commandment Lens: Similar in design and purpose to a shaping lens, a commandment lens allows its wielder to make ranged Staff attacks up to six waypoints away. In appearance, it resembles a shaping lens—a twisted metal circlet, hooked, that its user might stretch gossamer across its frame. Through this gossamer, the commandment lens focuses its wielder's will and insight. A commandment lens has a maximum Charisma of 3 for purposes of calculating damage.



Ring Weapons

Name	Speed	Acc	Damage	Defense	Rate	Range	Max Perception	Cost	Tags
Cosmos Seed	6	+0	+0	-6	3	10	●●●●●	●●●	G, P
Curdling Dream Bow	5	+1	12	-6	1	1	—	●●●●	G
Raw Will	5	+0	+0	-6	2	0	—	●●●	N
Shaping Lens	6	+0	+4	-6	2	6	●●●	•	G
World Heart	6	+1	+2	-6	3	8	●●●●	••	G

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Staff Weapons

Name	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Cost	Tags
Commandment Lens*	6	+0	+2	-6	2	•	G
Courtier's Caul	5	-2	+7	+4	2	••	—
Entanglement	6	-1	+0	—	1	—	E, N, P
Harness of Twisted Words	6	+0	+7	—	1	•••	E, P
Hunting Clan	6	+2	+5	+2	2	•	—
Litany Bones	5	+1	+8	+1	2	—	—
Society	5	+1	+0	+2	3	—	N

* This weapon is a ranged Staff-shaping weapon. It has a range of 6 waypoints, and a maximum Charisma of ••• for purposes of calculating damage.



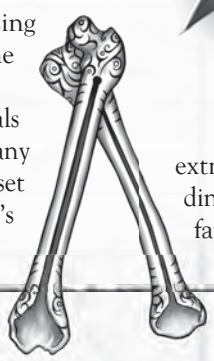
Courtier's Caul: A courtier's caul is a thin sheath of gossamer, drawn over the hands and face of a raksha who engages in Staff-shaping. Although it makes fine manipulation more difficult, the caul affords protection from the shaping of a raksha's enemies. A courtier's caul also acts as weak shaping armor (see pp. 132-133), adding one to the raksha's shaping soak. It has a mobility penalty of -2 and a fatigue value of 1. **Note:** A courtier's caul can be evoked into Creation, where it confers its normal shaping soak as a bashing and lethal soak bonus instead.

Entanglement (unarmed attack): Armed only with his words and passion, the raksha appeals to his enemy's logic and reason, and in so doing, crushes him.

Harness of Twisted Words: A harness of twisted words is a vestment of contract and written promises sewn together into a garment. Raksha who wear them bind foes in chains of law, pact and deceit. **Eclipse Caste Solars who possess one or more Graces can ready their diplomatic immunity as if it were a harness of twisted words when engaged in shaping combat.** The harness is an entanglement weapon.

Hunting Clans: Savants of Creation among the raksha compare hunting clans to certain insects—they're swarms of dream-scraps that exist to reorganize societies and minds. A raksha who wields a colony of hunting clans can heighten emotional bonds that tie people together. Once unleashed, the individual dream-scraps of the clan flitter out into the society in which the raksha travels, impressing his social views on it to the detriment of the raksha's enemies.

Litany Bones: The hollow bones of mortals who die within the Wyld can be shaped into litany bones. A raksha who taps out a rhythm on a set of litany bones can call upon some of Creation's substance to impose his will upon the shaped world of dreams. As litany bones are found, rather than made, they have no Cost. Mortals who die in the Wyld are common enough.



Society (unarmed attack): The raksha brings about the censure of her adversary, using shame, pressure or otherwise forcing the target to accede to the demands of the attacker. If necessary, a raksha can summon an entire society into existence for the sole purpose of having it shun her victim.

Weapons of the Sword

Sword weapons are, simply, weapons of war. They focus an attacker's desire for conflict and domination. The default description of a Sword shaping attack is along the lines of "I attack" or "My monster advances."

Entanglement (unarmed attack): As with any other type of entanglement, this unarmed attack represents a means of inflicting damage over time. In the context of Sword-shaping, an entanglement attack usually takes the form of a duel that, once begun, the opponent cannot withdraw from without losing face (or worse).



Extras: One of the simplest Sword-shaping weapons, extras are simply an army created to carry out a raksha's bidding. With a normal shaping action, a raksha can create a fantasy representing an army of millions (see pp. 116-117).

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Sword Weapons

Name	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Cost	Tags
Entanglement	6	-1	+0	—	1	—	E, N, P
Extras	6	+1	+2	+2	3	•	—
Horror	6	+3	+7	+0	2	•••	—
Monster	5	+3	+6	-1	2	••	—
Mutant Warleader	6	+1	+3	+3	2	••	—
Nishkriya Mask	4	+3	+3	+2	3	•••	—
Personal Prowess	5	+1	+2	+0	3	—	N
Sky Barb	5	+2	+3	+0	2	•	—

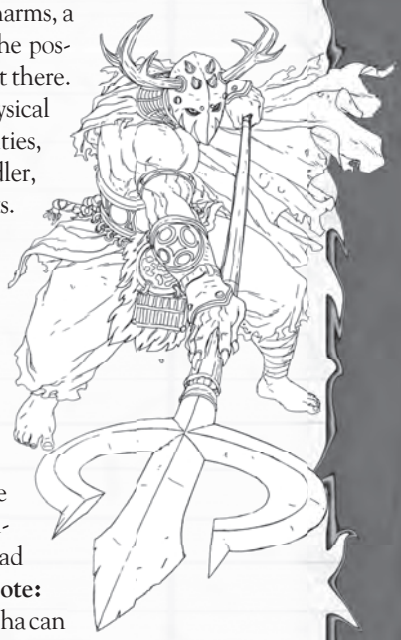
Only such an army forged to serve as a shaping weapon can allow the raksha to achieve victory over his enemies, however. **Note:** With appropriate Charms, a raksha can summon an army of extras he possesses into Creation and deploy it as a military force.



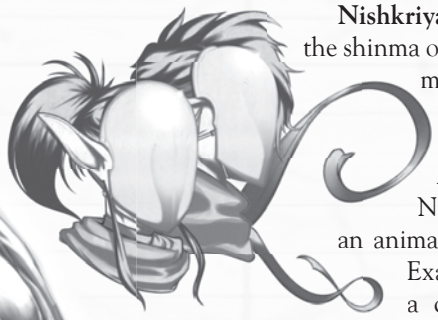
Horror: Greater than mere monsters, horrors inflict upon their targets no simple wounds. A horror of the Wyld denies cosmic meaning—so terrible is a horror's visage that one who faces it begins to doubt all meaning. A horror is not quite a behemoth, but it approaches such a creature in power and ferocity. **Note:** With appropriate Charms, a raksha can summon a horror he possesses into Creation and deploy it there. In Creation, a horror has the Physical Attributes, combat-related Abilities, Virtues and Willpower of its handler, as well as five points of mutations. Its Mental Attributes are equal to its handler's Essence, and its Social Attributes are all 0.



Monster: Beyond simple armies, many raksha choose to attack in shaping combat with great beasts. Less than horrors, let alone true behemoths, monsters still function as devastating instruments of war. **Note:** With appropriate Charms, a raksha can summon a monster he possesses into Creation and deploy it there. In Creation, a monster has the Physical Attributes, combat-related Abilities, Virtues and Willpower of its handler, as well as three mutation points. Its Mental Attributes are each 1, and its Social Attributes are all 0.



Mutant Warleader: Created from a warped and Wyld-assimilated mortal, a mutant warleader most often hangs back and serves to guard the raksha who created it. Some raksha, however, send their mutant warleaders into battle to lead the raksha's extras in combat. **Note:** With appropriate Charms, a raksha can summon a mutant warleader he possesses into Creation and deploy it there. In Creation, a mutant warleader has the traits of an elite soldier, plus four mutation points.

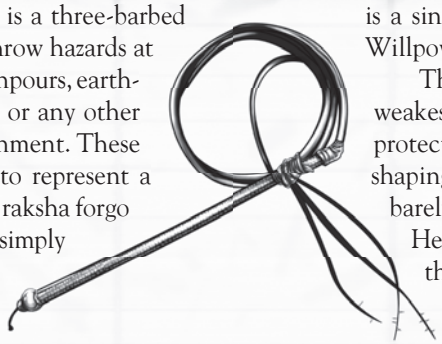


Nishkriya Mask: Named for the shinma of conflict, the blank mask of Nishkriya marks its bearer as an avatar of strife. A raksha who wears a Nishkriya mask sports an anima banner akin to an Exalt, which rises in a chiaroscuro pillar toward the heavens. Masked warrior raksha are some of the most feared Sword-shapers.

Personal Prowess (unarmed attack): Armed only with the strength of her resolve, and perhaps tooth and claw, the raksha tears her enemies to pieces, forcing them to submit to her superiority.

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Sky Barb: A sky barb is a three-barbed whip that cuts the sky to throw hazards at the enemy—torrential downpours, earth-shattering tremors, glaciers or any other manipulation of the environment. These traits are also appropriate to represent a hazard on its own, for some raksha forgo the creation of a sky barb and simply create a hazard to pull from Elsewhere and throw in the paths of their enemies at will. **Note:** A sky barb has no utility in Creation, but a hazard forged by a raksha as a personal possession can be summoned into Creation through appropriate Charms. The form of a hazard evoked into Creation in this manner will vary according to which Charm was used, but all such hazards will manifest as dangerous environmental conditions that inflict environmental penalties equal to their owners' Essence on Creation-born caught within them.



Shaping Armor

Those raksha who travel in dangerous places and expect attack from unfamiliar foes wrap false principles of narrative truth around their Hearts to shield themselves from the wills of opponents. Like mortal armor, shaping armor has three important traits—soak, mobility and fatigue. Shaping armor's soak trait is a single number, which increases the raksha's effective Willpower for the purpose of calculating soak.

There are four common types of shaping armor. The weakest shaping armor, the courtier's caul, provides little protection but has the advantage of also serving as a Staff-shaping weapon. The lightest of false truths, assertion gauze barely conceals the Heart below. Some raksha wrap their Hearts in fate weave, gossamer imitations of the fabric of the Loom of Fate. Those raksha who wish the strongest protection don form chitin, shells of deceptive stability. Such shells are arduous to craft but afford the strongest protection short of shaping armor treasures (see p. 139).

When creating superior shaping armor using the rules for superior equipment in **Exalted**, page 365, treat +1L/+1B soak as simply +1 soak. Shaping armor's mobility penalty subtracts directly from Heart DV. A raksha with a Heart surrounded by false truth might be more resilient against the narrative of a foe, but when she attempts to slide away from a foe's attack by denying her own existence, the two lies conflict.

As within, so without. The longer a raksha wears shaping armor, the more she internalizes its false truth, and the more difficult she finds it to shape the world around her. For every tale in which a raksha persists in wearing shaping armor past the first, she suffers a cumulative -1 internal penalty to

Shaping Armor

Name	Soak	Mobility	Fatigue	Cost
Courtier's Caul*	+1	-2	1	••
Assertion Gauze	+2	-2	1	•••
Fate Weave	+4	-3	2	••••
Form Chitin	+6	-4	3	•••••

* A courtier's caul can also function as a Staff-shaping weapon (see p. 130).

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all shaping actions, up to a maximum penalty of the armor's fatigue value. Tales spent without performing a single shaping action don't increase the penalty, but remember that moving from one waypoint to another is a shaping action. To reset the penalty to 0, a character must spend an entire tale without wearing any shaping armor. Most raksha don their armor only when conflict looms or when they travel through unsafe territory.

Donning shaping armor requires a number of sequential Speed 6, DV -3 shaping actions equal to the armor's mobility penalty, no more than one of which may be placed in a flurry. Removing shaping armor requires the same.

Other Grace Magic

Not all magic of the Fair Folk is Charms. The raksha shape their own Graces and the Graces of their underlings into terrible beasts called behemoths, priceless treasures of the Ring, mighty spells of oneiromantic sorcery and binding oaths of awesome power. Fair Folk purchase adjurations, behemoths, oneiromantic spells and treasures (collectively referred to as Wyld artifacts) with the Artifact Background. All these forms of artifact have an Artifact rating ranging from • to •••••, with certain rare examples qualifying as Artifact N/A.

Having a Grace transformed into an adjuration, behemoth, oneiromantic spell or treasure confers no immediate ill effects upon the bearer of that Grace. Some few raksha forge their own Graces into these things, but most do not, for an altered Grace is more attractive to thieves. Most noble raksha shape their spells, pets, oaths and trinkets from the Graces of minions whose Hearts they posses and own.

Any Creation-born capable of attuning to artifacts can use a treasure. Any character with at least one Grace can swear to an adjuration or bond a behemoth. Any character capable of acquiring gossamer can use an oneiromancy spell. With Storyteller permission, a Creation-born who meets these prerequisites can begin with appropriate Wyld artifacts. Many Lunars in particular possess both Graces and Wyld artifacts.

Handlers and Lorekeepers

A raksha who possesses a behemoth or an oneiromantic spell need not attune to it herself. She may delegate the cost of attunement to a *handler* (for a behemoth) or a *lorekeeper* (for a spell). Nobles often make handlers or lorekeepers of commoners whose Hearts they possess and own. A handler functions as a "master of hounds," except that the "hound" is a behemoth that might be as big as a small town. **The traits of a behemoth in Creation are derived from its *attuned handler*, regardless of who possesses it.** Lorekeepers function as librarians, tending the spells so their masters can concentrate on other matters. **In the case of oneiromancy, regardless of who's attuned to a spell, *the one who possesses it* must pay the cost in motes and gossamer to cast it.**

No equivalents to handlers or lorekeepers exist for treasures or adjurations.

Adjurations

Adjurations are Staff Graces, forged into world-shaping oaths, bound to the shinma Nirvikalpa and used by the Fair Folk to bind their societies together. Oaths are intangible concepts in Creation, but in the Wyld, they're as real as anything else in the cauldron of dreams, most commonly manifesting on some physical item upon which the oath is sworn. Adjurations empower those bound to them. They offer blessings, manipulating the world to ensure their own fulfillment.

Swearing to an adjuration requires a commitment of one mote per level of the oath's Artifact rating. The character cannot voluntarily un-commit those motes. She must either fulfill the terms of the oath or break them before she can reclaim the investment. Only the possessor of an adjuration can swear upon it, but if possession passes to someone else, such as through vexation, the subsequent possessor can swear the same oath once he attunes to the adjuration.

Adjurations

Note: These traits are the default traits for an adjuration used as a Staff-shaping weapon. Individual weapons may vary at the Storyteller's discretion. In addition to the traits listed here, the player may also choose to define the adjuration's Staff-shaping weapon traits as being equivalent to those of a Cup-shaping entanglement weapon or a Ring-shaping ranged weapon of the same level for Diplomats who wish to use entanglement enhancers or ranged weapons. The player can give a particular weapon only one set of traits, however.

Name	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Tags
Samhara Oath	5	+0	+8	+2	2	—
Sthiti Oath	5	+1	+16	+1	2	P
Anugraha Oath	5	+2	+16	+0	2	—
Tirobhava Oath	5	+2	+16	+0	2	—

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Doing so does not affect the previous possessor's commitment in any way.

Each oath contains a specific promise and a quantity of conferred mutation points. Raksha who attune the oath by swearing to that promise receive the associated mutations until the oath is broken or fulfilled. When the adjuration is created, the oath it represents is fixed, as are the mutations points conferred by swearing upon that oath. Neither the oath nor the mutation points can be altered except through the Unshaped Staff Transformation Charm (see pp. 204-205). Mutations granted by oaths are transitory. They don't permanently increase a raksha's mutation points for the purpose of Essence maximum or experience point costs, but they *can* push her (Essence + mutation points) above her (Willpower + 4). An unwise raksha can swear to an oath that calcifies her. A raksha who breaks an adjuration oath suffers a number of catastrophic botches equal to its Artifact rating.

When a raksha attuned to a Throne Room swears to an adjuration on behalf of a freehold, the freehold holds the benefits in common. The lord of the freehold can reflexively assign the associated mutation benefits to any single consenting character in fealty to him.

Samhara Oath (Artifact •)

Mutation Points: Up to 2

Sworn in the name of the shinma Nishkriya, and also called Sword oaths, samhara oaths are made in the shadow of endings and the knowledge that all things die. They often manifest as raiton shadows that hover close to the raksha and drive others into commitments through fear.

The Oath of Dasaya: "I swear that my feet shall never again touch the lands of Creation until I have slain the Unconquered Sun." The oath grants the mutation Gossamer Wing Flight (see p. 216; 2mp).

Sthiti Oath (Artifact ••)

Mutation Points: Up to 3

Sworn in the name of the shinma Nirvishesha, and also called Ring oaths, sthiti oaths are made in recognition that the self exists only in context with others, and that interaction is part of self-definition. They often manifest in shaped worlds as coronas of light that subtly shine around those who sanctify their integrity with commitments.

The Oath of Ayo: "I shall not sleep without weapon in hand until the passage of the next Calibration." The oath grants the mutation version of the Ordinary Object Conjuration (see pp. 191-192; 1mp multiplied by three), and allows the player to roll (Intelligence + Craft [Glamour]) at difficulty 3 to summon an exceptional slashing sword to her hand.

Anugraha Oath (Artifact •••)

Mutation Points: Up to 4. The raksha treats the oath as inflicting half its total mutation points, however, for purposes of determining the raksha's total mutation points.

Sworn in the name of the shinma Dharma, and also called Cup oaths, anugraha oaths are made in joy or hunger, out of a desire for their outcomes. They often manifest in shaped worlds as will-o-wisps or siren scraps of music, luring others into commitments through beauty.

The Oath of Nishumba: "I shall dedicate myself for a year and a day to the devastation of my enemies." The oath grants the raksha a monstrous two-headed goblin body formed with the Wyld affliction Huge (see **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. II—The Wyld** p. 146; 2 mp) and the Charm Glorious Hero Form (see p. 217; 2mp), increasing his Strength and Stamina by two dots each, his Dexterity by one dot, and granting him an additional -0 and -1 health level.

Tirobhava Oath (Artifact ••••)

Mutation Points: Up to 6. The raksha, however, treats the oath as inflicting half its total mutation points for purposes of determining the raksha's total mutation points.

Sworn in the name of the shinma Nirvikalpa, and also called Staff oaths, tirobhava oaths are sworn because oaths are binding, and in binding, there is power. In shaping combat, a tirobhava oath usually possesses a supernatural benefit that improves shaping facility in addition to its normal shaping weapon traits. (See **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, pp. 14-15 for a discussion of powers appropriate for four- and five-dot artifacts). They often manifest in shaped worlds as a staff held by the raksha and wrapped with the terrible power of law.

The Oath of Madhu: "Let any catch me on dry land, and they may slay me." The oath confers the mutation version of Assumption of the Living Kingdom (see p. 160; 6mp). Madhu paired this benefit with the Assumption of the Land's Heart (see pp. 159-160) that he personally knew and merged his spirit with the endless ocean of the West to become the invulnerable sea. A Solar prince covered the sea in obsidian shards and dredged up Madhu to lay atop them, and the raksha was forced to submit to destruction.

Srishti Oath (Artifact •••••)

Mutation Points: Up to 4. The raksha treats the oath as inflicting only one mutation point for purposes of determining the raksha's total mutation points, though.

Sworn in the name of the shinma Nirguna, and also called Heart oaths, srishti oaths are the deepest oaths of the raksha. In shaping combat, a srishti oath has an associated supernatural power of scope appropriate to its level.

The Oath of Hiranya: "I shall serve the shinma Nirvikalpa with the performance of many austerities, and never let myself rest or die." The oath confers the benefit of Bastion of the Self (Sword) (see pp. 168-169; 4mp), which grants immunity to mundane attacks and to the arts of the Sword. It also grants an additional shaping defense against shaping attacks meant to slay the swearer. The raksha cannot be shaped into death either with a weapon or without one, either by day or by night, either on land or at sea or in the air. Despite his protection, however, Hiranya was brought low by Narasimha, a monstrous lion-headed raksha, who caught Hiranya

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in the twilight hour, carried him to a threshold, and on his lap, with clawed hands, strangled him. This attack earned a three-die Wyld stunt on a Sword attack, broke the oath and earned Hiranya a botch on his reflexive counterattack that snapped his own Sword Grace.

Behemoths

Raksha forge their behemoths from Sword Graces, bound to aspects of Nishkriya. Most behemoths are huge, terrifying beasts, with monstrous forms well suited to exotic stunts. Attuning a behemoth requires a commitment of three motes per dot of Artifact rating, as well as several hours of tending per day.

Mechanically, each behemoth is two things—a giant monster (from the perspective of the Creation-born) and a Sword-shaping weapon. A behemoth's traits in shaping combat are not tied to its traits as a giant monster. As a Sword-shaping weapon, the behemoth is simply just another weapon with static equipment traits that modify the attacks of the raksha who uses it. As a monster, a behemoth begins with the Attributes, Abilities, Charms, Virtues and Willpower of its attuned handler, modified by mutations.

Fey Beasts (Artifact • or ••)

Of all the Wyld horrors the raksha marshal in battle, fey beasts are the least. Whether a one-dot or two-dot beast, this class of behemoth has the same shaping traits. As a monster, a one-dot beast receives six mutation points, and a two-dot beast receives nine. Either type of fey beast also has a natural weapon that uses the attack modifiers of a fine weapon. For example, a long-necked, sharp-beaked, scaled riding bird (a one-dot fey beast) might attack as if with a great sword with a bonus to Accuracy.

Riding Bird: A powerful, war bird used by the raksha as a steed. Its mutations include Gossamer Wing Flight (see p. 216; 2mp), Glorious Hero Form (see p. 217; 2mp) and the Wyld affliction Thick Skin (see **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. II—The Wyld** p. 147; 2mp). It uses its handler's traits, but it adds flight, one dot of Strength, one dot of Stamina, +2L/+2B soak and a beak-based natural attack.

Daikaiju (Artifact •••)

Daikaiju are monsters of terrible prowess—the heart of a raksha's army. All daikaiju have 12L/12B armor. This armor stacks with armor from mutations. Their natural weaponry uses the attack modifiers of an exceptional weapon. For example, a behemoth with giant elephantine legs might use them as exceptional sledges with bonus Accuracy, Damage and Defense. In addition, daikaiju receive 12 mutation points to spend as desired.

Albino Hybroc: A great white hybroc that dwells in the heart of an eternal blizzard. Its feathers are like knives—specifically, exceptional throwing knives with improved rate, melee damage and ranged damage. It can cast them off at the nadir of a wing beat. This monstrous beast inflicts primal terror on those who catch a glimpse of its burning red eyes or the beat of its wings. It uses Imposition of Law (see p. 168; 4mp) to automatically succeed on (Charisma + Presence [Inflicting Fear]) rolls. Its frozen heart beats once a century, and its skin turns attacks like superheavy steel. It uses Bastion of the Self (Heart) (see pp. 168-169; 4mp) for immunity to normal damage. It has Gossamer Wing Flight (see p. 216; 2mp) and the Wyld affliction Huge (see **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. II—The Wyld**, p. 146; 2mp), increasing its Strength and Stamina by two dots over those of its handler and adding a -0 and -1 health level.

Deep Wyld Horror (Artifact •••• or •••••)

The terror weapons of a raksha's arsenal, Deep Wyld horrors bring devastation to the battlefield. In Sword combat, Deep Wyld horrors have associated supernatural powers of scope appropriate to the horror's level (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, p. 14-15, for a discussion of powers appropriate for four- and five-dot artifacts). Deep Wyld horrors have 20L/20B armor, which stacks with armor from mutations. Their natural weaponry uses the modifiers for an attuned one- or two-dot artifact weapon, complete with magical material bonus. In addition, four-dot Deep Wyld horrors have 15 mutation points to spend as desired, while five-dot Deep Wyld horrors have 18.

The Soul-Eating Boar: The writhing barbed spines of a soul-eating boar have the weapon qualities of an attuned soulsteel dire lance: Speed 5, Accuracy +4, Damage +8L (+12L on a charge), Defense +2, Rate 2 and with the ability to drink a number of motes of Essence equal to the handler's permanent Essence whenever it strikes a target and inflicts at least one level of damage. The boar is an indefatigable hunter. Two picks of Imposition of Law (see p. 168; 4mp each) give it automatic success on (Stamina + Resistance [While Hunting]) and (Perception + Survival [Tracking]) rolls. To this, it adds the Giant blight (see **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. II—The Wyld**, p. 148; 4mp), the Enhanced Smell pox (see **Exalted**, p. 288; 1mp)

Behemoths

Name	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Tags
Fey Beast	5	+3	+6	+2	3	—
Daikaiju	5	+2	+12	+0	2	P
Deep Wyld Horror	5	+2	+16	-1	1	P

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and Glorious Hero Form (see p. 217; 2mp), increasing its Strength by three, its Stamina by three, its health levels by -0/-1/-1/-2/-2, its scent-based Awareness rolls by two dice and its Dexterity by one.

Ishiika (Artifact N/A)

Ishiika, the grass-cutter scythe, is the most terrible Sword-shaping weapon acknowledged by the hosts of the raksha, once tamed by Prince Balor. It takes the appearance of a scorpion formed from a raging ocean of teeth, surrounded by an endless cloud of clicking disembodied mandibles that in the pattern of their sounds speak the greatest fears of every listener's heart. Some claim Ishiika fell before the Godspear of the Five Metal Shrike; others, that Balor could not wield Ishiika against Creation at all, for the creature was larger than all the lands of shape. In any case, it has not been seen since the Prince's dissolution.

Employed in Sword-shaping combat, Ishiika has Speed 4, Accuracy +3, Damage +12, Defense +5 and an unlimited rate. It grants its wielder six bonus dice to Join Shaping Battle rolls. Shaping weapons used to parry Ishiika are utterly destroyed, shattering their Sword and Heart Graces (if any) before eliminating them entirely.

In ordinary combat, Ishiika has immortality on the level of the Primordials. It has Essence 10 and traits on par with the greatest of behemoths, gods or Third Circle demons, but it cannot focus its attention on anything smaller than a direction. Human-sized foes who venture into its area of influence suffer one attack per two ticks, with 10 successes on the attack roll and 11 lethal base damage. Targets who do not use Charms or stunts to defend themselves take an automatic three health levels of lethal damage rather than suffer an attack.

Oneiromancy

Oneiromantic spells are artifacts forged from Cup Graces and bound to Dharma. Raksha use spells as tools of ravishment, ensnaring their prey with dreams of passion, serenity and terror. Invoking an oneiromantic spell in Creation takes a number of scenes, a number of (uncommitted) motes and a number of points of gossamer. A spell uses its lorekeeper's traits when determining its abilities. A lorekeeper must commit three motes per Artifact rating to attune a spell and spend several scenes of ritual per day to maintain that commitment.

Waking Circle Spell (Artifact •)

Cost: 10m, 1g
Invocation Time: One scene
Duration: Waking Circle spells remain invoked for one tale or story, as appropriate

To determine the tangible effects of a Waking Circle spell, build each spell as an object with up to 10 mutation points. They must have exactly one point of Assumption Charm mutations, normally Assumption of (Element) Shape (see pp. 156-157). The remaining mutation points are spent on non-Assumption mutations to craft the spell itself.

Pauper's Mask: This spell takes the form of a leering wooden mask that impoverishes all who look upon it. The mask has the permanent versions of Assumption of Wood Shape (1mp) and the Hateful Coin Curse (see pp. 192-193; 3mp multiplied by three). When someone looks at the mask, roll its lorekeeper's (Intelligence + Bureaucracy). The victim



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Oneiromancy Spells

Name	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Tags
Waking Circle Spell	5	+1	+6	+2	1	E
Dreaming Circle Spell	6	+1*	+6*	+2	1	E
Desire Circle Spell	6	+3	+9	+2	1	E
Samadhi Circle Spell	5	+2	+16	+0	2	—
Shinma Circle Spell	5	+2	+16	+0	2	—

* Dreaming Circle spells used as shaping weapons generally have either a narcotic effect or a poisonous effect on those who stand against them. The wielder of a Dreaming Circle spell has the option of boosting either the spell's Accuracy or Damage in shaping combat.

temporarily loses one dot of Resources per success. This work of glamour fails if the target's (Wits + Essence) exceeds the lorekeeper's Bureaucracy.

Dreaming Circle Spell (Artifact ••)

Cost: 15m, 1g
Invocation Time: One scene
Duration: Dreaming Circle spells remain invoked for one tale or story, as appropriate

The tangible effects of a Dreaming Circle spell are built with up to 11 mutation points. They have either one or two points of Assumption Charm mutations, normally Assumption of (Element) Shape (see pp. 156-157) or Assumption of the Land's Heart (see pp. 159-160). The remaining mutation points are spent on non-Assumption-type mutations to craft the spell itself.

The Utopia Stone: This spell can blanket a hamlet-sized region with the ignorance of pain. Although pain and suffering remain real, people there naturally conceal and forget about its existence, so that they believe themselves living in a utopia and cover up evidence to the contrary. The spell has the permanent versions of Assumption of the Land's Heart (2mp) and Fall of Night Shadows the Truth (3mp multiplied by three). When conjured into Creation, the Assumption of the Land's Heart effect draws its influence down into the earth, blanketing a region suitable for a small hamlet. Whenever someone is hurt or suffers in that region, roll the spell's lorekeeper's (Conviction + Stealth), adding the successes to the difficulty of Investigation, Lore, Occult or Socialize rolls to find out about that pain. This is a work of glamour that cannot shield suffering from those with (Intelligence + Essence) exceeding the lorekeeper's Stealth.

Desire Circle Spell (Artifact •••)

Cost: 20m, 2g
Invocation Time: Two scenes
Duration: Desire Circle spells remain invoked until some condition inherent to the spell is met. If that condition is the passage of time, the spell lasts up to a year and a day.

The tangible effects of a Desire Circle spell are built with up to 13 mutation points. They have one to four points of Assumption Charm mutations, normally chosen from Assumption of (Element) Shape, Assumption of the Land's Heart or Assumption of the City's Heart. The remaining mutation points are spent on non-Assumption Charms to craft the spell itself.

The effects of Desire Circle spells are stronger than ordinary works of glamour. Characters whose traits would normally render them immune to the work of glamour still suffer its effects unless they use a stunt or Charm to see through it. Such Charms need not offer any specific defense against the Wyld or shaping effects.

Maze Map: This spell can transform a city into a maze and takes the form of a labyrinth drawn on a piece of gilt paper. It has the permanent version of Assumption of the City's Heart (4mp) and Undetectable Lie (see pp. 208-209; 3mp multiplied by three). When summoned into Creation, it tacks itself to a wall in the city and sinks its power deep into the land. The chosen lie is "You're hopelessly lost." Characters with (Wits + Essence) up to the lorekeeper's Manipulation consider themselves hopelessly lost from the moment they enter the city and are likely to wander in circles even with their destination in plain sight. Stunts and Charms won't help unless they defend against the Fair Folk, the Wyld or the raksha twisting their minds. Characters with (Wits + Essence) higher than the lorekeeper's Manipulation would normally be immune, but because this spell is of the Desire Circle, they must use a stunt or Charm to escape it. Some appropriate Solar Charms include Trackless Region Navigation, Judge's Ear Technique or even an Awareness Excellency. A simple stunt such as marking one's way with chalk would also suffice.

Samadhi Circle Spell (Artifact ••••)

Cost: 25m, 2g
Invocation Time: Two scenes
Duration: Samadhi Circle spells remain invoked until some condition inherent to the spell is met. If that condition is the passage of time, the spell lasts up to a year and a day.

Spells of the Samadhi Circle, also called "true self spells," influence the endless primordial dreams of the Wyld, the

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Graces and mortal souls. No raksha can invoke them who does not own his or her own Heart. In shaping combat, Samadhi Circle spells each have an associated supernatural power of scope appropriate to its level (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, pp. 14-15, for a discussion of powers appropriate for four- and five-dot artifacts). The tangible effects of a Samadhi Circle spell are built with up to 15 mutation points, at least one point of which must come from Assumption Charm mutations. The remaining mutation points are spent to craft the spell itself. Charms or stunts are necessary to see through the Samadhi Circle, as with the Desire Circle.

Summoning the Armies of the Wyld: This spell can create a tainted land and slowly gather an army of Wyld addicts to live within it. Cast as the Wyld recedes from Creation, its permanent Assumption of the Wyld-Tainted Land (see p. 160; 6mp, but see the effects of Mad God Mien that follow) takes force and creates a tainted region. The permanent version of Shiftless Untamed Beauty (see p. 180; 1mp) makes the land itself addictive, and the permanent version of Adored by All the World (see pp. 181-182; 2mp) attracts a few more followers—Wyld loyalists, drawn to the region rather than the raksha—each scene. As the storm gathers, the permanent form of Ordinary Object Conjuration (see pp. 191-192; 1mp multiplied by three) forges one suit of armor from the sky each scene. Mad God Mien (see pp. 160-161; 0mp, but increases the mutation point cost of Assumption of the Wyld-Tainted Land from 6mp to 8mp) protects the result from standard countermagic. Characters whose (Integrity + Essence) exceeds the lorekeeper's Presence are not immune to the work of glamour that is Shiftless Untamed Beauty contained within this spell unless they use an appropriate Charm or stunt to disengage themselves from the land's allure.

Shinma Circle Spell (Artifact •••••)

Cost: 30m, 3g
Invocation Time: Three scenes
Duration: Shinma Circle spells remain invoked until some condition inherent to the spell is met. If that condition is the passage of time, the spell lasts up to one century.

Shinma circle spells influence the primal substrata of the Wyld that exists before dreams, from which the shinma, the Primordials and certain of the unshaped were made. The tangible effects of Shinma Circle spells are built with up to 18 mutation points, at least one of which must come from an Assumption Charm. The remaining mutation points are spent to craft the spell itself. It takes an appropriate Charm or stunt to see through Shinma Circle works of glamour, as with the Samadhi and Desire Circles.

These rules apply only to player-created Shinma Circle spells or spells created by the Storyteller for casual unshaped use. Shinma Circle spells that exist for story purposes can have additional or unusual abilities, and some are effectively legendary (N/A) artifacts in power.

Glamour Sorcery and Countermagic

For the purposes of countermagic, treat Waking and Dreaming Circle spells as Terrestrial Circle Sorcery, treat Desire and Samadhi Circle Spells as Celestial Circle Sorcery, and treat Shinma Circle spells as Solar Circle Sorcery.

In addition, each of these spells has a physical manifestation, the Cup Grace from which it's formed, usually as sturdy as any Cup Grace (see p. 92). Targeted by countermagic of equal level, it goes inert, dispelling all effects; the raksha cannot use that spell again that story. Targeted by greater countermagic, the manifestation shatters, destroying the spell entirely and unmaking all its effects, but leaving the physical manifestation of the Grace behind as an indestructible but powerless trinket. Adamant Countermagic, targeting the spell's manifestation, destroys utterly any oneiromantic spell not protected by Mad God Mien (see pp. 160-161).

Treasures

Treasures are artifacts of the Ring. A Ring-shaping weapon gains +1 Accuracy, +1 Defense and +1 Rate in the hands of the raksha who crafted it, as the weapon demonstrates the skill of its creator.

Aside from the Ring-shaping weapons listed here, the Ring can also become a traditional artifact—an enchanted sword, mask or other object useful to the Creation-born or a raksha in Creation. Unlike adjurations, behemoths and oneiromancy spells, only a treasure specifically defined as being a shaping weapon has shaping weapon traits.

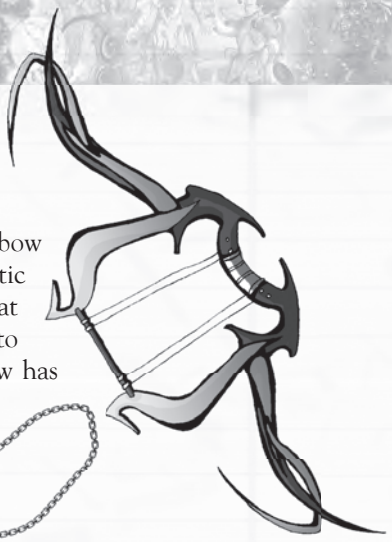
Treasures

Note: Treasures that serve as Ring-shaping weapons have no maximum Perception.

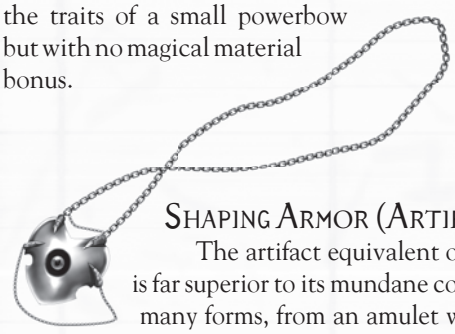
Name	Speed	Acc	Damage	Defense	Rate	Range	Attune	Tags
Hundred Color Shaping Lens	6	+2	+3	-6	2	10	6m	—
Resonant Chorus Bow	6	+2	+15	-6	1	6	3m	—

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Resonant Chorus Bow (Artifact •)



A gossamer-inlaid curdling dream bow, the resonant chorus bow sings an ever-changing song, chaotic but with an underlying pattern that tugs at the mind. If evoked into Creation, a resonant chorus bow has the traits of a small powerbow but with no magical material bonus.



Shaping Armor (Artifact •+)

The artifact equivalent of shaping armor is far superior to its mundane cousin. It can take many forms, from an amulet worn around the neck to a harness strung from shoulder to hip, but it always covers the heart.

Soak	Mobility	Fatigue	Cost	Attune
+4	-0	0	•	2
+6	-1	0	••	3
+8	-1	1	•••	4
+10	-2	1	••••	6

Suits of artifact shaping armor with Cost ••••• also exist. They possess the soak, mobility penalty and fatigue value of Cost •••• armor and some secondary ability appropriate to a five-dot artifact. Some suits of Cost •••• armor possess some secondary ability appropriate to a four-dot artifact—such armors have the soak, mobility penalty and fatigue values of Cost ••• artifact shaping armor.

If evoked into Creation, artifact shaping armor also acts as conventional magical armor, with traits equivalent to artifact armor of the same Artifact rating but with no magical material bonus.

Hundred Color Shaping Lens (Artifact ••)



The strands of dream overlaid on a hundred color shaping lens writhe eternally, each struggling to dominate the patterns the lens creates. If evoked into Creation, a hundred color shaping lens functions as a ranged weapon capable of firing bolts of either gossamer or Essence. Each shot costs one gossamer or three motes and is targeted with the wielder's (Perception + Awareness). When used in this capacity, the lens has the following traits: Speed 6, Accuracy +2, Damage 10B (piercing), Range 100.



Artifact Waypoint Complex (Artifact •••+)

Artifact waypoints are flying citadels or fantastical airships, engineered as mobile artillery platforms. They float one journey above the waypoints they pass over. In Ring-shaping combat, an artifact waypoint has qualities similar to a normal artifact ranged or thrown weapon of equal level and a commitment cost of three motes. It contains a number of individual waypoints equal to its artifact rating, and attempts to damage those waypoints suffer a -3 external penalty.

If evoked into Creation, an artifact waypoint typically has the traits of an artifact flying vessel with an equivalent Artifact rating.

Freeholds

Freeholds—like adjurations, behemoths, oneiromantic spells and treasures—are forged from the Graces of the raksha. In the Wyld, freeholds are centers of power, society and community where raksha gather and interact. In Creation, freeholds are all that and more. Oases of fluid possibility in form's sterile actuality, Creation's freeholds exist isolated from their surroundings, twisting local geomancy to hide them from Creation's sight. They exist atop mountains, shielded by banks of mist, at the bottoms of mirrored lakes or in isolated valleys. Within freeholds, raksha take shelter from harsh Creation and live in memory of the Wyld.

Existence within freeholds is covered in more detail elsewhere in this book (see pp. 43-44) and in **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. I—The Wyld**, pages 30–33. The mechanics of freeholds are dealt with here.

The Arcane Redoubt

The Arcane Redoubt is the exact center of a freehold, created by using the Charm Forging the Arcane Redoubt (see p. 203) to embed a Heart Grace in a suitably isolated demesne or a waypoint within the Wyld. At the moment the Arcane Redoubt's bonefire ignites, the bearer of the freehold's Heart Grace turns to dust and ash.

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That raksha ceases to exist until such a time as the bonefire dies, at which point the immolated raksha returns to life. The bonefire must be fed with dross, a mixture of Essence and gossamer. If not fed 20 motes and one gossamer per tale, the bonefire dies, and all its effects fail.

In Creation, the freehold fills with Wyld taint, and the demesne becomes part of the Middlemarches of Rakshastan, encompassing (the demesne's level + 5) waypoints in area. In the Wyld, the bonefire extends its influence into surrounding waypoints, capturing (the Heart Grace's level + 5) waypoints nearby. To control more waypoints, a freehold requires a Stronghold (see p. 142).

The level of a freehold determines its size. A freehold in Creation is generally smaller than a freehold in the Wyld, though it contains the same number of waypoints. In Creation, a level-1 freehold is a mere 100 yards across, while a level-2 freehold is 200, a level-3 freehold is 400 yards across, a level-4 freehold is half a mile across, and a level-5 freehold is a full mile across. In the Wyld, a freehold spreads out to encompass the full size of all the waypoints it contains and the journeys connecting them. (Remember, most journeys span 30 miles.)

To attune to a bonefire, a character must cast his own Heart into it. If he does not own his Heart, he must have the owner's consent. He must then take six Attune Grace shaping actions (see p. 121). During those six actions, his Heart is vulnerable. It can be stolen or stolen back with normal dice actions or vexation (see p. 125), though reaching into the fire to claim it inflicts one level of aggravated damage. Once the six actions are complete, the character is attuned, and he becomes the freehold's master. Attunement provides the following three benefits:

- The attuned raksha may embody himself within the freehold as a whole. He is reflexively aware of all things that transpire there, he interacts with the whole freehold at once, and he can use shaping actions as if present in any of the freehold's waypoints.
- The attuned raksha receives a number of automatic successes equal to his Essence on all shaping rolls within the freehold.
- The attuned raksha can reflexively spy on any of the Fair Folk carrying pennants or cysts from the freehold, looking in on them as if present. He can also wither any of the freehold's pennants or cysts, wherever it may be, and grow it again over the course of a story in the freehold's heart.

An attuned raksha outside the freehold must hold a pennant or a cyst to realize these benefits.

Multiple raksha can place their Hearts into the bonefire. The benefits of attunement divide among them. Each holds a power in turn, for a duration set by the raksha who makes the bonefire—a day, a week, a month, a season or a year. The raksha track all of these on the moon's face.

Cysts and Pennants

A freehold's bonefire produces cysts, pennants or some combination of the two. A cyst is a membranous sac of Essence containing a freehold's writhing dreams. Unlike a hearthstone, a cyst provides no supernatural power on its own, but a raksha holding a cyst respires a number of motes per hour equal to the cyst's rating—even in Creation. A freehold can produce one cyst of level equal to the freehold's level, or more cysts with total levels equaling the freehold's level.

Pennants are mere wisps of a freehold's fluid being. They manifest as objects, trinkets or tools with the traits of mundane equipment, no larger than a suit of armor, and are as difficult to destroy as a hearthstone. Pennants confer no Essence to the raksha who carry them, but any raksha carrying a pennant suffers no Essence loss from calcification (see p. 101). Every dot of a freehold's level allows for the creation of three pennants, but creating pennants detracts from the freehold's ability to produce cysts.

Thus, a level-2 freehold could produce a level-2 cyst, two level-1 cysts, a level-1 cyst and three pennants, or six pennants.

It takes a mere unrolled shaping action on the part of the freehold's master to change the geomantic configuration of a freehold enough to produce new cysts or pennants or destroy existing ones.

The Fountainhead

The Fountainhead is the center and focus of a freehold's definition, created by embedding a Ring Grace into the structure of one of a freehold's waypoints with the Charm Forging the Fountainhead (see pp. 203-204). The Fountainhead has feminine or passive symbolism—examples include a well, a pond, a topiary, a cave, a mandala, an enormous looking glass or a copse. A freehold with a Fountainhead is a living being. Its consciousness is distant and abstract, but it witnesses everything that transpires within itself. The freehold gains a Ring trait equal to the Ring Grace used to create it.

Attuning to a Fountainhead requires six Attune Grace shaping actions of effort and a one-mote commitment. A raksha attuned to a Fountainhead is the freehold's keeper. The majority of the raksha Workers in the freehold must participate, lending their strength to the endeavor. This attunement erases a previous raksha's attunement. One need not be the freehold's master, nor possess his consent, to become its keeper.

The keeper defines the freehold and commands its awareness. She can reflexively sense anything that

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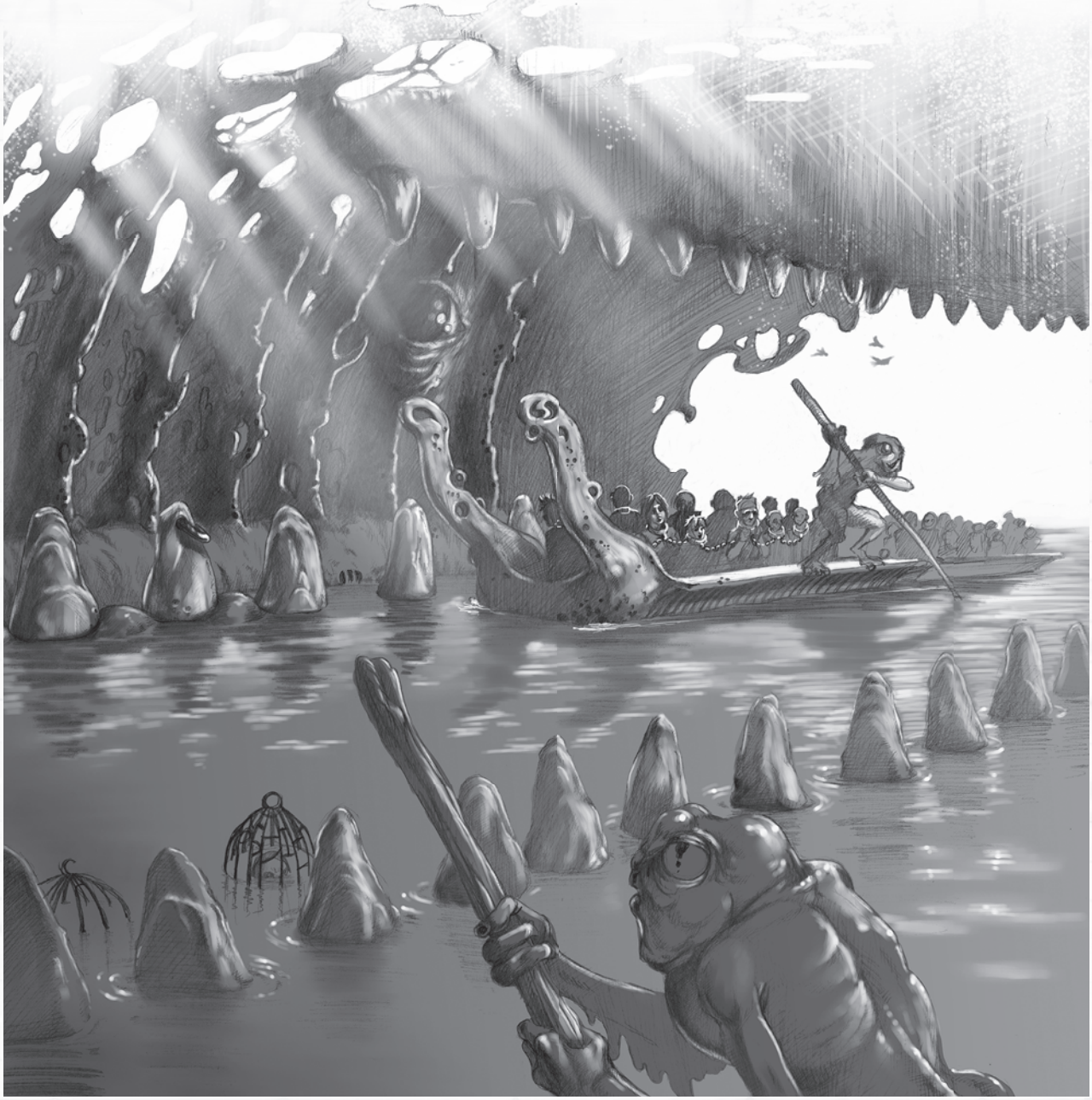
happens in the freehold or near any of its cysts or pennants. She may use applicable Ring defenses against shaping attacks made against the freehold's waypoints and may make Ring shaping attacks as if present in any of the freehold's waypoints.

Unlike creating an Arcane Redoubt, the process of creating a Fountainhead inflicts no particular negative effect on the bearer of the Ring Grace used. The Fountainhead remains that raksha's Ring Grace. The keeper owns the Ring Grace and may inflict the Curse of Namelessness (see p. 101) on the bearer.

The Glory

The Glory is the center and focus of a freehold's majesty, created by embedding a Cup Grace in the structure of one of a freehold's waypoints with the Charm Forging the Glory (see p. 204). It emits a faint radiance of the Cup, which makes the freehold a delightful and marvelous place. Even for mortals tortured and abused in the dark, fetid freehold Segneri, the place has an odd magical quality for which part of them will forever long. The freehold gains a Cup trait with a rating equal to the rating of the Cup Grace used to create it.

Attuning to a Glory requires an uninterrupted performance consisting of six Attune Grace shaping actions and a one-mote commitment. Attuning thus erases any previous raksha's attunement. A raksha attuned to a Glory is the freehold's pride. The attunement fails if someone drives the attuning character away or successfully interrupts his performance.



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One need not be the freehold's master, nor acquire his consent, to become its pride.

A freehold with a Glory radiates glamour and enchantment. Creation-born characters who accept such a freehold's hospitality suffer a social attack at the beginning of each scene within that freehold, with (the freehold's Cup trait + 5) automatic successes, directing them to linger in the freehold. Characters already determined to linger in the freehold are ordered to show no resistance to the raksha of the freehold. Characters already determined to show no resistance to the raksha of the freehold are ordered to consent to the raksha's Charms. These effects are works of glamour, and they have no effect on characters with a (Wits + Essence) total of 7 or higher.

The pride controls the emotional ambiance of the freehold. He can selectively prevent raksha from respiring Essence naturally in the freehold with a difficulty 3 Cup-shaping action. He can also embody himself in the spiritual structure of the freehold. This effect makes him aware of all Cup-shaping within the freehold, allows him to use applicable Cup defenses against shaping attacks made against the freehold's waypoints and lets him use applicable Cup-shaping actions as if present in any of the freehold's waypoints.

Unlike creating an Arcane Redoubt, the process of creating a Glory inflicts no particular negative effects on the bearer of the Cup Grace used. The pride owns the Cup Grace and can inflict the Curse of Hubris (see p. 100) on that raksha.

The Stronghold

The Stronghold is the center and focus of a freehold's dynamic, aggressive strength, created by embedding a Sword Grace in the structure of one of a freehold's waypoints with the Charm Forging the Stronghold (see p. 204). A Stronghold always has masculine or martial symbolism. Examples include a fort, a parade ground, an obelisk or a mountain peak. Its existence protects the freehold against physical invasion. The freehold gains a Sword trait with a rating equal to the rating of the Sword Grace used to create it.

Attuning a Stronghold requires six Attune Grace shaping actions of effort and a one-mote commitment. This attunement erases any previous raksha's attunement. A raksha attuned to a Stronghold is the freehold's general. The character attuning must possess undisputed martial control over the area. He must run anyone who might object out of the Stronghold's waypoint. One need not be the freehold's master, nor possess his consent, to become its general.

The general commands the physical territory of the freehold. He can rearrange any number of the journeys between the freehold's waypoints with a difficulty 3 Sword-shaping action. He cannot completely isolate any waypoint or reduce the number of journeys. He can also embody himself anywhere in the physical structure of the freehold. This effect gives him awareness of all Sword-shaping actions within the freehold, allows him to use applicable Sword-shaping defenses against shaping attacks made against the freehold's waypoints and lets him make Sword-shaping actions as if present in any of the freehold's waypoints.

A freehold with a Stronghold can claim possession of additional waypoints. The freehold can thereafter directly control (Sword trait x 10) waypoints. To claim a new waypoint, the general must vex the waypoint with the intent of claiming it for the freehold instead of himself. The targeted waypoint must be connected by journey to one of the freehold's existing waypoints. In Creation, the general must stake claim to some territory adjacent to the freehold and hold it for one season. This act produces a "phantom" waypoint, for these purposes subject to vexation as a Bordermarch waypoint. Once the general vexes the phantom waypoint, the freehold's cloak of mist spreads over the territory, or the freehold's lake floods it, or the freehold's hills creep forward to elevate it. In any case, the freehold's border expands to isolate and claim that territory, and it effectively becomes a Middlemarch waypoint, indistinguishable from the freehold's other waypoints.

Unlike creating an Arcane Redoubt, the process of creating a Stronghold inflicts no particular negative effects on the bearer of the Sword Grace used. The general owns the Sword Grace and can inflict the Curse of Meekness (see p. 101) on that raksha.

The Throne Room

The Throne Room is the central focus for the freehold's society, a place of court and deliberation, and is created by embedding a Staff Grace in the structure of one of a freehold's waypoints with the Charm Forging the Throne Room (see p. 204). Its existence gives the freehold the ability to marshal and shape the convictions of others. The freehold gains a Staff trait equal to the rating of the Staff Grace used to create it.

A freehold's Throne Room allows raksha to bind themselves in fealty to the freehold and its master. The oaths binding the freehold apply to all such characters until they or the current master rejects that fealty.

Attuning a Throne Room requires six Attune Grace shaping actions of effort and a one-mote commitment. This act erases any previous raksha's attunement. A raksha attuned to a Throne Room is the freehold's vizier. The raksha attuning must have a certain level of cooperation. During the story in which she attempts attunement, the raksha must meaningfully interact with every noble sworn to the freehold. Meaningful interaction includes things such as exchanges of presents, amorous encounters and scheming in concert, but not casual banter or strictly hostile encounters. One need not be the freehold's master, nor win his consent, to become that freehold's vizier.

The vizier controls the social framework of the freehold. She may make one oath or adjuration per tale on the freehold's behalf. She can also embody herself in the social

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Breakthroughs

Certain First Age texts refer to Fair Folk "breakthroughs." A breakthrough is a method of attacking Creation wherein a demesne is subverted into a freehold and given a Fountainhead, a Glory, a Stronghold and a Throne Room. That freehold's general, with the consent of its master, vizier, keeper and pride, leaves the freehold and travels to another freehold in the Deep Wyld, which must also possess a Fountainhead, a Glory, a Stronghold and a Throne Room. The general vexes away one of the Deep Wyld freehold's waypoints (a simple task, if the leaders of that freehold consent). This creates a journey *in potential* between the vexed waypoint and a waypoint of the freehold in Creation. Then, rituals performed by mortal slaves of the first freehold's general cause the geomantic fabric of Creation around the freehold to loosen. This loosening creates a true journey directly between the two freeholds—that's a single journey as explained on page 114—allowing easy travel from the Deep Wyld directly to Creation's interior. This journey always takes a physical form, such as a bridge that extends into a bank of mist, and any action taken by Creation-born that destroys the physical embodiment of the journey wrecks the breakthrough.

It takes the work of 6,000 mortal slaves to reify the journey, minus 1,000 for every level of the freehold in Creation. The slaves must labor for six years, minus one year for each level of the freehold in the Wyld. In the moment of completion, any slave laboring on the connection is instantly reduced to one dot of every Virtue and 0 dots of Willpower.

Breakthroughs are not generally executed anymore. With the armies of Prince Balor of the Terrible Gaze broken and scattered, and with the majority of freeholds inhabited by exiles from the Wyld, the risks exceed the rewards. Raksha who own freeholds in Creation cannot be sure their holdings won't be overrun by more powerful Fair Folk in the Wyld once the journey is reified, and most generals don't wish to risk their positions being usurped while they travel into the Wyld.

structure of the freehold. This effect makes her aware of all Staff-shaping within the freehold, allows her to use applicable Staff defenses against shaping attacks made against the freehold's territory and lets her make Staff-shaping actions as if present in any of the freehold's waypoints.

Unlike creating an Arcane Redoubt, the process of creating a Throne Room inflicts no particular negative effects on the bearer of the Staff Grace used. The vizier owns the Staff Grace and can inflict the Curse of Alienation (see pp. 100-101) on that raksha.

Conjured Minions

The Charm Awakened Dream Manufacture (see pp. 199-200) allows for the creation of many different forms of minions, which the raksha use to populate their freeholds. The most common of these minions are often dubbed "wee folk" by the Creation-born. They are not imitations of Creation's life, but beings designed entirely to serve the raksha's needs. The three sorts of wee folk presented here serve as illustrations of three tiers of power among raksha minion. Storytellers should feel free to create new sorts of wee folk, using the following traits as benchmarks.

Each form of wee folk presented here has a supernatural attack, negated with Glamour Resistance (see p. 149).

Manikins

Tiny creatures with minds akin to a smart monkey's or very young child's, manikins are between three and six inches tall. Raksha occasionally use them as minute servants, but more often as toys or miniscule pets. Although their raksha masters rarely draft manikins into service as combatants, and although manikins are not especially dangerous by the standards of raksha servants, they're nonetheless not to be underestimated when faced in combat in large numbers.

Motivation: Please its creator

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 1; Charisma 1, Manipulation 1, Appearance 1–3; Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 1

Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 2, Temperance 1, Valor 2

Abilities: Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Craft (Varies) 1, Dodge 2, Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Other: Varies by Direction) 1, Martial Arts 2, Melee 2, Stealth 2, Survival 2

Join Battle: 1

Attacks:

Minute Claws: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 0L*, Parry DV 3, Rate 3

Needle-Spear: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 4L, Parry DV 3, Rate 2

Tiny Straight Sword: Speed 4, Accuracy 7, Damage 3L, Parry DV 3, Rate 2

* The raw damage of a manikin's claw attack is no more than the successes on its attack roll.

Soak: 0L/1B

Health Levels: Incap

Dodge DV: 2 **Willpower:** 3

Essence: 1 **Essence Pool:** 10

Other Notes: Manikins are so small their Strength is practically nonexistent. None of them can lift anything larger than a rat or a teacup. As such, they can't make clinch attacks. An attack by a manikin affects a target's senses—either sight alone, or touch and hearing, or taste and smell. Each successful attack that inflicts damage also reduces the target's (Perception + Awareness) pool for that

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sense or sense group by one. If the pool is reduced to 0, the target loses that sense or group, becoming blind, deaf and numb, or unable to smell or taste. This is a Crippling effect. Lost senses recover gradually after the end of the scene in which they're lost.

Glamour Resistance: A manikin's sense-stripping attack is a work of glamour. It has no effect on a target whose (Awareness + Essence) total exceeds the manikin's Dexterity.

Poppets

Larger than manikins, and more intelligent—with minds equivalent to a bright mortal child of six years—poppets are between six inches and one foot tall. Raksha often use poppets as servants or performers.

In combat, poppets are deceptively easy to underestimate. They're near-matches for elite soldiers, and many freeholds have hundreds of the creatures at their masters' disposal.

Motivation: Please its creator

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 5, Stamina 2; Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 1–3; Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 3

Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 2, Temperance 2, Valor 2

Abilities: Archery 2, Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Craft (Varies) 2, Dodge 2, Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Other: Varies by Direction) 1, Martial Arts 2, Melee 2, Performance 3, Stealth 2, Survival 2

Join Battle: 5

Attacks:

Minute Claws: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 1L, Parry DV 4, Rate 3

Needle-Spear: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 5L, Parry DV 4, Rate 2

Tiny Straight Sword: Speed 4, Accuracy 7, Damage 4L, Parry DV 3, Rate 2

Petite Self Bow: Speed 6, Accuracy 7, Damage 5L*, Range 150, Rate 2

* Uses broadhead arrows.

Soak: 1L/2B

Health Levels: -1/-2/Incap

Dodge: 4 **Willpower:** 4

Essence: 2

Essence Pool: 20

Other Notes: An attack by a poppet gradually paralyzes its target. Each successful attack that inflicts damage reduces the target's Dexterity-based dice pools by one. If any action's dice pool is reduced to 0 by this penalty, the target is too clumsy and numb to perform that action. This is a Crippling effect. Paralysis wears off slowly after the scene in which it's inflicted.

Glamour Resistance: A poppet's paralysis attack is a work of glamour. It has no effect on a target whose (Stamina + Essence) total exceeds the poppet's Dexterity.



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Homunculi

The largest of the wee folk are the size of small children, with the intelligence of human adults. Dozens of homunculi live in most freeholds, serving as majordomos over the poppets and always ready for war. Although they're small and fragile, homunculi are as skilled in combat as great mortal heroes, and they are perfectly dedicated to serving their masters' will, ready to lay down their lives at their creators' smallest whims.

Motivation: Please its creator

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3; Charisma 2-3, Manipulation 2–3, Appearance 1–3; Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 2, Temperance 2, Valor 2

Abilities: Archery 3, Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Craft (Varies) 2, Dodge 2, Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Other: Varies by Direction) 1, Lore 1, Martial Arts 2, Melee 4, Occult 1, Performance 3, Presence 1, Stealth 2, Survival 2, Thrown 2

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 7, Damage 1, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Minute Claws: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 3L, Parry DV 4, Rate 3

Needle-Spear: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 7L, Parry DV 4, Rate 2

Tiny Straight Sword: Speed 4, Accuracy 10, Damage 6L, Parry DV 4, Rate 2

Diminutive Throwing Knife: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 5L, Range 15, Rate 3

Little Thrown Javelin: Speed 4, Accuracy 8, Damage 6L, Range 30, Rate 2

Petite Self Bow: Speed 6, Accuracy 8, Damage 5L*, Range 150, Rate 2

* Uses broadhead arrows.

Soak: 3L/5B (Various armors, 2L/2B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-2/-4/Incap

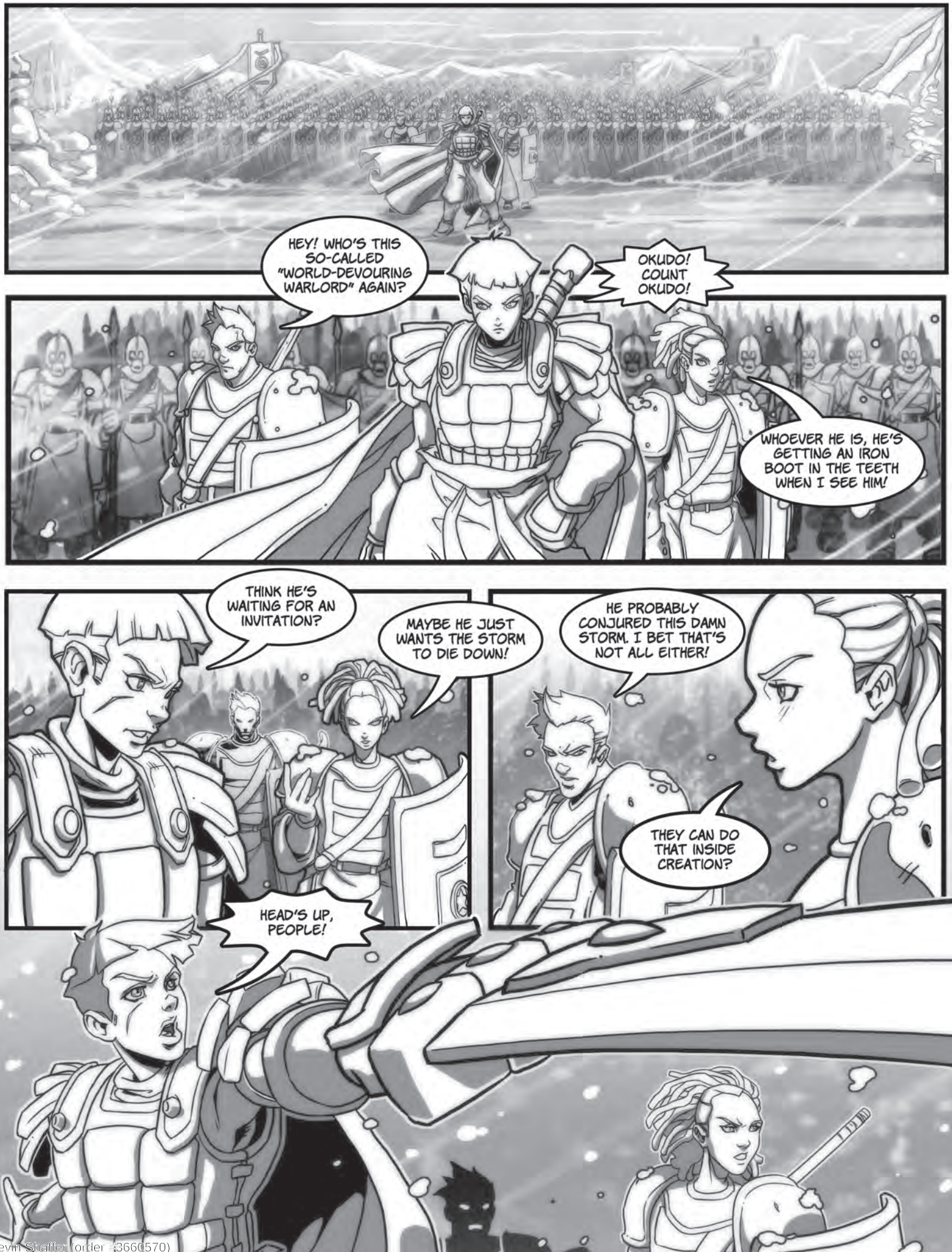
Dodge: 5 **Willpower:** 5

Essence: 3 **Essence Pool:** 30

Other Notes: A homunculus attack can inflict the magical effect of either a manikin or poppet effect. Alternatively, it can inflict temporary insanity, in which case the target contracts a random deficiency derangement (see **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. I—The Wyld**, p. 148). A character who already has a derangement gains an additional one. These derangements last the rest of the day, and are a Sickness effect.

Glamour Resistance: A homunculus's insanity attack is a work of glamour. It has no effect on a target whose (Integrity + Essence) total exceeds the homunculus's Wits. When a homunculus uses the sense-stripping attack of a manikin or the paralysis attack of a poppet, the target is unaffected should her (Awareness + Essence) or (Stamina + Essence), respectively, exceed the homunculus's Dexterity.

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CHAPTER SIX
CHARMS

Calling the powers of raksha "Charms" is not strictly accurate, but it is a useful and universally applied analogy. The Charms used by Exalted, spirits and other such beings are tried-and-true techniques for manipulating Essence within the confines of the stabilized Essence matrix known as Creation (and its related realms of existence). The Charms of the raksha, even when deployed successfully within Creation, do not actually affect the underlying nature of Creation. Instead, they superimpose a bit of the Wyld on it, temporarily (and in some cases, perhaps permanently) effecting a change in Creation through the imposition of a Wyld taint upon it.

The true purpose of most raksha Charms is to aid in shaping effects while in the Wyld. While the raksha do have Charms that can function in Creation where shaping rules are inapplicable, it is more accurate to say that the raksha doesn't shape reality so much as bring a little bit of the Wyld with him and shape that. This "little bit of the Wyld" is referred to as gossamer.

Gossamer

Raksha use the term gossamer to describe a substance that can be drawn either from the dreams, hopes and desires of mortals or from the refined distillation of the Wyld itself. It is possible that these two are the same thing, although no one knows how this could possibly be. Gossamer can be harvested from locations in the Wyld rich in oneiromantic possibility, or it can be acquired in Creation through the ravishing of mortals. The mechanical rules for obtaining gossamer from either source are outlined under the Gossamer Background on pages 97-98 and in the shaping combat rules that govern ravishing on pages 124-125.

Whatever its origin, gossamer represents the raw potential of the Wyld in a solidified form capable of existing in Creation. In other words, it is a real substance that is nevertheless susceptible to shaping effects. **Raksha Charms cannot affect anything in Creation or any Creation-born without gossamer being spent as part of the Charms' cost.** For the purposes of this

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limitation, freeholds, Bordermarches and uncapped demesnes count as being "outside Creation." Ignore the gossamer cost of Charms deployed in such places unless the Charm description specifically states otherwise. For those Charms that can be combined with gossamer to affect Creation and its inhabitants, the gossamer cost is listed in the Charm's description. Many of these Charms require gossamer to be spent in conjunction with an Assumption Charm so that a raksha entering Creation gains an innate power to affect Creation's environment and inhabitants. Some Charms have a listed gossamer cost of 0. Such Charms can be used to affect Creation but require such negligible amounts of gossamer that the expenditure does not affect the raksha's own gossamer reserves.

Glamour Resistance

Although Charms augmented with gossamer and innate powers created with it can affect Creation and its inhabitants, such effects do not directly alter the fabric of reality in the way that the Charms of the Creation-born do. Generally, gossamer-based effects are instead *works of glamour*, which possess many of the characteristics of Illusion effects but do not target the mind. Instead, they target the patterns of Essence around the Creation-born whom the raksha seeks to affect, essentially deceiving reality itself into adopting the desired result. The limitation of a work of glamour is that, when the intended target has developed his mind, body and spirit to the point that reality conforms more readily to his existence, the target has a better chance of resisting the glamour.

Mechanically, each work of glamour has a shaping trait and an opposed trait. If a character's (opposed trait + Essence) exceeds the raksha's (shaping trait), the character sees through the effect, and it is not real for him. If the character's (opposed trait + Essence) equals or is less than the raksha's (shaping trait), the character must treat the glamour as if it were real for all purposes. This is more than a mere illusion. For affected characters, the glamour *is real* for all purposes. An affected mortal can walk over a glamour bridge without falling into the ravine below. He can ride a raksha steed into battle as if it were a mighty stallion, never realizing that it is actually a child's rocking horse enchanted with gossamer. An unaffected mortal, however, is immune to the raksha's less beneficial effects and can simply ignore both a raksha's honeyed, irresistible lies and her summoned behemoth with the same equanimity.

In addition to Glamour Resistance, all tattooed Lunars are absolutely immune to works of glamour that affect their physical forms or interfere with their shapeshifting, and all Exalted with active Wyld-resisting Charms such as Integrity-Protecting Prana or the like are completely immune to shaping actions. Other Creation-born who enter the Wyld with talismans designed to protect against the Wyld gain a bonus to their Glamour Resistance equal to the level of protection afforded by the talisman.

Glamour Charms that do not directly affect Creation-born can still be works of glamour, but they present no chance for Glamour Resistance. Some works of glamour are *permanent* and, as such, provoke no Glamour Resistance. Permanent works of glamour enacted in Creation are considered real for all purposes and to all observers.

Charms that create works of glamour are denoted by the Glamour keyword. Some Charms require gossamer but do not affect Creation-born. For example, all Assumption Charms require the expenditure of gossamer. If a Charm has a listed gossamer cost (including a cost of 0) but does not carry the Glamour keyword, the gossamer cost applies wherever the Charm is activated, but the resulting effect is not subject to Glamour Resistance and is not vulnerable to cold iron.

Cold Iron

All raksha have an innate vulnerability to iron objects, and raksha usually refer to iron as "cold iron" because of the burning cold its touch inflicts on them. The origin of this peculiar weakness is a mystery even to the raksha themselves. Some raksha savants claim the vulnerability was imposed on them by the First Age Solars through some forgotten oath, while others insist that it dates back to the earliest raksha forays into Creation and is some flaw inherent in the shinma Nirakara. The topic is widely debated in the Church of Balor and is sometimes the basis for heresy charges against one faction or another.

In any case, Creation-born who live close to Fair Folk territories don't really care why iron protects them. Any weapon made of pure iron (as opposed to steel) inflicts aggravated damage on a raksha and also ignores any natural soak she gains from Stamina and Charms. In Creation, the vast majority of weapons are made of steel or bronze, not iron. The process of turning iron into steel is alchemical in nature and apparently negates whatever property of iron exists that makes it a bane to the Fair Folk. The touch of an item of cold iron, even one as small as a horseshoe or a nail, instantly dispels works of glamour, subject to the following exceptions.

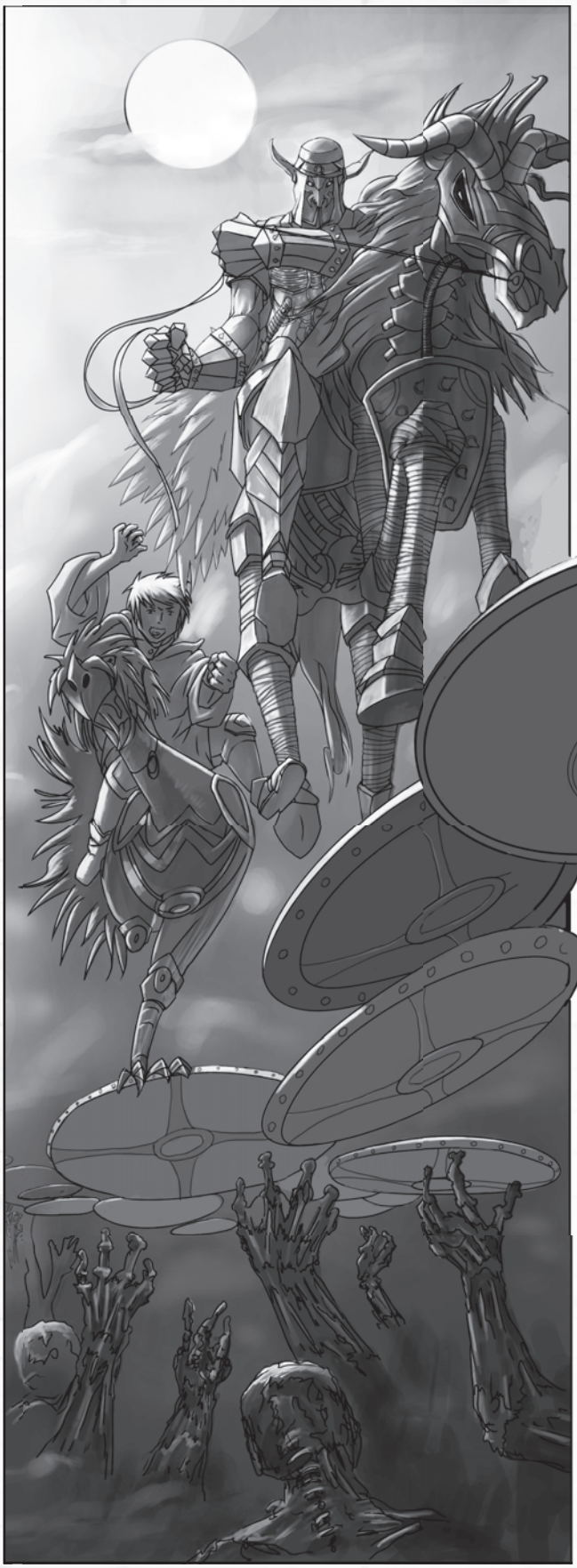
Assumption Charms: The touch of cold iron does not disrupt an Assumption Charm (see p. 156). Such Charms, by their very nature, exist to inure the raksha to Creation's baleful touch and are not considered to be works of glamour.

Mutations: Cold iron will not disrupt any mutation incorporated into a raksha's form as a result of a Mutation Charm. Such Charms actively transform the basic nature of the one who has been mutated, and there is no default form to which a mutated character can return.

Permanent Works of Glamour: Some works of glamour are identified as *permanent*. A permanent work of glamour, once fashioned in Creation, is considered real for all purposes and does not dissolve against cold iron.

Finally, unless the Storyteller declares otherwise, if a work of glamour affects multiple sentient beings, cold iron must touch each of them in order to disrupt the effect. Absent Storyteller approval, a character might be able to awaken an enchanted sleeping princess with the touch of an iron nail, but not the entire kingdom that has been put to sleep along with her.

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Mutations

Mutations, within the context of raksha magic, represent long-term or even permanent alterations to the mutated being's nature. Charms that carry the Mutation keyword permit a raksha to build an innate power or ability into her very form and nature or into the form and nature of her servants and creatures. Some mutations confer mere physical benefits. Others grant supernatural, Charm-like powers that the raksha can freely use in Creation or other locales where shaping actions are not available. Often, such powers are also works of glamour and may be defeated by Glamour Resistance.

A raksha can freely activate a Mutation Charm simultaneously with an Assumption Charm without the need for a Combo. Unless a Mutation Charm specifically allows the player to activate it *without* connecting it to an Assumption, the raksha cannot add the benefits of the Charm to her form without reentering the Wyld, dispelling the Assumption and then reactivating it, along with the new Mutation Charm. Mutation Charms with a listed duration of "Assumption" last for as long as the Assumption Charm with which they are associated. The effects of innate powers created through Mutation Charms typically last for a set period of time in Creation but may be terminated early if the raksha terminates the Assumption Charm with which the innate power is associated.

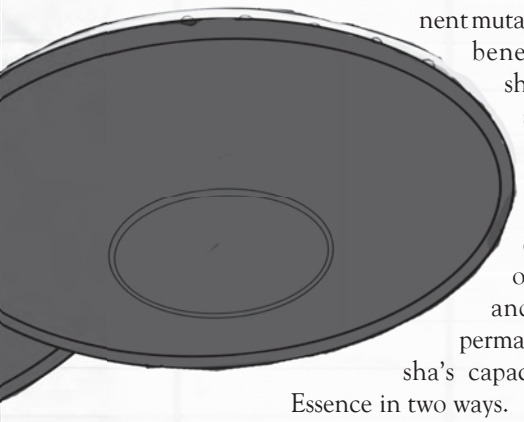
Some Mutation Charms have an associated mutation point cost. Such Charms enact permanent alterations to the raksha's nature. Other Charms confer innate powers on the raksha for the duration of the Charm's effect. Generally, when the raksha activates an innate power, treat it as a simple Charm. If the power's description expressly states that it is reflexive, however, treat it as a reflexive Charm. Innate powers cannot be activated on the same tick as Charms *unless* the power's description specifically says it can be combined with certain Charms (usually Charms that modify shaping actions). Unless the innate power description specifies a different Speed, assume that it is a five-tick miscellaneous action. **For a series set in Creation, the total gossamer**

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cost for a raksha's Assumption-keyword Charms and Mutation-keyword Charms cannot exceed the amount of gossamer with which she begins the story as provided by her Gossamer Background.

Permanent Mutations

Some mutations come with an associated mutation point cost. Such mutations represent permanent alterations of the raksha's identity. These permanent mutations confer powerful benefits, especially for shaped raksha in Creation. They weaken the raksha in other ways, however. The mutation itself is carved out of a piece of the raksha's soul, and such mutilations permanently limit the raksha's capacity to develop his Essence in two ways.



• **Mutations points increase the cost for raising Essence in the future.** Whenever the raksha's player is ready to buy a new dot of Essence with experience points, add up all of the raksha's mutation points and add them to the cost of buying the next dot. *Example: Shikuzi the Weaver has Essence 4 and four mutation points. Normally, purchasing a fifth dot of Essence would cost 32 experience points. Shikuzi's four mutation points raise the experience point cost up to 36.*

• **Mutations directly place a cap on the raksha's maximum Essence.** Add together the raksha's Essence and the sum of her mutation points. This total can never exceed the raksha's (Willpower + 4). *Example: Shikuzi the Weaver has Essence 4 and four mutation points, for a total of 8. His (Willpower + 4) is equal to 10. Shikuzi currently has the potential to raise his Essence by two or purchase two additional points worth of mutations or some combination thereof. If he raises his Willpower above 6, this cap increases appropriately.*

A permanent mutation, once acquired, becomes a fundamental part of the raksha's form and identity. The only way a raksha can rid himself of a mutation that was improvidently purchased is through the Spirit-Flaying Meditation Charm on page 219. Otherwise, a raksha with even one permanent mutation point is forevermore incapable of crossing back through the shinma Nirakara and becoming unshaped. For this reason, unshaped raksha generally view shaped raksha with permanent mutations as abominations to be shunned. Raksha with permanent mutation points remain trapped in their shaped forms forever… or at least until calcification or death at the hands of a Creation-born.

Transitory Mutations

Not all mutation effects need be permanent mutations. If a Charm has no listed mutation cost but still carries the Mutation keyword, the raksha can gain the benefits of the innate power described by the Charm. This benefit functions essentially as a mutation, but it is considered to have a mutation point cost of 0 and does not limit the raksha's capacity to increase his Essence, as long as the benefit is not made permanent. These mutations are referred to as transitory mutations. A transitory mutation is usually one that the raksha incorporates into his form when he constructs it in preparation for entering Creation. Such transitory mutations last as long as the Assumption does.

Raksha Charms as Permanent Mutations

Some Mutation Charms can be incorporated into the raksha's form as a permanent mutation, even Charms whose effects would customarily be considered transitory mutations. A Charm can be acquired as a permanent mutation if, and only if, the Charm has a fixed gossamer cost that is more than 0. A Charm that has a variable gossamer cost, a gossamer cost of 0 or no gossamer cost at all cannot be taken as a permanent mutation.

If the relevant Charm is one that affects the raksha himself, convert the normal gossamer cost into a mutation point cost on a one-for-one basis. Ignore any other costs associated with the Charm. For example, the Bastion of the Self Charm allows the raksha to become immune to certain types of damage. Activating Bastion of the Self for a single story normally costs 10 motes, one Willpower and four gossamer. If the raksha incorporates Bastion of the Self permanently into his form as a mutation, however, the Charm remains continuously active thereafter, even if the raksha abandons his current Assumption. The Charm now has a mutation point cost of four, but does not require Essence, Willpower or gossamer.

If the relevant Charm is one that allows the raksha to affect other beings, the rules are slightly different. First, the raksha's player must make all decisions regarding how the Charm will function, including who its valid targets are, before purchasing the mutation. For example, the Abiding Gift Charm (see pp. 184-185) allows a raksha to bless a Creation-born so that she always succeeds on a single type of action. When taking Abiding Gift as a mutation, the raksha must define the action to be perfected, then he must decide what type of Creation-born he wishes to automatically affect. One example might be to grant automatic success to all (Dexterity + Melee [Sword]) rolls, but only for mortals who freely swear loyalty to the raksha. The effects of a mutation that affects others are never cumulative with the mutation itself. That is, if the raksha grants the benefits of Abiding Gift to a Creation-born once, he cannot do so again while the previous benefits are still in force. Abiding Gift normally costs 10 motes, one Willpower and three gossamer to activate. Taking it as a mutation, the raksha ignores the Essence, Willpower and gossamer cost. Instead, each point of gossamer in the cost converts to three mutation points. Therefore, a raksha who took Abiding Gift as a mutation would gain a prodigious 9 mutation points, which would seriously hamper his ability to improve his Essence, but he could freely and reflexively grant the described benefit to any mortal who swore fealty to him.

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The raksha must have already purchased the relevant Charm before he can convert it into a permanent mutation. The raksha still knows the Charm and can use it as he wishes independently of the mutation effect. Continuously active works of glamour are still works of glamour and will not affect Creation-born whose (opposed trait + Essence) exceeds the raksha's (shaping trait).

Mutations and Behemoths

Some Charms, most notably Behemoth-Forging Meditation, permit a raksha to create a behemoth or some other type of Wyld-tainted monstrosity. Anywhere a Charm refers to imposing mutations on a creature other than the raksha itself, such mutations can take the form of any Mutation Charm in this chapter or any other Charm that can legally be converted into a permanent mutation.

Assumption Charms

Assumption Charms govern the circumstances by which the raksha enters Creation or some other shaped realm. Only a raksha who has already shaped an identity for herself through the Gateway of Sundraprisha Charm is capable of then refining that body through an Assumption Charm. In other words, unshaped raksha can never use Assumption Charms on themselves while still remaining unshaped, although unshaped can learn Assumption Charms and frequently use them in crafting oneiromantic effects and other such phenomena. The Assumption Charm (or Charms) deployed by a raksha may influence the form she takes in Creation, but any alterations to her appearance are purely cosmetic absent the application of mutations or other Charms.

A raksha caught in Creation without any active Assumption Charms suffers calcification (see p. 101). The precise form of an Assumption is fixed when the Charm is purchased and cannot be changed. If a raksha, for example, desires two different Assumptions of Fire Shape, he must purchase Assumption of (Element) Shape twice. Basic Assumption forms are always humanoid, with two arms, two legs, a torso and a head. The player can modify this basic form with appropriate Mutation Charms.

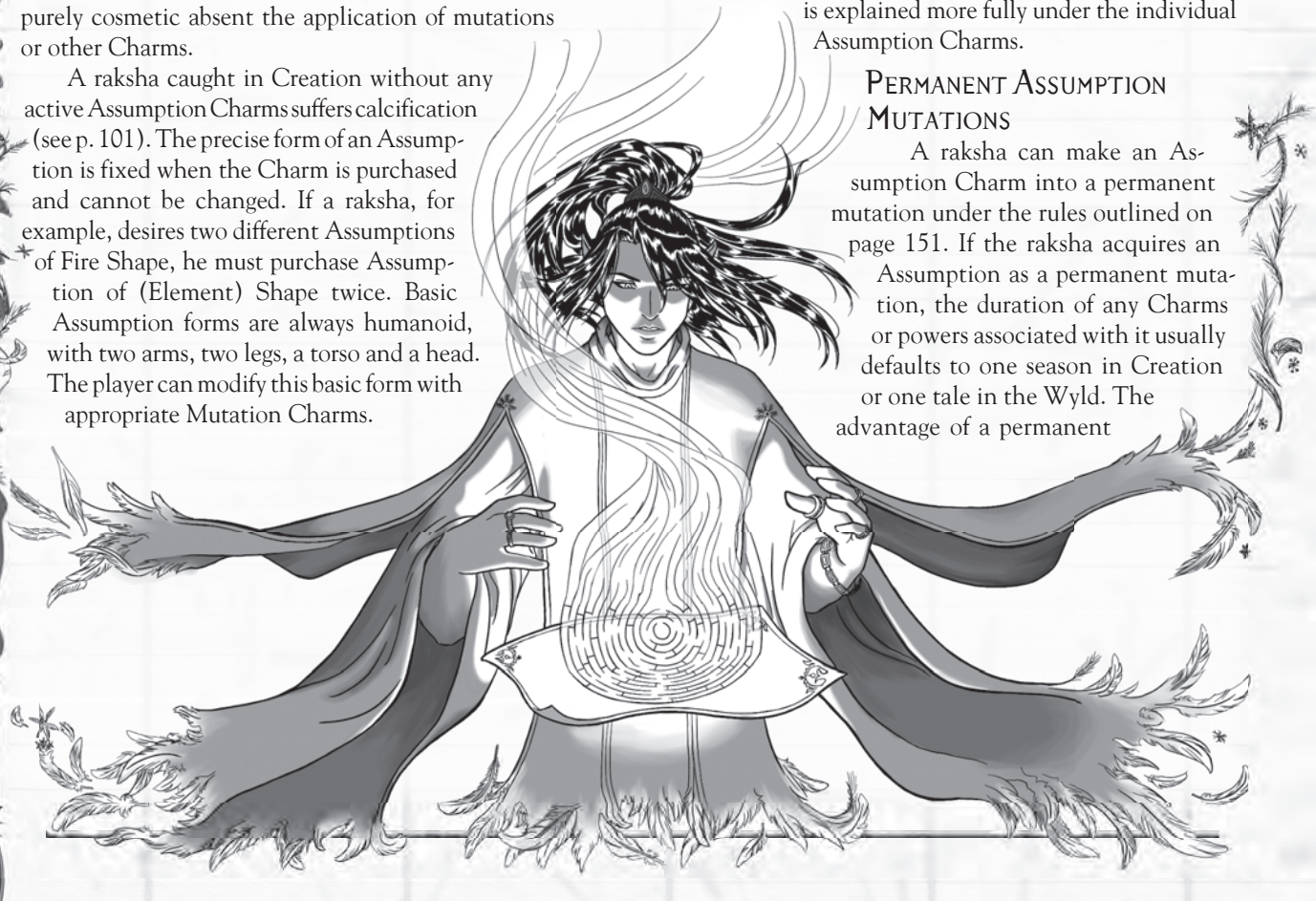
For series set in Creation, the total gossamer cost for a raksha's Assumption-keyword Charms and Mutation-keyword Charms cannot exceed the amount of gossamer with which she begins the story as provided by her Gossamer Background.

Customarily, an Assumption Charm lasts until the raksha voluntarily returns to the Wyld to terminate it, usually as a prelude to shaping a new Assumption, complete with new or different mutations attached to it. The effects of many Charms and innate powers are linked to the character's active Assumption and often end early if the raksha terminates the Assumption for some reason. A raksha can activate as many Assumptions as she can afford at one time without the need for a Combo, but she must activate them all simultaneously. If the raksha activates one Assumption Charm and then another, the latter Charm terminates the earlier one. A raksha with multiple Assumption Charms active can draw upon all of the innate powers inherent in all of her assumed forms, and she can change from one of her assumed forms to another at the cost of one mote of Essence. These differing forms may be as similar or as different as the raksha wishes, subject to the limitations inherent in the characteristics of each Assumption Charm.

Assumption Charms also have a secondary use—they provide the "physical components" of oneiromancy spell artifacts. That is, when a raksha creates an oneiromancy spell, he must incorporate one or more Assumption Charms into it for the spell to have a physical form and for its effects to be spread over a wide area of Creation. How this works is explained more fully under the individual Assumption Charms.

Permanent Assumption Mutations

A raksha can make an Assumption Charm into a permanent mutation under the rules outlined on page 151. If the raksha acquires an Assumption as a permanent mutation, the duration of any Charms or powers associated with it usually defaults to one season in Creation or one tale in the Wyld. The advantage of a permanent



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Assumption is that it will persist through the activation and/or termination of other Assumption Charms, as will any mutations attached to the permanent Assumption. The disadvantage of a permanent Assumption is that it is, after all, permanent. The raksha cannot simply shape a new body for herself, complete with a new array of mutations built into it, just by stepping into the Wyld and performing a quick shaping action. In fact, if a raksha has acquired a permanent Assumption Charm, the *only* way to add additional mutations to her form thereafter is by learning a new Assumption Charm and hanging her new mutations on it.

A shaped raksha in the Wyld with no active Assumption Charms is still considered to be shaped but is treated as if she were a dematerialized spirit. She can be neither perceived nor affected by Creation-born except through Charms or magic that allow for interaction with dematerialized spirits. Such dematerialized raksha can, however, still take shaping actions and also be affected by them. A raksha caught in Creation without an Assumption Charm or some other form of magical protection suffers calcification (see p. 101).

Charms of the Shaped Raksha

The Charms in this chapter are those common to shaped raksha. Additional Charms useful to unshaped raksha can be found in Chapter Two.

New Keywords

Assumption: The Charm allows the raksha to assume a fixed form capable of existing in some fashion in Creation (or comparable realms of existence). Assumption Charms last until terminated in the Wyld. Many other Charms have a listed duration of "Assumption." Such Charms must be activated in conjunction with an Assumption Charm and will last as long as the underlying Assumption does.

Evocation: The Charm allows the raksha to summon into Creation one of his possessions that could not normally exist there.

Glamour: The Charm directly affects the Creation-born or else alters the raksha in some way so that she gains an innate ability that can directly affect the Creation-born.

Mutation: The Charm can be used in conjunction with an Assumption Charm to grant the raksha innate magical powers or special traits at the time he enters Creation. Unless expressly stated in the text, a mutation Charm must be activated at the same time as the Assumption Charm the raksha is using to build his shell for travel through Creation.

Keyword: Shaping

The Shaping keyword is described in **Exalted**, pages 183 and 217. To expand on the definitions found there, a Charm that carries the Shaping keyword is one that either allows the Charm-user to make some kind of shaping action or else affects or modifies shaping action rolls, including attack rolls in shaping combat. The Shaping Charms contained in this chapter are limited to shaping actions performed in the Wyld and have no functionality in any other shaping context (such as destiny-shaping rolls made by Sidereal Exalted or shaping rolls performed in the Labyrinth by Abyssal Exalted).

Integrity or Lore Charms that defend generally against shaping effects will also protect their users from any raksha shaping magic in a manner consistent with the descriptions of such Charms. For example, Integrity-Protecting Prana (see **Exalted,** p. 217) will completely protect a Solar from any raksha shaping action, attack or effect (including effects resulting from innate mutation powers that can be defeated by Glamour Resistance) that has the potential to alter the Solar's mind, body or soul.

Shaped-Only: The Charm can be used only by shaped raksha, whether in Creation or the Wyld. Such Charms are generally not part of shaping actions (although one might be able to incorporate such a Charm into a shaping action with a clever stunt). An unshaped raksha can learn a Shaped-Only Charm and incorporate it into creations such as behemoths, oneiromantic spells and even lesser raksha created to serve it, but it can never apply the effects of a Shaped-Only Charm to its own unshaped form without first becoming shaped. Nor can an unshaped raksha's Emanations ever use Shaped-Only Charms on themselves without first becoming shaped.

Unshaped-Only: The Charm can be used only by an Emanation of an unshaped raksha in the Wyld (see Chapter Two).

New Cost Labels

In addition to costs normally associated with Charms (Essence, Willpower, etc.), Fair Folk Charms often require the raksha to either expend gossamer or acquire mutation points in the course of activation.

Label	Cost	Example
#g	gossamer	(3g for three gossamer)
#mp	mutation points	(2mp for two mutation points)

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Charm Concept: Creation-Born

Some Charms are described as having special effects with regard to "Creation-born." Others, especially works of glamour, have greater difficulty in affecting Creation-born, who are blessed with the benefits of Glamour Resistance. The term "Creation-born" refers to any being in or from Creation other than a Fair Folk, including but not limited to Exalted, mortals, Mountain Folk, Dragon Kings, gods, ghosts and elementals. Beastmen and Wyld mutants are also generally treated as Creation-born by raksha Charms. Despite their close connection to the Wyld, such beings still originate from Creation.

Generally, demons and Autochthonians are considered Creation-born for purposes of raksha Charms. The only non-raksha who are not considered Creation-born are beings from outside Creation who resemble creatures of the Wyld rather than creatures of Creation. For example, the Second Circle demon Octavian has strong ties with the element of earth and would, therefore, be considered Creation-born. The Second Circle demon Makarios, however, has dominion over dreams and thus might be considered a raksha for purposes of determining how a raksha Charm affected him. When in doubt, assume that any creature who might be affected by a raksha Charm who is not one of the Fair Folk is a Creation-born.

Excellencies and Related Charms

Raksha do not have the same Excellencies available to Essence-wielding beings in Creation. When a raksha shapes a body for herself to wear in Creation, that form is fixed except for any flexibility built into it with Mutation Charms. The raksha has no Charms that can make her situationally stronger, faster, prettier or more proficient at some skill in the way that Exalted improve themselves through Excellencies and the like.

Raksha *do* have Charms comparable to Excellencies that can bolster their shaping effects in the Wyld. These Charms, called "Grace Excellencies," can be used only in the context of shaping actions and are keyed to the five Graces.

First (Grace) Excellency

Cost: 1m per die; **Mins:** (Grace) 1, Essence 1;
Type: Reflexive (Step 1 for attacker, Step 2 for defender)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: One shaping action
Prerequisite Charms: None

This Excellency permits a raksha to augment the traits by which he defines himself for purposes of facilitating a shaping action or defending against one. There are five of these Excellencies—one for each of the four Graces associated with shaping actions and one associated with the Heart Grace, which is used for defensive purposes.

When a raksha's player makes a shaping combat roll, he can have the raksha activate the First Excellency associated with the Grace that governs that type of shaping combat (Cup-, Ring-, Staff- or Sword-shaping). This Charm adds one die to the shaping roll per mote spent. The raksha cannot spend more motes on this Charm than (the relevant Grace + Essence). The raksha's player can also add dice to a Join Shaping Battle roll if the raksha has the First Grace Excellency appropriate to his feeding Grace (or Graces).

If the raksha wishes to improve his parry defense to a shaping attack, he can also use the First (Grace) Excellency. For every mote spent (up to the maximum of [Grace + Essence]), the raksha's player rolls one die. Each success on this reflexive roll adds one to the raksha's Parry Shaping DV against the incoming shaping attack.

The First Heart Excellency works differently. For every mote spent (up to the maximum of the Heart Grace), the raksha's player rolls one die, with each success adding one to the raksha's Dodge Shaping DV. A raksha with the First Heart Excellency can also use it to increase his shaping soak. For every mote spent (up to the maximum of the Grace), the raksha's player rolls one die, with each success adding one to the raksha's shaping soak.

Fair Folk Charms and Combos

A raksha can freely place Charms of the First and Second Excellencies together into a Combo, even Excellencies related to different Graces. No combination of Excellencies (or any other type of Charm), however, can allow a raksha to increase a shaping action dice pool by more than his (relevant Grace + Essence). Also, a raksha can never place more than one Heart Excellency into a Combo. Finally, a raksha can never put a Third Excellency of any type into a Combo with either a First or Second Excellency.

A raksha can activate as many Mutation Charms as he can afford simultaneously with an Assumption Charm without the need for a Combo. Combos otherwise follow the rules outlined on pages 244–247 of **Exalted.**

Second (Grace) Excellency

Cost: 2m per success or 2m per dot of soak; **Mins:** (Grace) 1, Essence 1;
Type: Reflexive (Step 1 for attacker, Step 2 for defender)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: One shaping action
Prerequisite Charms: None

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This Excellency permits a raksha to perfect the traits by which he defines himself for purposes of facilitating a shaping attack or defending against one. There are five of these Excellencies—one for each of the four Graces associated with shaping actions and one associated with the Heart Grace, which is used for defensive purposes.

When a raksha's player makes a shaping combat roll, he can have his character spend two motes to gain an automatic success on the shaping roll. The raksha must have the appropriate Charm for the type of shaping attack he is making (Cup-, Ring-, Staff- or Sword-shaping), and he cannot spend more motes on this Charm than (the relevant Grace + Essence). Fractional motes spent on this Charm are lost. The raksha can also gain automatic successes on a Join Shaping Battle roll if he has the Second Grace Excellency appropriate to his feeding Grace (or Graces).

If the raksha wishes to improve his defense to a shaping attack, he can use the Second Grace Excellency. For every two motes spent (up to the maximum of the Grace), the raksha increases the raksha's Parry Shaping DV against an incoming shaping attack by one.

The Second Heart Excellency works differently. For every two motes spent (up to the maximum of the Grace), the raksha increases his Dodge Shaping DV against an incoming shaping attack by one. A raksha with the Second Heart Excellency can also use it to increase his shaping soak. For every two motes spent (up to the maximum of the Grace), the raksha increases her shaping soak by one.

Third (Grace) Excellency

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** (Grace) 1, Essence 1;
Type: Reflexive (Step 4 for attacker, Step 6 for defender)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: One shaping action
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Third (Grace) Excellency can save the raksha from disaster by permitting his player to reroll a failed shaping action or attack roll. There are five of these Excellencies—one for each of the four Graces associated with shaping actions and one associated with the Heart Grace, which is used for defensive purposes. The raksha can activate this Charm after his player makes a shaping roll associated with the relevant Grace. This Charm allows the raksha's player to make the roll again and take the result she prefers. The raksha's player can also reroll a Join Shaping Battle roll if the raksha has the Third Grace Excellency appropriate to either of her feeding Graces, but the player can reroll a Join Shaping Battle roll only once.

The raksha can also improve her defense to a shaping attack with the Third (Grace) Excellency. At a cost of four motes, the raksha can add ([Grace] ÷ 2) directly to Parry Shaping DV against shaping attacks.

The First Heart Excellency works somewhat differently. At a cost of four motes, the raksha can add the value of half his Heart Grace to his Dodge Shaping DV. He can also spend four motes to add the value of half his Heart Grace to his shaping soak.

Unassailable Tower of (Shaping Trait)

Cost: 1g per point of increase; **Mins:** Heart 2, Essence 2;
Type: Simple
Keywords: Glamour, Mutation, Shaped-Only
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: None

Generally, when a raksha wishes to affect a thing or being within the confines of Creation, she must do so through a work of glamour. A being of Creation can see through such works of glamour if the being's (opposed trait + Essence) exceeds the raksha's (shaping trait). The precise traits involved in resisting a work of glamour are detailed under each Charm's description. This Charm permits the raksha to bolster the integrity of her fictions. For every point of gossamer spent on this Charm, the raksha increases her shaping trait by one for purposes of determining whether beings of Creation can resist the glamour.

This Charm may be purchased multiple times. Each time it applies to a different trait, which is typically an Attribute or Ability. If the raksha uses a version of this Charm to boost

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a particular shaping trait, then the increase applies to all works of glamour for which that trait determines Glamour Resistance for the duration of the story. A raksha cannot boost a shaping trait by more than her Heart Grace.

Charms of the Mask

These Charms permit a shaped raksha to pass through Nirakara and exist in some manner within the confines of Creation or some other shaped realm. The Charms of the Mask are not associated with any of the Graces or with any other trait. The minimum Essence requirement is the only trait-based prerequisite a raksha must meet in order to purchase one of these Charms.

Assumption Charms

These Charms govern the circumstances by which a raksha enters Creation or some other shaped realm. Only a raksha who has already shaped an identity for herself through the Gateway of Sundraprisha Charm is capable of then refining that body through an Assumption Charm. In other words, unshaped raksha can never use Assumption Charms while still remaining unshaped, although unshaped can learn Assumption Charms and frequently use them in crafting oneiromantic effects and other such phenomena. The Assumption Charm (or Charms) deployed by a raksha may influence the form she takes in Creation, but any alterations to her appearance are purely cosmetic absent the application of mutations or other Charms. These Charms are Stackable in that a raksha can activate as many Assumptions simultaneously as she can afford. A raksha who carries multiple active Assumptions can choose the form in which she appears from all the choices her active Assumption Charms give her. The magical benefits of all of her active Assumption Charms are constantly available.

Assumption of (Element) Shape

Cost: 10m, 1g; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Assumption, Stackable
Duration: Until terminated
Prerequisite Charms: None

This Charm permits a shaped raksha to enter Creation in a form (usually humanoid) aspected to one of the five elements. This is the most commonly used Assumption among noble raksha. This Charm is actually a cluster of five separate Charms, each of which confers a different benefit and must be learned separately. The raksha chooses the element he will assume when invoking this Charm and cannot change it without reentering the Wyld to dispel and then reapply this Charm. Raksha who rely on this Charm to construct shapes for themselves in Creation have access to an array of related Charms—the Elemental Influence Charms beginning on page 161—to further improve the quality of their elemental forms.

A raksha who maintains multiple versions of this Charm has the option of wearing any of the forms available to him or of combining two or more elements into a single form. For example, a raksha who had activated both Assumption of Air Shape and Assumption of Fire Shape would have the option of appearing as a being of solid smoke, while another raksha could combine Assumption of Earth Shape and Assumption of Water Shape to manifest as a creature of mud.

Assumption of Air Shape: A raksha who enters Creation in this form suffers no ill effects from cold and can walk on ice or snow as if it were solid, stable ground. Raksha protected by Assumption of Air Shape often appear to be made of ice or snow, or simply have luminescent white skin.

Assumption of Earth Shape: A raksha who enters Creation in this form can see clearly in the darkest depths. Raksha protected by Assumption of Earth Shape often have bodies of stone, earth or precious gems, or simply have brown or jet-black skin.

Assumption of Fire Shape: A raksha who enters Creation in this form is immune to all non-magical heat- and fire-based forms of damage. Raksha protected by Assumption of Fire Shape frequently appear to be made of fire or magma, or simply have red, orange or black skin.

Assumption of Water Shape: A raksha who enters Creation in this form can swim at her normal movement rate,

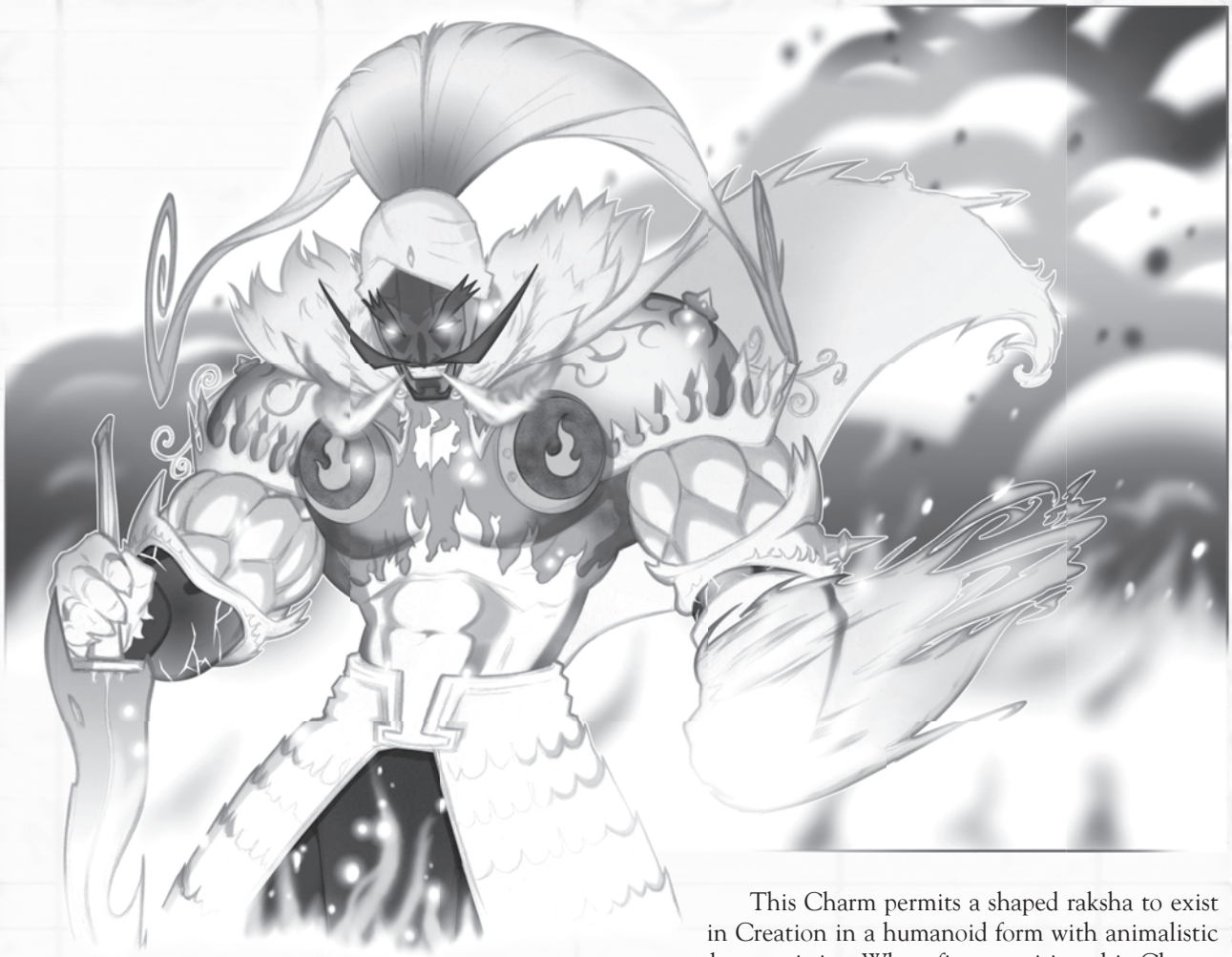
ASSUMPTION OF (ELEMENT) SHAPE

ASSUMPTION OF BESTIAL VISAGE

ASSUMPTION OF CEREMENTS AND BONE

ASSUMPTION OF DREAMS AND PASSION

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can breathe water as well as air and can otherwise function freely in an aquatic environment. Raksha protected by Assumption of Water Shape often have liquid forms, or simply possess blue or green skin.

Assumption of Wood Shape: A raksha who enters Creation in this form can maintain his balance on even the thinnest tree branch. The raksha can also resist any natural poison with just one success on a (Stamina + Resistance) roll. Raksha protected by Assumption of Wood Shape appear to be covered in bark, leaves or moss, or simply possess brown or green skin.

Oneiromancy Benefit: Incorporated into an oneiromancy spell, this Charm allows the spell to exist in Creation in some kind of elemental form, such as an object of wood or paper (which is based on Assumption of Wood Shape), a potion (which is based on Assumption of Water Shape), or one made of metal (which is based on Assumption of Earth Shape or Assumption of Fire Shape).

Assumption of Bestial Visage

Cost: 10m, 1g; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Assumption, Shaped-Only, Stackable
Duration: Until terminated
Prerequisite Charms: None

This Charm permits a shaped raksha to exist in Creation in a humanoid form with animalistic characteristics. When first acquiring this Charm, the raksha must choose a specific animal of Creation upon which she bases her bestial form. The raksha gains a number of mutation points equal to her Essence to apply to the Assumption, which can be used to purchase poxes, afflictions, blights or abominations appropriate to modeling the animal the raksha will emulate. For example, a cat-based raksha with Essence 2 might possess some combination of Claws, Enhanced Sight, Fur or a Tail, each of which is a pox worth one mutation point (see **Exalted**, p. 288). The mutation points acquired through this Assumption, however, are considered to have a mutation point cost of 0 for purposes of calculating the raksha's (mutation point + Essence) total as described on page 151. When the raksha increases her Essence, she can acquire a new mutation appropriate to her chosen animal form or she can "save" her mutation points applicable to this Charm to purchase more expensive mutations.

Each time the raksha purchases this Charm, it grants her the characteristics of a different animal. The Assumption always causes the raksha to enter Creation in a humanoid form with animal characteristics instead of simply in the form of an animal, absent the use of other Charms. This is the Assumption most commonly used by commoner raksha.

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Oneiromancy Benefit: Incorporated into an oneiromancy spell, this Charm allows the spell to exist in Creation in some kind of animalistic form, such as a bull's horn or a monkey's paw.

Assumption of Cerements and Bone

Cost: 10m, 1g; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Assumption, Shaped-Only, Stackable
Duration: Until terminated
Prerequisite Charms: None

This Charm permits a shaped raksha to exist in Creation or the Underworld in a form resembling one of the undead. The raksha is material, intelligent and ambulatory while in Creation but is otherwise treated as being one of the dead. The raksha can receive Essence from burnt offerings, and she is vulnerable to the powers of Deathlords and the like. While in this form, the raksha can use Charms such as Banquet of Crumbs in a shadowland or in the Underworld, and ghosts become valid targets for Ravishing the Created Form and other Feeding Charms.

Oneiromancy Benefit: Incorporated into an oneiromancy spell, this Charm allows the spell to exist in Creation in some kind of death-aspected form, such as a human skull or a cursed coffin.

Assumption of Dreams and Passion

Cost: 10m, 1g; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Assumption, Shaped-Only, Stackable
Duration: Until terminated
Prerequisite Charms: None

This Charm permits a shaped raksha to exist in Creation in a humanoid form without the obviously inhuman appearance associated with most Assumption Charms. The raksha's new form is cunningly crafted to invoke in those around him a particular emotion or passion or belief important to the raksha's identity. While wearing this shape, the raksha adds one automatic success to all social rolls where invoking that emotion is useful. For example, a beautiful Luminary who had assumed the aspect of love might gain one automatic success on all rolls to seduce mortals, while a terrible Cataphract who had assumed the aspect of fear might gain an automatic success to intimidation rolls. A raksha could also use this Charm in order to pose as a specific individual, adding one automatic success to all rolls necessary to maintain the imposture.

The raksha chooses the emotion or passion or belief when invoking this Charm and cannot change it without entering the Wyld to dispel and then reapply this Charm. If he is willing to pay the cost, however, the raksha may choose to activate more than one version of this Charm simultaneously. For example, he could assume one form based on love and another based on fear and a third that lets him pose as a specific individual such as the madam of a local whorehouse or the Dragon-Blooded satrap of the whole city. Although only one of those forms is physically apparent at a time, the raksha can draw upon the automatic success benefits of all three versions. A raksha cannot, however, add more than one automatic success to a single roll no matter how many concurrent versions of this Charm he has active.

Raksha who rely on this Charm to walk in Creation have access to an array of related Charms—the Emotional Influence Charms beginning on page 166—to further improve the quality of their emotional forms.

Glamour Resistance: A raksha who bases his form on the Assumption of Dreams and Passion cannot apply his automatic success bonus to social rolls against Creation-born whose (Temperance + Essence) exceeds her Manipulation.

Oneiromancy Benefit: Incorporated into an oneiromancy spell, this Charm allows the spell to exist in Creation in some kind of emotionally resonant form, such as a heart-shaped locket to represent love or a blood-stained whip to represent fear.

Assumption of the Person's Heart

Cost: 10m, 1g; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Assumption, Glamour, Mutation, Stackable
Duration: Until terminated
Prerequisite Charms: Any Assumption Charm

This Charm allows the raksha instill a minor Wyld taint on a Creation-born. If used as an Assumption Charm, Assumption of the Person's Heart costs 10 motes and one gossamer and must be activated while in sight of the Creation-born to be tainted. Thereafter, the raksha can travel into Creation along with the affected Creation-born. Her assumed form is designed to appeal to the Creation-born's emotions in some way, whether to entice him or to terrify him. Regardless, the raksha gains two automatic successes on all social rolls against the Creation-born she taints. If the raksha has also activated Assumption of Dreams and Passion, the automatic successes from both Charms stack.

If the raksha has activated no other Assumptions, she has no manifested existence in Creation apart from the one she taints. If the Creation-born is rendered unconscious or if she leaves his sight, she instantly dematerializes as if she were a spirit (but at no Essence cost), and she has no power to affect Creation or be perceived by others who are unable to sense dematerialized spirits. In this state, the raksha can be harmed only by attacks capable of harming dematerialized spirits. If the tainted Creation-born is slain and the raksha has no other active Assumptions, she suffers the effects of normal calcification effects for a raksha caught in Creation without an Assumption Charm. If the raksha does have another active Assumption, she can freely materialize into that form and dematerialize at will at a cost of one mote.

While the link between the two endures, the raksha can share the benefits of any active mutations or innate powers she currently possesses with her pet Creation-born. For example, if the raksha has Assumption of Water Shape active, she can grant the Creation-born the power to breathe and move freely underwater. If her Assumption carries the innate power associated with the Undetectable Lie Charm, she can

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grant that innate power to him, but he would be able to use that power only if he were capable of spending Essence, since each use of that innate power costs five motes. Conferring such a benefit costs the raksha one point of gossamer per mutation point in the case of conferred mutation benefits or a number of gossamer points equal to the gossamer cost of the Charm for any Charm benefits shared. In the case of the raksha with Assumption of Water Shape active, the raksha must spend one point of gossamer to confer the benefits of Assumption of Water Shape on the Creation-born (the gossamer cost of Assumption of Water Shape). In the case of the Undetectable Lie innate power, the raksha must spend three gossamer (the gossamer cost of that Charm).

The raksha can withdraw any conferred gifts at any time as a reflexive action. If the raksha leaves the creature's presence, the effects of any benefits conferred still continue until withdrawn. In addition to its use as an Assumption Charm, this Charm can also be taken as a transitory mutation. The raksha must spend one gossamer in conjunction with some other Assumption Charm to gain the following innate power:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 10m, 1wp, 1+g): The raksha can taint a Creation-born she encounters while in Creation, granting him the benefits of a mutation or innate power she currently has active. The gossamer cost of tainting a Creation-born is calculated in the same manner as the Assumption aspect of this Charm. The Creation-born retains the granted power for one day. At the end of the day, the Creation-born's player must roll his character's Willpower against a difficulty equal to the number of gossamer spent on the power to resist Wyld addiction. This power *does not* allow the raksha to dematerialize, nor does it grant any automatic successes on social rolls against the affected Creation-born.

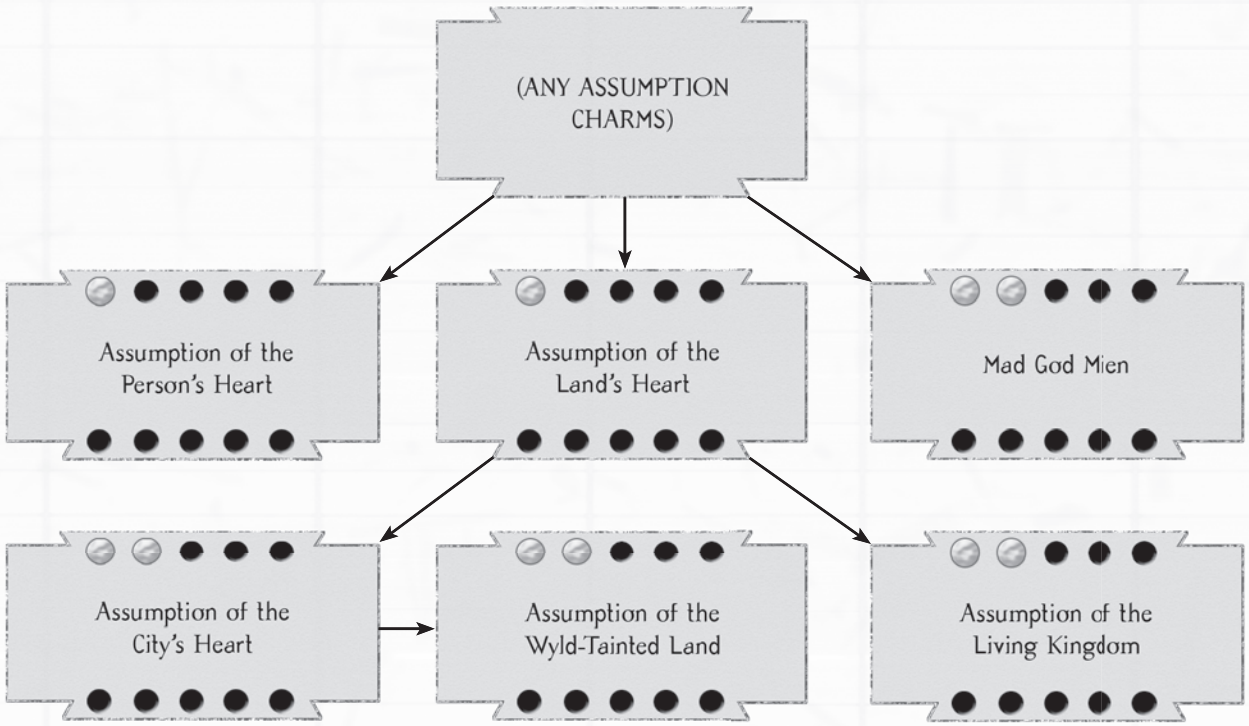
Glamour Resistance: The raksha cannot use this Charm to taint any creature whose (Stamina + Essence) exceeds her Charisma.

Oneiromancy Benefit: This Charm is seldom used as the physical component for an oneiromancy spell, but it can be incorporated into a spell designed to affect specific individuals.

Assumption of the Land's Heart

Cost: 10m, 2g; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Assumption, Glamour, Mutation, Shaped-Only
Duration: Until terminated
Prerequisite Charms: Any Assumption Charm

This Charm allows the raksha to transform himself into a subtle Wyld taint that infects an entire region of Creation. When activated as an Assumption Charm (at a cost of 10 motes and two gossamer), the raksha distills his being into a small physical object that contains his Heart Grace. The object can then be transported into Creation by another, and while there, the Heart Grace can perform a series of preprogrammed glamour effects that can affect everyone within the region covered by the taint. For example, the Heart Grace might be programmed to maintain the Fearsome Mien Charm (see p. 214) to perpetually frighten away everyone in the area or the Beguilement Charm (see pp. 206-207) to maintain a specific delusion among the inhabitants of the region. The raksha must know the Charm to be incorporated into the



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Heart Grace's programming and must pay any necessary costs to incorporate such Charms into the Assumption.

The area that can be affected by the Heart Grace is a small area, such as a tiny village of up to 25 people in size. The raksha's entire Essence diffuses across the affected area, and any rolls made by the Heart Grace apply against every valid target within that area. While the Assumption endures, the raksha himself exists as an immaterial spirit-like being diffused across the affected area. He cannot be perceived or harmed except through appropriate magical powers.

The disadvantage of using this Charm is that, while the raksha is immaterial and separated from his Heart Grace, he is devoid of self-motivation. The raksha cannot spend Willpower, nor can he initiate any action other than to protect himself, to answer questions put to him or to perform rote tasks. He cannot initiate any new actions. A raksha who activates this Assumption Charm and another one simultaneously can maintain a separate physical form. While wearing that form, the raksha still cannot spend Willpower but otherwise suffers none of the normal penalties of Assumption of the Land's Heart.

Detecting a Wyld taint on an area requires a successful difficulty 3 (Perception + Occult) roll. Actually finding the hidden Heart Grace requires a successful difficulty 5 (Perception + Occult) roll. Charms such as All-Encompassing Sorcerer's Sight (see **Exalted**, p. 222) allow automatic success on such rolls. In addition to its benefits as an Assumption Charm, Assumption of the Land's Heart can be used as a Mutation Charm. By spending two gossamer in conjunction with a different Assumption Charm, the raksha gains the following innate power:

Innate Power (*Cost*: 10m, 1wp): This power allows the raksha to gain the benefits of the Assumption aspect of this Charm even if he did not spend the full cost before entering Creation. In this way, the raksha can travel to the area he seeks to taint and inflict the effects of Assumption of the Land's Heart on it without the need for a third party to carry his Heart Grace to the desired area. This innate power, once activated, otherwise functions exactly like the Assumption Charm.

Glamour Resistance: None. Creatures within the affected area resist preprogrammed glamour effects as normal for each effect.

Oneiromancy Benefit: Usually incorporated into a higher level oneiromancy spell along with Assumption of (Element) Shape, this Charm allows the spell to affect mortals in a large area that fits within the normal range parameters of the Charm.

Assumption of the City's Heart

Cost: 10m, 1wp, 4g; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Assumption, Glamour, Mutation, Shaped-Only
Duration: Until terminated
Prerequisite Charms: Assumption of the Land's Heart

As per Assumption of the Land's Heart except that the taint affects a larger territory—any place big enough to support up to 1,000 people. If the raksha invokes both this Charm *and* Assumption of the Land's Heart, she can establish a smaller, village-sized area within the larger territory in which her Heart Grace can invoke permanent glamour effects.

Oneiromancy Benefit: As per Assumption of the Land's Heart.

Assumption of the Living Kingdom

Cost: 15m, 1wp, 6g; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Assumption, Shaped-Only
Duration: Until terminated
Prerequisite Charms: Assumption of the Land's Heart

As per Assumption of the Land's Heart except that the taint affects a much larger area—a small kingdom capable of supporting up to 100,000 people. If the raksha invokes both this Charm *and* Assumption of the Land's Heart, she can establish a place of great power. Within the small village-sized area that is the locus for her Heart, the raksha can commune with that Heart. The raksha can take self-directed actions. She cannot choose to spend Willpower, but she can attempt to persuade her Heart Grace to do so.

Oneiromancy Benefit: As per Assumption of the Land's Heart.

Assumption of the Wyld-Tainted Land

Cost: 15m, 1wp, 6g; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Assumption, Shaped-Only
Duration: Until terminated
Prerequisite Charms: Assumption of the City's Heart

The Wyld flows through each raksha, and when one has passed through the Gateway of Sundraprisha into Creation, the Wyld passes through her into hated Creation itself. This Charm functions exactly like Assumption of the City's Heart except that the affected area must share a border with the Bordermarches on at least 20 percent of its boundary. In addition to the normal effects of Assumption of the City's Heart, this Charm also creates a powerful tainted land. Any raksha can attempt shaping magic within that area of Creation, albeit at a +5 difficulty.

Oneiromancy Benefit: As per Assumption of the Land's Heart.

Mad God Mien

Cost: None; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: Shaped-Only
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Any Assumption Charm

This Charm blurs the line between Creation and the Wyld, between reality and dream. Acquiring this Charm permanently increases the cost for all Assumption Charms by two gossamer (or two mutation points for permanent Assumptions). The raksha can pass through Nirakara in a quasi-Wyld form. Essentially, he exists in Creation without an Assumption and without being annihilated by reality's basilisk gaze. The raksha can enter Creation as a formless being, but he still resists calcification as if he carried an active Assumption.

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This Charm permanently adds one to the difficulty of all Charms and shaping actions by others that alter the raksha's body in any way. It also causes the Charms and powers of Creation-born to treat the raksha as an automaton and as a creature outside fate, thereby rendering him immune to most direct mental influence and destiny-shaping effects. Oneiromancy spells that incorporate the permanent version of this Charm are immune to all countermagic effects below Celestial Circle sorcery. The raksha remains vulnerable to powers that can somehow bind the raksha into Creation wholesale. Two such powers are the Greater Sign of Jupiter (see **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Sidereals**, p. 211) and Harmony with Reality Technique (see **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Lunars**, p. 187).

Oneiromancy Benefit: Spells with this Charm incorporated into them are immune to most sorcerous countermagic spells.

Elemental Influence Charms

These Charms build upon the underlying Charm Assumption of (Element) Shape. A raksha who enters Creation through a use of that Charm can use these Charms to build innate powers similar to those of elementals into his Assumption. Unless specifically stated otherwise, the raksha must have a version of Assumption of (Element) Shape active in order to use any of these Charms, and any elemental effects invoked by them must be associated with the element the raksha has assumed.

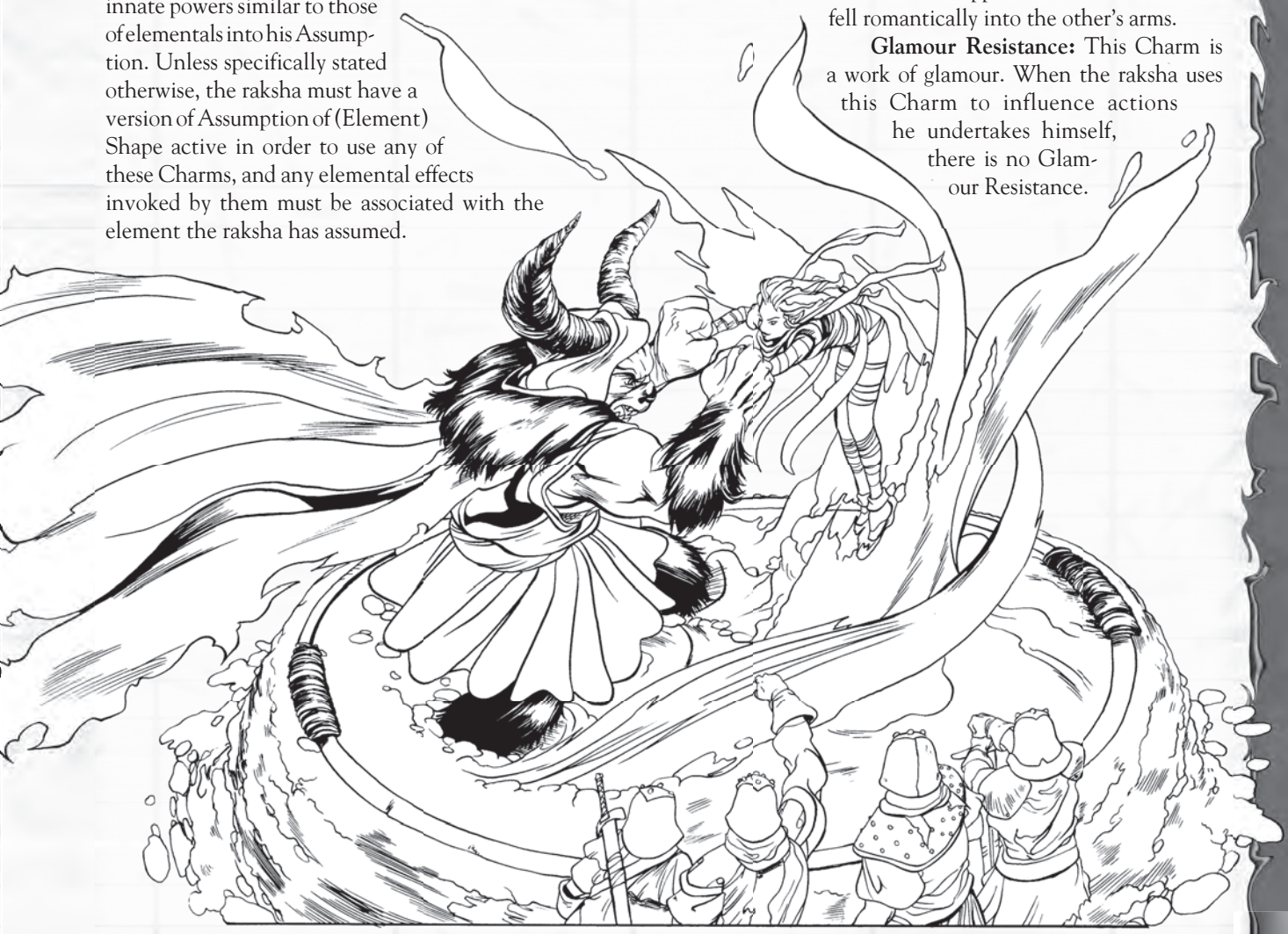
Sovereign Element Shape

Cost: 1g; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Glamour, Mutation, Shaped-Only
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Any Assumption of (Element) Shape

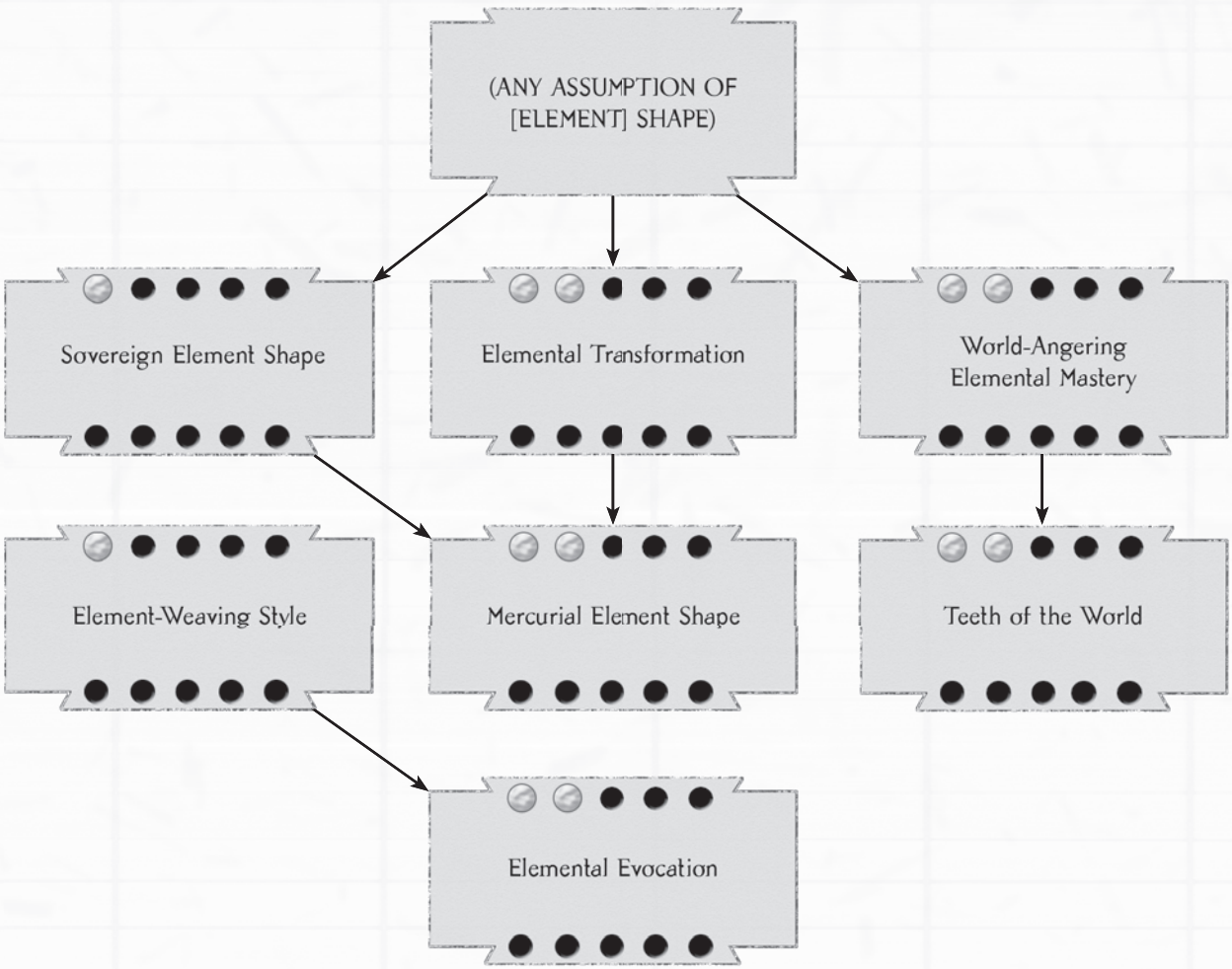
The raksha can draw upon the elements of Creation in conjunction with the inherent properties of raksha narrative magic. When a raksha spends one gossamer to activate this Charm in conjunction with Assumption of Elemental Shape, he gains the following innate power:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 1m, *Speed:* 5): The raksha can reflexively spend one mote to grant a one-die Wyld bonus to any single action, whether undertaken by himself or anyone within his presence. Two conditions must be met. First, the raksha must be able to define how he is using the appropriate element to assist him. Second, he must have the Assumption of (Element) Shape Charm appropriate to that element active. For example, if the raksha were using Assumption of Earth Shape and were preparing to fire an arrow, he might "bond himself with the ground for balance." Later, if he wished to help one Creation-born seduce another, he might seek to manipulate events so that one of the two tripped over a loose stone and fell romantically into the other's arms.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour. When the raksha uses this Charm to influence actions he undertakes himself, there is no Glamour Resistance.



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When he uses it to assist an action undertaken by a Creation-born, the Charm fails if the targeted mortal's (Integrity + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Manipulation.

Element-Weaving Style

Cost: 1g; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Glamour, Mutation, Shaped-Only
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Sovereign Element Shape

This Charm ingratiates the raksha's chosen form with the elemental architecture across which all of Creation is draped. The raksha's deceptive shape is so cunningly designed to emulate the elemental form that the element that has been copied responds to the raksha's will. The raksha must spend one gossamer to activate this Charm in conjunction with an Assumption of (Element) Shape. Doing so confers the following innate power on the raksha:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 5m; *Speed:* 6): The raksha can "sculpt" the element with which she is aligned as if it were clay through a (Wits + Craft) roll. Used in conjunction with Assumption of Air Shape, Fire Shape or Water Shape, the raksha can shape any of those materials into a solid form that will hold its new shape for one lunar cycle. Used in conjunction with Assumption of Earth Shape or Wood Shape, the raksha can shape anything made of earth or metal or anything made of wood as if he had First Age tools, even if he's working barehanded. The actual presence of such tools reduces the difficulty of the craftworking by one. This power allows a raksha to manipulate the appearance and form of an elemental of the appropriate element, but only if that elemental is not capable of Glamour Resistance.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour. It cannot affect an elemental material that is currently in the possession of a Creation-born whose (Integrity + Essence) is greater than the raksha's Wits. It cannot affect a Creation-born elemental whose (Integrity + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Craft.

Elemental Evocation

Cost: 10m, 1g; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Simple (Speed 3)
Keywords: Evocation, Shaped-Only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Element-Weaving Style

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The raksha summons into Creation a possession that otherwise could not exist there. The form of this summoned possession is elemental in character and must be based upon the element associated with whichever Assumption of (Element) Shape Charm the raksha has active. For example, a raksha wearing the Assumption of Air Shape who summoned forth a hazard might fashion it into a lightning storm or a blizzard, while one who bore the Assumption of Wood Shape might call forth a sudden growth of ambulatory carnivorous plants.

World-Angering Elemental Mastery

Cost: 1g; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Glamour, Shaped-Only
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Any Assumption of (Element) Shape

When the raksha enters Creation in the guise of a creature of the elements, this Charm can be used in conjunction with the Assumption Charm to grant her the following innate ability for the duration of her narrative:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 5m): The raksha reaches out with his stolen elemental form, turning the very foundations of Creation against their inhabitants. By activating this power, the raksha can inflict an internal environmental penalty equal to his Essence against a single action he witnesses in Creation. The raksha's player must be able to define how the element he has assumed is able to impose the penalty under the circumstances at hand. This power is reflexive.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour and cannot be used to hinder a Creation-born whose (Dexterity + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Manipulation.

Teeth of the World

Cost: 1g; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Mutation, Shaped-Only
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: World-Angering Elemental Mastery

The raksha's elemental disguise nears perfection. She is now so fully attuned to the element she has assumed that she can call upon it to attack her enemies in Creation. Activating this Charm confers upon the raksha an innate attack power appropriate to the element she has assumed. For each attack, the raksha must have access to a suitable quantity of the element to form the attack. If the element is not present in sufficient quantities, however, the raksha can summon hostile elemental conditions into existence at a cost of one gossamer per attack. Because the raksha simply uses this gossamer to alter the material of Creation and then direct it against another, this attack never invokes Glamour Resistance. The resulting attacks are always considered non-magical environmental damage for purposes of Charms that resist such damage.

Each of these attacks is unblockable and undodgeable except through a Charm or a stunt. Each of these attacks has a cost of five motes and a Speed of 5. The base lethal damage for all attacks is equal to twice the raksha's Essence.

Innate Power (Air): The raksha can call down lightning, hail, icy wind or any other deadly environmental effect appropriate to the element of Air. This attack normally requires serious inclement weather—a thunderstorm, a blizzard, a hurricane, etc.—and the raksha must be above ground and outdoors. During calm weather or while inside or underground, the raksha can launch the attack at a cost of one gossamer. The attack's Accuracy is equal to the raksha's (Dexterity + Archery) dice pool. The raksha must be within 500 yards of the target and able to see it.

Innate Power (Earth): The earth itself rises up against the enemies of the Fair Folk. The raksha can cause stones to fling themselves at the target, inflicting twice her Essence in damage. The attack's Accuracy is equal to the raksha's (Dexterity + Martial Arts), with a range of 500 yards. This power also has a secondary attack. With just one success on a (Dexterity + Martial Arts) roll, the raksha can cause the ground to shake within a radius of 30 yards. The player of anyone standing within that area must roll (Dexterity + Athletics) successfully against a difficulty equal to the raksha's successes as a normal action or have their characters knocked prone. Structures take the raksha's Essence in lethal damage. Neither of these effects can be activated unless the raksha is standing on solid ground, and targets farther than five yards from the ground (at sea, in the air, hanging from a tree) are immune to both of these attacks. With the expenditure of one gossamer, however, the raksha can create stones from nothing and hurl them against targets otherwise protected from this power.

Innate Power (Fire): The raksha can cause any ambient flame to leap toward an enemy. The target must be within five yards of a significant blaze. The attack's Accuracy is equal to the raksha's (Dexterity + Archery) dice pool. If no fire is handy, the raksha can spend one gossamer to summon a fire into existence and launch it toward his target. The raksha must be within 100 yards of the target and able to see it.

Innate Power (Water): The raksha can cause the ocean, the sea, a river or any sufficiently large quantity of water to rise up against his enemy like a crushing wave. The target must be within five yards of water. The attack's Accuracy is equal to the raksha's (Dexterity + Martial Arts) dice pool. The raksha must be within 100 yards of the target and be able to see it. If the target is not near a sufficiently large body of water, the raksha can spend one gossamer to create a quantity of water in order to make the attack.

Innate Power (Wood): The raksha can turn a whole forest against his adversary. The target must be within five yards of a tree or within 30 yards of any small wooden object. Trees can grapple the target, while smaller objects leap at her, either inflicting attacks with the raksha's (Dexterity + Martial Arts) pool. For grappling attacks, trees use the raksha's normal Strength. If no appropriate plant life is available, the raksha can cause suitable plants to spring from the ground at a cost of one gossamer. The attack has an Accuracy equal to the raksha's (Dexterity + Martial Arts) and has a range of 100 yards.

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Elemental Transformation

Cost: 1g; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Glamour, Mutation, Shaped-Only
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Any Assumption of (Element) Shape

Some raksha are accomplished shapeshifters, though their skills are inferior to the Lunar Exalted (at least while in Creation). Activating this Charm in conjunction with Assumption of (Element) Shape grants the raksha the innate ability to transform into a form resembling an elemental of Creation. The raksha can purchase this Charm multiple times to allow the transmutation into additional elemental forms. This Charm confers the following innate ability for the duration of the raksha's time in Creation:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 10m, 1wp; *Speed:* 5): The raksha can assume a form Creation-born might easily mistake for a true elemental, although deities and savants will typically know better. The specific form is chosen when this Charm is purchased. Regardless of its appearance, the raksha's player has (Essence + 3) mutation points to spend on this secondary form. Typically, a raksha exposed to cold iron while in his altered shape is instantly forced back to his true form. Some advanced oneiromancy spells permit such effects to survive contact with cold iron.

Although technically a work of glamour, this Charm affects only the raksha's own body and does not provoke Glamour Resistance. The mutation points acquired through this power do not count toward the raksha's (Essence + mutation point) total.

Mercurial Element Shape

Cost: 1g; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Glamour, Mutation, Shaped-Only
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Sovereign Element Shape, Elemental Transformation

The raksha's control over his elemental form is such that he can reflexively alter it as needed to achieve his goals. If activated by a raksha using Assumption of (Element) Shape, the Fair Folk acquires the following innate ability:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 5m): With but a thought, the raksha can make some minor change to his elemental form sufficient to grant him a two-die Wyld bonus. The player must define what sort of change is made to acquire this bonus. He might surround himself with a swirling column of air to aid in jumping or movement. He might develop stretchable watery arms to facilitate a Larceny roll. He might become able to pass through underbrush without disturbing it to throw off pursuers. The effect lasts as long as the raksha continues to pursue the same action for which he activated this power, which might be a single dice roll or a months-long pursuit. The raksha need only describe the changes wrought by this power in terms of elemental traits in general. The potential traits are limited to the characteristics of the element with which he has associated his Assumption of (Element) Shape Charm.

Because this power affects only the raksha himself, it does not provoke Glamour Resistance.

Bestial Visage Charms

These Charms build on the underlying Charm Assumption of Bestial Visage. A raksha who enters Creation through a use of that Charm can use these Charms to build innate powers similar to those of beastmen into his shaped form. Unless specifically stated otherwise, the raksha must have a version of Assumption of Bestial Visage active in order to use any of these Charms, and any bestial effects invoked by them must be associated with the animalistic shape the raksha has assumed.

King of Beasts Method

Cost: 1g; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Glamour, Mutation, Shaped-Only
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Assumption of Bestial Visage

The raksha can call upon the beasts of Creation in conjunction with the inherent properties of raksha narrative magic. The raksha invokes this Charm when he enters Creation through Assumption of Bestial Visage, thereby gaining the following innate power to call upon the traits of his animalistic nature to aid him in some minor way in his endeavors:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 1m, *Speed:* 5): For the duration of the story, the raksha can reflexively spend one mote to grant a one-die Wyld bonus to any single action, whether undertaken by himself or anyone within his presence. Two conditions must be met. First, the raksha must be able to describe how the action is benefited by the characteristics of a particular animal. Second, he must have the Assumption of Bestial Visage Charm appropriate to that animal active. For example, if the raksha were using Assumption of Bestial Visage (Lion) and was preparing to engage in battle, he might roar like a mighty beast to intimidate his enemies. Later, if he wished to give encouragement to shy Creation-born, he might try to inspire him with the majestic solemnity of his leonine form.

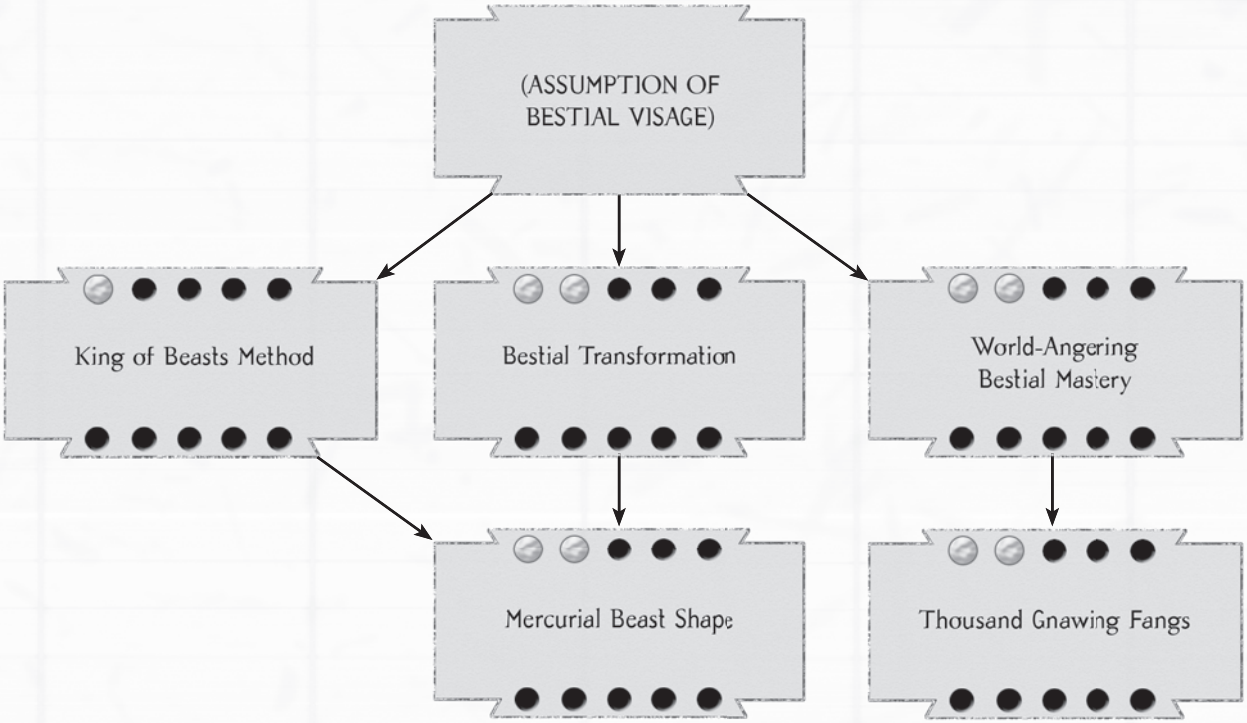
Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour. When the raksha uses this Charm to influence actions he undertakes himself, there is no Glamour Resistance. When he uses it to assist an action undertaken by a Creation-born, the Charm fails if the targeted mortal's (Integrity + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Manipulation.

Bestial Transformation

Cost: 1g; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Glamour, Mutation, Shaped-Only
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Assumption of Bestial Visage

Some raksha are accomplished shapeshifters, though their skills are inferior to the Lunar Exalted (at least in Creation). Activating this Charm in conjunction with Assumption of Bestial Visage grants the raksha the innate

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ability to transform into a perfect copy of the animal with which the raksha has associated her Assumption of Bestial Visage Charm. The raksha can purchase this Charm multiple times to allow transmutation into additional forms. While wearing an animal form, the raksha can communicate freely with animals of that type, as well as with humans and other intelligent creatures. This Charm confers the following innate ability for the duration of the raksha's time in Creation:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 10m, 1wp; *Speed:* 5): The raksha can change his shape into that of a particular animal. The specific animal is chosen when this Charm is purchased and must be appropriate to the raksha's Assumption of Bestial Visage Charm. The raksha's player has (Essence + 3) mutation points to spend on this secondary form. Typically, a raksha exposed to cold iron while in his altered shape is instantly forced back to his true form. Some advanced oneiromancy spells permit such effects to survive contact with cold iron.

Although technically a work of glamour, this Charm affects only the raksha's own body and does not provoke Glamour Resistance. The mutation points acquired through this power do not count toward the raksha's (Essence + mutation point) total.

Mercurial Beast Shape

Cost: 1g; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Glamour, Mutation, Shaped-Only
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: King of Beasts Method, Bestial Transformation

The raksha's control over his bestial form is such that he can reflexively alter it as needed to achieve his goals. If activated in tandem with Assumption of Bestial Visage, the raksha acquires the following innate ability:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 5m; *Speed:* 5): With but a thought, the raksha can make some minor change to his bestial form sufficient to grant him a +2 internal Wyld bonus. The player must define what sort of change is made to acquire this bonus. He might grow claws to aid in combat. He might acquire prehensile fingers to help with climbing. His eyes might change to those of a cat or hawk to facilitate Awareness rolls. The effect lasts as long as the raksha continues to pursue the same action for which he activated this power, which might be a single dice roll or a months-long pursuit. The raksha need only describe the changes wrought by this power in terms of animal traits in general. The potential traits are not limited to the characteristics of the animal with which he has associated his Assumption of Bestial Visage Charm.

Because this power affects only the raksha himself, it does not provoke Glamour Resistance.

World-Angering Bestial Mastery

Cost: 1g; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Glamour, Shaped-Only
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Assumption of Bestial Visage

When the raksha enters Creation wearing the face of an animal, this Charm can be activated along with the Assumption to grant her the following innate ability:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 5m): The raksha reaches out to the beasts of Creation, turning them against the mortals in their midst. By activating this power, the raksha can inflict an environmental penalty equal to his Essence against a single

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action he witnesses in Creation. The raksha's player must be able to define how some animal in the vicinity disrupts the planned action. This power is reflexive.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour and cannot be used to hinder a Creation-born whose (Dexterity + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Manipulation. Likewise, the raksha cannot call upon the aid of an intelligent animal whose (Wits + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Manipulation.

Thousand Gnawing Fangs

Cost: 1g; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Shaped-Only, Mutation
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: World-Angering Bestial Mastery

The raksha is now nearly one with Creation's animal kingdom. She is so fully attuned to Creation's animal life that she can call upon it to attack her enemies. Activating this Charm along with the Assumption confers upon the raksha the following innate attack power:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 5m; *Speed:* 5): The raksha can create an environmental hazard in the form of some kind of animal attack. This might range from an attack by wild dogs to a swarm of killer bees to a plague of rats. Regardless, the attack has an Accuracy equal to the raksha's (Dexterity + Martial Arts). The summoned animals are not "real" enough to defend against normally, but stunts or Charms totally protect the victim from the effects. Against affected Creation-born, this power inflicts a base lethal damage equal to twice the raksha's Essence. The attack's range is 100 yards.

Glamour Resistance: This power represents a work of glamour that cannot harm a Creation-born whose (Stamina + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Dexterity.

Emotional Influence Charms

These Charms build upon the underlying Charm Assumption of Dreams and Passion. A raksha who enters Creation through a use of that Charm can use these Charms to build innate powers into his shaped form that allow him to affect the emotional states of others. Unless specifically stated otherwise, the raksha must have Assumption of Dreams and Passion active in order to use any of these Charms, and any emotional effects invoked by them must be associated with the emotional incarnation the raksha has assumed.

Elegant Muse Attitude

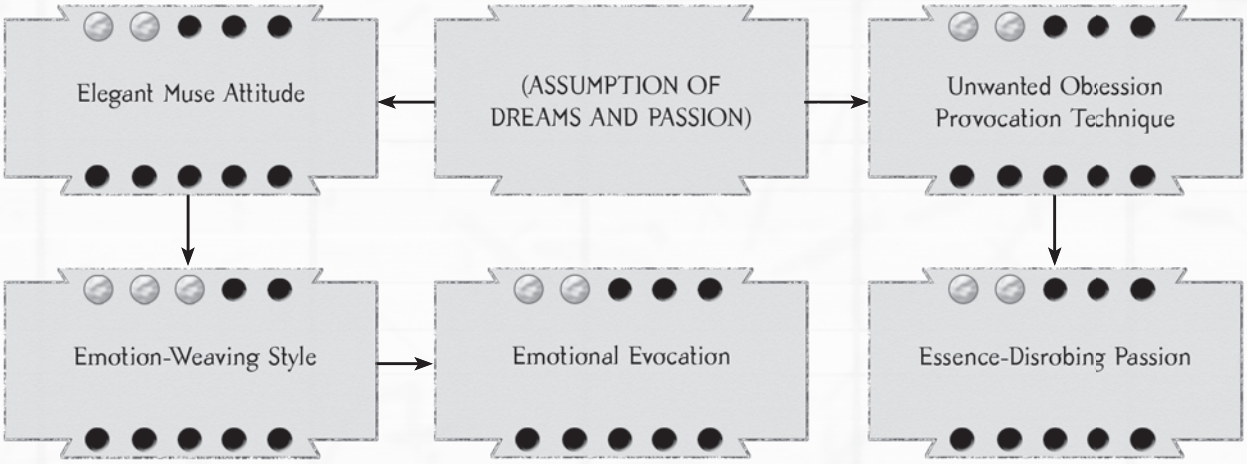
Cost: 1g; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Glamour, Mutation, Shaped-Only
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Assumption of Dreams and Passion

The raksha can use the emotion she symbolizes to bolster her own aims or to inspire (or terrify) others. Upon entering Creation and assuming an emotional resonance, the raksha can use this Charm to give herself the following innate power:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 1m): The raksha can reflexively grant a two-die bonus on any action she takes consistent with the emotion or belief she has assumed. A seductress of love, for example, can gain a two-die bonus to her Socialize



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rolls to influence besotted lovers, while the Cataphract of fear might gain a two-die bonus on Presence rolls to frighten away challengers. The raksha can also grant a similar benefit to any action performed by another she witnesses, subject to the limitations of Glamour Resistance.

Glamour Resistance: This power is a work of glamour. When used to confer an emotional bonus on a Creation-born, the power fails if the recipient's (Integrity + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Charisma.

Emotion-Weaving Style

Cost: 1g; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Mutation, Shaped-Only
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Elegant Muse Attitude

Having become the personification of an emotion, the raksha can now forcefully instill that emotion into the very souls of those pitiful mortals who cross his path. This Charm, when activated in conjunction with Assumption of Dreams and Passion, grants the raksha the following innate ability:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 5m, 1wp; *Speed:* 5 [or 3 long ticks in social combat]): This power permits the raksha to redefine the Motivation of a shaped being. The raksha's player must roll (Manipulation + Presence) against a difficulty equal to the target's Essence. If the roll is successful, the raksha can redefine the target's Motivation for up to one season. The effect ends automatically if the raksha leaves Creation and terminates Assumption of Dreams and Passions *or* when the raksha is slain.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour that cannot affect the Motivation of any Creation-born whose (Integrity + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Manipulation.

Emotional Evocation

Cost: 10m, 1g; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Simple (Speed 3)
Keywords: Evocation, Shaped-Only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Emotion-Weaving Style

This Charm functions as per Elemental Evocation (see pp. 162-163), except that the summoned possession, rather than having an elemental aspect, instead carries an emotional one. For example, a warrior of rage and a temptress of lust might each summon forth a suit of armor or a pet dog. For the warrior, the armor would be appropriately terrifying and the dog would be a slathering, enraged mastiff. For the temptress, the armor might be fashioned of delicate, pink adamant, while the dog would be an adorable lap dog fit for a boudoir.

Unwanted Obsession Provocation Technique

Cost: 1g; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Glamour, Mutation, Shaped-Only
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Assumption of Dreams and Passion

The power of the emotion or belief by which the raksha defines himself in Creation can overpower those who come into his orbit. This Charm, used in conjunction with Assumption of Dreams and Passion, grants the raksha access to the following innate power:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 5m): By unleashing the emotion at the core of his assumed form into Creation, the raksha can reflexively impose an internal penalty equal to his Essence on a single witnessed action of which he disapproves. The raksha's player must define how the emotion the character has assumed can logically result in the penalty to be inflicted. If the raksha has used this Assumption to disguise himself as another, this power instead inflicts an internal penalty on all rolls to penetrate the raksha's disguise for the duration of a scene.

Glamour Resistance: This power is a work of glamour and cannot affect Creation-born whose (Temperance + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Manipulation.

Essence-Disrobing Passion

Cost: 1g; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Glamour, Mutation, Shaped-Only
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Unwanted Obsession Provocation Technique

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As the raksha focuses the intensity of the emotion or belief she symbolizes onto a single target, she finds she can direct that intensity past her target's mind and soul into the very Essence pattern that defines him. This Charm, activated in conjunction with Assumption of Dreams and Passions, confers the following innate power:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 5m); The raksha can direct the white-hot core of her emotional nature directly into the Essence that defines her target. The raksha's player must roll (Manipulation + Performance) against the target's Dodge MDV. If the raksha succeeds, the target loses motes of Essence equal to the raksha's Essence plus her extra successes on the attack. The target also suffers a -1 internal penalty on all actions for the rest of the scene as the emotion the raksha represents overcomes him. This penalty can stack with Unwanted Obsession Provocation Technique, but not with itself.

Glamour Resistance: This power is a work of glamour that cannot affect a Creation-born whose (Occult + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Charisma.

Charms of the Heart

The shinma Nirguna defines existence in the Wyld. The raksha associate it with will and self-determination. A raksha who has lost his Heart Grace, especially to another raksha, is a pitiable creature who exists only at the sufferance of others. Charms of the Heart are principally used to define a raksha's essential nature, to defend against the corrosive effects of bedlam and to dodge or resist shaping attacks.

Name Charms

These Charms help the raksha define her own sense of self. They permit the Fair Folk to incorporate truths into their own existence that not even the banal strictures of Creation can deny.

Imposition of Law

Cost: 2g; **Mins:** Heart 1, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Mutation, Shaped-Only
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: None

The raksha builds into his very being an undeniable truth in the form of a mundane task for which failure, for him, is nearly impossible. Each time this Charm is purchased, the player chooses an Attribute, an Ability and a specialty that define a specific mundane action. A raksha can acquire this Charm a number of times equal to his Heart Grace. If he spends two gossamer in conjunction with an Assumption Charm, he incorporates perfection at that task into his nature, gaining the following innate power:

Innate Power (*Cost*: 10m, 1wp): For one day after paying the cost for this power, the raksha guarantees himself at least one success on the (Attribute + Ability [Specialty]) roll he has chosen to improve. If internal penalties reduce his dice pool to 0, he still gets one success. If external penalties (including DV) reduce his successes to 0, he still gets one success. In combat (assuming the dice pool to which this Charm is applied is an attack roll), the raksha will always hit his target, although this Charm does nothing to aid him in penetrating soak.

Two limitations on this power exist, however. First, the raksha does *not* gain an automatic success if his action is opposed by either Charms or a stunt. Second, the raksha cannot do something that is simply impossible. For example, a Fair Folk Cataphract might choose (Dexterity + Archery [Longbow]) to become the world's greatest archer. Generally, he is assured of hitting a target regardless of environmental penalties, DV, extreme range and no matter how small the target is. If the range is so great that it is simply beyond the possible range of a bow, however, this power cannot guarantee his success. Similarly, even though he is certain to hit a fleeing mortal enemy with his bow, he does not gain the single automatic success if the enemy stunts (leaping out into a chasm to escape the Fair Folk pursuers) or uses a Dodge Charm to evade the arrow.

If the raksha has more than one version of this Charm, he can spend two gossamer for each version he incorporates into his Assumption. The raksha can then activate all of the Imposition of Law effects built into his Assumption at once by spending 10 motes and one Willpower. The benefits conferred by this power last for one day but end early if the raksha terminates his Assumption.

Bastion of the Self (Grace)

Cost: 10m, 1wp, 4g; **Mins:** Heart 2, Essence 2;
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Mutation, Shaped-Only
Duration: Assumption, one tale or one story
Prerequisite Charms: None

While Imposition of Law defines an action at which the raksha is certain to succeed, this Charm defines a type of danger from which the raksha need have no fear. This Charm is actually a cluster of five Charms, one associated with each of the Graces. Each Charm renders the raksha utterly immune to a fairly broad source of non-magical harm or to a particular form of shaping damage. In Creation, if the

IMPOSITION OF LAW

BASTION OF THE SELF (GRACE)

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raksha is threatened by a magically augmented attack (as defined under each of the descriptions that follow), Bastion of the Self instead improves his defense against the attack. In the Wyld, it confers total immunity to the listed shaping damage type. **A raksha can purchase this Charm only once, and no version of this Charm will protect a raksha from attacks or damage that incorporate cold iron.**

In the Wyld, the raksha can activate this Charm reflexively by spending 10 motes and one Willpower, and the Charm's effects last for one tale. When activating it in conjunction with an Assumption, the Charm costs four gossamer and lasts for the Assumption's duration. A raksha who has not acquired the Charm as a mutation can activate it reflexively in Creation by spending 10 motes, one Willpower *and* four gossamer. In the latter case, the Charm lasts for one day.

Bastion of the Self (Cup): The raksha is protected from non-magical effects that weaken the raksha in some way or reduce any of his traits (poisons, disease, dehydration, etc.), as well as Cup-shaping attacks. If the effect is the result of a Charm, spell or innate power, including natural poisons created through magical means (such as raksha powers or Lunar shapeshifting), the raksha instead adds his Essence in dice to any relevant roll to resist the effect.

Bastion of the Self (Ring): The raksha is protected from natural mental influence and from Ring-shaping attacks. If the effect is one that causes unnatural mental influence, the raksha instead adds his Essence to his applicable MDV. Charms and other effects that merely increase the attacker's normal dice pool but otherwise result in natural mental influence do not count as magical attacks for purposes of this power.

Bastion of the Self (Staff): The raksha is protected from non-magical social combat attacks and from Staff-shaping attacks. If the social attack is aided by a Charm or other supernatural effect, the raksha instead adds his Essence to his applicable MDV. Charms and other effects that merely increase the attacker's normal dice pool but otherwise result in natural mental influence do not count as magical attacks for purposes of this power.

Bastion of the Self (Sword): The raksha is immune to all non-magical attacks and to Sword-shaping attacks. In this context, "attacks" include any deliberate attempt to inflict harm on the raksha with mundane weaponry or non-magical martial arts. If an attack made against the raksha employs either a magical weapon or uses a Charm or other supernatural power, the raksha instead adds his Essence to his applicable DV.

Bastion of the Self (Heart): The raksha is immune to all non-magical forms of damage from any source. Against normal attacks, it duplicates the benefits of Bastion of the Self (Sword). Against environmental damage effects, it confers total immunity to damage unless the environmental damage is caused by a magical effect, including the Charms and innate powers of raksha and elementals or the anima powers of Dragon-Blooded. Where environmental damage effects are the result of magic, the raksha either adds his Essence to any applicable DV or adds his Essence in dice to any relevant dice roll to resist damage. Bastion of the Self (Heart) provides no protection whatsoever from shaping attacks.

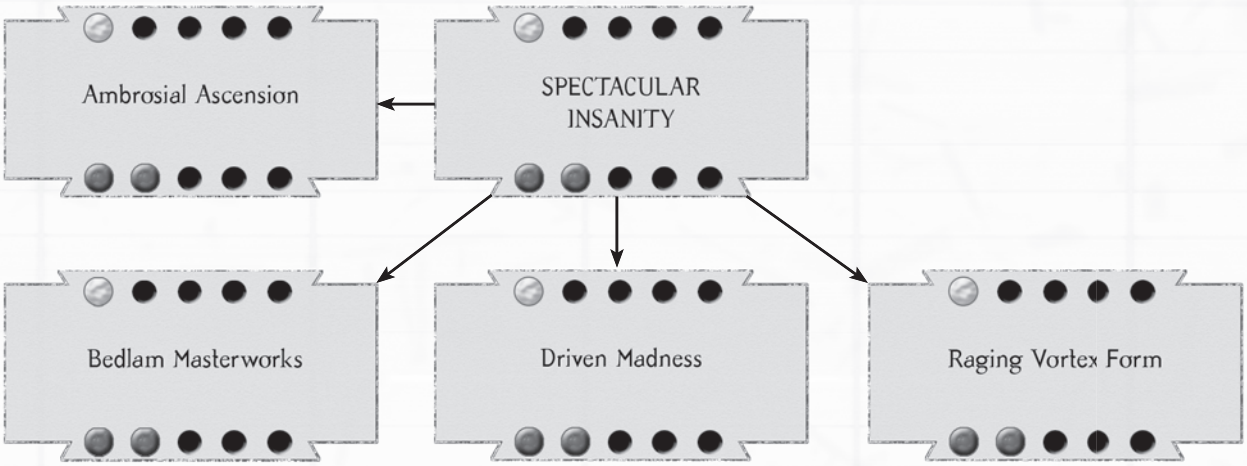
Bedlam-Influencing Charms

These Charms help the raksha resist the debilitating effects of bedlam. Although they are considered Charms of the Heart, only the core Charm, Spectacular Insanity, has a minimum Heart requirement. The other four have minimum requirements for each of the other four Graces.

Spectacular Insanity

Cost: 1g; **Mins:** Heart 2, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Mutation
Duration: Assumption or one tale
Prerequisite Charms: None

Invoking this Charm transforms bedlam from a debilitating curse to a blessing, if not a very enjoyable one. This Charm may be activated in conjunction with an Assumption or reflexively while in the Wyld. In the former case, it lasts while the Assumption does. In the latter case, it lasts for the duration of the tale. In either case, when the



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raksha enters bedlam, she can spend five motes to instantly recover temporary Willpower and gain new gossamer equal to the Virtue with which the bedlam is associated. This action is reflexive.

Ambrosial Ascension

Cost: 8m, 1g; **Mins:** Cup 2, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Compulsion, Mutation
Duration: Assumption or one tale
Prerequisite Charms: Spectacular Insanity

For raksha who have this Charm active when they enter bedlam, the chaotic Wyld energies invoked by the experience are filtered through the lens of the raksha's Compassion. The raksha can activate this Charm in the Wyld at any point before he enters bedlam, thereby gaining the benefits of the following innate power for the duration of the tale. Alternatively, he can spend one gossamer to activate this Charm in conjunction with an Assumption to gain the following innate power for the duration of the Assumption:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 8m): As the raksha enters bedlam, he can spend eight motes as a reflexive action. For the duration of the bedlam, the raksha becomes a creature of angelic beauty who radiates glory (despite her transparent madness). Any character who wishes to impede or attack her must first spend two Willpower points on each action in which he wishes to oppose her. This is an unnatural mental influence effect that is overcome when the attacking character has spent eight Willpower points.

Glamour Resistance: This power is a work of glamour that will not deter Creation-born attackers whose (Integrity + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Appearance.

Bedlam Masterworks

Cost: 10m, 1wp, 1g; **Mins:** Ring 2, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Mutation
Duration: Assumption or one tale
Prerequisite Charms: Spectacular Insanity

This strange Charm permits the raksha to use bedlam as an opportunity to acquire bizarre objets d'art summoned from the unknown reaches of the Wyld itself. The raksha can activate this Charm in the Wyld at any point before he enters bedlam, thereby gaining the benefits of the listed innate power for the duration of the tale. Alternatively, he can spend one gossamer to activate this Charm in conjunction with an Assumption to gain the following innate power for the Assumption's duration:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 10m, 1wp; *Speed:* 1 dramatic action): When a raksha who has entered bedlam while this Charm was active emerges from that state, his player rolls (Intelligence + Craft [Glamour]). Success yields one or more weird and disturbing craftworks that collectively contain a number of gossamer points equal to the total successes on the roll. This gossamer can be claimed either by ravishing or simply by smashing the items recovered. At the Storyteller's discretion, an exceptional number of successes might result in an actual artifact with magical properties or perhaps an item of oneiromancy.

Driven Madness

Cost: 5m, 1g; **Mins:** Staff 2, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Mutation
Duration: Assumption or one tale
Prerequisite Charms: Spectacular Insanity

This Charm aids the raksha in fulfilling any oaths she has sworn, even while drowning in the depths of bedlam. The raksha can activate this Charm in the Wyld at any point before she enters bedlam, thereby gaining the benefits of the listed innate power for the duration of the tale. Alternatively, she can spend one gossamer to activate this Charm in conjunction with an Assumption to gain the following innate power for the Assumption's duration:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 5m): When the raksha enters bedlam, he can reflexively activate this power. For the duration of the bedlam, the raksha adds three automatic successes on all non-shaping Virtue rolls that help her keep or fulfill an oath.

Raging Vortex Form

Cost: 10m, 1g; **Mins:** Sword 2, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Mutation
Duration: Assumption or one tale
Prerequisite Charms: Spectacular Insanity

Some raksha (far too many, as far as Creation is concerned) have monsters lurking in their souls. A raksha with this Charm can unleash that monster during her darkest moments. The raksha can activate this Charm in the Wyld at any point before he enters bedlam, thereby gaining the benefits of the listed innate power for the duration of the tale. Alternatively, he can spend one gossamer to activate this Charm in conjunction with an Assumption to gain the following innate power for the Assumption's duration:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 10m): When a raksha enters bedlam, he can reflexively spend 10 motes to instantly gain a number of temporary mutation points equal to half his permanent Willpower. These mutations last as long as the raksha stays in bedlam and have no adverse effect on him, even if the sum of his (mutation points + Essence) exceeds her (Willpower + 4). The player must choose the mutations that will be acquired during bedlam when this Charm is first purchased. These mutations are fixed until the raksha's permanent Willpower increases or decreases, at which time the player can reallocate them as he wishes.

Serenity Charms

These Charms help the raksha evade shaping attacks or ignore their effects if they are undodgeable. The Charms mimic the effects of the Dodge and Resistance Abilities, whether by improving the raksha's Heart Shaping DV or his shaping soak.

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Assertion of a Greater Vision

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Heart 2, Essence 1;
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Any Heart Grace Excellency

The raksha writes her name in the sands of the Wyld and dares the pounding surf of unreality to wash it away. Even if her name is erased, does she not continue on, unscathed? This Charm helps the raksha ignore the impact of the shaping of her rivals. It instantly negates all penalties to the Shaping DV of the raksha's choice against a single shaping attack. The raksha must spend the Essence for this Charm *before* the shaping attack is made.

Sapphire Emptiness Kata

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Heart 2, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Any Heart Excellency

The universe flings itself at the raksha, full of rage and malice, and the raksha simply smiles and says, "No." This Charm allows the raksha to reflexively add his Dodge to his Heart Shaping DV against a single attack. The raksha must spend the Essence for this Charm *before* the shaping attack is made.

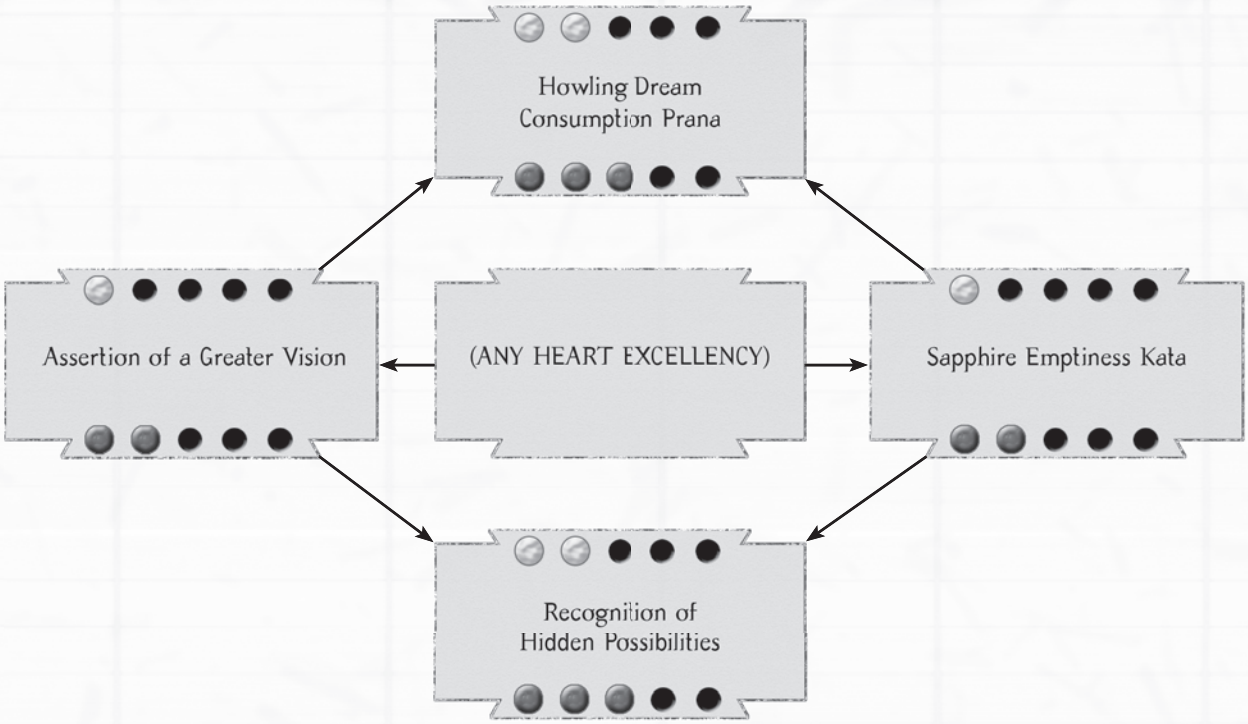
Howling Dream Consumption Prana

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Heart 3, Essence 2;
Type: Simple
Keywords: Combo-Basic, Shaping
Duration: One shaping battle
Prerequisite Charms: Assertion of a Greater Vision, Sapphire Emptiness Kata

For the duration of the shaping battle, the raksha can apply his full Heart Shaping DV to all incoming shaping attacks.



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Recognition of Hidden Possibilities

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Heart 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Assertion of a Greater Vision, Sapphire Emptiness Kata

The raksha can apply her full Heart Shaping DV to a single attack that would otherwise be undodgeable. Furthermore, regardless of how well the attacker rolls, his attack successes are reduced to just two.

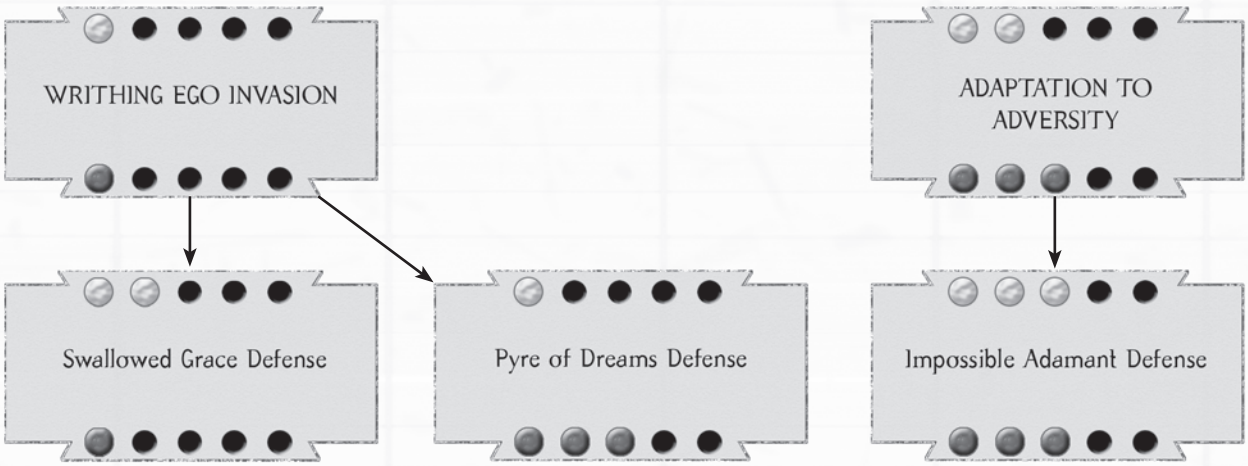
Writhing Ego Invasion

Cost: 1m per soak; **Mins:** Heart 1, Essence 1;
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

At the edge of the raksha's consciousness, the distant echoes of her enemy's furious assault tickle at her self-awareness. She cocks her ear, as if to listen for the source of the faint buzzing, and then shakes her head as if to clear a momentary fancy from it. This Charm allows the raksha to improve her soak against a single shaping attack. For every mote spent on the Charm (up to a maximum number of motes equal to her Temperance), the raksha adds one dot to her soak.

Swallowed Grace Defense

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Heart 1, Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Writhing Ego Invasion



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The raksha consumes his Graces deep inside himself, sealing them away from harm behind the unassailable wall of his own ego. The raksha activates this Charm when someone targets him with a successful shaping attack. If the raw damage pool of the attack is less than the raksha's Willpower, he can ignore the attack completely.

Pyre of Dreams Defense

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Heart 3, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Writhing Ego Invasion

Even when an enemy strikes true, the raksha's placid demeanor holds as the force of the blow glances aside, barely leaving a mark. The raksha can activate this Charm after an attack hits but before its damage is rolled. The Charm reduces the entire damage pool, no matter how many dice are in it, to the attacker's Essence.

Adaptation to Adversity

Cost: 2+m; **Mins:** Heart 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Moving with the speed of a broken dream, the raksha shields himself from the nightmares of others. Normally, donning shaping armor requires a number of sequential Speed 6, DV -3 shaping actions equal to the armor's mobility penalty. For every two motes spent in the activation of this Charm, the raksha reduces the number of shaping actions required to don armor by one, to a minimum of one Speed 6, DV -3 shaping action.

Impossible Adamant Defense

Cost: 4m, 1wp, 1g; **Mins:** Heart 3, Essence 3;
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Adaptation to Adversity

With a blur of impossible motion, the raksha seals his Heart away behind a protective shield. This Charm allows the raksha to instantly and reflexively don any shaping armor he owns.

Charms of the Cup

The shinma Dharma perhaps epitomizes why the nature of the Fair Folk is so impenetrable to the people of Creation. Dharma simultaneously represents desire and apathy, resilience and decay, ignorance and omniscience. To the raksha, concepts such as desire and apathy are not merely descriptions of specific motives for action—they are pinpoints on a multi-dimensional graph that encompasses the entire spectrum of all possible imperatives for action. As Thief of Words so wisely said: "As the progenitor of corruption, Dharma is, himself, pure; as the definition of ignorance, he is, himself all-knowing; as the forerunner of every desire, he is, himself, free of hunger."

Cup-shaping is the principle domain of those raksha who view themselves as Entertainers. It is also the domain of those who call themselves predators. Cup-shaping is the form of shaping combat that permits the Fair Folk to ravish their victims, eating away at the dreams and hopes of doomed mortals like a cancer of the soul.

Cup Combat Charms

These Charms aid principally in Cup-shaping actions and attacks (and by extension, in most Staff-shaping actions and attacks). Some of these Charms also have mutation benefits that can be incorporated into the raksha's Assumption Charms to grant her powers in Creation, which are useful in more mundane settings. Although a gossamer cost is included, that cost needs to be paid only if the raksha wishes to incorporate the mutation effect into her Assumption form. Unless stated otherwise, ignore any gossamer costs for applications of these Charms when they are deployed in shaping combat.

Heart-Cutting Style

Cost: 1m, 1g; **Mins:** Cup 1, Essence 1;
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Glamour, Mutation, Shaping
Duration: Instant or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: None

The raksha's effortless grace at presenting delights of the Cup washes over his enemies like a tidal wave. The raksha invokes this Charm after making a successful Cup- or Staff-shaping attack. The Charm allows the raksha to count extra successes twice for purposes of determining damage.

When activated in conjunction with any Assumption Charm (at a cost of one gossamer), Heart-Cutting Style allows the raksha to enter Creation in a form of transcendent beauty, thereby gaining the following innate power:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 5m)**:** At a cost of five motes, the raksha can appear before a single being of Creation in that being's image of perfect beauty. With regard to that being, the raksha ignores for the rest of the scene the cap on the MDV penalty she imposes in social combat for having a higher Appearance than the person with whom she is interacting (see "Relative Appearance" on p. 172 of **Exalted**).

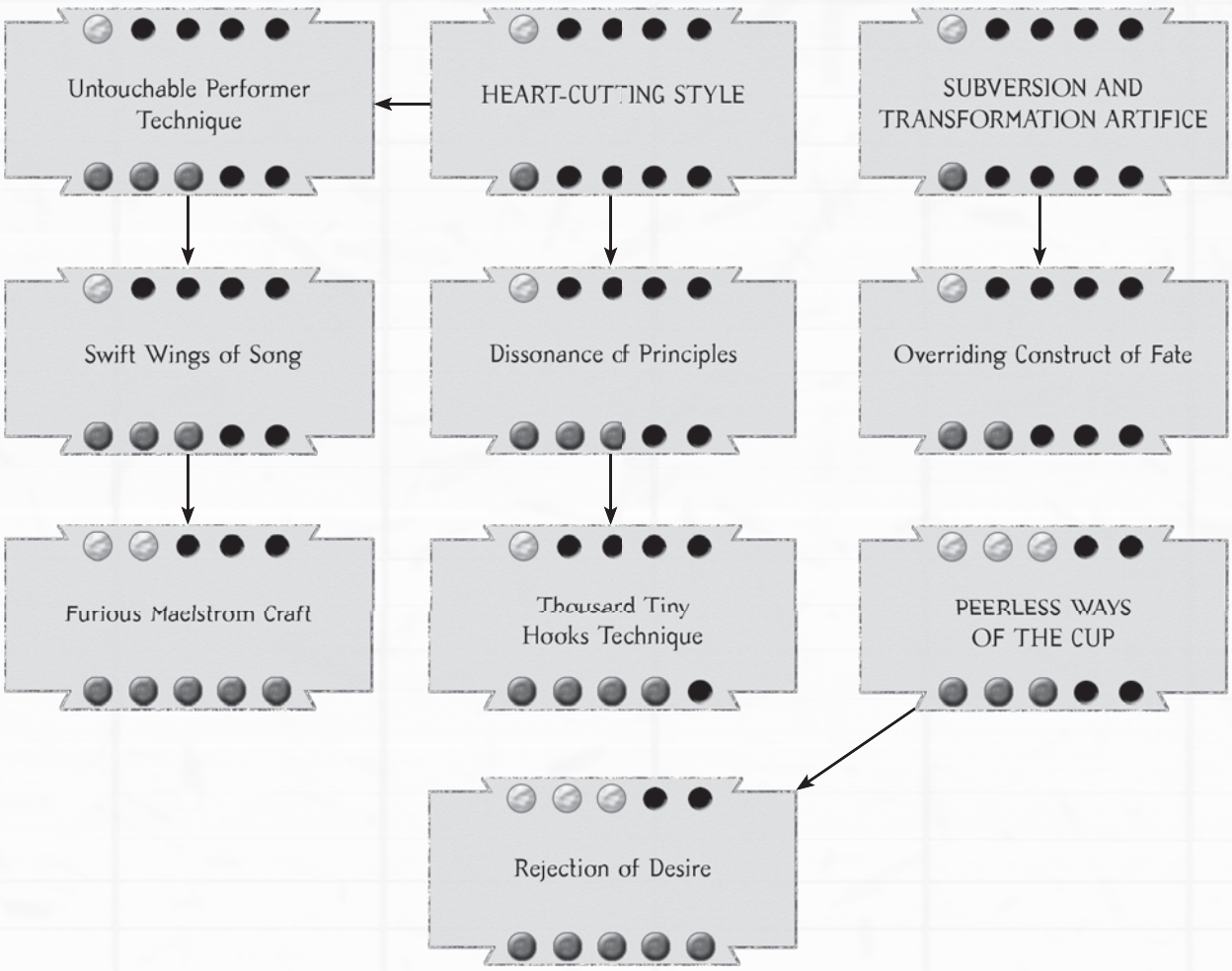
Glamour Resistance: Heart-Cutting Style is a work of glamour and will not affect any Creation-born whose (Wits + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Appearance.

Untouchable Performer Technique

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Cup 3, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Heart-Cutting Style

The raksha's grace deflects criticism and softens anger. In that way, she defends herself without appearing to do so. This Charm allows the raksha to reflexively negate all penalties to her Cup Shaping DV against a single shaping attack. The Charm also adds the raksha's Cup to the value of

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her Cup Shaping DV. This Charm does not function if the raksha's Cup Shaping DV is already reduced to 0, however. This Charm has no utility in Creation.

Dissonance of Principles

Cost: 1m per die, 1g; **Mins:** Cup 3, Essence 1; **Type:** Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Glamour, Mutation, Shaping
Duration: One shaping battle or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Heart-Cutting Style

The raksha dazzles her enemies with circuitous arguments and logical fallacies, leaving them sputtering and impotent. Upon activating this Charm, the raksha spends a variable number of motes (up to a maximum equal to twice her Valor). The raksha then makes a Cup-shaping or Staff-shaping attack. If the attack hits, no damage is rolled. Instead, the raksha stuns her adversary. The raksha's player rolls one die for every mote spent on the Charm (plus dice for extra attack successes, as normal), applying the enemy's Temperance as soak to this roll. For the rest of the shaping battle, the target suffers an internal penalty on all shaping dice pools equal to the successes on the roll.

Additionally, the raksha can spend one gossamer in conjunction with an Assumption Charm to gain the following innate power:

Innate Power (*Cost*: variable): The raksha must spend a variable number of motes (up to a maximum equal to twice her Valor). For the duration of one day, the raksha inflicts an internal penalty equal to the number of motes spent on all rolls made against the raksha by others in the context of social combat. This power represents a form of unnatural mental influence. An affected character can ignore the penalty for one scene by spending one Willpower point. The effect is completely overcome when the character has spent a number of Willpower points equal to the raksha's Essence.

Glamour Resistance: The innate power of this Charm is a work of glamour that will not inflict any penalties on a Creation-born whose (Investigation + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Manipulation.

Thousand Tiny Hooks Technique

Cost: 3m, 0g; **Mins:** Cup 4, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Glamour, Mutation, Shaping
Duration: One shaping attack or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Dissonance of Principles

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The raksha's words cast a net of ideas and rhetoric around his enemy that digs into her flesh. This Charm aids the raksha in Cup-shaping or Staff-shaping entanglement attacks. After spending three motes, the raksha's player can add his character's Essence to all rolls to inflict, maintain, control or otherwise use an entanglement shaping attack. He also adds his Essence to all damage rolls based on the entanglement. Finally, a raksha who knows this Charm automatically gains the following innate power in Creation:

Innate Power (*Cost*: 3m): The raksha can entangle a Creation-born in a web of confusion, distracting him from the danger the raksha's honeyed words represent. The raksha's player must roll (Manipulation + Performance) against the target's Dodge MDV. If the social attack is successful, the target will be unable to use his Dodge MDV to defend against the raksha's attacks for the rest of the scene. All social attacks by the raksha will become undodgeable with regard to that character.

Glamour Resistance: The innate power associated with this Charm is a work of glamour that cannot entangle a Creation-born whose (Investigation + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Performance.

Swift Wings of Song

Cost: 3m, 1g; **Mins:** Cup 3, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Glamour, Mutation, Shaping
Duration: Instant or one story
Prerequisite Charms: Untouchable Performer Technique

The raksha knows the songs of the Wyld by heart and is always ready to take the first steps in the dance with another of her kind. The raksha's player rolls Join Shaping Battle as normal and adds her Cup rating in automatic successes to the roll. If the raksha spends one extra gossamer when activating an Assumption Charm, she gains the following innate power for the rest of the story:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 3m): The raksha can spend three motes to add her Cup rating in automatic successes to her Join Battle roll. This benefit affects only the raksha herself and does not provoke Glamour Resistance.

Furious Maelstrom Craft

Cost: 5m, 1wp, 1g; **Mins:** Cup 5, Essence 2;
Type: Extra Action
Keywords: Combo-OK, Glamour, Mutation, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Swift Wings of Song

A storm rages across the Wyld. A flash of lightning, a peal of thunder, and the raksha's enemies fall before him. This Charm permits the raksha to flurry his shaping attacks against a multitude of opponents. The raksha makes a single Cup- or Staff-shaping attack and applies the results against a number of targets equal to twice her Essence. If the raksha who knows this Charm spends one additional gossamer when activating an Assumption Charm, she gains the following innate power for the rest of the story:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 5m): As a practical matter, it is very difficult to engage multiple targets in social combat simultaneously unless all the parties involved are discussing the same subject. The Fair Folk laugh at this limitation. This power allows the raksha to take multiple social combat actions on the same tick that have nothing to do with one another. The raksha can simultaneously ask one person to submit to ravishing, another if he is willing to sell his daughter into slavery and a third if he would be willing to trade all of his worldly goods for a bowl of cold, foul-tasting soup. Each social attack is made at the raksha's full dice pool. The social attacks represent natural mental influence (and therefore do not provoke Glamour Resistance), but given the high Social Attributes of many raksha, they might as well be unnatural. A raksha can make a maximum number of simultaneous social attacks equal to her Cup rating.

Subversion and Transformation Artifice

Cost: 3m, 1g; **Mins:** Cup 1, Essence 1; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-OK, Glamour, Shaping
Duration: One shaping battle
Prerequisite Charms: None

With this Charm, a raksha in the Wyld can fashion a shaping weapon for himself suitable for aiding in Cup- or Staff-shaping. The weapons that can be created through this Charm might include a figment, a heart thorn, a harness of razored dreams or a harness of twisting words, all of which are described more fully on pages 127-128 and 129-130. The raksha fashions these instruments out of Essence and gossamer. In addition to the weapon's normal base qualities, the raksha can divide a number of points equal to her Cup into improving its Accuracy, Damage, Defense or Rate, or into reducing its Speed (to an absolute minimum of 3). The creation is a work of permanent glamour that lasts for one shaping battle.

This Charm has no utility in Creation.

Overriding Construct of Fate

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Cup 2, Essence 1; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Subversion and Transformation Artifice

With this Charm, the raksha becomes a juggernaut of narrative power, who can force her way through the strongest defenses and compel a target to submit to her story. By spending three motes as part of a Cup- or Staff-shaping attack, the raksha can make her attack unblockable. Also, if the attack is successful and the raksha so desires, the force of her attack can knock the opponent out of the current milieu and into any adjacent waypoint.

In addition, if a raksha who knows this Charm also knows the Beguilement Charm (see pp. 206-207), she can spend one additional gossamer when using that Charm against a being of Creation. Doing so renders that being's Dodge MDV inapplicable and forces him to rely on his Parry MDV.

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Peerless Ways of the Cup

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Cup 3, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The raksha can defy the customary limitations his Graces place on shaping combat. He can parry a single shaping attack made by any Grace with his Cup Parry DV.

Rejection of Desire

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Cup 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Peerless Ways of the Cup

Having mastered his understanding of the Cup, the raksha now rejects the possibility of being harmed by it. The raksha can perfectly parry a single Cup-shaping attack.

Feeding Charms

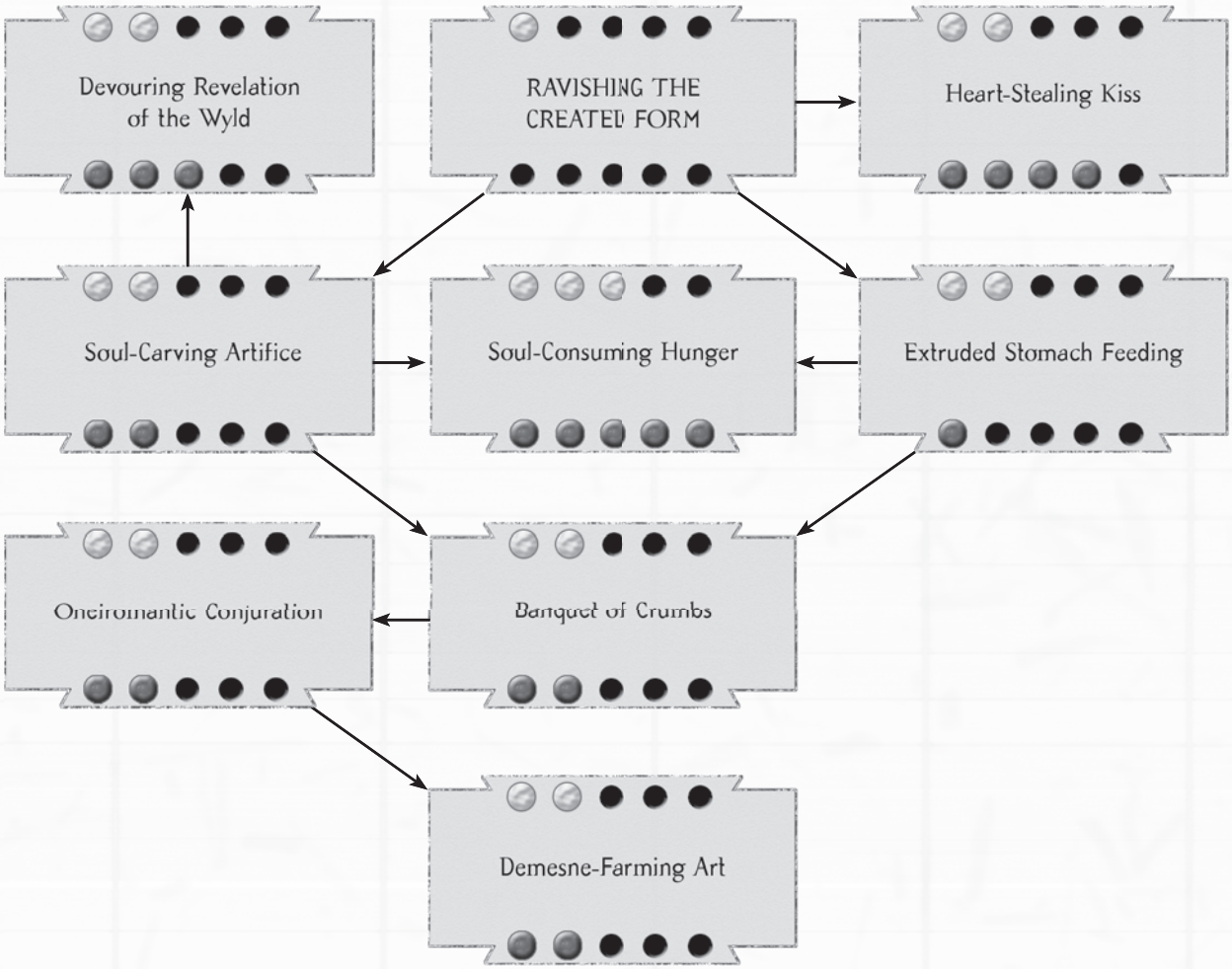
These Cup Charms are used by raksha in Creation to feed upon mortals, through a process very similar to ravishment via Cup-shaping. Creatures of Creation heal from such Charms just as they do from conventional ravishment (see p. 125). Although these Charms are considered Cup Charms, many of them have a Cup requirement of 0, and creatures who have Graces but not a Cup Grace can learn these Charms.

Ravishing the Created Form

Cost: 1wp, 0g; **Mins:** Cup 0, Essence 1; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-Basic, Glamour, Shaped-Only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

Cut off from the Wyld energies that are their life's blood, Fair Folk in Creation must subsist on Essence leached from the Willpower and Virtues of mortal prey. In order to use this Charm, a raksha must first touch a consenting Creation-born target, although this consent can be secured through natural or unnatural mental influence. Then, the raksha's player must roll a number of dice equal to the raksha's feeding Grace. Each success reduces either the target's permanent Willpower or the target's relevant Virtue (the raksha's player's choice) by one point. For each point the victim loses, the raksha regains 10 motes of temporary Essence.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour. The raksha who uses it cannot feed from creatures whose (targeted trait + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Willpower. Additionally, any attempt to drain the Virtues of an Exalt



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below the minimum imposed by the Great Curse will automatically fail.

Soul-Carving Artifice

Cost: 3m; 1wp, 0g **Mins:** Cup 2, Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Glamour, Shaped-Only
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Ravishing the Created Form

The dreaming mind of a mortal has much in common with the Wyld, especially when under the influence of one of the Fair Folk. This Charm allows a raksha to influence the subconscious mind of a consenting mortal, invoking a potent dream, vision or hallucination to be shared by the raksha and the mortal. As with Ravishing the Created Form, "consent" can be secured through invasive, mind-altering means. The shared dream is distracting to both parties, inflicting a -1 internal distraction penalty on both the raksha and the mortal for the Charm's duration. This dreamscape permits the raksha (and the mortal, if he is capable of shaping actions) to possess the benefits of accessing a Wyld zone even while in Creation's confines, as the chaotic infrastructure of the shared dreamscape is just as malleable as the Middlemarches to a skilled dream crafter.

Mechanically, while the raksha exists within the mortal's dreams, she treats the dreamscape as if it were a 10-waypoint space in the Middlemarches. She can create anything within this domain that she could fashion in the Middlemarches of the Wyld, and she can even abandon her current Assumption Charm and activate a new one. The raksha can take anything created within the dreamscape back with her into Creation (assuming the item is something that could be transported from the Middlemarches into Creation). Any such items, however, whether they're possessions or gossamer, fade away when this Charm ends. If two raksha find themselves within the same dreamscape, they can engage in shaping duels just as they could in the Wyld.

Only the raksha's consciousness actually enters the dreamscape—his body remains in Creation. The raksha's player must roll (Perception + Awareness) for his character to remain aware of events occurring around his physical body, and that roll suffers a -3 internal penalty. If the raksha suffers any physical damage, he automatically knows it and can terminate this Charm reflexively. While in the dreamscape, the raksha exists in the narrative time associated with the Wyld, but no matter how long he subjectively stays in the dream, only one scene passes in Creation.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour. It cannot affect a character whose (Wits + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Performance.

Devouring Revelation of the Wyld

Cost: 2g; **Mins:** Cup 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Glamour, Mutation, Shaped-Only
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Soul-Carving Artifice



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The raksha who possesses this Charm must also have some aspect of his physical form that can be revealed dramatically. When he does so, he can overwhelm the intellect of those who witness his performance, dazzling them with his brilliance. When the raksha activates this Charm in conjunction with an Assumption Charm, it confers the following innate power:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 5m): The raksha must dramatically unveil some hidden aspect of himself as a reflexive action. For example, if the raksha has wings, whether functional or not, he can spread them to reveal their iridescent plumage. If he wears a cloak, he can open it to show off the shifting, rainbow colors within. Regardless, when the raksha reveals his hidden glory, it dazzles and hypnotizes those who observe. Any Creation-born who can see the hypnotic revelation suffers a -1 external penalty due to distraction. This power is a work of glamour, but it affects only the raksha himself and thus offers no opportunity for Glamour Resistance.

Furthermore, if a Creation-born botches a Virtue roll while interacting with the raksha while this power is active, the raksha can reflexively and permanently devour one dot of the botched Virtue, converting it into 10 motes of Essence. This aspect of the power is also a work of glamour but is susceptible to resistance.

Glamour Resistance: The feeding aspect of this Charm cannot affect Creation-born whose (Wits + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Performance.

Heart-Stealing Kiss

Cost: 3m, 1wp, 1g; **Mins:** Cup 4, Essence 2;
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Glamour, Shaped-Only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Ravishing the Created Form

This Charm permits the raksha to ravish a non-consenting Creation-born with just a touch. The raksha must successfully touch the victim, which might require a (Dexterity + Martial Arts) roll against an unwilling victim. The raksha's player may then roll a number of dice equal to her character's feeding Grace. The roll inflicts no damage, but instead, reduces either the target's permanent Willpower or the target's relevant Virtue (the player's choice) by one point per success. For each point that is stripped away in this manner, the raksha regains two motes of temporary Essence. Unlike the permanent effects of Ravishing the Created Form, Virtue or Willpower dots lost via this Charm return at a rate of one dot per day.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour. The raksha who uses it cannot feed from creatures whose (targeted trait + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Presence. Additionally, any attempt to drain the Virtues of an Exalt below the minimum imposed by the Great Curse will automatically fail.

Extruded Stomach Feeding

Cost: 1wp, 0g; **Mins:** Cup 1, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Glamour
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Ravishing the Created Form

The raksha temporarily enacts a change in her own sense of self in order to elevate a Minor Grace to the position of feeding Grace. By this method, the raksha can feed on a Virtue that is not ordinarily her preference. This Charm functions exactly like Ravishing the Created Form except that the raksha can feed using *any* Grace.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour. The raksha who uses it cannot feed from creatures whose (targeted Virtue + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Willpower. Additionally, any attempt to drain the Virtues of an Exalt below the minimum imposed by the Great Curse automatically fails.

Soul-Consuming Hunger

Cost: 1wp, 1hl, 1g; **Mins:** Cup 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-OK, Glamour
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Soul-Carving Artifice, Extruded Stomach Feeding

Within the context of the Wyld, there is truly no limit to the hunger of the Fair Folk… or to their capacity to satiate themselves. This Charm can be used only in the Wyld and on a consenting creature, though consent can be acquired through unnatural means. The raksha's player rolls a number of dice equal to the raksha's Cup rating against a difficulty equal to the target's Essence. The attack inflicts no damage. Instead, with just one success, this Charm annihilates the target. The raksha feasts upon the victim's soul, recovering 10 motes of Essence for each point of Willpower and Virtue the victim possessed. The Essence recovered cannot exceed the raksha's normal Essence cap, nor can the Essence be shared with anyone else.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour. It automatically fails against creatures whose (Integrity + Essence) exceeds the raksha's feeding Grace. Also, the Charm automatically fails against Creation-born with Essence ratings of 2+ and against all Exalts.

Banquet of Crumbs

Cost: 0g; **Mins:** Cup 2, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaped-Only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Soul-Carving Artifice, Extruded Stomach Feeding

This Charm permits the raksha to feed on ambient emotion within Creation. Raksha typically find such secondhand emotions to be feeble and bland, but beggars can't be choosers. Any raksha who knows this Charm gains the following innate power in Creation:

Innate Power (*Cost:* None): After being in the presence of Creation-born experiencing powerful emotions, the raksha can invoke this power to recover Essence from the emotional resonance that lingers over the scene. The raksha's player then rolls a number of dice equal to the raksha's feeding Grace, and the raksha recovers one mote per success. The raksha cannot recover more Essence than his normal Essence

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The Enchanted

Raksha can ravish the Willpower and Virtues of any being of Creation either through Charms or, if in the Wyld, through a Cup-shaping attack. It is impossible, however, for a raksha to reduce the Willpower or Virtue of a being with Essence 2 or higher to below 1. It is likewise impossible for a Fair Folk to ever ravish an Exalt in such a manner that it affects the Great Curse. For example, ravishment can never reduce a Solar Exalt's primary Virtue to less than 3. A raksha can, however, reduce the Willpower or Virtue of an Essence 1 Creation-born all the way to 0. Such victims are considered to be "enchanted" and suffer serious disabilities as a result of their enchantment.

In general, a character with a Virtue rating of 0 can never channel that Virtue and can never succeed on a Virtue roll without the use of Charms. Additionally, each type of enchanted character suffers effects appropriate to her disability.

Compassion 0 characters are utter sociopaths and are incapable of feeling true empathy for others. Such characters suffer a -2 external penalty on all attempts to understand, empathize with or influence others socially.

Conviction 0 characters tend to act according to careless whims, giving no thought toward long-term goals. They lack the wherewithal to grasp when any sort of ethical or moral framework should compel or prohibit certain actions. Such characters quickly become alienated from civilized society and suffer a -2 external penalty on all social rolls and on all Socialize-related rolls.

Temperance 0 characters are without any sense of their own identity, knowing only the base needs of the moment. When such a character is hungry, she eats. When she is aroused, she seeks a sexual partner or pleasures herself. Such characters are virtual amnesiacs, forgetting their names, identities and Motivations (and losing all benefits of Motivation while under this effect). Such a character also suffers a -2 external penalty to all Lore rolls due to disregarded memories.

Valor 0 characters live in terror of everything and everyone, with no sense of proportion as to why some threats are genuine and others are meaningless. Such characters suffer a -2 internal penalty on all actions.

Willpower 0 characters are also known as "the dream-eaten." Such characters automatically fail all Willpower rolls and can never spend Willpower for any purpose. They will meekly accept any orders forcefully given to them. Many Fair Folk make it a habit to sell dream-eaten victims to the Guild as slaves.

cap, and he can use this Charm only once per scene. This power affects only the raksha himself and does not provoke Glamour Resistance. The power can benefit from appropriate Grace Excellency Charms.

Oneiromantic Conjuration

Cost: 0g; **Mins:** Cup 2, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Shaped-Only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Banquet of Crumbs

Just as a mosquito sucks the blood from sleeping victims, so too can the raksha leach away the vitality of their very dreams. This Charm allows the raksha to convert the oneiromantic power of a Creation-born's dreams into gossamer, granting him the following innate power in Creation:

Innate Power (*Cost*: 10m; *Speed:* One dramatic action): The raksha must be in the presence of a sleeping Creation-born to activate this power, which allows her to recover one gossamer. The raksha can draw gossamer from a given mortal only once per scene. Although this Charm is technically a work of glamour, affected Creation-born are not protected by Glamour Resistance due to the fact that the targeted being is asleep and dreaming at the time.

Demesne-Farming Art

Cost: 10m, 0g; **Mins:** Cup 2, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Glamour, Mutation, Shaped-Only
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Oneiromantic Conjuration

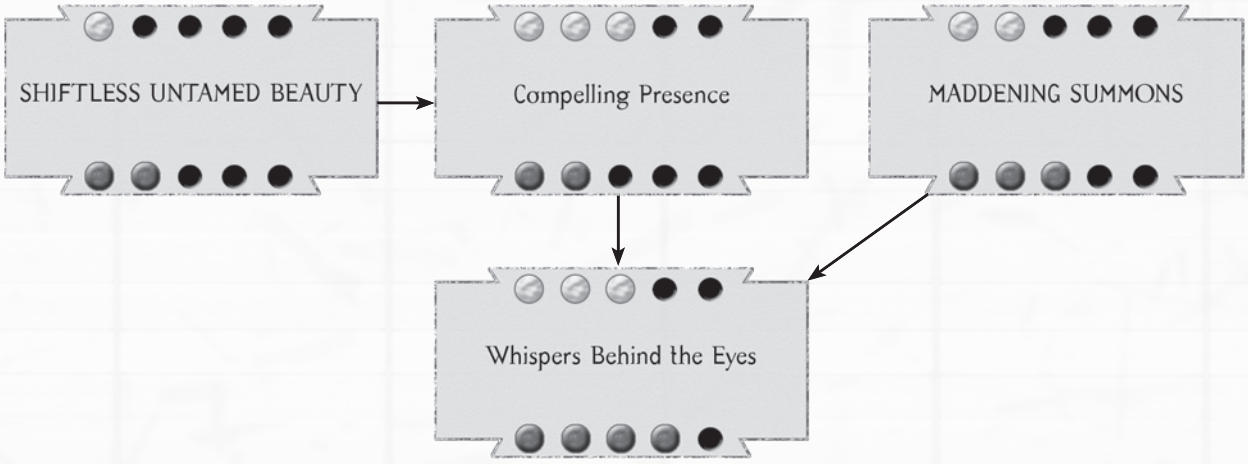
With this Charm, the raksha can scrape together gossamer from the scraps of raw potential that pool around uncapped demesnes. The raksha must visit an uncapped demesne, which can yield gossamer only once per story. Once the raksha activates this Charm, the demesne provides gossamer equal to its rating. In addition, the raksha automatically gains the following innate power in Creation:

Innate Power (*Cost*: 1m; *Speed:* 5): The raksha spends a mote of Essence, and her player rolls (Perception + Essence), adding the raksha's Cup in automatic successes. On a success, the raksha can sense any uncapped demesnes within (her successes x 10) miles.

Addiction Charms

Dharma is the shinma of desire, and that aspect of the shinma flows through all the Fair Folk as a spark of dazzling Wyld energy that other beings find irresistible. These Charms manipulate the addictive characteristics of the Wyld and use them to trap Creation-born and other raksha alike.

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Shiftless Untamed Beauty

Cost: 1g; **Mins:** Cup 2, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Glamour, Mutation, Shaped-Only
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: None

The raksha fans the spark of the Wyld that burns in her soul, and it roars forth in a blaze that cannot be ignored. Anyone who sees the raksha risks his soul being consumed by the entrancing flames of the Wyld itself. When the raksha activates this Charm in conjunction with an Assumption Charm, she gains the following innate power:

Innate Power (*Cost*: 8m): The raksha must spend eight motes to activate this power for one day. The raksha's presence becomes addictive to Creation-born. When the raksha interacts one-on-one with a Creation-born character, her player can reflexively roll the character's (Charisma + Presence) against the target's Dodge MDV once per scene. If the roll is successful, the character becomes addicted to the raksha's presence. The raksha receives a +1 situational bonus on all normal social actions against addicted mortals.

In addition, after each full month apart from the raksha, the player of an addicted character must make a successful Willpower roll with a difficulty equal to the raksha's Cup rating, lest his character be compelled to return to her. This addiction represents unnatural mental influence and can be overcome only after the Creation-born has spent three Willpower points.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour. It does not affect characters whose (Integrity + Essence) is greater than the raksha's Presence.

Compelling Presence

Cost: 1g; **Mins:** Cup 2, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Glamour, Mutation, Shaped-Only
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Shiftless Untamed Beauty

The raksha calls upon the Wyld to shape himself into the image of the icon that sits at the core of a mortal's dreams and nightmares. When a raksha who knows this Charm activates it in conjunction with an Assumption Charm, he gains the following innate power:

Innate Power (*Cost*: 10m, 1wp): This Charm permits a raksha to instantly addict a mortal to his presence (as per the rules outlined under Shiftless Untamed Beauty). The player of the raksha must roll (Manipulation + Presence) as a reflexive action and get more successes than the target's Dodge MDV. In addition to the normal effects of addiction, affected characters cannot attack the raksha during the scene without spending one Willpower point per hostile action. This addiction represents unnatural mental influence and can be overcome only after the Creation-born has spent Willpower equal to the raksha's Essence. If the raksha also has Shiftless Untamed Beauty active as part of his Assumption when he activates this power, the Willpower cost to overcome the addiction both temporarily and permanently is doubled.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour and will not affect characters whose (Temperance + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Presence.

Maddening Summons

Cost: 1g; **Mins:** Cup 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Compulsion, Glamour, Mutation, Shaped-Only
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: None

Those who become entranced by the beautiful horror of the Wyld cannot help but answer when it calls. This Charm allows a raksha to summon to her (in either the Wyld or in Creation) any character who is either currently addicted to her presence or who has been in the past. The raksha must spend one gossamer in conjunction with an Assumption Charm to gain the following innate power:

Innate Power (*Cost*: 5m): The raksha chooses which character she wishes to summon, and her player rolls (Manipulation + Performance) against the difficulty of the target's Essence. If the roll is successful, the Charm fills an addicted target's dreams with overwhelming images of the raksha and her current location, coupled with a powerful need to

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see her again. In addition to the compulsion, the target also suffers a derangement of the raksha's choice until he either returns to her side or breaks the addiction. Targets who have already broken the addiction experience the dreams but not the compulsion or derangement effects, and they suffer no ill effects from the dreams themselves.

This effect represents unnatural mental influence and can be overcome only after the Creation-born has spent Willpower equal to the raksha's Essence. If the raksha also has Shiftless Untamed Beauty active as part of his Assumption when he activates this power, the Willpower cost to resist the summons both temporarily and permanently is doubled. While the summons is active, the affected character cannot overcome the underlying addiction until after he has first overcome the summons, although a character can spend Willpower on both simultaneously if he can afford to do so.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour that cannot affect a character whose (Integrity + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Performance.

Whispers Behind the Eyes

Cost: 0g; **Mins:** Cup 4, Essence 3; **Type:** Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Glamour, Shaped-Only
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Compelling Presence, Maddening Summons

Once the raksha enters the soul of an addicted mortal, he always has a channel into her heart. This Charm permits a raksha to communicate with a mortal addicted to him through the following innate power:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 3m): The raksha can open a channel into the mind of any character addicted to his presence. The raksha's player must roll his character's (Charisma + Performance) against the target's Dodge MDV in Creation or simply make a Cup-shaping action if he is in the Wyld. If successful, he can speak what messages he desires or implant whatever delightful or grotesque images he fancies directly into the addict's mind. This power can be enhanced by appropriate Charms that modify Cup-shaping actions.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour that cannot affect characters whose (Integrity + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Presence.

World-Shaping Charms

Through these Charms, a raksha invokes the echoes of the techniques used aeons ago by the Primordials to fashion Creation out of the roiling chaos of the Wyld. These Charms permit a raksha to insert herself into the fabric of Creation, interweaving the story of her life seamlessly into the greater narrative of patterned existence. They can also affect the relationship between mortals and, in some cases, the fates of mortals. These Charms are often used in conjunction with oneiromancy.

Some of these Charms can also be used by the unshaped raksha to redefine the relationships and characteristics of those who wander into the waypoint that defines an unshaped raksha's existence. In this manner, the unshaped raksha deceives its visitors into believing that they are in Creation, thus preventing them from seeing the terrible danger that surrounds them.

Although they are Glamour Charms, these Charms generally do not create innate powers in the same manner as most such Charms. Instead, they represent subtle manipulations of gossamer used to infect parts of Creation.

Gladdening Visage

Cost: 1g; **Mins:** Cup 1, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Mutation, Glamour
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: None

The people of Creation fear the Fair Folk—and for good reason—but sometimes, it is not helpful to be feared. When activated in conjunction with an Assumption Charm, this Charm causes the form the raksha wears in Creation to appear less threatening to mortals. If the raksha's basic form is at least humanoid, this Charm allows her to pass as a normal human. If her form is clearly non-human, this Charm causes Creation-born to recognize her as a natural and beneficial god of Creation. In either case, absent successful Glamour Resistance or the application of powerful Charms such as All-Encompassing Sorcerer's Sight, it is impossible for an observer to ever notice that the raksha is one of the Fair Folk.

An unshaped raksha who knows this Charm can cause a veil of seeming normalcy to fall over the waypoint that defines it, causing all who enter to believe that the waypoint is familiar location, possibly even a part of Creation. When used in this manner, the Charm allows the unshaped raksha to automatically gain surprise on its first Cup-shaping attack against affected visitors.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour and has no effect on beings whose (Perception + Essence) is greater than the raksha's Performance.

Adored by All the World

Cost: 2g; **Mins:** Cup 2, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Glamour
Duration: One season or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Gladdening Visage

Having learned how to pass as a being of Creation, the raksha can now weave himself into the fabric of human social interaction. This Charm allows a raksha who has entered Creation to spread gossamer out into the surrounding community, forming new relationships between the raksha and the mortals of the area, relationships that affected mortals absolutely believe to be preexisting and completely real. The raksha's player rolls (Manipulation + Performance). For each success, the raksha gains one temporary dot of Allies or Followers (he can split successes among the two Backgrounds as he wishes). The raksha does not actually get to choose his allies or followers, but they are always appropriate to his needs of the moment. The allies and followers maintain their

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fully developed relationship with the raksha for the duration of the current season. As a side effect, third parties who do not become allies or followers but who would otherwise be expected to know of such a relationship between an ally or follower and the raksha will also be persuaded of the relationship's long-term existence and validity (except, of course, for third parties who are capable of Glamour Resistance). This Charm lasts for a maximum of one season but will end prematurely if the raksha terminates his Assumption before then.

An unshaped raksha can use this Charm to gain insight into the relationships of visitors that it can use against them in the context of Cup-shaping actions. The unshaped raksha's player rolls (Manipulation + Performance) against the Shaping DV ratings of any visitors it wishes. For each extra success, the raksha gains a +1 bonus on its next Cup-shaping attack, as the glamour invoked manifests as illusions of friends, allies or lovers of the visitors to lull them into a false sense of security.

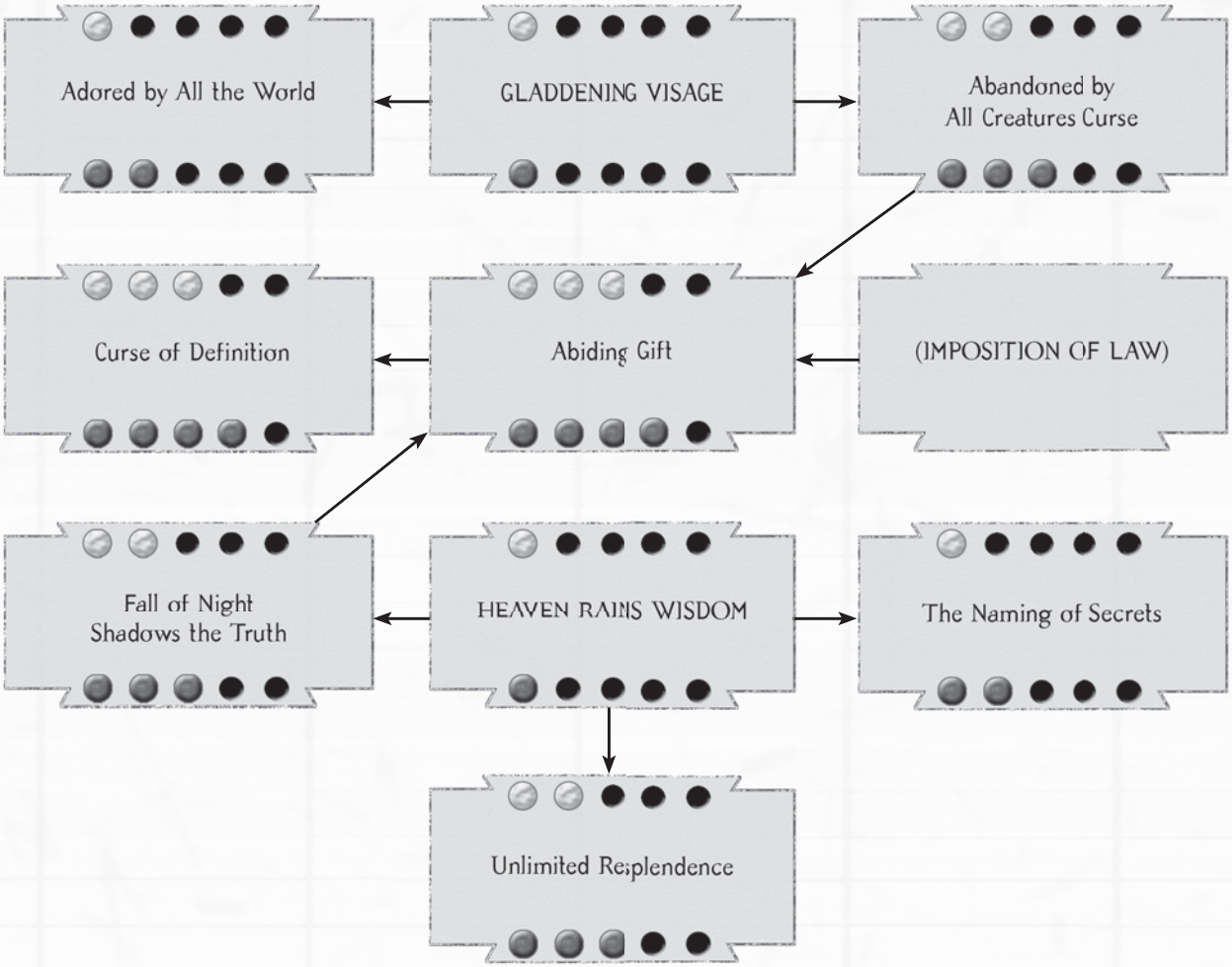
Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour and cannot persuade a Creation-born of the relationship's existence if her (Perception + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Performance. When the Charm ends, any affected mortal will completely forget about her temporary alliance with the raksha unless her (Wits + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Performance.

Abandoned by All Creatures Curse

Cost: 3g; **Mins:** Cup 3, Essence 2;
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Glamour
Duration: One season or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Gladdening Visage

The gossamer unleashed by the Fair Folk on unsuspecting mortals transforms into a hailstorm of misery and bad luck. In this manner, the raksha rewrites the part a mortal plays, reducing him in stature from a leading role to a mere bit player. After the raksha interacts with a Creation-born, her player rolls (Manipulation + Larceny) in an opposed roll against the target's (Charisma + Integrity). For each extra success accumulated by the raksha, the target loses one dot in Allies, Followers or Mentor, as chosen by the raksha. A sudden argument causes an ally to storm away from the character. A follower becomes distracted by some urgent business and can no longer attend to the character's needs. The mentor is distracted, preoccupied, kidnapped or otherwise unable to come to the character's aid. This Charm will never actually result in the death of affected allies, followers or mentors, it merely severs their

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connection to the target character. This Charm lasts for a maximum of one season but will end prematurely if the raksha terminates her Assumption before then.

For unshaped raksha, this Charm works as it does for shaped raksha, save that it can be used to sever a relationship only if the affected character and his allies, followers or mentor (as appropriate) are all within the raksha's waypoint.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour. It cannot drive away allies, followers or mentors whose (Wits + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Stealth. Additionally, if the *target* has a (Wits + Essence) exceeding the raksha's Stealth, the target can use a stunt or Charm to hunt down lost associates and convince them that their anger or preoccupation is an illusion. Any affected allies, followers or mentors whose (Intelligence + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Stealth will realize that their actions were unnaturally influenced. Otherwise, an affected character will simply rationalize his conduct.

Heaven Rains Wisdom

Cost: 1g; **Mins:** Cup 1, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Glamour, Shaped-Only
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: None

Although utterly alien to Creation, the Fair Folk have ironically powerful insights into its nature and character. This Charm allows a raksha who has entered Creation to intuitively gain insight into her new surroundings simply by reading patterns of Essence invisible to even the most perceptive Creation-born. Normally, all Fair Folk suffer a -3 penalty on all Lore and Occult rolls pertaining to Creation. By incorporating this Charm into her Assumption, the raksha totally negates that penalty.

Although it is technically a work of glamour, this Charm affects only the raksha herself and does not provoke Glamour Resistance.

The Naming of Secrets

Cost: 2g; **Mins:** Cup 2, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Glamour, Shaped-Only
Duration: One season or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Heaven Rains Wisdom

That which is not revealed intuitively through the Heaven Rains Wisdom Charm can still be learned by one cunning enough to ask the right questions. The raksha's player rolls (Manipulation + Investigation). For each success, the raksha gains one temporary dot in Contacts. This Charm

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cannot be used to raise the raksha's Contacts rating above his Essence. The benefits of this Charm last for a maximum of one season but will end prematurely if the raksha terminates his Assumption before then.

Although this Charm is technically a work of glamour, it does not provoke Glamour Resistance. As part of its functioning, the Charm automatically establishes relationships between the raksha and potential sources of information whose traits are insufficient to resist the effect. In other words, the Charm will never attempt to make someone into a contact for the raksha if that person would be capable of resisting the Charm in the first place.

Fall of Night Shadows the Truth

Cost: 3g; **Mins:** Cup 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Glamour, Mutation, Shaped-Only
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Heaven Rains Wisdom

Fair Folk who wish to walk among the Creation-born like the predators they are had best learn to conceal their tracks. By spending three extra gossamer in conjunction with an Assumption, the raksha gains the following innate power:

Innate Power (*Cost*: 1m): The raksha interacts with a situation or a thing that she wishes to conceal from investigation or discovery by others. Then, her player rolls (Manipulation + Stealth). Successfully using this Charm inflicts a -1 external penalty on all attempts to find out anything about whatever thing or matter was occluded through the use of the Contacts Background or any similar Background. Even better, it inflicts an external penalty equal to the raksha's successes on all Investigation, Lore, Occult or Socialize rolls to investigate such matters. The effects of this power last for a maximum of one season but will end prematurely if the raksha terminates her Assumption before then.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour that cannot affect investigating Creation-born whose (Intelligence + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Stealth.

Unlimited Resplendence

Cost: 2g; **Mins:** Cup 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Mutation, Glamour, Shaped-Only
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Heaven Rains Wisdom

Subtle yet potent, the raksha's cunning disguise allows him to penetrate ever deeper into the narrative structure of Creation, transforming himself into a person of importance to be respected by the Creation-born. This Charm allows a raksha who has entered Creation to insinuate himself into the social structures of the Creation-born as represented by the Backing, Influence and Resources Backgrounds. The raksha's player spends two gossamer in conjunction with an Assumption and rolls the raksha's (Manipulation + Performance). For each success, the raksha gains one dot that can be allocated between Backing, Influence or Resources for the duration of the Assumption. None of these Backgrounds can be increased above the raksha's Essence, though the raksha can divide up his successes among different Influences or Backing organizations. The raksha can choose general regional influence or influence within a specific organization.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour. Influence or Backing gained from it cannot be used to give the raksha influence over Creation-born whose (Perception + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Performance. Unaffected characters realize instantly that the raksha is not entitled to the authority he claims. A cunning raksha can circumvent unaffected characters, however, by filtering his orders through intermediaries who are affected and who have sufficient Influence or Backing in their own right to simply order the unaffected character to do as the raksha wishes. A Creation-born whose (Wits + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Performance penetrates the raksha's pretend-Resources, seeing it for the fool's gold it is.

Abiding Gift

Cost: 3g; **Mins:** Cup 4, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Mutation, Glamour, Shaped-Only
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Imposition of Law, Abandoned by All Creatures Curse, Fall of Night Shadows the Truth

As Imposition of Law permits the raksha to incorporate into herself a truth that cannot be denied, this Charm allows her to grant a similar benefit to one of the Creation-born. This Charm functions exactly like Imposition of Law (see p. 168), except that instead of guaranteeing an automatic success for herself on a specific (Attribute + Ability [Specialty]) roll, the raksha defines such a roll upon which the target of this Charm will always succeed. The Charm adds three gossamer to the cost of an Assumption and confers the following innate power:

Innate Power (*Cost*: 10m, 1wp): For one season, the raksha guarantees a Creation-born at least one success on the (Attribute + Ability [Specialty]) roll the raksha has chosen to improve. If internal penalties reduce the Creation-born's dice pool to 0, he still gets one success. If external penalties (including DV) reduce his successes to 0, he still gets one success. In combat (assuming the dice pool to which this power is applied is an attack roll), the raksha will always hit his target, although this power does nothing to aid him in penetrating soak.

As with Imposition of Law, there are two limitations on this power. First, the Creation-born does *not* gain an automatic success if his action is opposed either by Charms or by a stunt. Second, the Creation-born cannot do something that is simply impossible. For example, the raksha might choose (Charisma + Socialize [Seduction]) so that a Creation-born farm boy might win a princess's love. Generally, the young man is assured of seducing his target regardless of social penalties, MDVs and so forth. If the farm boy is never allowed to even meet the princess, however, this power would not guarantee his success. Similarly, he does not gain the single automatic success if the princess stunts (convincing the simple farm boy

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that she's merely the princess's servant) or uses an Integrity Charm to resist the youth's pitched woo.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour. The raksha cannot confer the benefits of this Charm on any character whose (Wits + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Intelligence, no matter how much the character might wish to be the recipient of this blessing.

Curse of Definition

Cost: 4g; **Mins:** Cup 4, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Glamour, Shaped-Only
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Abiding Gift

The antithesis of the Charm that precedes it, Curse of Definition allows the raksha to assault the integral nature of his enemy by inflicting upon her a curse in the form of a mundane task at which she will always fail. The raksha chooses a specific Attribute, Ability and specialty each time he purchases this Charm. By spending four gossamer in conjunction with an Assumption, the raksha gains the following innate power:

Innate Power (*Cost*: 10m, 1wp): For the next season, the affected character will automatically fail at the action defined by the (Attribute + Ability [Specialty]) chosen unless the character incorporates a stunt or a Charm into the action. Even then, the character's player suffers a -2 external penalty on the roll. As long as it can be defined by a single, specific Attribute, Ability and specialty combination, the action at which the character is doomed to fail can be quite broad—"waking up" and "drinking water" are both suitable actions for purposes of this Charm. The effects of this power end prematurely if the raksha terminates his Assumption.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour that cannot affect any character whose (Wits + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Stealth.

Virtue-Shaping Charms

These Charms permit a raksha to focus the power of Dharma through his Cup Grace and use it to manipulate the Virtues and Graces of other beings, including the Creation-born. These Charms can also be used to affect the amount of shaping damage the raksha can endure, and they are useful in oneiromancy.

Unsightly Rigor Approach

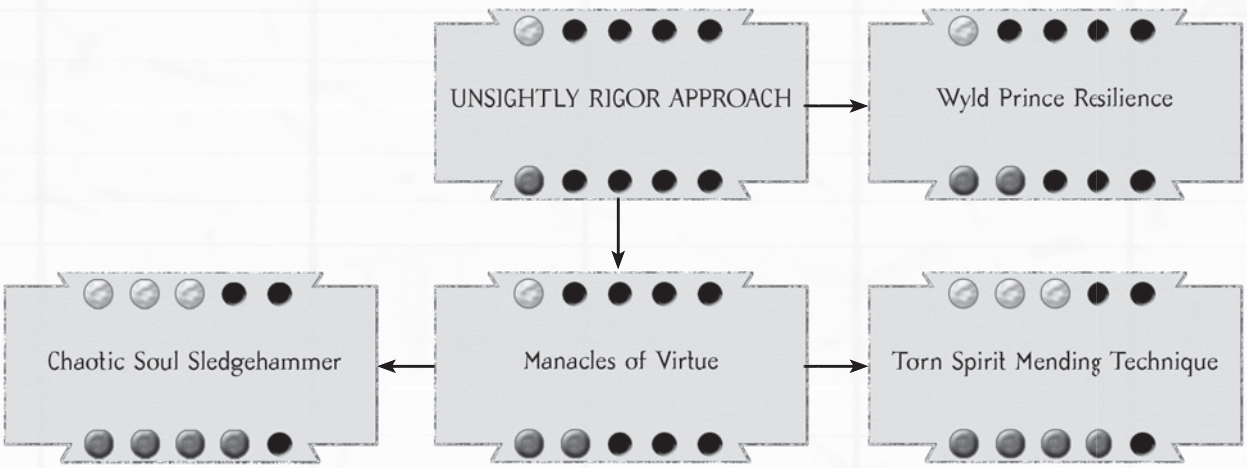
Cost: 5m per shaping action, 1g; **Mins:** Cup 1, Essence 1; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-OK, Mutation, Shaping
Duration: One shaping action or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: None

The raksha's understanding of herself permits her to bolster her own spiritual integrity, hardening her Virtues as need be to weather the storms of her existence. If the raksha is in the Wyld, her player spends five motes and makes a Cup-shaping action. For each success, the raksha can increase the rating of one of her Virtues or Graces. The raksha cannot add more than her Essence to either a Virtue or Grace through any combination of Charms, and she cannot divide successes up among multiple traits with a single application of this Charm. This benefit lasts until the raksha's next shaping action, but she can reflexively extend this benefit over the course of additional shaping actions at a cost of five motes per extra action. Additionally, by spending one gossamer in conjunction with an Assumption, the raksha gains the following innate power:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 5m): The raksha's player rolls (Manipulation + Medicine), increasing the rating of one of her Virtues or Graces by one point per success. This effect will last for one scene but can be extended at a cost of five motes spent at the beginning of each new scene. This power affects only the raksha and does not provoke Glamour Resistance.

Wyld Prince Resilience

Cost: 1mp; **Mins:** Cup 2, Essence 1; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: Mutation
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Unsightly Rigor Approach



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This Charm augments the raksha's ability to resist shaping effects, at the cost of limiting her in other areas of development. Such is the cost of permanent mutation. Each purchase of this Charm adds two extra health levels to *all* of the raksha's shaping damage tracks. A player can purchase this Charm a number of times equal to the raksha's Cup.

Manacles of Virtue

Cost: 1g; **Mins:** Cup 2, Essence 1; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-OK, Glamour, Mutation, Shaping
Duration: One tale or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Unsightly Rigor Approach

The raksha's mastery of self extends to dominion over others. This Charm allows the raksha to artificially heighten the power of another character's Virtues. The raksha chooses the Virtue to enhance and makes an entanglement Cup-shaping attack against another character. If the attack is successful, the target is not ravished. Instead, each extra success on the roll adds one dot to the targeted Virtue for all purposes *except* for ravishment purposes. The extra dots count toward Virtues rolls, Willpower and Essence pool calculation, and acquiring Limit, as appropriate, but if any Fair Folk attempts to ravish the target, only her normal Virtues apply. The raksha cannot increase a target's Virtue by more than the target's Essence through any combination of effects. This effect lasts for one tale in the Wyld.

Additionally, by spending one gossamer in conjunction with an Assumption, the raksha gains the following innate power:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 3m): First, the raksha must interact with a Creation-born for a scene. Then, the raksha chooses which Virtue to augment before his player makes a (Manipulation + Medicine) roll against a difficulty equal to the target's Essence. Each success adds one dot to the targeted Virtue. The effects of this power last for one scene, but the power otherwise functions like the shaping combat aspect of the Charm.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour that cannot affect Creation-born whose (Wits + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Medicine.

Chaotic Soul Sledgehammer

Cost: 3g; **Mins:** Cup 4, Essence 3; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Glamour, Mutation, Shaping
Duration: One tale or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Manacles of Virtue

The raksha's insights into the nature of Virtue now permit her to strike a mighty blow at the very root of her enemy's nature. This Charm allows the raksha to damage one of another creature's Virtues. The raksha's player chooses which Virtue to affect, and her character makes a standard Cup-shaping attack against the target. If the attack is successful, the affected character immediately loses one channel from the targeted Virtue and suffers a -1 external penalty on all rolls made for that Virtue. Both of these effects last for the duration of the tale.

Additionally, by spending three gossamer in conjunction with an Assumption, the raksha gains the following innate power:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 3m): The raksha's player must roll (Manipulation + Medicine) against a difficulty equal to the target's Essence. If the roll is successful, the targeted character loses one channel from the targeted Virtue and suffers a -1 external penalty on all rolls made for that Virtue. The character recovers the lost Virtue channel as normal. The external penalty lasts for one scene. These effects are not stackable.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour that does not affect characters whose (Integrity + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Medicine.

Torn Spirit Mending Technique

Cost: 10m, 1wp, 0g; **Mins:** Cup 4, Essence 3;
Type: Simple
Keywords: Glamour
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Manacles of Virtue

Occasionally—quite rarely, in fact—a raksha experiences something approaching pity. Or perhaps, the raksha just sees something she wants and is willing to make a trade. This Charm allows a raksha to heal the effects of ravishment inflicted on others. It can restore damaged Virtues and Willpower to their previous levels, and it can remove the effects of ravishment (see pp. 124-125).

In order to activate this Charm, the raksha must be willing to sacrifice an oneiromancy spell she possesses. Used to cure a character's ravishment, the sacrificed spell must have an Artifact rating equal to or above the target's original Cup rating (or targeted trait rating if the Charm is used to heal a Creation-born of ravishment).

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour and cannot affect a Creation-born whose (wounded trait + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Medicine, no matter how much the Creation-born might want it to.

Charms of the Ring

The shinma Nirvishesha defines identity—not just one's name and face, but one's place in society and one's purpose in life. Some call Nirvishesha the "heartless machine god," making sure that each raksha is but a cog in a great clockwork mechanism whose workings are as vast as they are incomprehensible. Lesser raksha use the Charms of Nirvishesha to assist in Ring-shaping combat, to influence the minds of the weak-willed, to bolster themselves into ramparts of indestructibility and to fashion and affect both their own possessions and those of others. To the unshaped raksha, such trickery is a pitiful reflection of Nirvishesha's true glory. The unshaped raksha know the names of Nirvishesha's forgotten aspects, each of which is a killing word to one of the shaped raksha, and the shapeless ones use these killing names to protect themselves from corruption by cloaking themselves in non-existence.

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Ring Combat Charms

These Charms assist in Ring-shaping actions and attacks. Also, since Ring-shaping attacks conceptually model ranged attacks in Creation, many of these Charms permit the raksha to focus his shaping efforts on waypoints beyond the one within which he currently acts. Unless expressly stated otherwise, these Charms have no utility in Creation.

Shuddering Wyld Inference

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Ring 3, Essence 1; **Type:** Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Any Ring Excellency

In the Wyld, spatial relationships are only one of the illusions to be ignored by the canny warrior, and every raksha knows that the distance from one waypoint to the next is simply the time it takes for something interesting to happen. At a cost of one mote, this Charm allows the raksha to make a Ring- or Staff-shaping attack against a target in another waypoint without any penalty for range.

Waypoint Knife

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Ring 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: One story
Prerequisite Charms: Shuddering Wyld Inference

The raksha dreams that his maw is large enough to swallow the world, and suddenly it is. This Charm allows the raksha to target an unoccupied waypoint within the maximum range of his shaping weapon. His player then rolls (Intelligence + Craft [Glamour]) as a Ring-shaping action. On a success, the raksha draws the entire waypoint into himself, temporarily negating its existence as a place to exist within the Wyld. For the rest of the story, anyone who enters the affected waypoint automatically journeys on to the next adjacent waypoint without taking an additional Journey action.

Mind's Grip Rigor

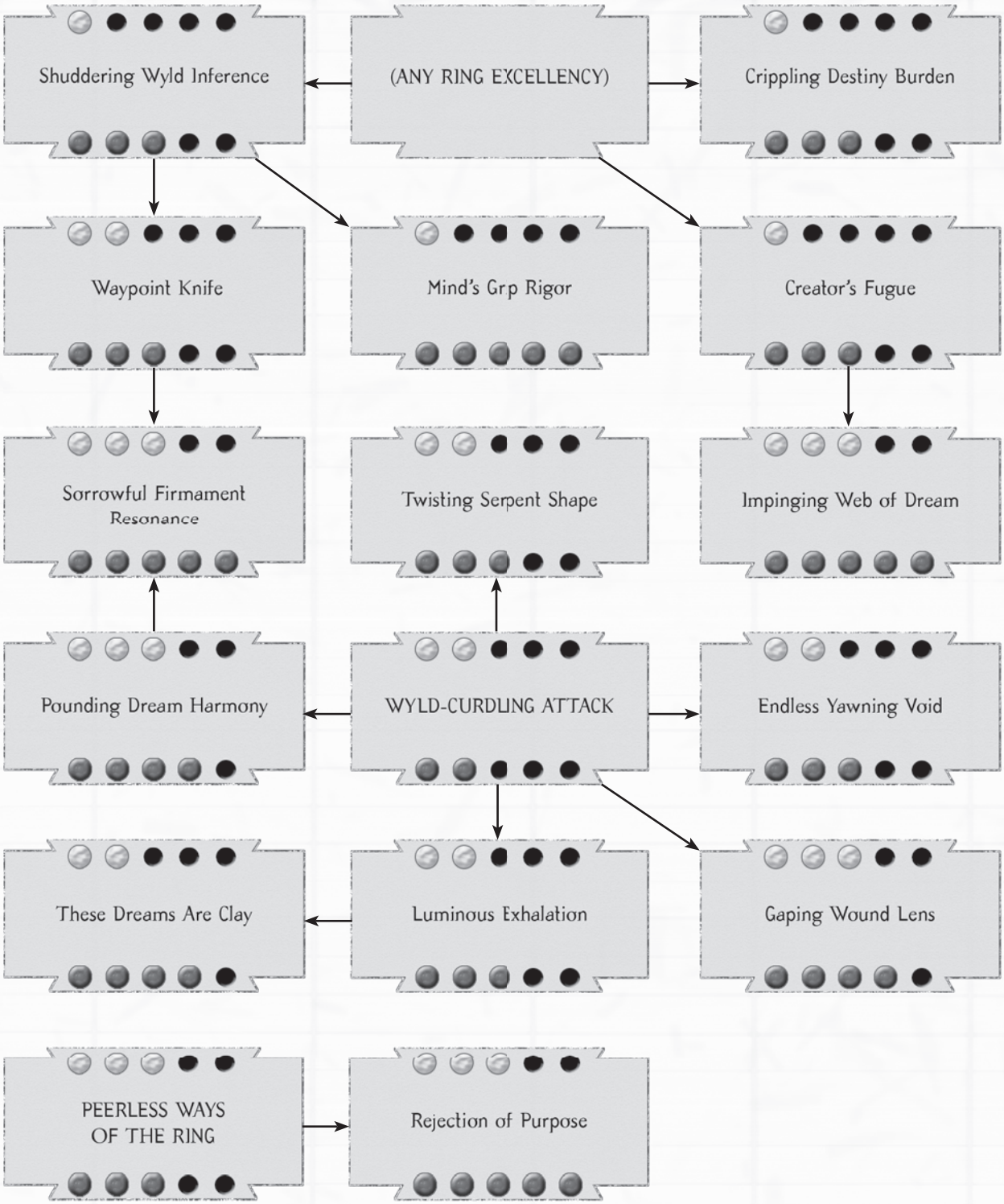
Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Ring 5, Essence 1; **Type:** Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Shuddering Wild Inference

Clearing her mind of any thought of failure, the raksha ensures her own success. Such is the Way of the Ring. When this Charm is activated, the raksha gains two automatic successes on a non-combat Ring- or Staff-shaping action or six automatic successes on a Ring- or Staff-shaping attack. In the latter case, however, the raksha must also halve her extra successes for purposes of calculating damage.

Creator's Fugue

Cost: 3m per extra attack; **Mins:** Ring 3, Essence 1; **Type:** Extra Action
Keywords: Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Any Ring Excellency

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In a flurry of realized possibility, the raksha decides the fate of all those who oppose him. Upon activating this Charm, the raksha can flurry a Ring- or Staff-shaping attack without any dice penalties. For every three motes spent, the raksha can make one attack at his full dice pool. The raksha can make a maximum number of attacks equal to his permanent Essence.

Impinging Web of Dream

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Ring 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Extra Action
Keywords: Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Creator's Fugue

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Just as a fly compresses all of its possible futures into one by falling into a spider's web, so does the raksha's enemy work his own doom by falling into innumerable strands of the raksha's ingenious plans. This Charm allows the raksha to make a magical Ring- or Staff-shaping flurry. Each attack is at the raksha's full dice pool, and the total number of attacks is equal to her Essence.

Crippling Destiny Burden

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Ring 3, Essence 1; **Type:** Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Any Ring Excellency

It is a sad day for any warrior who chooses to bring a blade to an archery contest. After activating this Charm, the raksha can make a Ring- or Staff-shaping attack from a maximum distance of one waypoint. The raksha's player rolls damage as normal. In addition, for every level of damage inflicted, the target also suffers a cumulative -1 internal penalty on all Sword-shaping actions until the end of the battle.

Wyld-Curdling Attack

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Ring 2, Essence 2; **Type:** Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The raksha's horrid attack traps her enemy in a pocket of congealed reality, like a fly caught in amber. This Charm adds the raksha's Essence to the damage bonus of a successful Ring- or Staff-shaping attack.

Endless Yawning Void

Cost: 1m per 2 dice; **Mins:** Ring 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Wyld-Curdling Attack

This Charm is an obscenity to some raksha, yet that does not deter them from using it against their enemies. When a raksha invokes Endless Yawning Void against his enemy as part of a shaping attack, that enemy finds herself trapped within an embolism of shaped reality that springs into being around her like a cancerous cyst of crushed possibility. This Charm adds two dice to the raksha's shaping dice pool for a Ring- or Staff-shaping action per mote spent. If the action is an attack, the Charm also adds two dice to the damage pool per each mote spent. The raksha can spend up to his Essence in motes but must spend at least one mote. The raksha cannot increase the dice pool for a shaping action by more than the sum of the corresponding Grace and the raksha's Essence through any combination of Charms or effects. Other raksha within a radius of 20 waypoints automatically sense the use of this Charm, and its use is an unambiguous threat made to every other raksha who perceives it. Unshaped raksha often fly into rages in response to this Charm.

Luminous Exhalation

Cost: 2m per attack; **Mins:** Ring 3, Essence 2;
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Shaping
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Wyld-Curdling Attack

Generally, ranged Ring-shaping attacks and actions require ammunition, usually in the form of gossamer. Those who master this Charm are free of that limitation. Upon purchasing Luminous Exhalation, the raksha gains the permanent ability to spend Essence in place of gossamer for purposes of any gossamer ammunition cost. The raksha must spend two motes of Essence for every gossamer point the attack would normally have cost.

These Dreams Are Clay

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Ring 4, Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Luminous Exhalation

This Charm builds upon its prerequisite. While Luminous Exhalation allows the raksha only to spend Essence in place of gossamer as ammunition for Ring- or Staff-shaping attacks, this Charm allows her to convert Essence directly into gossamer, which can be used for any purpose. One point of gossamer can be created from five motes of Essence, and the transubstantiation can be performed only in the Middlemarches or deeper into the Wyld. Gossamer created through this Charm is inherently unstable and dissolves into nothingness at the end of the tale.

Twisting Serpent Shape

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Ring 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple (Speed 4)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Wyld-Curdling Attack

The raksha reaches out his will to envelop his enemy in the crushing grip of pointless custom and choking ennui, wherever she seeks to hide from him. As with Luminous Exhalation, this Charm permits the raksha to make a ranged Ring- or Staff-shaping attack without the need for gossamer. Instead of merely replacing the cost of gossamer, however, this Charm actually lets the raksha unleash a special ranged attack with unique traits. The attack uses the attack pool and Accuracy bonus of the raksha's readied shaping weapon, which must have a range equal to one waypoint or higher. The base damage of this attack is (the raksha's Perception + 10), its range is 10 waypoints, and the attack has a Speed of 4.

Gaping Wound Lens

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Ring 4, Essence 3; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: One shaping battle
Prerequisite Charms: Wyld-Curdling Attack

The raksha tears away a piece of her soul and uses it as a viewing lens to focus her ire on her enemy with the

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intensity of 10,000 suns. This Charm allows the raksha to fashion a ranged shaping weapon from her own body. This weapon becomes one of her possessions for the duration of the shaping battle. The lens has an Accuracy bonus and a Rate both equal to the raksha's Essence. It has a Speed of 4, and a Range of up to 10 waypoints. The raksha can use the lens as a shaping weapon for Ring-shaping attacks, for which it has a base Damage equal to (Perception + Essence), or for Staff-shaping attacks, for which it has a base Damage equal to (Charisma + Essence). Neither type of attack has any damage cap for Perception or Charisma.

Pounding Dream Harmony

Cost: 1m per soak reduction; **Mins:** Ring 4, Essence 3; **Type:** Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Wyld-Curdling Attack

With this Charm, the raksha invokes one of the lesser names of Nirvishesha—not one of its killing names (unless that raksha seeks his own undoing), but still a name of power. By this mechanism, the raksha insinuates unknown laws and forgotten principles into his enemy's being, thereby penetrating the deceptions with which that enemy shields herself. The raksha spends the motes for this Charm and makes a Ring- or Staff-shaping attack. If the attack succeeds, this Charm allows him to ignore one point of the enemy's soak per mote spent. The raksha cannot spend more motes in the activation of this Charm than his Essence.

Sorrowful Firmament Resonance

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Ring 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-Basic, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Waypoint Knife, Pounding Dream Harmony

The raksha dares to invoke the name Sayujya, the Great Union of Spirits, the least of Nirvishesha's killing names. As the whispered name echoes down the dimensional corridor, its reverberations seek out the raksha's enemy to sound her doom. This Charm allows the raksha to make a Ring- or Staff-shaping attack against a single target at a maximum range of three waypoints. This attack can be parried, but only with stunts or Charms. It cannot be dodged by any means other than Recognition of Hidden Possibilities (see p. 172). The echoes of this sound reverberate in every direction for 10 waypoints, and the raksha's victory is often Pyrrhic. Any unshaped raksha in the area will perceive the name of Sayujya as a call to battle… or to dinner.

Peerless Ways of the Ring

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Ring 3, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

As per Peerless Ways of the Cup, except that the raksha can parry a single shaping attack made by any Grace with his Ring Parry DV.

Rejection of Purpose

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Cup 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Peerless Ways of the Ring

As per Rejection of Desire, except that the raksha can perfectly parry a Ring-shaping attack.

Body-Strengthening Charms

These Charms invoke the power of the Ring to perfect the raksha's identity, rendering him proof against harm. They assist in defending against shaping attacks, as well as proofing the raksha's body against the dangers of Creation.

Knife-Hand Dream

Cost: 1m, 1g; **Mins:** Ring 1, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Glamour, Mutation
Duration: Instant or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: None

Even an unarmed raksha is a fearsome opponent, for his dream weapons are always at the ready. By spending one mote and one gossamer in the Wyld, the raksha can reflexively ready any shaping weapon in his possession. Additionally, by spending one gossamer in conjunction with an Assumption, the raksha gains the following innate power:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 1m): The raksha focuses the power of the Wyld through his hands, charging them with the pure destructive power of chaos for the rest of the scene. This Charm allows the raksha to inflict lethal damage with his barehanded attacks (if he could not already do so). He can also parry lethal blows barehanded as if wielding a weapon. This power is reflexive.

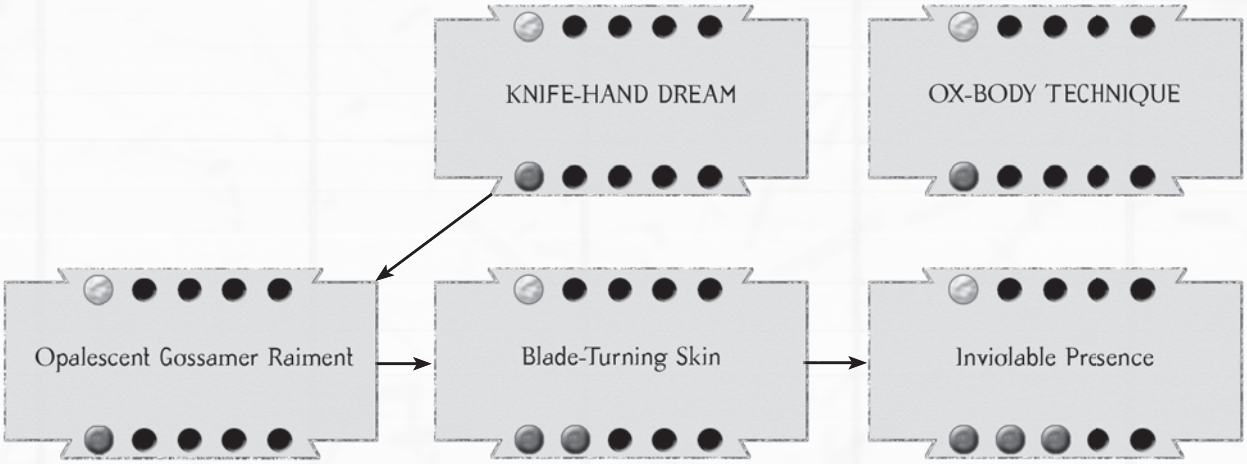
Glamour Resistance: This effect is a work of glamour. The raksha can neither inflict lethal damage upon nor parry barehanded the lethal attacks delivered by a Creation-born whose (Stamina + Essence) is greater than the raksha's Strength.

Opalescent Gossamer Raiment

Cost: 1+g; **Mins:** Ring 1, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Glamour, Mutation
Duration: Instant or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Knife-Hand Dream

The dreams that flow through the raksha's body pool on her skin in a smooth sheen that glistens by moonlight. In the Wyld, this Charm adds one to the shaping soak of the raksha's choice against a single attack. Additionally, by spending one gossamer in conjunction with an Assumption, the raksha adds a +1 bonus to her bashing and lethal soak. Although this Charm is technically a work of glamour, it affects only the raksha himself and does not provoke Glamour Resistance.

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Blade-Turning Skin
Cost: 1m, 2g; **Mins:** Ring 2, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Glamour, Mutation, Stackable
Duration: Instant or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Opalescent Gossamer Raiment

As per Opalescent Gossamer Raiment, except that the soak bonus is +2 both in the Wyld and in Creation. This Charm can stack with its prerequisite Charm.

Inviolable Presence
Cost: 1m, 4g; **Mins:** Ring 3, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Glamour, Mutation, Stackable
Duration: Instant or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Blade-Turning Skin

As per Opalescent Gossamer Raiment, except that the soak bonus is +4 both in the Wyld and in Creation. This Charm can stack with both Opalescent Gossamer Raiment and Blade-Turning Skin.

Ox-Body Technique
Cost: Special; **Mins:** Ring 1, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Glamour, Mutation
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: None

The raksha can use this Charm to shape additional health levels for herself to protect against injury in Creation. This Charm can be taken a number of times up to the raksha's Ring Grace rating. When the Charm is purchased, the player chooses one of the following benefits to activate along with an Assumption Charm:

- One -0 health level. This costs one gossamer to activate.
- One -1 and -2 health level. This costs one gossamer to activate.
- One -2 health level. This is permanent and has no gossamer or mutation point cost.

Although the raksha version of Ox-Body Technique is technically a work of glamour, it affects only the raksha's body and does not provoke Glamour Resistance.

Creation-Based Crafting Charms

These Charms permit the raksha to tell tales of his own opulent wealth or of the wretched poverty of his adversaries. They permit a raksha in Creation to use gossamer to create real objects… or at least objects the weak-willed can accept as real. In the same manner, these Charms can be used to tweak local reality with a touch of the Wyld so that Creation-born can lose their wealth, possessions and status. Many of these Charms can also be incorporated into oneiromancy.

Ordinary Object Conjuration
Cost: 1g; **Mins:** Ring 2, Essence 1;
Type: Simple (One dramatic action)
Keywords: Combo-Basic, Glamour
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: None

Pity the Creation-born, who can possess only those things that already exist. This Charm permits a raksha in Creation to forge gossamer into any mundane object he desires. The raksha's player rolls (Intelligence + Craft [Glamour]). The raksha can create any mundane object that would normally exist in Creation provided its Resources cost does not exceed the successes on the roll. Under no circumstances can this Charm create any of the following: a living being, any item



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with inherent magical properties, any item forged of one of the magical materials or of cold iron, or any item with a Resources cost in excess of 5. Each application of this Charm creates a single item no bigger than a human being. Each additional point of gossamer expended doubles the size of the creation, but each application still can create only a single item. Thus, with sufficient gossamer stores a raksha could fashion a palatial estate for himself, but one without even a single scrap of furniture. This Charm is more commonly used to create objets d'art or exceptional equipment.

This Charm is a *permanent* work of glamour. Objects created by it do not provoke Glamour Resistance and are not affected by the touch of cold iron. This Charm literally transmutes gossamer into a real object of Creation.

Limitless Wealth Conjuration Technique

Cost: 2g; **Mins:** Ring 3, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Glamour, Shaped-Only
Duration: One season
Prerequisite Charms: Ordinary Object Conjuration

Instead of merely creating expensive items as its prerequisite allows, this Charm simply lets the raksha become wealthy. The raksha sends her glamour out in a coruscating wave of reality-alteration and weaves her into the narrative of local Creation in the role of a person of means. The raksha's player rolls (Intelligence + Bureaucracy). For each success, the raksha gains a temporary point of the Resources Background, up to a maximum equal to her Essence. The Charm doesn't just create great heaping pots of coins, it also instantly upgrades the raksha's lifestyle to one appropriate to her new Resources rating. Her clothing becomes regal apparel, her beaten-down nag becomes a mighty steed, her tiny hovel becomes a mansion fit for a queen. The Resources acquired through this Charm can be used in any way that normal Resources could be used. If the raksha wishes, she can maintain two separate Resources ratings: one created by this Charm for her more expensive purchases and one mundane Resources rating that is actually "real." The effects of this Charm last for one season in Creation but end early if the raksha terminates her Assumption Charm prematurely.

Glamour Resistance: The Resources benefits acquired through this Charm are a work of glamour. Any Creation-born can perceive the raksha's true wealth if his (Wits + Essence) or his (Bureaucracy + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Bureaucracy. Resisting Creation-born see that the raksha's golden raiment is naught but tarnished brass and her coins nothing but worthless pebbles. At the end of the season, the Resources boost fades, and any items acquired by the raksha fade away, whether created through this Charm or purchased from affected mortals with the money obtained by it.

Hateful Coin Curse

Cost: 3g; **Mins:** Ring 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Glamour
Duration: One season
Prerequisite Charms: Ordinary Object Conjuration

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Creation's lore is replete with tales of wealthy and powerful mortals reduced to penury by a chance encounter with the Fair Folk. This Charm permits a raksha to inflict a curse of poverty on one of the Creation-born. The raksha interacts with the target, then his player rolls (Intelligence + Bureaucracy). An affected character instantly loses a number of Resources dots equal to the successes on the roll. The effects on the character's panoply are instantaneous. Each and every possession the character has that she no longer has enough Resources to justify either disappears (with other characters even forgetting she ever possessed such wealth) or is instantly ruined. Her clothes become tattered and torn. Her servants leave her, angrily complaining that they have not been paid in months. Even the most ostentatious mansion becomes a rotted, leaky hovel. As an additional side effect, the Charm inflicts a -2 external penalty on all mercantile or financial transactions of any sort between the affected being and any other Creation-born. The effects of this Charm last for one season in Creation but end early if the raksha terminates her Assumption Charm prematurely.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour. It will not affect the Resources rating of any character whose (Wits + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Bureaucracy. All other characters will forget that the affected being was ever wealthy save for the victim herself and any characters who knew her previously whose (Perception + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Bureaucracy. The -2 penalty on transactions will not affect transactions between the victim and a merchant if the merchant has a (Wits + Essence) that exceeds the raksha's Bureaucracy.

Wyld-Based Crafting Charms

Closely related to Creation-Based Crafting, these Charms permit the raksha to forge new possessions for herself within the Wyld. These possessions can exist only in the Wyld unless the raksha summons them to Creation through an Evocation Charm such as Elemental Evocation (see pp. 162-163) or Emotional Evocation (see p. 167) or unless the raksha goes to the trouble of making them permanent possessions.

Worker's Gift

Cost: 1mp; **Mins:** Ring 1, Essence 1; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: Mutation, Stackable
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: None

The existence of a raksha is defined by both her purpose and her heritage. This Charm permanently ties the raksha's Motivation to the Wyld. As a result, whenever the raksha regains Willpower by acting on her Motivation, she gains two points of gossamer. This Charm can be purchased a number of times equal to the raksha's Ring, with each iteration providing two more points of gossamer when the raksha acts on her Motivation. If a raksha acquires this Charm even once, however, she loses the ability to change her Motivation at will by dropping her Assumption.

Style-Improving Spirit

Cost: 1xp; **Mins:** Ring 2, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Glamour, Mutation, Stackable
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Worker's Gift

The infinite possibility of the Wyld informs every part of the raksha's soul, and his soul informs every part of the Wyld around him. This Charm permits the raksha to purchase new dots in the Style Background. The raksha acquires one new Style dot at a cost of one experience point every time he activates this Charm. The raksha can activate Style-Improving Spirit only once per tale or once per game session, whichever is longer. This Charm cannot be used to increase the character's Style Background above 5.

Essence-Forging Art

Cost: 3m, 0g; **Mins:** Ring 1, Essence 1; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-Basic, Glamour, Shaping
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: None

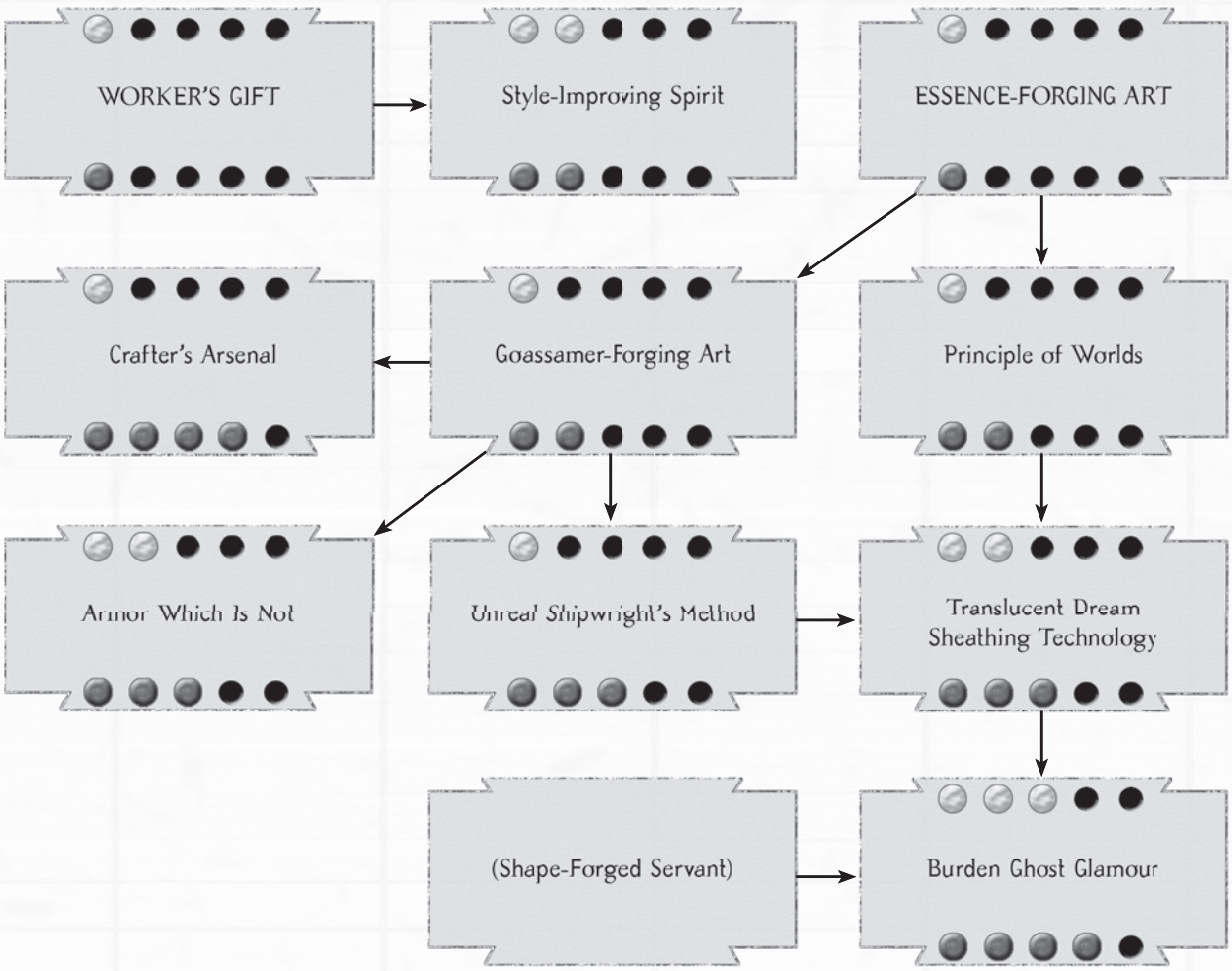
This Charm is the most basic representation of the effortless versatility inherent in Wyld-shaping and allows the raksha to forge a mundane possession. With it, a raksha can instantly create nearly anything he can imagine from pure Essence, subject to the following limitations. First, the object must be a mundane object. It cannot be an artifact, a shaping weapon or a living thing. It cannot be bigger than twice the size of a human being, nor can it cover a large enough area to permit two human-sized creatures to fight without environmental penalties. Once forged, the item is real and permanent within the Wyld but dissolves instantly in Creation absent the use of an Evocation Charm.

Creating an object with this Charm requires the raksha's player to roll (Intelligence + Craft [Glamour]) as a Ring-shaping action. The difficulty of this roll is determined by the quality of the item to be created. Once evoked into Creation, a mundane possession is real for all purposes except when opposed by Glamour Resistance.

Glamour Resistance: As a work of glamour, mundane possessions created with this Charm have no effect on Creation-born whose (Perception + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Intelligence. Against such unaffected beings, armor affords no soak bonus and weapons inflict no damage. Glamour-forged tools still function in such a being's presence, but they confer no benefits when used directly by that Creation-born or when that Creation-born acts against the one who employs a gossamer tool. If the possession is a permanent work of glamour, however, it does not provoke Glamour Resistance.

Difficulty	Description
1	**Serviceable.** The item is no better than what could be forged by a mortal in Creation. At the Storyteller's discretion, the raksha might be able to imbue the item with minor supernatural properties, but at the cost of reducing

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its normal traits. For example, the raksha might be able to fashion a chakram that was very good at ricocheting so that the raksha can strike targets behind cover with a stunt. It would, however, suffer penalties to Accuracy and Damage to balance that quality.

2	**Fine.** The item is of fine quality. See **Exalted**, page 365.
3	**Exceptional.** The item is of exceptional quality. See **Exalted**, page 365.
4	**Perfect.** The item is of perfect quality. See **Exalted**, page 366.
+1	**Permanence.** The raksha's possession can enter Creation without an Evocation Charm and it does not provoke Glamour Resistance.

Gossamer-Forging Art

Cost: 5m, 1+g; **Mins:** Ring 2, Essence 1; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Glamour, Shaping
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Essence-Forging Art

This Charm permits the raksha to create truly magical objects from gossamer. The process takes far longer than Essence-Forging Art, but the effects are far superior. First, the raksha must forge the item with a Ring-shaping action as if he were using Essence-Forging Art. Then, the raksha must spend an amount of gossamer equal to what the Resources cost of a mundane version of the item to be created would be. The difficulty of the Ring-shaping roll is equal to the gossamer cost. The raksha must also commit five motes to the item and let it spend an entire season absorbing the power of the Wyld.

The result is a gossamer item. A gossamer weapon adds an additional +1 to two of the following: Accuracy, Damage, Defense or Rate. Any Strength requirement for a gossamer weapon is reduced by one. Gossamer armor has no fatigue or mobility penalties. Gossamer tools are supernally effective, adding a number of bonus dice to each use equal to the tool's gossamer cost. The preceding benefits are in addition to the benefits from forging a fine, exceptional or perfect item.

A gossamer possession created through this Charm is always considered a permanent work of glamour, which can freely enter Creation with its owner without the need for an evocation Charm. Such possessions do not provoke Glamour Resistance.

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Crafter's Arsenal

Cost: 5m, 1+g; **Mins:** Ring 4, Essence 1; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Shaping
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Gossamer-Forging Art

This Charm improves upon Gossamer-Forging Art and allows the raksha to forge shaping weapons. Mechanically, this Charm functions like Gossamer-Forging Art except as follows. First, upon shaping the weapon into existence through a Ring-shaping action, the raksha must spend an amount of gossamer equal to the weapon's Gossamer Background cost. She must also commit five motes to the item and let it spend an entire season absorbing the power of the Wyld. The base difficulty for the Ring-shaping action is equal to the gossamer cost of the shaping weapon to be created. If the shaping weapon is to be a fine one, increase the difficulty by two. If it is to be an exceptional one, increase it by four. If it is to be a perfect one, increase the difficulty by six. (Apply the advantages of a fine, exceptional or perfect weapon to the shaping weapon's normal traits. See **Exalted**, pp. 365–366, for details.) The shaping weapon is a work of glamour that cannot survive in Creation absent the use of an Evocation Charm.

Even if a shaping weapon is summoned into Creation, it has generally no utility there, as raksha shaping actions do not affect Creation or its occupants. There are two exceptions. First, the following shaping weapons can be summoned into Creation through appropriate Evocation Charms: courtier's cauls, extras, hazards, horrors, monsters and mutant warleaders. Second, the Veil of Glamour Charm (see p. 209) permits a raksha to shape gossamer in Creation. Veil of Glamour shaping can make use of appropriate shaping weapons.

Armor Which Is Not

Cost: 5m, 1+g; **Mins:** Ring 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-Basic, Glamour, Shaping
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Gossamer-Forging Art

This Charm improves upon Gossamer-Forging Art and allows the raksha to forge shaping armor, which helps to protect against shaping attacks. Mechanically, this Charm functions like Gossamer-Forging Art except as follows. First, the raksha shapes the armor into existence through a Ring-shaping action and spends an amount of gossamer equal to the difficulty of the roll. The raksha must also commit five motes to the item and let it spend an entire season absorbing the power of the Wyld.

The shaping armor is a work of glamour that cannot survive in Creation absent the use of an Evocation Charm. If summoned into Creation, the armor adds its normal shaping soak bonus to the raksha's bashing and lethal soak. This bonus soak does not apply to attacks made by Creation-born whose (attack Ability + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Craft.

The same set of armor can serve as both shaping armor and gossamer armor, with the soak bonuses stacking, but the gossamer cost increases to twice this Charm's normal cost, and the raksha must commit 10 motes for the duration of a season.

Difficulty	Description
1	**Serviceable.** The armor is the equivalent of assertion gauze.
2	**Fine.** The armor is the equivalent of fate weave or fine assertion gauze.
3	**Exceptional.** The armor is the equivalent of form chitin, fine fate weave or perfect assertion gauze. Alternatively, if the raksha also knows Crafter's Arsenal, he can produce a courtier's call.
4	**Perfect.** The armor is the equivalent of perfect assertion gauze, exceptional fate weave, fine form chitin or a fine courtier's caul.
+1	**Permanence.** The raksha's armor can enter Creation without an Evocation Charm, and it does not provoke Glamour Resistance.

Unreal Shipwright's Method

Cost: 5m, 1+g; **Mins:** Ring 3, Essence 1; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-Basic, Glamour, Shaping
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Gossamer-Forging Art

The existence of a raksha is often the story of a journey, whether metaphorical or literal. This Charm facilitates Gossamer-Forging Art by allowing the raksha to fashion a Wyld vessel from the raw stuff of the Wyld to speed him on his journey through infinity. A Wyld vessel is essentially a ship of some kind (conceptually analogous to ships of Creation) that permits its raksha pilot to travel more quickly in the Wyld, as well as to transport passengers and possessions along with him.

To craft the Wyld vessel, the raksha's player must roll (Intelligence + Craft [Glamour]) as a Ring-shaping action. The raksha must then spend a number of gossamer equal to the difficulty of the shaping roll and commit five motes of Essence for the duration of a season. The difficulty of the shaping roll is based on the characteristics of the vessel to be fashioned according to the following chart. In addition to determining size and other accouterments, each point of difficulty improves the raksha's ability to traverse waypoints in the Wyld. Larger and more impressive ships can so intimidate other raksha that they confer a bonus to the pilot's soak versus shaping attacks.

A Wyld vessel is a raksha possession that can be brought into Creation through an Evocation Charm. In Creation, a Wyld vessel is capable of transporting the raksha (plus whatever passengers and cargo the ship can hold) at a speed of up to (difficulty rating x 50) miles per hour.

Glamour Resistance: A Wyld vessel created through this Charm is considered a work of glamour. Unless made

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permanent by its creator, such a vessel cannot enter Creation without its owner using an Evocation Charm, nor can a Creation-born board the vessel as a passenger or be deterred by its defenses if the Creation-born's (Perception + Essence) exceeds the owner's Sail.

Difficulty	Description
1	**Serviceable.** The ship is a one-person transport vessel, sufficient to hold the pilot and those possessions that can fit on his person. When performing a Journey action as part of a flurry, the raksha reduces the multiple action penalty by one.
2	**Fine.** The ship is a large vessel such as a military trireme or cargo ship capable of conveying anything from large military forces to small behemoths. When performing a Journey action as part of a flurry, the raksha reduces the multiple action penalty by two. He also adds one to his soak against shaping attacks.
3	**Exceptional.** The ship is the equivalent of a medium-sized First Age vessel or a flying whale with a castle on its back. When performing a Journey action as part of a flurry, the raksha reduces the multiple action penalty by two, and the raksha can cover two waypoints during a Journey action instead of just one. The vessel also adds two to the raksha's soak against shaping attacks.
4	**Perfect.** The ship is a greater behemoth that carries the raksha's palace on its shoulders or the equivalent of one of the titanic vessels of the First Age. When performing a Journey action as part of a flurry, the raksha reduces the multiple action penalty by three, and the raksha can cover three waypoints during a Journey action instead of just one. The vessel also adds three to the raksha's soak against shaping attacks. It can also be used as a monster for purposes of Sword-shaping but gains a +1 bonus to two separate traits of the raksha's choice (one of which can include reducing the monster's Speed by one).
+1	**Permanence.** The raksha's Wyld vessel can enter Creation without an Evocation Charm, and it does not provoke Glamour Resistance.

Principle of Worlds

Cost: 3m, 0g; **Mins:** Ring 2, Essence 1; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-Basic, Glamour, Shaping
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Essence-Forging Art

Having mastered the shaping of things, the raksha now progresses to the crafting of places. This Charm permits a raksha to use a shaping Charm to craft the landscape of an area of the Wyld up to one waypoint in size into a raksha territory. The raksha's player must roll (Intelligence + Craft [Glamour]) as a Ring-shaping action against a waypoint he possesses. The difficulty is determined both by the size of the territory to be created and the degree to which the shaped territory satisfies all the raksha's material needs. While in the Wyld, a raksha territory can theoretically be as big as its creator wishes. When a Creation-born enters the territory, however, and attempts to traverse it through Charms, the territory is conceptually reduced to a maximum diameter of 30 miles, and most territories are much smaller than that.

A raksha territory created through this Charm is considered a possession of its creator and can be summoned into Creation through an Evocation Charm. When used to evoke a territory into Creation, however, all Essence and gossamer costs associated with the Evocation Charm are increased by the difficulty originally needed to shape the raksha territory.

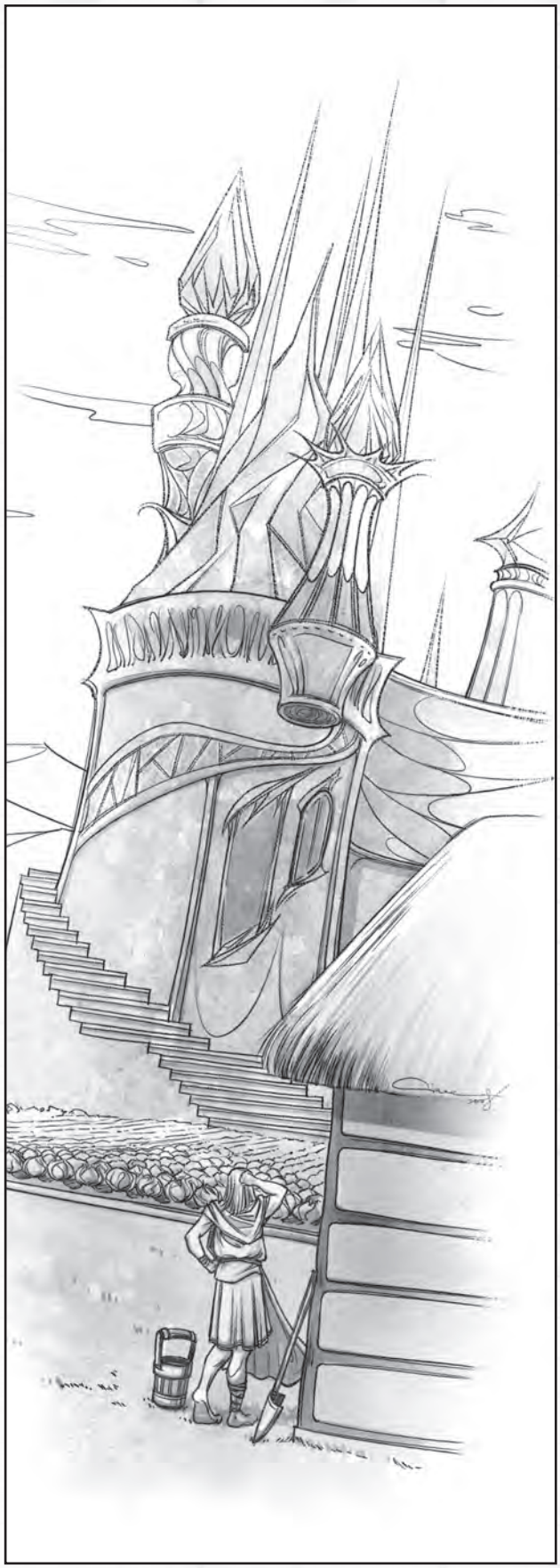
Evoking a raksha's territory into Creation does not literally rewrite local reality into the territory as it existed in the Wyld. Rather, the evocation changes local reality so that it resembles the milieu of the original territory with only important landmarks of the Wyld literally translated into reality. Affected regions of Creation thus resemble strange amalgamations of reality and raksha territory. A farmer in an affected area might be surprised to discover that everything on his farm was now colored bright pink including the clothes on his back. The farm itself, however, would remain largely unchanged by the evocation… except for the 40-story pink crystal palace that now stands in the farmer's cornfield.

Glamour Resistance: When a raksha territory is evoked into Creation, the evocation is considered a work of glamour. Living things within the affected area are *always* unaffected absent the use of other Charms, and items that are physically in the possession of a Creation-born within the region remain unaffected if the Creation-born's (Integrity + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Craft. Glamour Resistance does not apply to permanent raksha territories, but even then, living beings caught within the transformed area are not personally affected absent the use of other Charms.

Difficulty	Description
1	**Serviceable.** The raksha territory is a simple landscape or home—a meadow, a swamp or a small manor house. For Creation-born attempting to traverse it in the Wyld, it has a maximum diameter of one mile. If summoned into Creation, the evocation affects a maximum area of just under 10,000 square yards (about two acres). Only a few simple thematic elements are translated into Creation, enough to turn the skies green, for example.

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2	**Fine.** The raksha territory is large enough for a palace with spacious grounds or a landscape comparable to a small to medium-sized forest. For Creation-born attempting to traverse it in the Wyld, it has a maximum diameter of eight miles. If summoned into Creation, the evocation affects a maximum area of about three square miles. One or two geographic features or landmarks can be translated across wholesale. Several significant thematic elements can be incorporated into the area, enough to give all animals the power of speech, for example.
3	**Exceptional.** The raksha territory is an enormous place complete with entire towns populated by the raksha lord's servants and playthings. Less developed territories might include a large forest or swamp or a small lake or desert. For Creation-born attempting to traverse it in the Wyld, it has a maximum diameter of 15 miles. If summoned into Creation, the evocation affects a maximum area of about 20 square miles. The area is dominated by bizarre landmarks, disturbing geographic features and impossible weather phenomena (although none are harmful to local Creation-born residents absent other Charms such as Translucent Dream Sheathing Technology). Several highly sophisticated thematic elements can be introduced into an affected part of Creation, such as applying a consistent color scheme to all objects in the area or surrounding the Creation-born caught within the territory with all the trappings of some arcane raksha holiday.
4	**Perfect.** The raksha territory is a small nation with multiple cities that venerate the raksha lord as a god-king. Less developed territories might be the equivalent of Creation's largest forests, seas or deserts. For Creation-born attempting to traverse the territory in the Wyld, it has a maximum diameter of 30 miles. It is currently impossible to evoke a perfect raksha territory into Creation, as the Realm Defense Grid's automated systems would swat it down instantly. During the Balorian Crusade, when the Grid was initially inactive, the Fair Folk evoked perfect territories throughout Creation to serve as beachheads for the unshaped raksha who followed.
+1	**Permanence.** The raksha's territory can enter Creation without an Evocation Charm, and it does not provoke Glamour Resistance.



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Translucent Dream Sheathing Technology

Cost: 3m, 1g per difficulty point; **Mins:** Ring 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-Basic, Glamour, Shaping
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Gossamer-Forging Art, Unreal Shipwright's Method, Principle of Worlds

Previous Wyld-shaping Charms permit the raksha to dazzle Creation-born who enter her domain with works of glamour. This Charm allows her to directly affect or even harm them. The raksha targets an existing possession (an item, a vessel or a territory) with this Charm and imbues it with an inherent glamour effect that inflicts an automatic predetermined shaping effect on those who interact with it. This Charm can be reflexively used in tandem with Essence-Forging Art, Gossamer-Forging Art, Unreal Shipwright's Method or Principle of Worlds without the need for a Combo, and all motes spent are committed until the item being forged is completed (usually one season). If the Charm is used to enchant a previously existing possession, the raksha must commit the motes to the item for one season, at the end of which the shaping effect becomes a part of the possession's nature.

In order to enact this Charm, the raksha's player must roll (Intelligence + Craft [Glamour]) as a Ring-shaping action. The difficulty for the roll is determined by the nature of the shaping effect to be imbued into the possession. This difficulty also determines the gossamer cost for activating the Charm. Particular effects are described as being serviceable, fine, exceptional or perfect, depending on the difficulty applied. The Essence spent on this Charm must remain committed for one tale as appropriate while the raksha carefully sculpts the effect into the desired shape.

Generally, if a raksha applies a shaping effect to a possession and then carries it into Creation, the shaping effect goes dormant *unless* the possession is brought to Creation through an Evocation Charm or the shaping effect is made permanent. Making a shaping effect permanent through this Charm adds one to the Charm's difficulty.

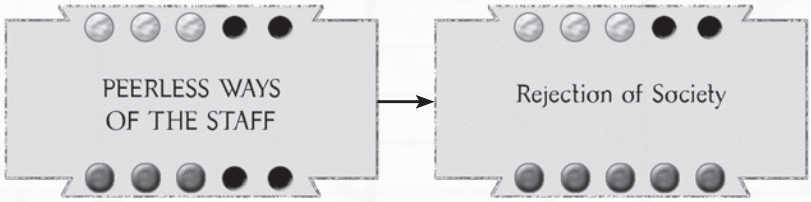
From a narrative standpoint, the shaping effect establishes a condition associated with the possession such that anyone who interacts with the item must abide by the normal rules for acceding to or ignoring shaping effects (see p. 117). For example, a raksha might enchant a particular bed in her castle with an exceptional effect (difficulty 3) that states that anyone who laid down on it would fall asleep until "awoken by love's true kiss." If an intruder did lie down on the bed, he would treat the effect as if it were a shaping effect successfully used against him by a raksha with an Essence of 3. In other words, he could either submit to the condition and fall asleep until awoken (thereby gaining a +1 Wyld bonus on all actions while a part of the narrative) or he could spend one Willpower to ignore it and thereafter suffer a -3 Wyld penalty on all future actions for the duration of the tale. If the raksha summons the item into Creation, the Wyld bonus and Wyld penalty last for one season (or until the raksha's Assumption ends).

Instead of first creating an item through Essence-Forging Art, Principle of Worlds or Unreal Shipwright's Method and then applying this Charm to it, the raksha has the option of simply creating the object wholesale from Translucent Dream Sheathing Technology. Doing so doubles the Essence and gossamer cost and adds one to the difficulty. A gossamer object cannot be directly created with this Charm.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour. In the Wyld, its effects function against the Creation-born normally. If the enchanted item is evoked into Creation, the shaping effect attached to it by this Charm continues to function, but its condition does not apply at all to any Creation-born whose (Integrity + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Intelligence.

Difficulty	Description
1	**Serviceable.** This is a simple shaping effect. It can be overcome by a Charm or a stunt, and any opposing shaping effect defeats it automatically. Otherwise, it inflicts a -1 Wyld penalty on anyone who defies the condition inherent in the shaping effect. Such a person must also pay one Willpower if it is the first violation of local reality during the scene. At this level of difficulty, the shaping effect must be targeted on single object small enough to fit into a 10'-by-10' room.
2	**Fine.** The raksha's shaping effect can impose a -2 Wyld penalty on anyone who defies the condition. Alternatively, he can impose a -1 penalty on a location small enough fit within a serviceable raksha territory.
3	**Exceptional.** The raksha's shaping effect can impose a -3 Wyld penalty on anyone who defies the condition. Alternatively, he can impose a -2 penalty on a location small enough to fit into a serviceable raksha territory or a -1 penalty on fine raksha territory.
4	**Perfect.** The raksha's shaping effect can impose a -4 Wyld penalty on anyone who defies the condition. Alternatively, he can impose a -3 penalty on a serviceable raksha territory, a -2 penalty on a fine territory or a -1 penalty on an exceptional territory.
+1	**Direct Creation.** The raksha shapes the possession and the shaping effect attached to it simultaneously as a single Ring-shaping action instead of simply applying the shaping effect to a pre-existing possession. This technique also increases the Essence cost by two.

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+1 **Permanence.** The raksha's shaping effect can enter Creation if the raksha evokes the item or territory to which it is attached. Even permanent shaping effects are still subject to Glamour Resistance.

Burden Ghost Glamour

Cost: 10m, 1wp, 0g; **Mins:** Ring 4, Essence 3;
Type: Simple
Keywords: Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Translucent Dream Sheathing Technology, Shape-Forged Servant

The raksha can terminate an existing incumbrance attached to a creature or a location within the Wyld. In addition to the listed Essence, Willpower and gossamer cost, this Charm totally consumes a treasure that the raksha owns. If used to remove a burden from a character, the artifact must have an Artifact rating equal to or above the target's Ring. If used to remove a burden from a freehold or demesne, the artifact must have an Artifact level equal to or greater than the freehold's or demesne's level.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour. It cannot lift an incumbrance or burden from a Creation-born character whose (Intelligence + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Willpower, no matter how much the Creation-born might wish it.

Charms of the Staff

The shinma Nirvikalpa represents the concept of "interaction" in all its forms. Subsidiary shinma within Nirvikalpa represent ideas ranging from communication to master-servant relationships, from courtly diplomacy to barroom brawls, from espionage to sex. Compared to the other Graces, the Staff has fewer Charms, but many of those Charms that fall within Nirvikalpa's domain are broad in their scope and potential for improvisation.

Staff Combat Charms

Staff-shaping combat is innovative in its possibilities. A raksha who defeats her enemy in a Staff-shaping contest has the option of inflicting Cup-, Ring- or Sword-shaping damage in the future. Accordingly, many Charms from the Shaping Combat cascades of those Graces can also benefit Staff attacks and actions, and Diplomats who engage in shaping combat typically study the shaping combat approach associated with one of those Graces. There are only two exclusive Staff-Shaping Combat Charms.

Peerless Ways of the Staff

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Staff 3, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

As per Peerless Ways of the Cup, except that the raksha can parry a single shaping attack made by any Grace with his Staff Parry DV.

Rejection of Society

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Cup 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Peerless Ways of the Staff

As per Rejection of Desire, except that the raksha can perfectly parry a single Staff-shaping attack.

Wyldlife Birthing Charms

The raksha can use these Charms to create servitors for himself. Such servants can be animals of the Wyld or even intelligent beings loyal to him.

Awakened Dream Manufacture

Cost: 3m, 0g; **Mins:** Staff 1, Essence 1; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-Basic, Glamour, Shaping
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: None



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Drawing upon her understanding of the Staff, the raksha forges dreams and fancies into living things to serve her. This Charm permits the raksha to create a lesser minion. Such creatures have no Motivation other than to serve their mistress. They have an Essence of 1 and no Willpower at all.

In order to create a minion with this Charm, the raksha's player must roll (Intelligence + Socialize) as a Staff-shaping action. If the roll is successful, the raksha instantly creates either a minion animal or a non-sentient humanoid minion servant. If the minion has a humanoid form, this Charm grants it three dots in the Craft or Performance Ability of its creator's choice. If the minion is an animal, the Charm grants it one extra dot in the Physical Attribute of its creator's choice. These benefits are in addition to those outlined in the chart according to the difficulty level of the shaping effect. The extreme versatility of this Charm permits a player to define her minion in terms of the hazard it represents pursuant to the "Knowing the Opposition" section in **Exalted**, page 247.

A minion created through this Charm can be summoned into Creation through an Evocation Charm but otherwise is incapable of entering Creation unless made permanent.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour. A minion created by it cannot harm or otherwise affect a Creation-born whose (Wits + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Socialize. If the minion is made permanent, Glamour Resistance does not apply.

Difficulty	Description
1	**Serviceable.** The minion has the traits of a citizen (see **Exalted**, pp. 278–279) or an animal comparable in utility to a horse. The minion represents Hazard 0.
2	**Fine.** The minion has the traits of an elite soldier (see **Exalted**, p. 280) or an animal with combat training comparable to a war dog. The minion represents a Hazard •.
3	**Exceptional.** The minion has the traits of a powerful mortal hero (but still not true self-awareness—see **Exalted**, p. 280) or an animal comparable to a claw strider or great cat. The minion represents Hazard ••.
4	**Perfect.** The minion has traits roughly comparable to a God-Blood (but still not true self-awareness—see **Exalted**, pp. 281–282) or an animal comparable to a tyrant lizard. The minion represents Hazard •••.
+1	**Permanence.** The minion can enter Creation at its master's bidding without the use of an Evocation Charm, and it does not provoke Glamour Resistance.

Shape-Forged Servant

Cost: 5m, 1g per mutation point; **Mins:** Staff 2, Essence 1; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-Basic, Glamour, Shaping
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Awakened Dream Manufacture

As per Awakened Dream Manufacture, except as follows. First, it takes the raksha a full story to properly fashion his minion. Second, the raksha must spend five motes instead of three, plus up to his Socialize in gossamer. For each point of gossamer spent, the minion gains one mutation point, the effects of which are incorporated into its structure. The raksha chooses the mutations to be applied.

A minion created through this Charm can be summoned into Creation through an Evocation Charm, *or* it can enter Creation freely if it is made permanent or if one of its mutations is a permanent Assumption Charm. Otherwise, it is incapable of surviving in Creation.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour. A minion created by it cannot harm or otherwise affect a Creation-born whose (Wits + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Socialize. If the minion is created to be permanent or has a permanent Assumption Charm mutation, Glamour Resistance does not apply.

Poppet-Integrating Spirit

Cost: 10m, 1xp; **Mins:** Staff 2, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-Basic, Shaping
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Shape-Forged Servant

This Charm binds a small creature of the Wyld to the raksha. A valid target for this Charm cannot represent a Hazard rating greater than ••, and if it already has a Heart Grace, that trait cannot exceed 1. If these conditions are met, the raksha can bind the creature to it as a familiar. The creature's prior Heart Grace, if it had one, is destroyed, and the creature is thereafter bound to the raksha's own Heart instead. Mechanically, each use of this Charm allows the raksha to acquire a one-dot familiar. If the targeted creature would represent a familiar rated higher than one dot, the raksha can still use the Charm, but his control over the familiar is incomplete until he spends enough experience to completely pay for its value (one experience point per dot of Familiar). The raksha can use this Charm to create a familiar out of one of his own minions.

Grace-Forging Charms

These Charms represent the greater arts of glamour-crafting. Many of these Charms permit the raksha to create Graces for either minions or Creation-born, allowing them to interact with the Wyld at a level commensurate with the Fair Folk. Charms used to forge new Graces are considered Charms of the Staff, but they require a minimum Staff of 0. Theoretically, a lesser raksha without a Staff Grace can learn the appropriate Charm and forge a Staff Grace for himself. Other Charms permit a raksha to forge an existing Grace

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he has acquired into new forms and functions, such as into artifacts or the bonefire of a freehold. Except where stated otherwise, none of the Charms listed here permit Glamour Resistance. These Charms insinuate fundamental aspects of the shinma themselves into Creation-born targets, which utterly defeats all such resistance. More information on the process for forging Graces can be found on pages 92 to 93.

Forging the Heart Grace

Cost: 15m, 1g; **Mins:** Staff 0, Essence 1; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Shape-Forged Servant

This Charm allows the raksha to forge a Heart Grace from raw Essence and gossamer. Noble raksha with a Birth Background rating of 4 or higher begin life with this Charm, having shaped themselves into existence. Lesser raksha began existence as the possession of some other raksha, only later winning a Heart Grace, and therefore freedom, for themselves. The raksha can use this Charm to grant a Heart Grace to a minion but not a Creation-born.

Forging the Cup Grace

Cost: 10m, 1g; **Mins:** Staff 0, Essence 1; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Forging the Heart Grace

With this Charm, the raksha can forge a Cup Grace for a consenting being. Valid targets for this Charm include minions, Creation-born and raksha who have somehow lost their own Cup Graces to destruction.

Forging the Ring Grace

Cost: 10m, 1g; **Mins:** Staff 0, Essence 1; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Forging the Heart Grace

As per Forging the Cup Grace except that this Charm forges a Ring Grace.

Forging the Staff Grace

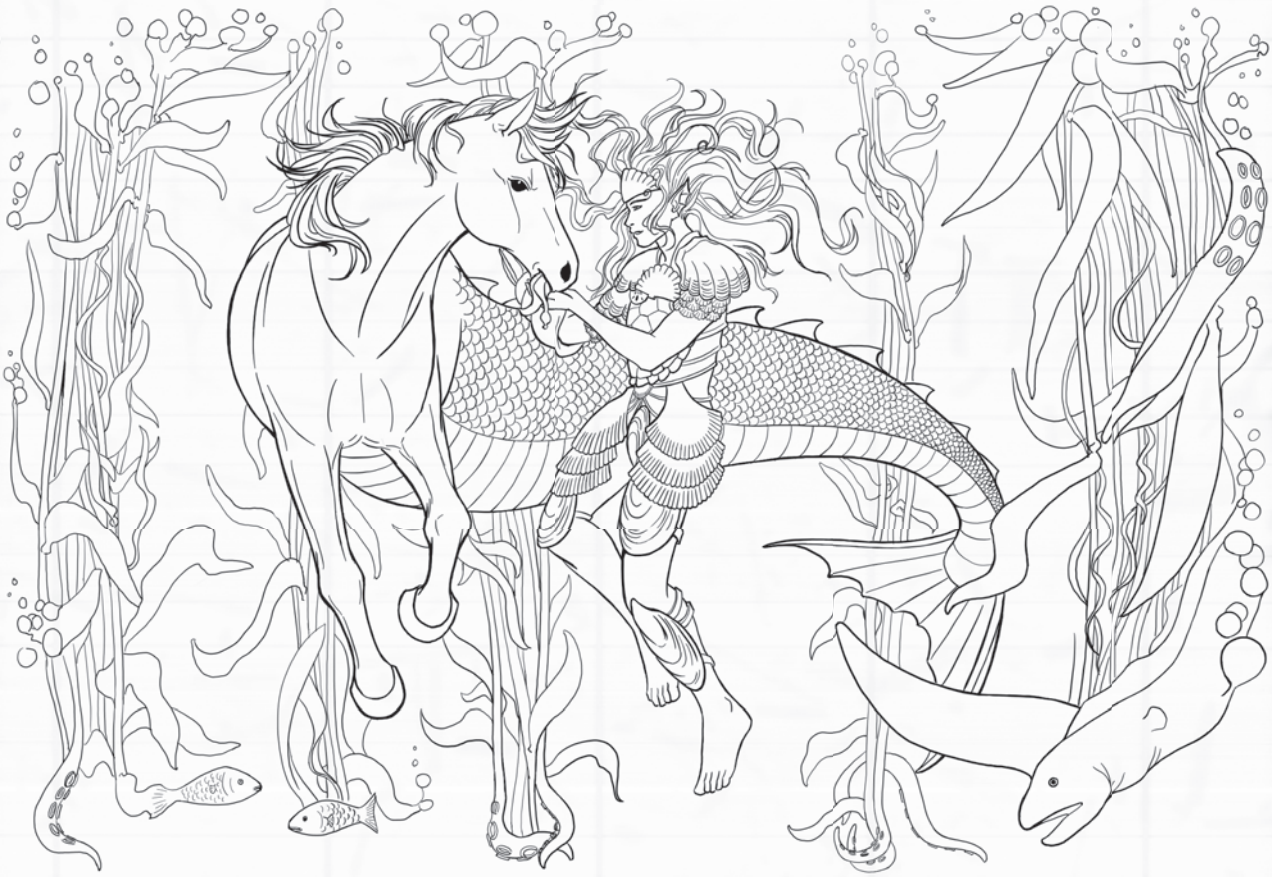
Cost: 10m, 1g; **Mins:** Staff 0, Essence 1; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Forging the Heart Grace

As per Forging the Cup Grace except that this Charm forges a Staff Grace.

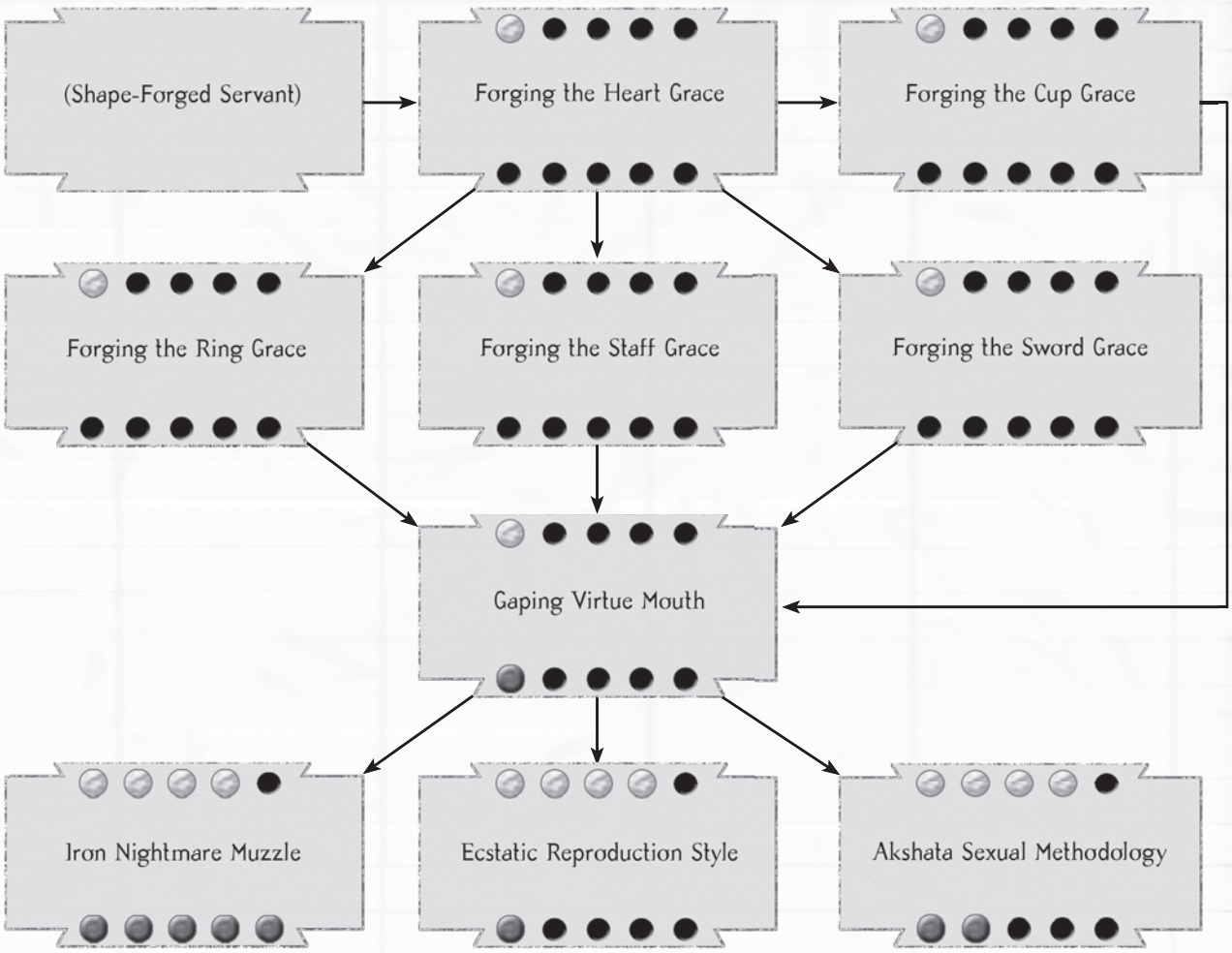
Forging the Sword Grace

Cost: 10m, 1g; **Mins:** Staff 0, Essence 1; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Forging the Heart Grace

As per Forging the Cup Grace except that this Charm forges a Sword Grace.



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Gaping Virtue Mouth

Cost: 20m, 1g, 1xp; **Mins:** Staff 1, Essence 1;
Type: Simple
Keywords: Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Forging the Cup Grace, Forging the Ring Grace, Forging the Staff Grace, Forging the Sword Grace

Having learned to forge new Graces for visitors to his realm, the raksha, in keeping with his duties as host, provides them with a repast fit for a king. With this Charm, the raksha can pry open the Cup, Ring, Staff or Sword Grace of a creature who has acquired such a Grace by some means. Thereafter, the targeted creature can treat said Grace as a feeding Grace, and the creature can learn the Charm Ravishing the Created Form, as well as any other Feeding Charms for which the creature meets all prerequisites.

The maximum number of feeding Graces any character can acquire after character creation is equal to (her Heart Grace – 1). A minion for whom a Cup, Ring, Staff and Sword Grace have been formed and who has at least one opened feeding Grace is truly considered a raksha.

Iron Nightmare Muzzle

Cost: 5m, 1g; **Mins:** Staff 5, Essence 4;
Type: Simple (Speed 4)
Keywords: Glamour, Mutation, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Gaping Virtue Mouth

Like a cruel master striking a bowl of rice from his starving worker's hands, this Charm allows the raksha to deprive his enemies of the opportunity to gain sustenance. The raksha can seal over an enemy's feeding Grace with a successful Staff-shaping attack. The target need not be within the raksha's immediate vicinity but must be within one waypoint. If the Staff-shaping attack succeeds, it inflicts no damage. Instead, the target must double the Essence cost of all Charms associated with the muzzled Grace until she can reopen it by some means (such as Gaping Virtue Mouth).

In addition, a raksha who spends one gossamer in conjunction with an Assumption Charm gains the following innate power while in Creation:

Innate Power (*Cost*: 5m, 1g; *Speed*: 4) The raksha can fling one point of gossamer at a Creation-born enemy, clogging the target's Essence-gathering organs with a miasma of confused

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impossibility on a successful hit. In order to do so, the raksha's player must successfully roll (Intelligence + Thrown) against the target's DV. This attack can be dodged, but it is unblockable absent perfect defenses. If the attack is successful, the target doubles all Essence costs for Charms and other magical effects for one scene per extra success on the attack roll.

Glamour Resistance: The Staff-shaping attack aspect of this Charm has no Glamour Resistance. By definition, any creature who has consented to receiving a feeding Grace is vulnerable to this Charm. The innate power aspect of the Charm, however, is a work of glamour that cannot affect any Creation-born whose (Occult + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Thrown.

Ecstatic Reproduction Style

Cost: 20m, 1g; **Mins:** Staff 1, Essence 4; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Gaping Virtue Mouth

By these means are many of the raksha nobility summoned into being. The raksha opens himself up to the Wyld and for an instant, they become as one. From this union, a new raksha is summoned into existence, her Heart Grace coming instantly and inevitably into her raksha parent's hand.

In order to give birth to a new raksha, the character's player rolls (Intelligence + Occult) as a Staff-shaping action. The difficulty for birthing a commoner raksha is 5. For heroic commoners, the difficulty is 7, and for nobles, it is 9. This roll is *not* an extended one. If the shaping action succeeds, the raksha creates the desired Fair Folk, which has all five Graces (an appropriate number of which are feeding Graces). The raksha who gave birth possesses and owns all of his child's Graces. Botching the shaping action creates a deformed or possibly insane child or even a monster, one who owns her own Graces and despises her raksha parent.

Akshata Sexual Methodology

Cost: 40m, 5g, 2xp; **Mins:** Staff 2, Essence 4;
Type: Simple
Keywords: Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Gaping Virtue Mouth

The raksha draws upon the name of Nirvikalpa, which she uses to sanctify an oath between two other Fair Folk through the birthing of a child from their union. The Charm permits one raksha to draw the Essence of two other consenting Fair Folk into herself and manipulate it to create a child. Each of the two parents (the gender of whom is irrelevant) must make an oath to one another, while the raksha who enacts this Charm must make a third oath in the child's name. The oath-child, as he is called, is bound from birth to the oath sworn in his name, while his parents are bound to the oaths sworn to each other while that child still lives. Treaties among the Fair Folk are often sealed with the birthing of a new raksha through this Charm.

Both of the parents can contribute to the activation of this Charm with Essence, gossamer and experience. The oath-child possesses his own Heart, Ring and Sword Graces, while one of his parents takes ownership of his Cup Grace and the other one his Staff Grace. If one of the parents is raksha, the child is raksha. If one is noble, the child is automatically noble.

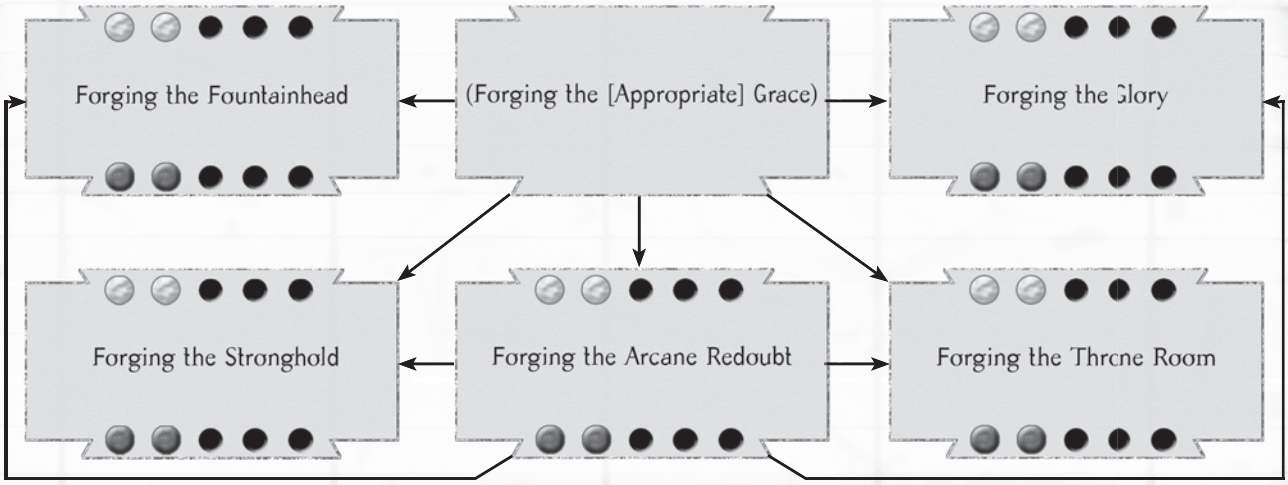
Forging the Arcane Redoubt

Cost: 25m, 3g; **Mins:** Staff 2, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: None
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Forging the Heart Grace

This Charm permits the raksha to embed the Heart Grace of a consenting creature in the center of an uncapped demesne within Creation or into a waypoint he controls in the Wyld. A silver, heatless bonefire soon erupts from the site where the Grace is embedded, transforming the entire demesne or waypoint into a freehold. The rules governing the forging of a freehold are more fully described on pages 139-140.

Forging the Fountainhead

Cost: 20m, 2g; **Mins:** Staff 2, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: None
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Forging the Ring Grace, Forging the Arcane Redoubt



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This Charm permits a raksha to embed a Ring Grace in his possession into the spiritual structure of a freehold, giving it the benefits of having a Fountainhead (see pp. 140-141).

Forging the Glory

Cost: 20m, 2g; **Mins:** Staff 2, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: None
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Forging the Cup Grace, Forging the Arcane Redoubt

This Charm permits the raksha to embed a Cup Grace in her possession into the spiritual structure of a freehold, giving it the benefits of having a Glory (see pp. 141-142).

Forging the Stronghold

Cost: 20m, 2g; **Mins:** Staff 2, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: None
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Forging the Sword Grace, Forging the Arcane Redoubt

This Charm permits the raksha to embed a Sword Grace in his possession into the spiritual structure of a freehold, giving it the benefits of having a Stronghold (see p. 142).

Forging the Throne Room

Cost: 20m, 2g; **Mins:** Staff 2, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: None
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Forging the Staff Grace, Forging the Arcane Redoubt

This Charm permits the raksha to embed a Staff Grace in her possession into the spiritual structure of a freehold, giving it the benefits of having a Throne Room (see pp. 142-143).

Great Works of the (Grace)

Cost: 20m, 3g; **Mins:** Staff 4, Essence 3; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Forging the Heart Grace

This Charm represents the pinnacle of the shaping arts: forging artifacts directly from the Graces of other raksha. These are actually four separate Charms, each of which must be purchased separately.

Great Works of the Cup: The raksha forges a Cup Grace into an oneiromantic spell (see pp. 136-138).

Great Works of the Ring: The raksha forges a Ring Grace into a treasure (see pp. 138-139).

Great Works of the Staff: The raksha forges a Staff Grace into an adjuration (see pp. 133-135).

Great Works of the Sword: The raksha forges a Sword Grace into a behemoth (see pp. 135-136).

A commoner raksha's Grace yields a one-dot artifact, and a noble Grace can yield a two-dot artifact. In either case, an artifact forged through this Charm remains a Grace for its original bearer. Its physical manifestation simply changes to that of the newly created artifact, whose owner now also has dominion over the connected Grace. Any character attuned to such an artifact can inflict the appropriate bedlam curse on the bearer of the Grace as a reflexive action. Once any particular Grace has been shaped through one of these Charms, it becomes an invalid target for future uses of the same Charm. An artifact rated at three dots or higher cannot be forged through this Charm unless the raksha has first succeeded in a quest against an unshaped (see the rules outlined beginning on p. 60).

The raksha who seeks to forge the Grace must choose the nature, power level and properties of the artifact to be created, and he must acquire the proper Grace. His player then rolls (Intelligence + Occult) as an extended Staff-shaping action against a threshold difficulty determined by the artifact's rating. Each roll represents one tale, and the raksha must leave the Essence committed to the Charm until the artifact is forged. The total number of threshold successes needed to forge the artifact is as follows.

Artifact	Difficulty	Total Successes Needed
•	3	10
••	4	30
•••	5	60
••••	6	100
•••••	7	200

Glamour Resistance: The artifact forged with this Charm is a permanent work of glamour that can be transported into Creation without the need for an Evocation Charm. Accordingly, Glamour Resistance cannot defend against the artifact, which is considered real for all purposes.

Unshaped (Grace) Transformation

Cost: 20m, 3g; **Mins:** Staff 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Great Works of the (Grace)

Instead of forging new artifacts from Graces, this Charm permits the raksha to redefine the parameters of the shaping effect that defines a preexisting artifact. In other words, the raksha can reshape an existing artifact according to her wishes. This is actually a cluster of four Charms, one for each Grace, each of which must be learned separately. The Grace this Charm represents must match the Grace represented by its prerequisite.

Unshaped Cup Transformation: The raksha reshapes an existing oneiromantic spell.

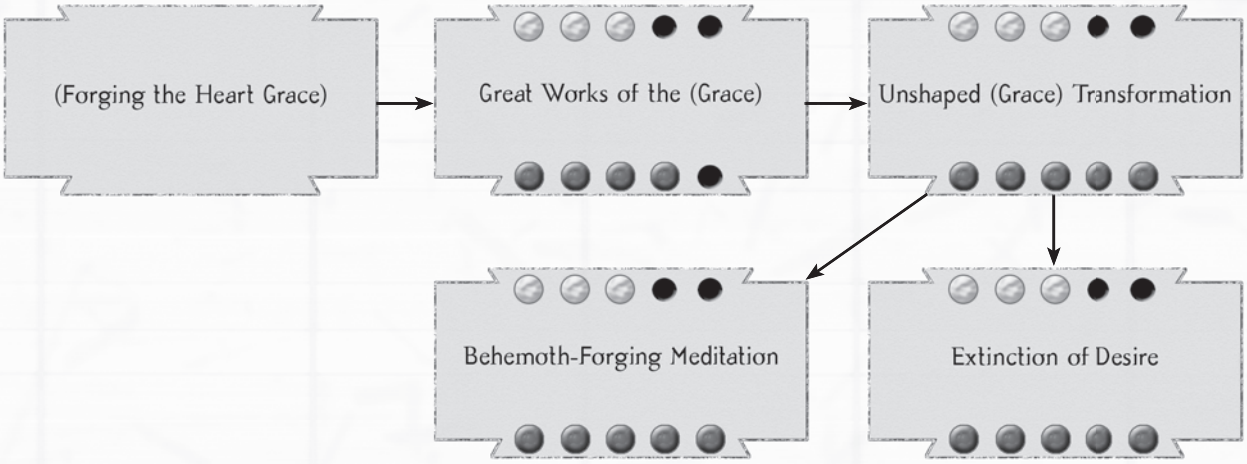
Unshaped Ring Transformation: The raksha reshapes an existing treasure.

Unshaped Staff Transformation: The raksha reshapes an existing adjuration.

Unshaped Sword Transformation: The raksha reshapes an existing behemoth.

In order to reshape the artifact, the raksha's player must roll (Intelligence + Occult) as a Staff-shaping action. This

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Charm cannot manipulate a Wyld-forged artifact with a rating above 5. The roll is an extended one, with each roll representing one story's worth of shaping. Once re-forged, the new artifact is a permanent artifact subject to the same Glamour Resistance strictures as in Great Works of the (Grace). The artifact's rating will remain the same—only through questing can an artifact's rating actually be improved. The difficulty for each roll is equal to the artifact's rating, and the total number of threshold successes needed for a successful shaping is as follows:

Artifact Rating	Total Threshold Successes Needed
•	3
••	5
•••	10
••••	30
•••••	60

As always, the Storyteller has final approval on what artifacts the raksha can forge with this Charm. This Charm can also be used to repair damaged artifacts or even resurrect slain behemoths. When used in that capacity, the difficulty of each roll is reduced by one, to a minimum of 1.

Behemoth-Forging Meditation

Cost: 20m, 3g; **Mins:** Staff 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Unshaped Sword Transformation

This Charm permits a raksha to incorporate any Creation-born she encounters in the Wyld directly into her narrative, casting him into the role of a minor behemoth. The raksha can impose one or more mutations on a Creation-born encountered within the Wyld. The raksha's player must roll (Intelligence + Occult) as a Staff-shaping action. A single success is enough to change the Creation-born's cosmetic appearance, and for every two successes rolled, the raksha can impose one point's worth of mutations on him. Creation-born with an Essence of 1 can serve as minor shaping weapons. The raksha can attune to any behemoth she forges and use it in Sword-shaping combat. Such a minor behemoth typically has the traits of a basic non-artifact Sword-shaping weapon (such as a horror, a mutant warleader and so forth). For each dot of Essence the affected Creation-born has in excess of 1, the raksha can either raise one of the behemoth's shaping weapon traits by one point or add an additional point of mutation. Mutants with 10 or more mutation points qualify as one-dot fey beasts (Artifact •).

The behemoth is considered a permanent work of glamour that can be brought into Creation without the need for an Evocation Charm. While in Creation, the behemoth is under the total control of the Fair Folk who forged it.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour and cannot transform any Creation-born whose (Stamina + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Intelligence into a behemoth. Once so transformed, however, the behemoth is considered a permanent work of glamour, and if its owner directs it to attack Creation-born beings, such attacks do not provoke Glamour Resistance in its victims.

Extinction of Desire

Cost: 1mp; **Mins:** Staff 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Unshaped Ring Transformation

The raksha achieves a perfected understanding of Nirvikalpa and redefines his own role in the drama of the Wyld. Upon activating this Charm, the raksha shapes himself into a Wyld artifact. The Charm destroys the raksha's Heart and Ring Graces instantly, along with her volition and awareness of self. She loses her Motivation and cannot spend Willpower for any purpose. She also loses the capacity to use any Charms of the Ring. Even though the raksha no longer has a Ring Grace, however, she does not suffer the Curse of Namelessness, nor does she cease to exist.

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Instead, the raksha becomes a sentient, if unmotivated, Wyld artifact under the total control of the first raksha to attune to her. Attunement costs one mote and requires six scenes of interaction. Once attuned, the other raksha can command the character as if in possession of her Heart Grace.

Raksha who become artifacts through this Charm gain the following benefits.

- The artifact ignores all shaping damage.
- The artifact gains +6L/6B soak against all attacks.
- The artifact becomes unbreakable, automatically converting all lethal damage to bashing damage before applying soak, unless the attack could damage one of the magical materials.
- If the raksha is slain in Creation, the artifact can be repaired as if it were a three-dot artifact.
- The raksha gains the benefits of the Mad God Mien Charm (see pp. 160-161).

An artifact created through this Charm is a permanent work of glamour that may be carried into Creation without an Evocation Charm and that does not provoke Glamour Resistance among Creation-born.

Society-Forging Charms

The raksha use these Charms to construct interpersonal relationships with other Fair Folk.

Oath Gossamer

Cost: 4g; **Mins:** Staff 1, Essence 1; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Shaping
Duration: One century
Prerequisite Charms: None

The raksha binds himself to another consenting raksha in a lasting relationship. The relationship can be anything—true love, bitter rivalry, an ongoing prank war, a hunter-prey relationship, et cetera. In every story in which the raksha actively pursues the relationship, he gains one bonus gossamer. If the raksha ever permanently ends the relationship, however, it instantly destroys his Staff Grace.

Eight-Corner Ring Binding

Cost: 1g per raksha; **Mins:** Staff 3, Essence 2;
Type: Simple
Keywords: Shaping
Duration: One century
Prerequisite Charms: Oath Gossamer

As per Oath Gossamer, except that the raksha can bind up to eight consenting raksha (including herself) into a network of Fair Folk, each of whom defines his relationship with the other seven at the Charm's activation. Each of the eight raksha gains one bonus gossamer in every scene in which that raksha actively pursues the relationship, but each risks the destruction of his Staff Grace if he deliberately ends any one of the relationships.

Domination Charms

These Charms can be used by a raksha to assert her dominance over Fair Folk and Creation-born alike. Even shaped reality itself can be suborned by the raksha's unique comprehension of the invisible connections between all that is.

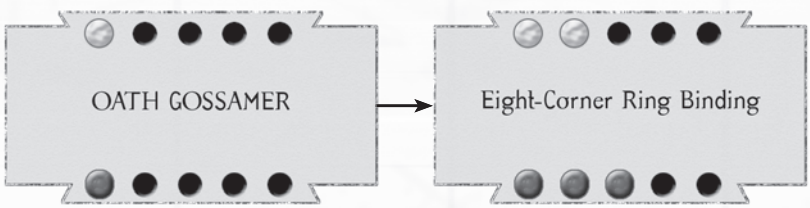
Beguilement

Cost: 5m, 3g; **Mins:** Staff 3, Essence 2;
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Glamour, Mutation, Shaping
Duration: Instant or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: None

The raksha's panache is so perfect, so effortless, so gallant, that it is impossible to refuse him. The raksha spends five motes and three gossamer, and his player rolls (Charisma + Socialize) as a Staff-shaping attack. If the attack is successful, the raksha can then add his Charisma to its raw damage. Additionally, a raksha who spends three gossamer in conjunction with an Assumption Charm gains the following innate power in Creation:

Innate Power (*Cost*: 10m, 1wp): In Creation, a raksha can use Beguilement to instill obedience in Creation-born through nothing more than his natural élan. This power, once activated, lasts for a scene, and during that time, any Creation-born the raksha encounters will accede to the raksha's most outrageous demands. She will not kill herself at his command or engage in any clearly suicidal course, but she can be persuaded to give him all her warm clothing in the middle of a blizzard; she will consent to being ravished or allowing her loved ones to be so violated; she will hurl herself into battle against the raksha's enemies, no matter how terrifying. Once activated, Beguilement affects every Creation-born the raksha encounters during the scene who is not protected by Glamour Resistance. Upon activating this power, the raksha's player must roll (Charisma + Socialize), and the effects of the Charm on ensorcelled characters will continue for one additional scene per success.

Glamour Resistance: Beguilement is a work of glamour. It automatically fails if the target's (Wits + Essence) *or* Willpower exceeds the raksha's Charisma. Also, Beguilement



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is a power carried through the raksha's voice and the power cannot be used in battle or on characters who cannot or will not listen, such as an angry mob.

Spite-Summoning Malediction

Cost: 3g; **Mins:** Staff 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Glamour, Mutation
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Beguilement

The raksha wields rumors, lies and the natural human tendency to scapegoat others as a subtle but powerful attack against his enemies. When used in conjunction with an Assumption Charm, Spite-Summoning Malediction confers upon the raksha the following innate power:

Innate Power (*Cost*: 1m; *Speed*: One long tick): The raksha must interact with the target socially and spend one mote. Then, his player rolls (Charisma + Socialize) against a difficulty equal to the target's Essence. This roll can benefit from Charms that improve Staff-shaping attacks and actions. If the roll is successful, the Charm causes the target to gain enemies at a frightening rate. For each extra success, the target loses one dot in one of the following Backgrounds (chosen by the raksha's player): Allies, Backing, Contacts, Followers, Influence or Mentor. If the successes exceed the target's points in those Backgrounds, the target also gains one or more meaningful enemies who actively oppose the target.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour. It cannot negate the Backgrounds of a Creation-born whose (Socialize + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Charisma, nor can it cause specific allies, contacts, followers or mentors whose (Socialize + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Charisma to turn against the affected person.

Tainted Creature Command

Cost: 0g; **Mins:** Staff 3, Essence 1; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Glamour, Mutation
Duration: Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Shape-Forged Servant

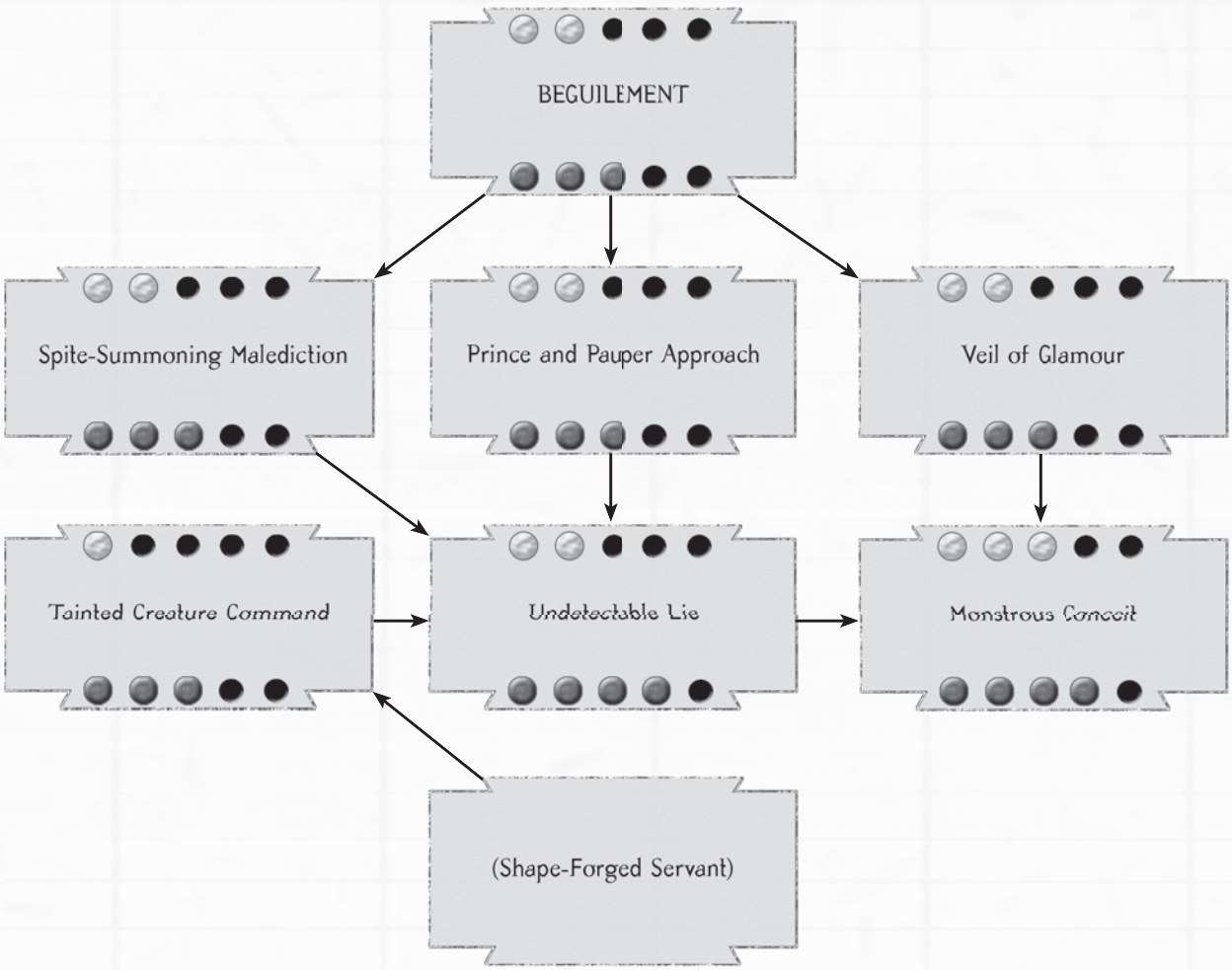
Calling upon the power of the Staff and the birthright of the raksha that it represents, this Charm permits a raksha to assert her dominance over lesser creatures of chaos. The raksha incorporates a mutation into herself that demands obedience from any beings she encounters who have been touched by the Wyld. The Charm confers the following innate power:

Innate Power (*Cost*: 8m, 1wp): Whenever the raksha interacts with any Creation-born human or animal that possesses at least one Wyld mutation, with any natural beast of the Wyld, or with any commoner raksha whose Essence is less than half of the character's own, she can activate this power. When the raksha asserts her authority over a valid target such as those just described, make a Willpower roll for the targeted creature with an internal penalty equal to the total number of mutation points the creature possesses. If the roll garners no successes, the creature will be compelled to obey the raksha in all things for one season or until the raksha terminates her Assumption, whichever comes first.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour that cannot compel obedience from any mutated Creation-born (including Wyld barbarians and mutants) whose



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(Wits + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Charisma. Furthermore, all Exalted are completely immune to this Charm, as are all Creation-born Essence-wielders of any sort.

Prince and Pauper Approach

Cost: 1g; **Mins:** Staff 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Supplemental
Keywords: Glamour, Mutation
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Beguilement

The gifts of Nirvikalpa disrupt communication as well as facilitate it, poisoning relationships and spreading mistrust with ease. When used in conjunction with an Assumption Charm, Prince and Pauper Approach confers upon the raksha the following innate power:

Innate Power (*Cost*: 5m; *Speed*: One long tick): The raksha must interact with her target socially for a brief time before spending five motes of Essence. This power lets the raksha pollute the target's aura with the scent of lies and misdirection. As a result, people who interact with the target will be less inclined to trust him and more suspicious of his motives. For the next season (or until the raksha terminates her Assumption), the target's player suffers a -2 external penalty on all social rolls based on persuasion, as well as all rolls to make use of influence-related Backgrounds such as Backing, Contacts or Influence. Additionally, whenever the target's truthfulness is called into question, any attempt to discern whether he is lying suffers a -2 external penalty on Investigation rolls if the target is telling the truth (thereby making it more likely he will be disbelieved) and gain two automatic successes on Investigation rolls if the target is lying (to make it more likely that the deception is uncovered).

Glamour Resistance: This power is a work of glamour. It cannot affect targets whose (Socialize + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Manipulation, nor can it affect Creation-born investigating the target whose (Investigation + Essence) exceed the raksha's Manipulation.

Undetectable Lie

Cost: 5m, 1wp, 3g; **Mins:** Staff 4, Essence 2;
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Compulsion, Glamour, Mutation, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Spite-Summoning Malediction, Tainted Creature Command, Prince and Pauper Approach

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In the Wyld, the raksha understands that words such as "truth" and "lie" are irrelevancies. The only real truths are those lies proven true by the intensity of one's belief in them. This Charm permits a raksha to incorporate an indisputable truth into a shaping attack. The raksha's player spends five motes and one Willpower and then rolls (Manipulation + Socialize) as a Staff-shaping attack. This Charm allows the raksha to convert all post-soak damage dice into automatic successes. Additionally, a raksha who spends three gossamer in conjunction with an Assumption Charm gains the benefit of the following innate power in Creation:

Innate Power (*Cost*: 5m, 1wp; *Speed*: 4 long ticks): The raksha's player must roll (Manipulation + Presence) against a targeted Creation-born's MDV. Although this aspect of the power is not a shaping action, it can benefit from appropriate Charms that improve Staff-shaping rolls. If the roll succeeds, it triggers a Compulsion effect in the Creation-born. The raksha can utter a single statement to the Creation-born, who is then compelled to believe it, no matter how absurd or improbable the statement is. A mortal told that she was blind would lose her sight. An Exalt told that his powers had been stripped away would be unable to use his Charms or other magical abilities. The Charm cannot allow people to do the impossible, but it will cause them to rationalize away their inability to do the impossible. If the raksha tells a mortal he can fly, the mortal will not suddenly take to the air, but he would become alarmed at his inability to do so, and he might also be amenable to suggestions to "jump off that cliff to get more lift." Resisting this unnatural mental influence costs five Willpower, all of which must be paid at once.

Glamour Resistance: The innate power conferred by this Charm is a work of glamour that cannot persuade Creation-born whose (Wits + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Manipulation.

Veil of Glamour

Cost: 5m, 1+g; **Mins:** Staff 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-OK, Glamour, Shaped-Only, Shaping
Duration: One action, scene or day per success, as appropriate
Prerequisite Charms: Beguilement

The gates of Nirvikalpa open wide, and the raksha pours gossamer into Creation to demonstrate the infinite possibility of the Wyld. Or at least she appears to do so as far as weak-willed mortals can tell. This Charm allows the raksha to perform "quick-and-dirty" shaping effects in Creation, fashioning Essence and gossamer into weak simulacra of the sorts of items she could fashion perfectly in the Wyld.

Mechanically, this Charm superficially duplicates the effects of several Wyld-Based Crafting Charms. When creating living creatures, this Charm uses the rules for Shape-Forged Servant (see p. 200). When forging gossamer objects, it uses the rules for Gossamer-Forging Art (see p. 194). When enchanting territories or objects, it uses the rules for Translucent Dream Sheathing Technology (see pp. 198-199). When fashioning transport vehicles, it uses Unreal Shipwright's Method (see pp. 195-196).

The Essence requirement for this Charm is always five motes, and this Essence is committed for the duration of the Charm. The gossamer requirement is calculated according to the Charm being mimicked but is always at least one gossamer. Despite their similarities, Veil of Glamour is generally inferior to each of the aforementioned Charms and differs from them in several important ways, some good and some bad.

Most notably, the creation of a work of glamour through this Charm is instant, but the item or being that is forged automatically vanishes at the end of the Charm's duration. This duration is determined by what "seed," if any, is used as a basis for the glamour. For example, the seed of a minion might be an insect or a simple animal, while the seed of a Wyld vessel might be a pumpkin or a leaky old boat.

In general, each item forged with this Charm must have as its seed a mundane item of Creation, in which case the Charm lasts for one scene per success on the player's (Intelligence + Craft [Glamour]) roll. This roll is considered a Ring- or Staff-shaping roll for purposes of Charms that can improve shaping rolls, but with a good stunt, a raksha might be able to treat the roll as a Cup- or Sword-shaping action instead. The raksha can add the Accuracy of any appropriate, Storyteller-sanctioned shaping weapon to the roll.

If the raksha uses a particularly appropriate seed, as determined by the Storyteller, the glamour lasts for one day per success. On the other hand, if the raksha totally forgoes the use of a seed and crafts the item from nothingness, the result lasts for one action per success.

Glamour Resistance: Items created through this Charm are works of glamour that have no effect on creatures whose (Wits + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Intelligence. Items created through Veil of Glamour can never be made into permanent works of glamour.

Monstrous Conceit

Cost: 0g; **Mins:** Staff 4, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Glamour, Shaped-Only, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Undetectable Lie, Veil of Glamour

The raksha can craft a work of glamour that exists only within the mind of a consenting Creation-born target. Any raksha who knows this Charm gains the following innate power in Creation:

Innate Power (*Cost*: 5m): This power duplicates the basic effects of Veil of Glamour except that the Essence spent on the Charm is not committed and the work of glamour can interact with only a single target. The glamour is not only unreal but imperceptible to Creation-born other than the target, but it is absolutely real to an affected target. Although this Charm has a gossamer cost of 0, the raksha is treated as having spent up to his Essence in gossamer for purposes of

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determining whether the requirements of any of the other shaping Charms being mimicked have been met.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour. It cannot affect a Creation-born whose (Perception + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Intelligence. The glamour cannot even be perceived by Creation-born other than the one who is the target of this Charm absent effects such as All-Encompassing Sorcerer's Sight.

Charms of the Sword

The shinma Nishkriya defines conflict, the means by which raksha of opposing identities assert themselves against one another. In addition to being the architect of violence among the Fair Folk, Nishkriya is also the prince of thieves. Raksha define their possessions as being a part of their identities, and stealing one of a raksha's possessions is a wound every bit as real as chopping off one of his arms or legs.

Sword Combat Charms

These Charms facilitate Sword-shaping attacks and defense. Unless expressly stated otherwise, these shaping combat Charms have no utility in Creation.

Scourging Wind Raid

Cost: 3m, 1wp, 0g; **Mins:** Sword 2, Essence 1;
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Glamour, Mutation, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Any Sword Grace Excellency

The raksha strikes like lightning, snatching his prize out of his startled enemy's hands. Upon activating this Charm, the raksha names one of the target's possessions and makes a Sword- or Staff-shaping attack at +2 difficulty. If the attack succeeds, the raksha automatically asserts a claim on the named object, which instantly passes into his possession. This effect is in addition to the attack's normal damage. This Charm cannot be used to steal Graces, artifacts or hearthstones, but it can be used to steal a shaping weapon, even a readied one, which does not fit into one of those categories.

In addition, a raksha who knows this Charm gains the following innate power in Creation:

Innate Power (*Cost*: 3m, 1wp; *Speed*: 3) The raksha becomes a preternaturally skilled pickpocket or thief in Creation. When attempting to acquire an inanimate object currently in the possession of a Creation-born (whether a bag of gold, a sword or the Creation-born's pants), the attempt automatically succeeds unless the target of the theft has Essence 2 or higher. If the target does have Essence 2 or higher, the raksha instead adds automatic successes to his Larceny or Stealth rolls equal to his Sword Grace. Furthermore, neither the victim nor any potential witnesses who fail to detect the theft will be capable of noticing the loss for a number of scenes equal to the raksha's Essence. (This protection fails if circumstances call attention to the theft, such as if the victim goes to pay for his meal and finds he has no gold, he enters battle and finds he has no sword, or he walks out into the street half-naked to the jeers of the crowd.) This Charm cannot be used to steal a magical item whose owner is attuned to it.

Glamour Resistance: This Charm is a work of glamour that cannot affect Creation-born whose (Perception + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Dexterity.

Dream-Sacrificing Method

Cost: 1wp, 1+g; **Mins:** Sword 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Scourging Wind Raid

Sometimes, even the sharpest blade must yield to the power of a well-timed bribe. The raksha can negate all the damage inflicted by a single Sword-shaping attack by sacrificing gossamer. For each point of gossamer expended, two damage successes are negated, with fractional gossamer lost. The sacrificed gossamer instantly becomes a possession of the attacker.

Unparalleled Terror Technique

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Sword 2, Essence 1; **Type:** Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Any Sword Grace Excellency

The raksha breathes a nightmare into her blade to haunt the dreams of her adversary. This Charm augments a single Sword- or Staff-shaping attack. If the attack succeeds, the raksha counts extra successes twice for purposes of calculating the raw damage pool.

Pincer of Transcendent Time and Fate

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Sword 2, Essence 1; **Type:** Extra Action
Keywords: Combo-Basic, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Any Sword Grace Excellency

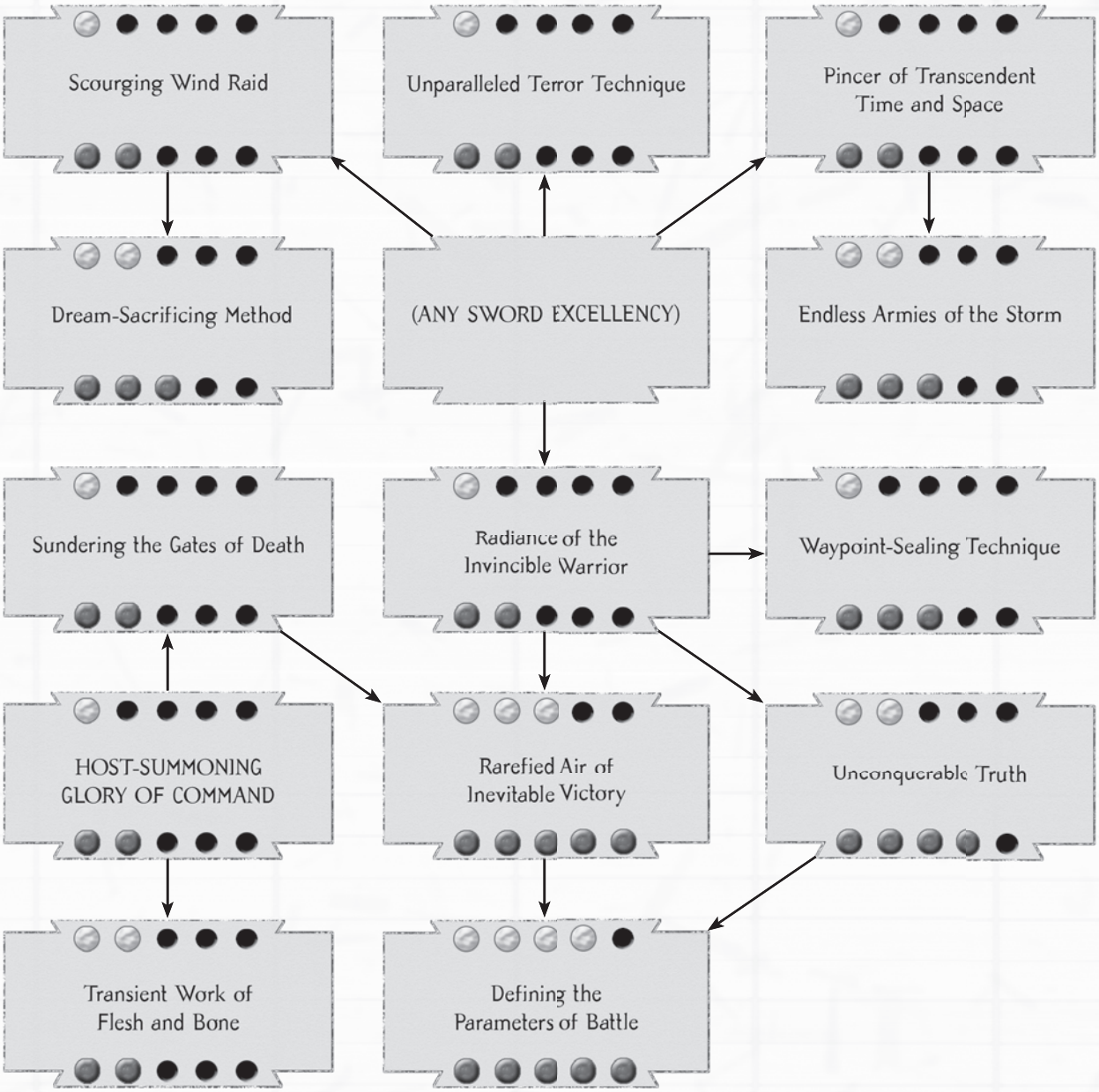
The raksha speaks the names of two aspects of Nishkriya: Aardra, who drenches the Wyld with blood, and Shushka, who dries it. This Charm uses the raksha's shaping action to launch two Sword-shaping attacks, two Staff-shaping attacks or one of each type. Each attack is at the raksha's full dice pool.

Endless Armies of the Storm

Cost: 2m per attack, 1wp; **Mins:** Sword 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Extra Action
Keywords: Combo-Basic, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Pincer of Transcendent Time and Fate

The raksha calls upon the Sword of Nishkriya to endlessly subdivide her own soul. Thus bolstered by an infinite army, the raksha marches forth against her enemies. This Charm lets the raksha make one Sword- or Staff-shaping attack with her full dice pool for every two motes of Essence spent. The raksha's maximum number of attacks under this Charm equals (her permanent Essence + 1).

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Host-Summoning Glory of Command

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Sword 1, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

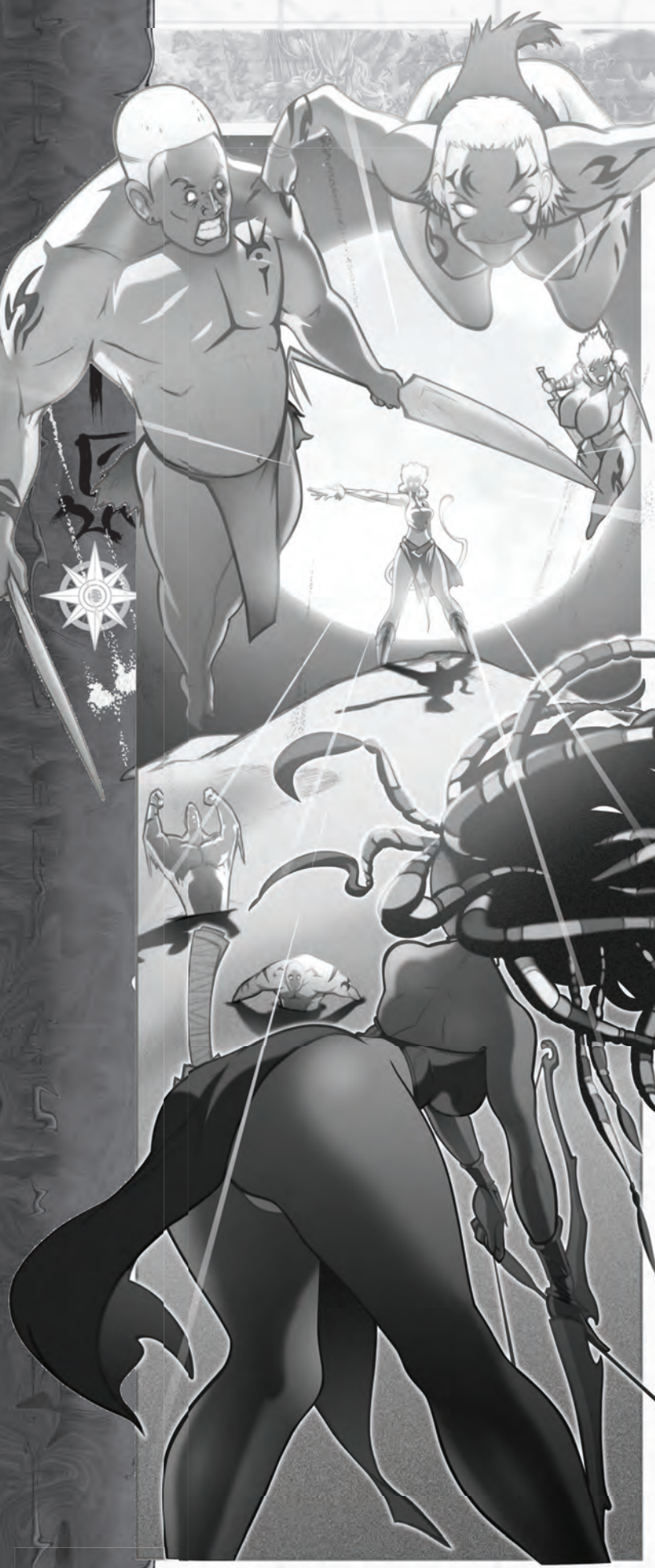
The raksha's tale of battle is an engrossing one, populated with a mighty cast of varied and interesting characters always at the ready when action calls. The raksha can instantly ready any Sword- or Staff-shaping weapon in her possession. She can use this Charm reflexively at any point, even simultaneously with a Join Shaping Battle roll.

Sundering the Gates of Death

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Sword 2, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Host-Summoning Glory of Command

In the Wyld, death has no victory over the raksha, nor the grave a sting. If the raksha's army is scattered, he can instantly call it back. If his behemoth dies, he can resurrect it. If the raksha himself is brutally cut down, his body mutilated by the force of the assault, he can rise once more, ready for battle. This Charm instantly readies a Sword- or Staff-shaping weapon, even if that weapon has been slain, destroyed or otherwise removed as a viable weapon. If he is "killed" through a shaping attack, the raksha can instantly restore himself to life without the need for a shaping action of his own. The raksha can use this Charm reflexively at any point, even simultaneously with a Join Shaping Battle roll. This Charm cannot restore beings who have been permanently slain.

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Transient Work of Flesh and Bone

Cost: 6m, 1g; **Mins:** Sword 2, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-Basic, Glamour, Shaping
Duration: One shaping battle or one scene
Prerequisite Charms: Host-Summoning Glory of Command

This Charm permits the raksha to summon into existence, whether within the Wyld or in Creation, a monster or a small army of extras to fight on her behalf. In the Wyld, it allows the raksha to create a Sword-shaping weapon out of Essence and glamour. The monster is a lumbering beast with a Speed of 5. The raksha's player can divide (the raksha's Sword Grace x 2) among the monster's Accuracy, Defense and lethal damage. The army is a unit of about 500 extras that moves quickly but without the monster's raw, overbearing power. The army has a Speed of 3, but the raksha's player can divide only the raksha's Sword Grace among the army-weapon's Accuracy, Defense and lethal damage. In either case, the weapon has a rate equal to the raksha's Willpower. The shaping weapon lasts for a single shaping battle.

In Creation, any monster summoned into existence by this Charm is usually a behemoth or a fey beast built with a number of mutation points equal to twice the raksha's Sword Grace. An army created by this Charm uses the traits for elite troops with a Magnitude equal to the raksha's Sword Grace. The monster or army endures for one scene in Creation.

Glamour Resistance: A monster or army fashioned through this Charm is a work of glamour. It cannot attack, defend against or soak attacks from any Creation-born whose (Wits + Essence) exceeds the raksha's War. The army cannot engage in mass combat against units whose (Drill + Might) exceeds the raksha's War.

Radiance of the Invincible Warrior

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Sword 2, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Any Sword Grace Excellency

Death and destruction, for all their boldness, fear to approach the raksha. The raksha can reflexively ignore all penalties to his Shaping DV against a single Sword- or Staff-shaping attack. The raksha must be aware of the attack.

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Waypoint-Sealing Technique

Cost: 3m, 1wp, 0g; **Mins:** Sword 3, Essence 1;
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Glamour, Mutation, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Radiance of the Invincible Warrior

Such is the power of the Sword that all who are wise seek to stay out of its reach. This Charm lets the raksha prevent his opponent from entering the same waypoint in which he stands. Whenever an opponent seeks to enter a waypoint the raksha occupies or controls, the raksha's player rolls (Dexterity + Melee) as an undodgeable Sword-shaping attack. If this attack overcomes the opponent's Shaping DV, the opponent cannot enter the waypoint for a number of actions equal to the raksha's Sword.

In addition, the raksha who knows this Charm gains access to the following innate power in Creation:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 3m, 1wp): The raksha assumes a defensive posture that Creation-born fear to challenge. The raksha's player rolls (Dexterity + Melee) or (Dexterity + Martial Arts). For the rest of the scene, any Creation-born character whose Valor does not exceed the raksha's successes is unable to approach the raksha closely enough to engage her in close combat. The Creation-born can still make ranged attacks, and he can overcome the effect to make Martial Arts or Melee attacks by spending one Willpower per attack. When the Creation-born has spent three Willpower, the effect is overcome completely. The raksha can advance toward affected characters and force them to back away, but the effect ends if she either backs the characters into a corner or engages in any hostile action against them.

Glamour Resistance: The innate power aspect of this Charm is a work of glamour that cannot affect characters whose (Valor + Essence) exceed the raksha's Dexterity.

Unconquerable Truth

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Sword 4, Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Radiance of the Invincible Warrior

The tale of the raksha is one of dominance and flawless action and reaction. This Charm lets the raksha parry any one Sword- or Staff-shaping attack with (his full Shaping DV + 6). The raksha can also apply this defense to shaping attacks that are normally unblockable.

Rarefied Air of Inevitable Victory

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Sword 5, Essence 3;
Type: Simple
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: One shaping battle
Prerequisite Charms: Sundering the Gates of Death, Radiance of the Invincible Warrior

The raksha who knows this Charm has written the story of his own invincibility and will brook no challenge to that narrative. For the duration of a single shaping battle, the raksha ignores all onslaught penalties inflicted on him by other attackers during the course of shaping combat. The raksha also reduces the defense penalty imposed by each of the raksha's actions by one.

Defining the Parameters of Battle

Cost: 5m, 1wp *or* 1g; **Mins:** Sword 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-OK, Glamour, Mutation, Shaping
Duration: One shaping battle
Prerequisite Charms: Unconquerable Truth, Rarefied Air of Inevitable Victory

The tale of the raksha's invincibility is now writ large in the fabric of the Wyld and is known to all, such that even the Creation-born spread his legends. After spending five motes and one Willpower, the raksha can reflexively spend one gossamer to negate all penalties to his Shaping DV against any Sword- or Staff-shaping attacks for the rest of the current shaping battle. Such magical parries do not count as Charm use. Furthermore, the raksha increases the relevant DV by six against each incoming attack. In addition, if a raksha who knows this Charm spends one gossamer in conjunction with an Assumption Charm, he gains the following innate power:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 5m, 1wp): For the duration of the scene, the raksha can negate all penalties to his Parry DV *and* increase his Parry DV by six at a cost of one gossamer per attack parried, even if the attack is normally unblockable. This Charm affects the raksha himself and does not provoke Glamour Resistance.

All-Inclusive Nightmare Defense

Cost: 3m, 0g; **Mins:** Sword 2, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Any Sword Grace Excellency

The raksha unleashes terror and doubt on his enemy, dispersing her forces and laying low her creatures. In order to use this Charm, the raksha must first successfully defend against a Sword-shaping attack with his Sword Shaping DV. If the sum of (the attacker's successes + her Essence) is less than the raksha's Sword Shaping DV, the attacker's Sword- or Staff-shaping weapon (as appropriate) is removed from readiness. Usually, this takes the form of the relevant monsters or armies being slain or routed. Additionally, a raksha who knows this Charm gains the following innate power in Creation:

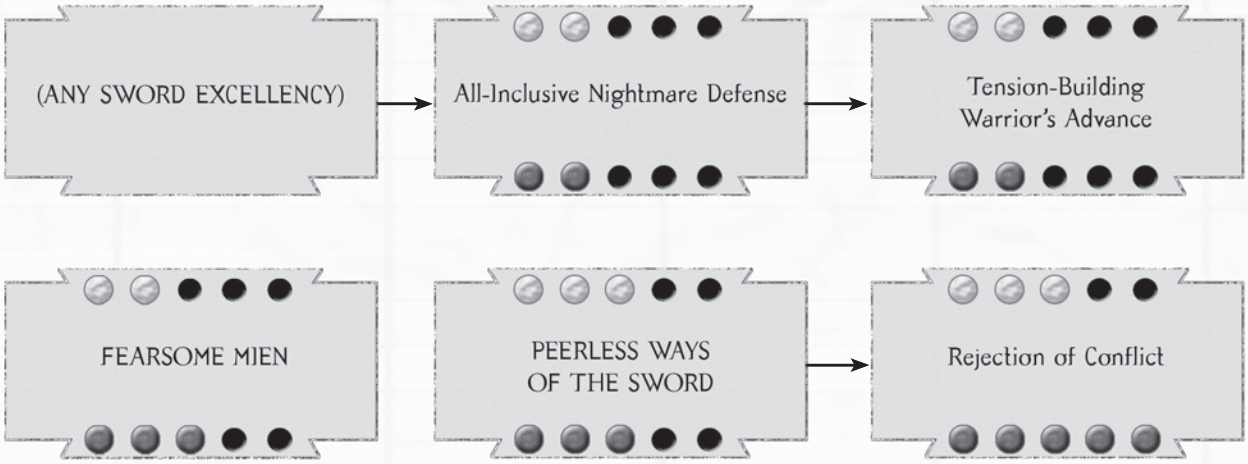
Innate Power (*Cost:* 3m): Whenever the raksha successfully parries a melee attack, he can spend three motes to reflexively try to disarm his attacker (see **Exalted**, p. 158) at his full dice pool.

Tension-Building Warrior's Advance

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Sword 2, Essence 2; **Type:** Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: All-Inclusive Nightmare Defense

The raksha speaks the name of Danda the Punisher, one of Nishkriya's aspects, and the name's reverberations

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confound her enemies. This Charm supplements a Sword- or Staff-shaping attack, reducing her enemy's Sword- and Staff-shaping DV ratings by an amount equal to her Essence. If the attack succeeds, its effects also remove the enemy's shaping weapon from readiness. This Charm cannot be used in conjunction with a surprise attack.

Fearsome Mien

Cost: 5m, 1wp, 2g; **Mins:** Sword 3, Essence 2;
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Glamour, Mutation, Shaping
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: None

The raksha adopts a terrifying appearance that unnerves and frightens his enemies. When the raksha is in the Wyld, his player must spend five motes and one Willpower and make a successful Sword-shaping attack against an enemy. If the attack succeeds, that enemy suffers an internal penalty on all Sword- and Staff-shaping attacks against the raksha for the rest of the scene equal to the raksha's Sword. In addition, a raksha who knows this Charm can spend two gossamer in conjunction with an Assumption Charm to gain the following innate power:

Innate Power (*Cost*: 5m, 1wp): Once this power is activated, any Creation-born who interacts with the raksha suffers an internal penalty equal to the raksha's Sword on all dice pools due to fear for the duration of the scene.

Glamour Resistance: The innate power is a work of glamour that does not affect Creation-born whose (Valor + Essence) exceeds the highest of the raksha's Sword Abilities.

Peerless Ways of the Sword

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Sword 3, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

As per Peerless Ways of the Cup, except that the raksha can parry a single shaping attack made by any Grace with his Sword Parry DV.

Rejection of Conflict

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Cup 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Peerless Ways of the Sword

As per Rejection of Desire, except that the raksha can perfectly parry a single Sword-shaping attack.

Transitory Mutation Charms

These Charms permit a raksha to temporarily incorporate certain mutations into her form. These Charms are specifically designed to permit a raksha who already has an active Assumption Charm to add them to her form with a standard Sword-shaping action and without dismissing and then reactivating the Assumption. Most Charms carrying the Mutation keyword can confer mutation benefits only if they are activated in the Wyld in conjunction with an Assumption Charm. If one of these Charms *is* activated in conjunction with an Assumption Charm, the raksha need only pay the associated gossamer cost. Unless stated otherwise, none of the benefits acquired through these Charms provoke Glamour Resistance among Creation-born.

Pox

Cost: 2m, 1g; **Mins:** Sword 1, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Mutation
Duration: One day or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: None

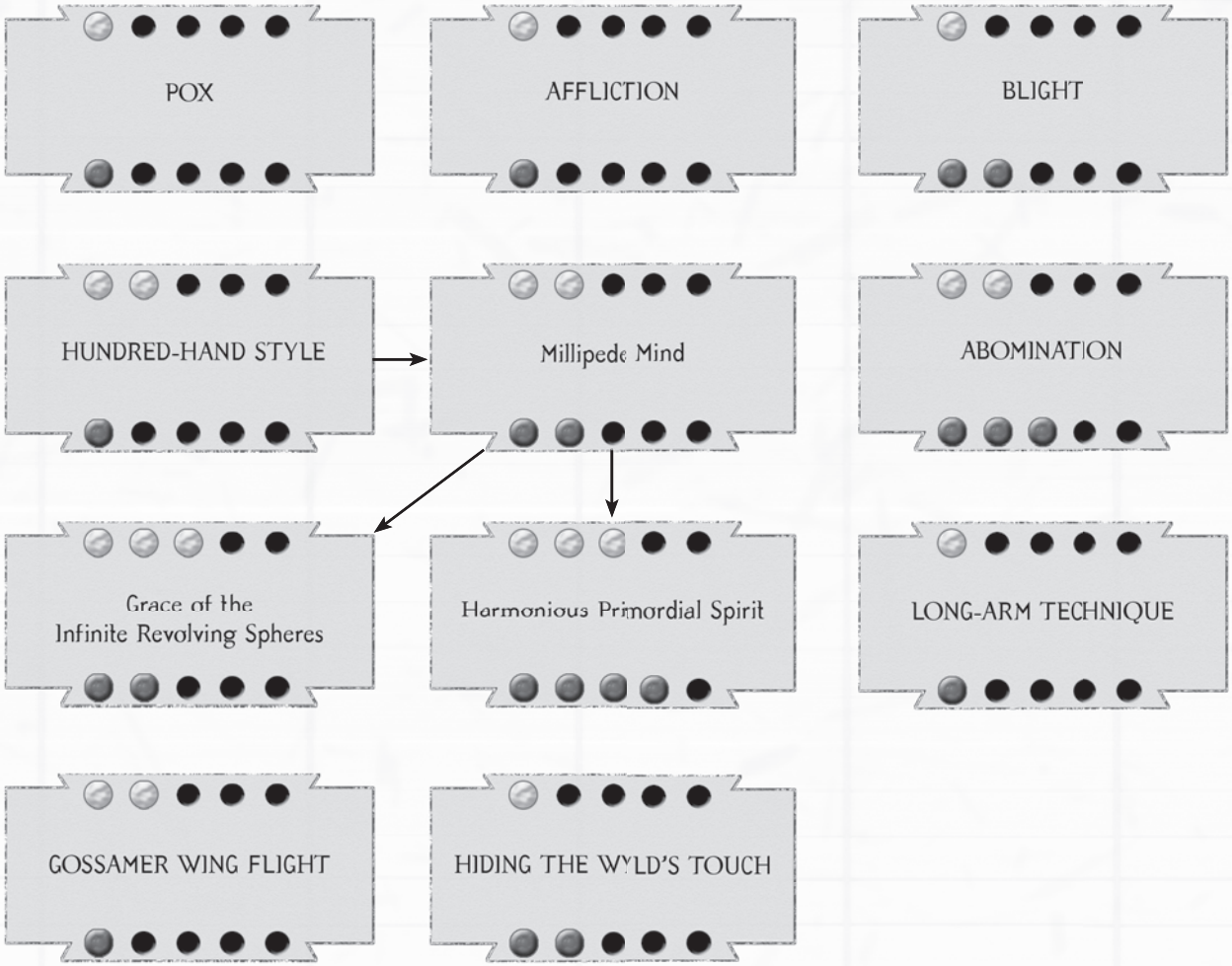
This Charm allows the raksha to temporarily acquire a single pox. Each time this Charm is purchased, it allows access to a different pox.

Affliction

Cost: 4m, 2g; **Mins:** Sword 1, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Mutation
Duration: One day or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: None

This Charm allows the raksha to temporarily acquire a single affliction. Each time this Charm is purchased, it allows access to a different affliction.

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Blight
Cost: 10m, 4g; **Mins:** Sword 2, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Mutation
Duration: One day or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: None

This Charm allows the raksha to temporarily acquire a single blight. Each time this Charm is purchased, it allows access to a different blight.

Abomination
Cost: 15m, 6g; **Mins:** Sword 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Mutation
Duration: One day or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: None

This Charm allows the raksha to temporarily acquire a single abomination. Each time this Charm is purchased, it allows access to a different abomination.

Hundred-Hand Style
Cost: 4m, 2g; **Mins:** Sword 1, Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Mutation
Duration: One day or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: None

This mutation is often acquired by raksha with multiple heads or extra limbs, but its benefits can accrue to any raksha. A raksha who carries this mutation reduces the penalty for multiple actions by one to a minimum of 0.

Millipede Mind
Cost: 8m, 4g; **Mins:** Sword 2, Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Mutation, Stackable
Duration: One day or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Hundred-Hand Style

As per Hundred-Hand Style, except that multiple action penalties are reduced by two to a minimum of 0. The benefits of this mutation can stack with those of Hundred-Hand Style, and both Charms can be activated simultaneously without the need for a Combo.

Grace of the Infinite Revolving Spheres
Cost: 10m, 1wp, 4g; **Mins:** Sword 2, Essence 3;
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Mutation, Stackable
Duration: One day or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Millipede Mind

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When a raksha carrying this mutation takes multiple actions (including flurries), the first five actions undertaken suffer no multiple-action penalties at all. Beginning with the sixth action, all normal penalties apply. Therefore, in a seven-attack flurry, the first five actions suffer no multiple action penalties, but the sixth will suffer a 12-die penalty and the seventh a 13-die penalty. The benefits of this mutation stack with those of Millipede Mind and Hundred-Hand Style, and any or all of these Charms can be activated simultaneously without the need for a Combo.

Harmonious Primordial Spirit

Cost: 4m, 1g, 1xp; **Mins:** Sword 4, Essence 3;
Type: Simple
Keywords: None
Duration: Special
Prerequisite Charms: Millipede Mind

The raksha embeds one of his Graces into a consenting commoner raksha, conveying certain benefits. First, the commoner raksha gains the characteristics of a heroic commoner if she wasn't one already. Second, the commoner raksha becomes utterly loyal to the one who embedded the Grace and at all times knows his will and obeys it completely. Third, both the raksha who embedded the Grace and the commoner in whom it was embedded have access to this Grace and can use it independently for satisfying Charm minimum requirements and for establishing the character's damage track for that Grace. The raksha who used this Charm can reclaim his Grace at any time but must be in the physical presence of the commoner raksha to do so. If the commoner raksha is slain (permanently or not), the Charm ends immediately, and the commoner's slayer may take possession of the Grace. Otherwise, the Charm is effectively permanent.

Long-Arm Technique

Cost: 1m, 1g per 2 yards; **Mins:** Sword 1, Essence 1;
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Mutation
Duration: One day or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: None

This mutation allows the raksha to stretch her limbs at will up to two yards for every point of gossamer spent in the activation of this Charm. The raksha cannot spend more gossamer in activating this Charm than her Essence. A raksha who has this Charm active at any level applies the Reach tag to all attacks (see **Exalted**, p. 373). Also, for every two yards by which the raksha's legs are extended, add two to her Move and Dash rates.

Gossamer Wing Flight

Cost: 4m, 2g; **Mins:** Sword 1, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-OK, Mutation
Duration: One day or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: None

This mutation grants the raksha a set of fully functional wings shaped from the mixed materials of both Wyld and Creation. Usually, nobles build their wings from one of the elements while commoners build theirs to resemble those of insects or birds. Typically, a raksha's wingspan is at least as wide as the raksha is tall, and the raksha must be able to spread and flap his wings to fly. The raksha's regular flight speed is equal to his normal Move or Dash rate. He ascends at half that rate and can dive at twice it.

Gossamer wings are clumsy, inflicting a -2 internal penalty on all Dexterity-based normal actions while airborne. If the raksha's player either purchases this Charm a second time or spends twice the normal activation cost, this penalty is negated.

Note: The Wings abomination confers wings that are far more effective than gossamer wings, but are much more expensive in terms of Essence (15m) and gossamer (6g).

Hiding the Wyld's Touch

Cost: 10m, 1wp, 4g; **Mins:** Sword 2, Essence 1;
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Mutation
Duration: One month or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: None

Unusually for a Wyld mutation, this mutation makes the raksha seem… normal. The raksha's body language and expressive techniques seem both human and familiar, reminding those Creation-born who encounter him of old acquaintances. This mutation grants two automatic successes on all mundane social rolls against the Creation-born. Even if the raksha is hideous, the mutation still encourages Creation-born to notice her "inner beauty." This Charm does not provoke Glamour Resistance. Despite its benefits, it does not affect Creation-born directly but simply enables the raksha to better interact with them.

Permanent Mutation Charms

These Mutation Charms can be acquired only as permanent mutations.

Armament of Flesh

Cost: 2mp; **Mins:** Sword 1, Essence 1; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: Mutation, Stackable
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: None

The raksha can incorporate some type of natural weaponry into his form—fangs, claws, horns, a forked tongue, a stinging tail, etc.—that he can use to supplement an unarmed Martial Arts attack. When the player chooses the weapon, he divides the raksha's Essence up among the weapon's Accuracy, Defense, Damage (which is lethal) and Rate. As the raksha's Essence improves, he may continue to improve his natural weapon's traits. The weapon's Speed is always 5. Players can purchase this Charm up to once per dot of the raksha's Sword. Each time the player takes this Charm, he can add an additional weapon or add his Essence again to improve the quality of an existing one.

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ARMAMENT OF FLESH

SURPASSING EXCELLENCE

GLORIOUS HERO FORM

RACING DRAGON SPEED

ROOT OF THE PERFECTED LOTUS

Surpassing Excellence

Cost: 1mp; **Mins:** Sword 1, Essence 1; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: Mutation, Stackable
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: None

Standing at the threshold between reality and possibility, the raksha carves a mutation in the form of supernal skill into her nature. This mutation grants the raksha a two-die specialty to the Ability of her player's choice. This mutation-specialty *does not* count against the normal three-die cap on specialties. A raksha can purchase a normal three-die specialty and then purchase this mutation to raise the total specialty bonus to +5. Players can purchase this Charm up to once per dot of the raksha's Sword, but any particular Ability can benefit from this Charm only once.

Celestial Martial Arts?

Acquiring the Root of the Perfected Lotus mutation fundamentally alters a raksha's body, mind and soul, effectively allowing her to mimic the spiritual awareness of a Dragon-Blooded martial artist. Theoretically, having mastered the Root of the Perfected Lotus, a raksha can go on to pursue the Bulb of the Perfected Lotus and possibly learn Celestial Martial Arts. Needless to say, a sifu willing to train a raksha in Creation's deadliest martial arts is hard to come by. Certainly, no Immaculate sifu would consider teaching a raksha, and to date, no raksha is known to have demonstrated any martial arts techniques above the Terrestrial level. Whether such self-discipline is even possible for the mercurial raksha is an open question, and one left to the Storyteller's discretion. At a minimum, a raksha character should never be allowed to begin the game with Celestial Martial Arts, and learning such techniques, assuming it is possible at all, should require extensive roleplaying.

Glorious Hero Form

Cost: 2mp; **Mins:** Sword 2, Essence 2; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: Mutation, Stackable
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: None

Placing his own body in the crucible of possibility, the raksha transcends the limits of his own perfection. This mutation permanently increases the raksha's Attributes in one of the following ways each time it is purchased:

- The raksha gains one dot of Strength and one dot of Stamina.
- The raksha gains one dot of Intelligence and one dot of Perception.
- The raksha gains one dot of Charisma and one dot of Appearance.
- The raksha gains one dot of Dexterity.
- The raksha gains one dot of Wits.
- The raksha gains one dot of Manipulation.

Players can purchase this mutation up to once per dot of the raksha's Sword. Each time an Attribute rating increases as a result of this Charm, the character's maximum rating in that Attribute also increases by one.

Racing Dragon Speed

Cost: 1mp; **Mins:** Sword 1, Essence 1; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: Mutation, Stackable
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: None

The raksha moves at the speed of dreams. This mutation permanently increases the raksha's Move and Dash rates by five yards. Players can purchase this mutation up to once per dot of the raksha's Sword.

Root of the Perfected Lotus

Cost: 4mp; **Mins:** Sword 2, Essence 2; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: Mutation
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: None

This mutation, cunningly stolen from Creation during the First Age, permits the raksha to replicate the decades of

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meditation and training needed for initiation into Terrestrial martial arts through a single mutation. This mutation allows the raksha to learn Terrestrial-level martial arts, acquiring new Martial Arts Charms at the same experience point cost paid by Dragon-Blooded.

Shaping Stances

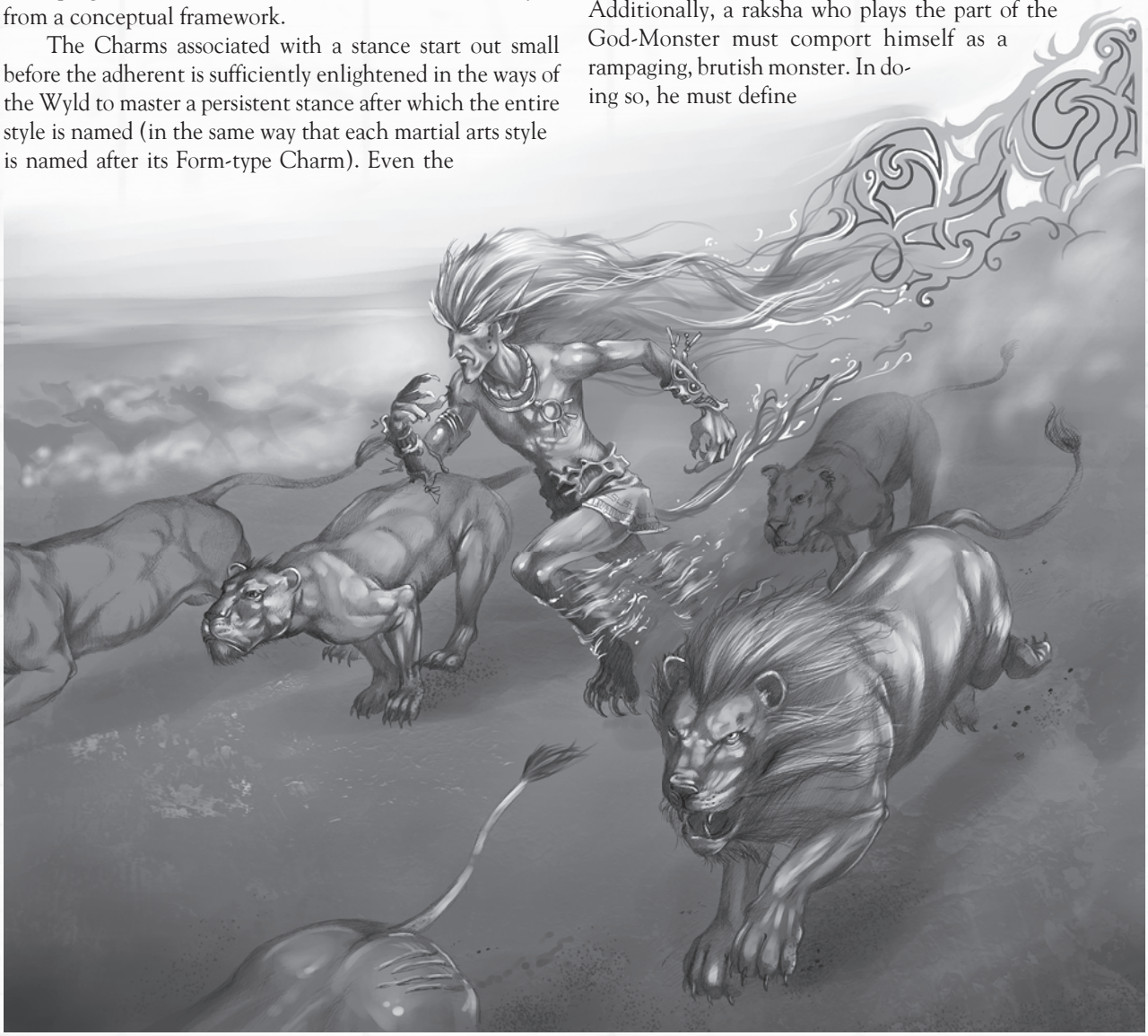
A shaping stance is the heart of a cascade of related shaping Charms developed by the raksha to facilitate their narrative magic. From the perspective of the Fair Folk, each stance germinates a story that the raksha tells through his life and actions. As long as the raksha maintains the characteristics and tropes of the persona he adopts, he gains preternatural skill at manipulating the Wyld in accordance with the persona's idiom. Sidereal savants who have studied the shaping stances theorize that they, in many ways, give rise to the shaping combat equivalent of martial arts styles. Each such style serves to conceptualize a particular approach to shaping combat, and each also resembles martial arts styles from a conceptual framework.

The Charms associated with a stance start out small before the adherent is sufficiently enlightened in the ways of the Wyld to master a persistent stance after which the entire style is named (in the same way that each martial arts style is named after its Form-type Charm). Even the wisest savants among the Sidereals and Lunars have no idea how many stances exist or whether any are more powerful and frightening than those commonly known. Some of the more paranoid Sidereals wonder if the Fair Folk have a stance-based equivalent to Sidereal Martial Arts.

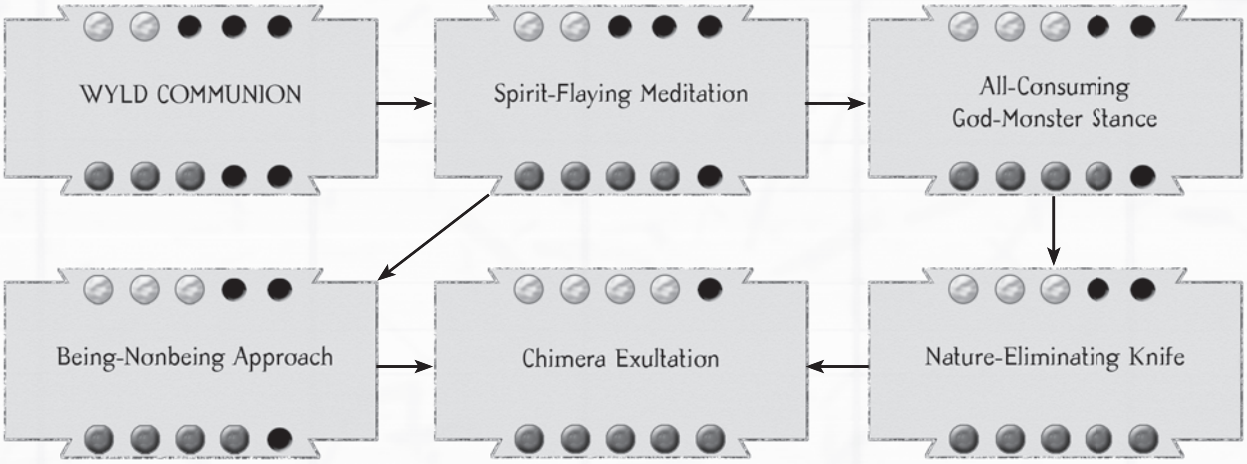
The styles that follow are those most commonly known and understood.

All-Consuming God-Monster Style

The All-Consuming God-Monster is a creature ruled by its passions and appetites, a rampaging and unrestricted id given form. Associated with Ring-shaping combat, the God-Monster teaches those Workers who follow his path to transcend all notions of restraint that stand in the way of apotheosis. A raksha who plays the part of the All-Consuming God-Monster must never channel his Temperance during a shaping combat or else he will be unable to use any of the Charms of this style for the duration of that combat, and all persistent Charms already activated will end immediately. Additionally, a raksha who plays the part of the God-Monster must comport himself as a rampaging, brutish monster. In doing so, he must define



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one vice he will pursue at every opportunity and never try to resist. Whenever he does choose to resist that chosen vice, any costs associated with the Charms of this style double for the duration of his current tale.

Wyld Communion

Cost: 5m, 0g; **Mins:** Ring 3, Essence 2;
Type: Simple (Speed 3)
Keywords: Mutation
Duration: One tale or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: None

All things are possible to the God-Monster, for he devours impossibility along with his enemies. While this Charm is active, whenever the raksha gains stunt dice, he gains one additional bonus die. As a result, stunts performed by the raksha can receive a dice bonus of two to four dice, with a correspondingly greater reward of Essence for a successful stunt. In the Wyld, this benefit lasts for the duration of the raksha's tale. In Creation, a raksha who knows this Charm gains the following innate power:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 5m): The raksha can add one extra stunt die to all actions that are awarded stunt dice for the duration of a scene.

Spirit-Flaying Meditation

Cost: 1wp, 1g; **Mins:** Ring 4, Essence 2;
Type: Simple (Speed 5)
Keywords: Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Wyld Communion

Self-preservation is no defense against the hunger of the God-Monster, but the raksha can choose to let the God-Monster devour only a portion of her that she wishes to lose. This Charm allows the raksha to cut a Charm or a trait out of her own existence without otherwise damaging her form or the array of Charms that support it. Each time this Charm is activated, the raksha permanently loses either one dot of a chosen trait or one specific Charm. If a Charm consumed by Spirit-Flaying Meditation was one that also caused the raksha to gain one or more permanent mutations, those mutations are removed as well, as are any mutation points the raksha carried as part of that Charm's cost. The raksha receives no other benefit for using this Charm, which is the only means by which a raksha can rid herself of permanent mutations. The raksha must be in the Wyld to invoke this Charm.

Being-Nonbeing Approach

Cost: 1m, 2g; **Mins:** Ring 4, Essence 3;
Type: Simple (Speed 3)
Keywords: Glamour, Mutation, Shaping
Duration: One shaping battle or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Spirit-Flaying Meditation

Opening wide its maw, the God-Monster devours the impression it makes on the world about it. Having done so, it moves on, leaving no trace of its passing. In the Wyld, the raksha spends one mote and two gossamer. For the duration of a shaping battle, the raksha adds one to her DV against all shaping attacks. She also adds her highest feeding Virtue in dice to any rolls to avoid detection by others in the Wyld. Additionally, by spending two gossamer in conjunction with an Assumption, the raksha gains the following innate power:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 1m): The raksha adds her highest feeding Virtue in dice to all Stealth rolls. Although this benefit is technically a work of glamour, it targets the raksha herself and does not provoke Glamour Resistance. It does not, however, provide improved Stealth against All-Encompassing Sorcerer's Sight or other Essence-based means of observation.

All-Consuming God-Monster Stance

Cost: 10m, 1wp, 0g; **Mins:** Ring 4, Essence 3;
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Glamour, Mutation
Duration: One tale or one story, as appropriate
Prerequisite Charms: Spirit-Flaying Meditation

Assuming the stance of the God-Monster, the raksha allows it to devour him, even as he devours it. From their mad dance of mutual consumption, a new and terrifying shape emerges. The shape is called the "God-Monster

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Sample God-Monster Body Benefits

The following are some of the most common benefits available to raksha who adopt the God-Monster Body. At the Storyteller's discretion, the player may be permitted to come up with other acceptable benefits, provided they fit in with the general theme of the All-Consuming God-Monster Stance.

Advaita Harmony: The God-Monster transcends a conventional understanding of Virtue, simultaneously becoming both compassionate and cruel, obsessive and blasé, courageous and cowardly. The raksha divides three extra dots among her Virtues while in her God-Monster Body (permanently assigned when this benefit is selected). Also, she gains the ability to violate her own Virtues without spending Willpower.

Calling upon the Dragon's Ire: The raksha can activate the All-Consuming God-Monster Stance simultaneously with an Assumption Charm, allowing him to access the benefits of the stance while in Creation. This benefit is also required for any raksha who has taken an Assumption Charm as a permanent mutation. Unshaped raksha Emanations may not acquire this benefit.

Chain-Defying Art: The raksha reflexively heals one level of shaping damage on every six ticks in shaping combat. In Creation, his healing rate is doubled.

Fearsome Radiance: Characters with Valor less than the God-Monster's Essence suffer a -2 internal penalty when attacking him with shaping or normal actions, as well as a -1 penalty to both shaping and normal DV.

Graces of the Wyld: The raksha is immune to bedlam while in God-Monster form.

Heart-Stopping Numinous Power: The raksha increases her effective Essence by two for all purposes while in God-Monster form.

Lumbering Feet of God: The God-Monster's form defies a conventional understanding of spatial relationships. In the Wyld, he can take a Journey action across three waypoints per scene. In Creation, the raksha's normal Move and Dash rates are tripled.

Miasma of Principle: *Prerequisite:* Unshapeable Transcendent Essence. The raksha's Essence is now added to his shaping soak, his natural bashing soak and his natural lethal soak.

Terrible Shaping Suasion: The raksha's player adds two dice to all shaping rolls while his character is in God-Monster form. While in Creation, he reduces the gossamer cost for all Charms by one (to a minimum of 0). This aspect of the Charm *will not* reduce the gossamer cost for Assumption Charms or Mutation Charms activated in conjunction with Assumption Charms.

Unshapeable Transcendent Essence: Add the raksha's Essence to her soak against all shaping attacks.

Untouchable Infinite Spirit: *Prerequisite:* Chain-Defying Art. Choose one shaping damage track when buying this Charm. The God-Monster reflexively heals all shaping damage of that type every six ticks in shaping combat, plus one point of each other shaping damage type. In Creation, the God-Monster's healing rate is multiplied by four. This replaces the benefit of Chain-Defying Art.

World-Devourer's Shadow: *Prerequisite:* Fearsome Radiance. The player of any character whose Essence is less than that of the God-Monster must succeed on a difficulty 2 Valor roll before her character may make either a shaping attack or a physical attack against him. Even if the roll succeeds, the attacker still suffers the effects of Fearsome Radiance.

Body," and this Charm brings it forth. When a raksha purchases this Charm, he receives three benefits, which his player must choose immediately from the list above. A shaped raksha can purchase this Charm only once. An unshaped raksha can do so a number of times equal to half its Essence, with each subsequent iteration of the Charm granting two benefits.

Customarily, this Charm is not compatible with *any* Assumption Charm, so a shaped raksha cannot activate All-Consuming God-Monster Stance while in Creation or maintain it while passing from the Wyld into Creation. The benefit Calling upon the Dragon's Ire negates this limitation, and those raksha who possess it can unleash their God-Monster Body on an unsuspecting Creation.

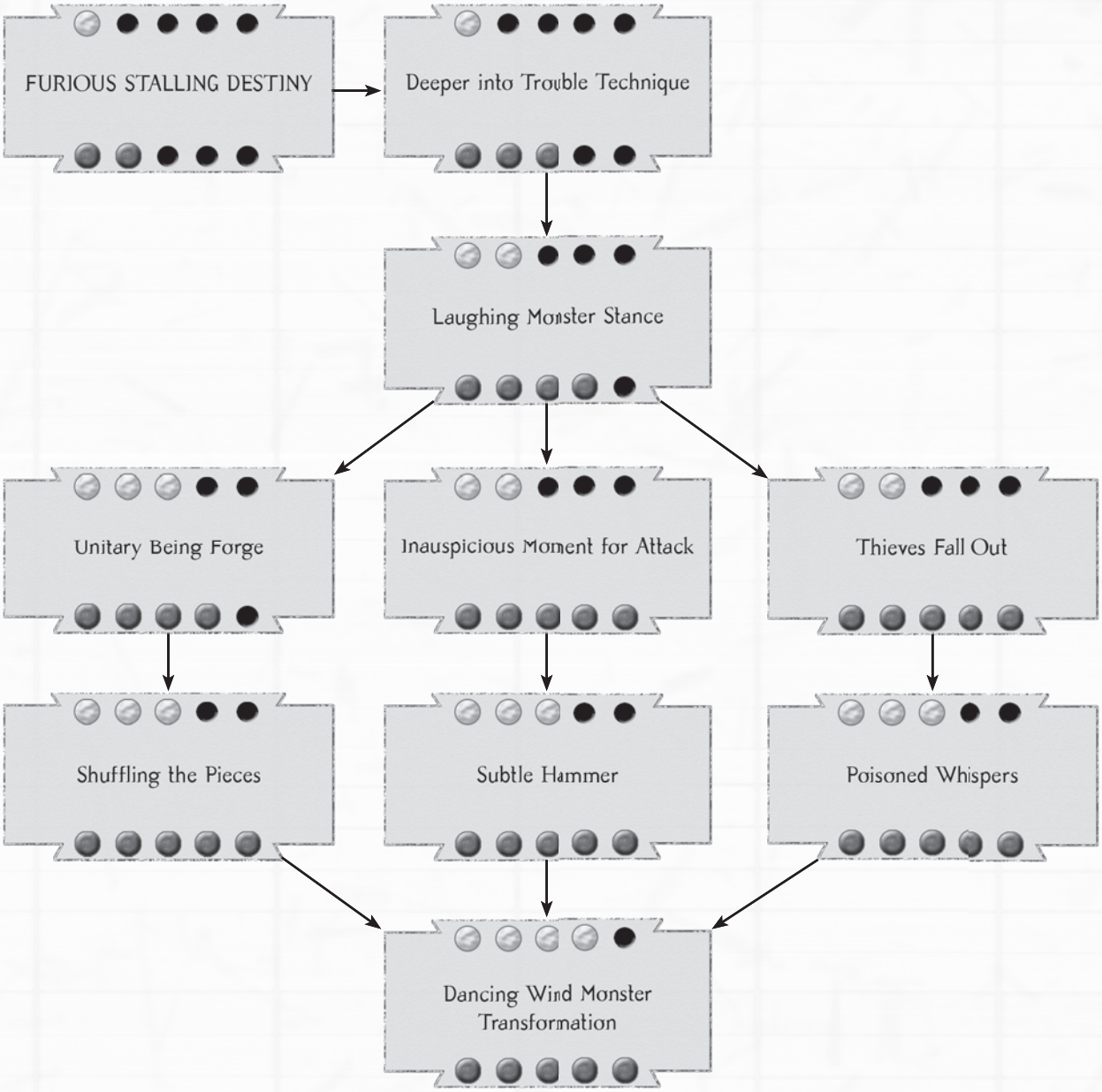
This is a Stance-type Charm. A character cannot use more than one Stance-type Charm at a time, and activating a new stance terminates the previous one.

Nature-Eliminating Knife

Cost: 1wp, 1g; **Mins:** Ring 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: None
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: All-Consuming God-Monster Stance

The God-Monster's hunger is relentless, finally turning with greedy claws and smacking lips on the raksha who has invoked it. Activating this Charm utterly destroys one of the raksha's own Graces, no matter where it currently is or who

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possesses it. As a side effect, this Charm permanently adds the "Graces of the Wyld" benefit to the raksha's God-Monster Body. If that benefit is already part of the raksha's God-Monster Body, he adds any other benefit of his choice.

Chimera Exultation

Cost: 1wp, 1g; **Mins:** Ring 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: None
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Being-Nonbeing Approach, Nature-Eliminating Knife

A raksha who terminates his Gateway of Sundraprisha Charm returns to the status of unshaped but still continues to exist… after a fashion. A raksha who activates this Charm leaves nothing behind. This Charm permits the raksha to instantly destroy her Heart Grace wherever it is and regardless of who possesses it. In the process, it utterly destroys the raksha, unleashing the raw power of her former existence into a coruscating (and probably tremendous) explosion of Wyld energy. This Charm is a plot device, having such limited or limitless effects as the Storyteller desires. At a minimum, the resultant explosion might totally destroy an unshaped raksha of at least moderate size or vaporize an unoccupied waypoint.

Laughing Monster Style

The Laughing Monster is a demonic child ruled by impetuosity and wicked humor, a merry prankster who takes inordinate joy in the humiliation of his rivals. Associated with Staff-shaping combat, the Laughing Monster mocks the idea

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of society, and those Diplomats who follow this path abandon all pretense of diplomatic solutions. A raksha who plays the part of the Laughing Monster must never channel her Conviction during a shaping combat, or else, she will be unable to use any of the Charms of this style for the duration of that combat, and all persistent Charms already activated will end immediately. Additionally, a raksha who plays the role of the Laughing Monster must adopt the persona of a childish and rude trickster. She must seize any and every opportunity to undermine established systems of authority and subvert acceptable notions of conduct. If the Laughing Monster ever declines the chance to embarrass or mock either a figure of authority or a sworn enemy, all costs associated with any of this style's Charms double for the duration of her current tale.

Furiously Stalling Destiny

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Staff 2, Essence 1;
Type: Reflexive (Step 9)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Counterattack, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The Laughing Monster turns every attack back against his attackers, mocking their every effort. This Charm lets the raksha's player roll his full (Charisma + Occult) as a free and reflexive Staff-shaping counterattack against any opponent who uses a shaping attack of any kind against him. This counterattack comes in Step 9 of shaping combat. The raksha may not use this Charm to counterattack in response to a counterattack made against him.

Deeper into Trouble Technique

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Staff 3, Essence 1; **Type:** Supplemental
Keywords: Shaping
Duration: Until the target's next attack
Prerequisite Charms: Furiously Stalling Destiny

The Laughing Monster's tomfoolery drives her enemies to distraction and rage. The raksha's player rolls (Charisma + Occult) as a Staff-shaping attack. If the attack hits, the player rolls damage normally. In addition, the attack infuriates the target, compelling him to attack the raksha over anyone else. If the target's next shaping action targets anyone other than the raksha, he must spend a point of Willpower to make the attack.

Laughing Monster Stance

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Staff 4, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple (Speed 3)
Keywords: Shaping
Duration: One shaping battle
Prerequisite Charms: Deeper into Trouble Technique

With this Charm, the raksha assumes the persona of the Laughing Monster, a figure of derisive humor and unbridled chaos. For the duration of the battle, whenever the raksha evades a shaping attack with any Shaping DV, the raksha can spend one Willpower to redirect the shaping attack against any other target she wishes, including back against the original attacker. The attacker must reroll the attack against the new target, adding any bonus dice applied to the previous roll from Charms or stunts and treating the new target as if it had been the target all along.

This is a Stance-type Charm. A character cannot use more than one Stance-type Charm at a time, and activating a new stance terminates the previous one. Any redirected attack occurs on Step 9 of combat resolution and is in addition to any counterattacks the raksha can make.

Unitary Being Forge

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Staff 4, Essence 3; **Type:** Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Laughing Monster Stance

The Laughing Monster is ever ready for awkward silences and social faux pas and can seize upon such moments to humiliate his rivals and heap scorn upon them. The raksha's player rolls (Intelligence + Occult) as a Staff-shaping attack. If the attack is successful, the raksha gains one additional damage die for each level of Sword, Ring or Cup damage his opponent currently suffers.

Shuffling the Pieces

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Staff 5, Essence 3;
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Unitary Being Forge

Never predictable, let alone boring, the Laughing Monster always strikes in a manner that defies expectation. The raksha's player rolls (Charisma + Occult) as a Staff-shaping attack. A successful attack inflicts no new damage. Instead, the raksha can heal up to (her Essence + the extra successes on the attack roll) levels of damage already inflicted on the target's Cup, Ring and/or Sword damage, dividing up the healing as she wishes. Then, she immediately and automatically inflicts as much damage as she healed on the target's Staff Grace. The raksha can use this power to "heal" an ally (assuming his Staff Grace can survive the damage the Charm inflicts) or to cripple the Staff Grace of her enemy.

Inauspicious Moment for Attack

Cost: 1m per target; **Mins:** Staff 5, Essence 2;
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Laughing Monster Style

Even armies slow their advance when baffled, distracted or humiliated by the Laughing Monster. At the beginning of shaping combat, the raksha can invoke this Charm against one opponent per mote spent, up to a maximum number of targets equal to her Essence. The raksha's player must roll (Intelligence + Occult) as a Staff-shaping attack, with the result compared to the Staff DV of each targeted enemy. If the attack succeeds against a character, that character suffers an internal penalty to his Join Shaping Battle roll equal to

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the raksha's Essence. If this penalty reduces a character's Join Shaping Battle roll to 0 or below (before the application of any dice-adding effects or other Charms), that character will be unable to make any shaping attacks for (the Laughing Monster's Essence + 6) ticks. An affected character can still take reflexive actions and defend with reflexive Charms and effects.

Subtle Hammer

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Staff 5, Essence 3;
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Inauspicious Moment for Attack

The Laughing Monster's intentions cannot be divined. Even when he openly tells his adversaries what he plans to do, few have the wit to see through the misdirection. This Charm renders a Staff-shaping attack of any sort unblockable and undodgeable, rendering all forms of Shaping DV inapplicable unless the target incorporates a Charm into her defense. Regardless of whether the target's DV applies, the raksha also doubles extra successes for purposes of determining shaping damage.

Thieves Fall Out

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Staff 5, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Five actions
Prerequisite Charms: Laughing Monster Stance

Before the Laughing Monster's trickery, alliances fail and bonds of friendship shatter. The raksha can use this Charm to sow division between two opponents and disrupt their alliance. The raksha must identify two targets, and his player rolls (Charisma + Occult) as a Staff-shaping action against one of them. The difficulty of this roll is that target's Shaping DV or her Essence, whichever is higher. If the shaping attack is successful, then in addition to any other effect, the affected target suffers when in the presence of the other target. On each of her next five actions, if the affected target is in the same or an adjacent waypoint as her ally, she suffers one level of unavoidable and unsoakable Staff damage.

Poisoned Whispers

Cost: 8m; **Mins:** Staff 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Until next action
Prerequisite Charms: Thieves Fall Out

Lies and dissimulation permit the Laughing Monster to turn his enemies against one another. Like a demented child, he exults in their discord. Once the raksha activates this Charm and until his next action, each time someone targets her with a shaping attack and misses, the raksha can reflexively redirect the incoming shaping attack against any available target of her choice, including the original attacker. This redirected attack costs the raksha nothing.

Dancing Wind Monster Transformation

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Staff 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: One shaping battle
Prerequisite Charms: Shuffling the Pieces, Subtle Hammer, Poisoned Whispers



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Having had his sport and finished his business, the Laughing Monster fades away, leaving only the sound of his mocking laughter and the enraged bellows of his beaten foes. While this Charm is active, the raksha adds his Essence to his Shaping DV for the remainder of the shaping battle.

Spirit-Twisting Obsession Style

The Prince of Chaos is a terrifying figure to the Fair Folk, for it is his way to transform desire into obsession, to turn a raksha's capacity for positive emotion into a soul-deadening fountain of despair. Associated with Cup-shaping combat, the Spirit-Twisting Obsession Style teaches Entertainers to kill with kindness and to burn with a kiss. A raksha who plays the part of the Prince of Chaos must never channel his Compassion during a shaping combat, or else he will be unable to use any of the Charms of this style for the duration of that combat, and all persistent Charms already activated will end immediately. Additionally, a raksha who plays the part of the Prince of Chaos must adopt the mien of a cruel and sadistic villain. He must never openly display kindness or concern for the weak or innocent or ignore an opportunity to demonstrate his contempt for his lessers. If he ever does so, any costs associated with the Charms of this style double for the duration of his current tale.

Elusive Object of Desire

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Cup 2, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The first teaching of the Prince of Chaos is to realize that it is better to want than to have, better to desire than to hold, better to love unrequited than to experience the pain of rejection or the banality of a passion that has died. This Charm adds a number of automatic successes equal to the raksha's Cup to any roll made to escape, dodge or parry a Cup-shaping entanglement.

Art of Corrosion

Cost: 5m, 1wp, 0g; **Mins:** Cup 3, Essence 2;
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Glamour, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Elusive Object of Desire

The second teaching of the Prince of Chaos is to understand that Virtue is an illusion, calculated to conceal from its possessor his own flaws and frailties. This Charm allows the raksha to metaphorically praise one of the Virtues of her opponent and, by doing so, bring him low. The raksha activates this Charm after her target declares either a shaping or normal action but before his player rolls. The raksha's player rolls (Manipulation + Performance) in Creation or any Cup-shaping attack in the Wyld. The difficulty is equal to the target's Essence. If the roll succeeds, the Charm forces the target to spend a point of Willpower (if he has any left) and channel the praised Virtue on that action, even if doing so is wildly inappropriate to the declared action. This Charm will not function if the target has exhausted his temporary Willpower or has no available channels left for that Virtue during the current story.

Glamour Resistance: In Creation, this Charm represents a work of glamour that cannot affect any Creation-born whose (Integrity + Essence) exceeds the raksha's Manipulation.

Spirit-Twisting Obsession Stance

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Cup 4, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Shaping
Duration: One shaping battle
Prerequisite Charms: Art of Corrosion

The raksha assumes the mantle of the Prince of Chaos, a living symbol of the corruption of one's own sense of self. The raksha then shares the wisdom of his insights with his enemies. Upon activating this Charm, the raksha names a single opponent, who must be at least potentially a participant in the current shaping battle. For the Charm's duration, that opponent suffers an internal penalty equal to the raksha's permanent Essence from all shaping dice pools and suffers a penalty equal to half that to all Shaping DV scores. This Charm affects only raksha in the Wyld. It has no utility in Creation or against Creation-born in the Wyld.

This is a Stance-type Charm. A character cannot have more than one Stance-type Charm active at a time, and activating a new Stance-type Charm terminates any previous one.

Subtle Breath of Ruin

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Cup 5, Essence 2;
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: One shaping battle
Prerequisite Charms: Spirit-Twisting Obsession Stance

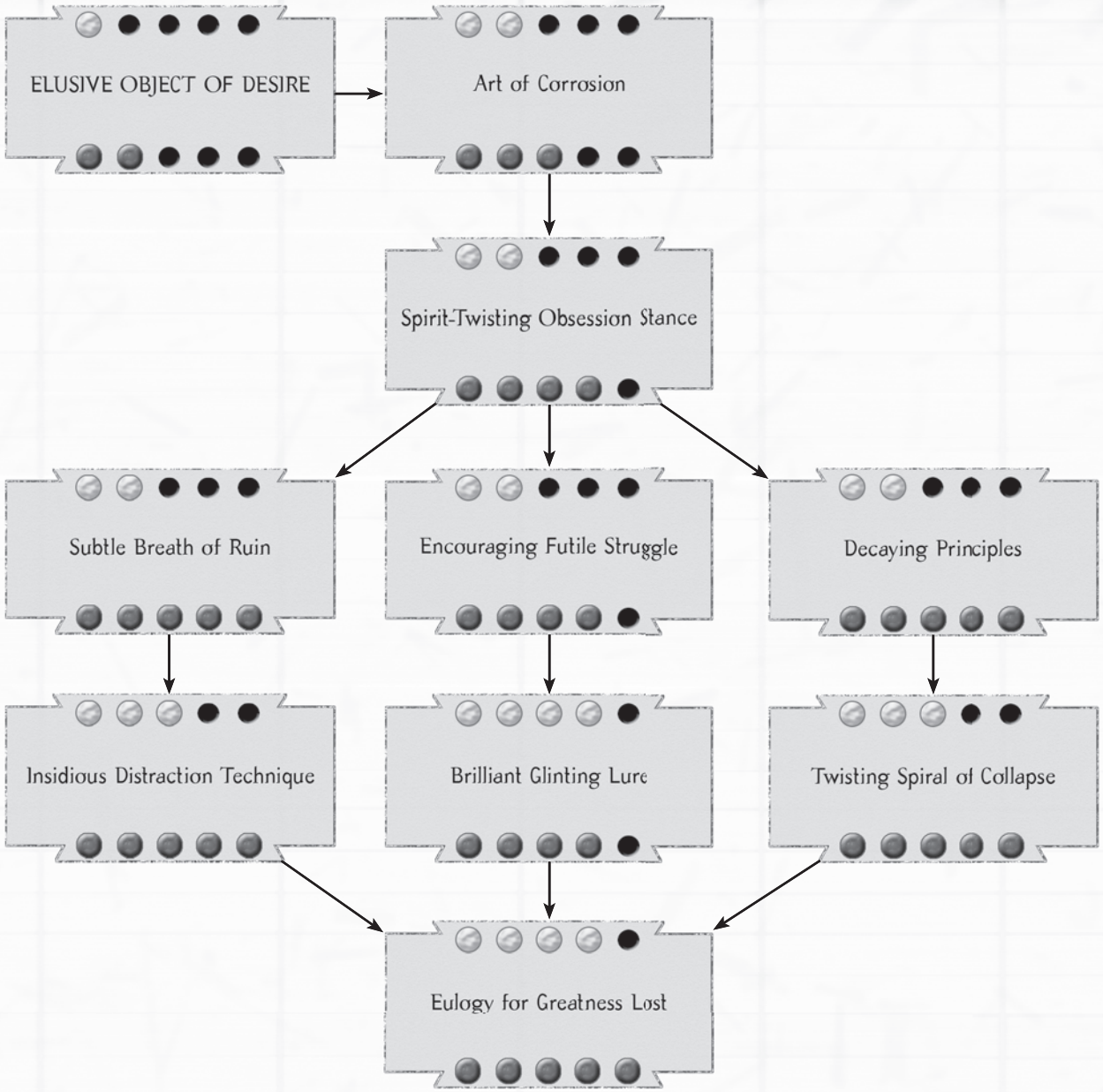
The Prince moves closer, bringing doom with him. The raksha's player rolls (Manipulation + Larceny) as a Cup-shaping attack. If the attack roll is successful, ignore the damage roll. Instead, this Charm increases the difficulty of all of the target's shaping actions by an amount equal to the raksha's Essence for the rest of the shaping battle.

Insidious Distraction Technique

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Cup 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Until next action
Prerequisite Charms: Subtle Breath of Ruin

As hope fades, the target is no longer capable of defending successfully, so great is her dread of the Prince of Chaos. The raksha's player rolls (Manipulation + Larceny) as a Cup-shaping attack. If the attack is successful, ignore the damage roll. Instead, for the duration of the scene, the target cannot put more actions into a single flurry than his Temperance, and both his Parry and Dodge Shaping DV scores are reduced to his Temperance.

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Encouraging Futile Struggle

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Cup 4, Essence 2;
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-Basic, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Spirit-Twisting Obsession Stance

As the target struggles ever harder against the chains that the Prince of Chaos wraps around his soul, they only grow tighter. The raksha activates this Charm in conjunction with a Cup-shaping attack. If the attack is successful, its damage becomes piercing. If the attack was already piercing, it completely bypasses the target's soak.

Brilliant Glinting Lure

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Cup 4, Essence 4; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Until next Cup-shaping action
Prerequisite Charms: Encouraging Futile Struggle

Just as things seem darkest, the target senses hope, as the Prince of Chaos suddenly transforms into the perfect vessel for her obsession. This Charm allows the raksha to add her Performance in dice to her next Cup-shaping action, including reflexive shaping actions such as Art of Corrosion. The raksha cannot use this Charm to create actions from nothing.

Decaying Principles

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Cup 5, Essence 2; **Type:** Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Spirit-Twisting Obsession Stance

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As the raksha's attunement to the Prince of Chaos grows ever stronger, her corruption grows into a torrent of inescapable despair. This Charm supplements a Cup-shaping attack, rendering the target's Dodge Shaping DV inapplicable *unless* the target channels his Temperance to improve the Shaping DV score. The attack can be parried normally.

Twisting Spiral of Collapse

Cost: 5+m, 1wp; **Mins:** Cup 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Shaping
Duration: One shaping battle
Prerequisite Charms: Decaying Principles

The Prince of Chaos now begins to turn his face toward the enemy, transforming the raksha into an irresistible soul-deadening force. For every five motes spent in activating this Charm, the raksha increases the rate of his chosen shaping weapon (which can include entanglement weapons such as a harness of razored dreams) by one.

Eulogy for Greatness Lost

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Cup 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Insidious Distraction Technique, Brilliant Glinting Lure, Twisting Spiral of Collapse

Magnanimous in victory, the Prince of Chaos sings the praises of his fallen foe as she looks up at him silently from the grave. This Charm allows the raksha to make a Cup-shaping attack. After soak is applied, each remaining damage die is automatically converted into a success.

World-Devouring Warlord Style

The World-Devouring Warlord is an irresistible conquering force whose destiny is to rule all that she surveys. Associated with Sword-shaping combat, the World-Devouring Warlord teaches Warriors to comport themselves as generals and rulers instead of mere combatants. It is the duty of the Warlord's army or champion to fight on her behalf, and it is unfitting for a true Warlord to bloody herself in a meaningless frontline skirmish when there is a conquest to direct. Accordingly, a raksha who plays the part of the World-Devouring Warlord must never channel her Valor during a shaping combat, or else she will be unable to use any of the Charms of this style for the duration of that combat, and all persistent Charms already activated will end immediately. Additionally, a raksha who plays the part of the World-Devouring Warlord must adopt the posture of one who is destined to rule over all, a posture that snide inferiors might call megalomania, though never to the Warlord's face if they are wise. The Warlord must never show deference to any other being, no matter how great his power. If she ever does so, any costs associated with the Charms of this style double for the duration of her current tale.

Aegis of a Martial Destiny

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Sword 1, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The start of any tale of war begins with the initiation of hostilities, and every Warlord's story must begin with his motivation for battle. This Charm allows the raksha to defend against aggressive shaping attacks by defining the circumstances under which conflict can begin. By spending one mote, the raksha adds a bonus equal to half his Sword (rounded up) to his applicable Shaping DV.

Antagonist-Naming Technique

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Sword 2, Essence 1;
Type: Simple (Speed 3)
Keywords: Shaping
Duration: One tale
Prerequisite Charms: Aegis of a Martial Destiny

The Warlord must have his enemy—they cannot exist without one another. This Charm permits the raksha to define both himself and a particular antagonist (who must exist and must currently hold an antagonistic posture toward him) as the principal characters in the raksha's narrative. While the Charm continues to function, it automatically negates all shaping effects that would otherwise remove either the raksha or his named antagonist as active characters in the story. No one can shape the raksha into quiescence, banishment or death without also in some manner restoring him to life and/or activity.

Thematic Stunting Methodology

Cost: 5m; 0g **Mins:** Sword 2, Essence 1; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Mutation, Shaping
Duration: One tale
Prerequisite Charms: Aegis of a Martial Destiny

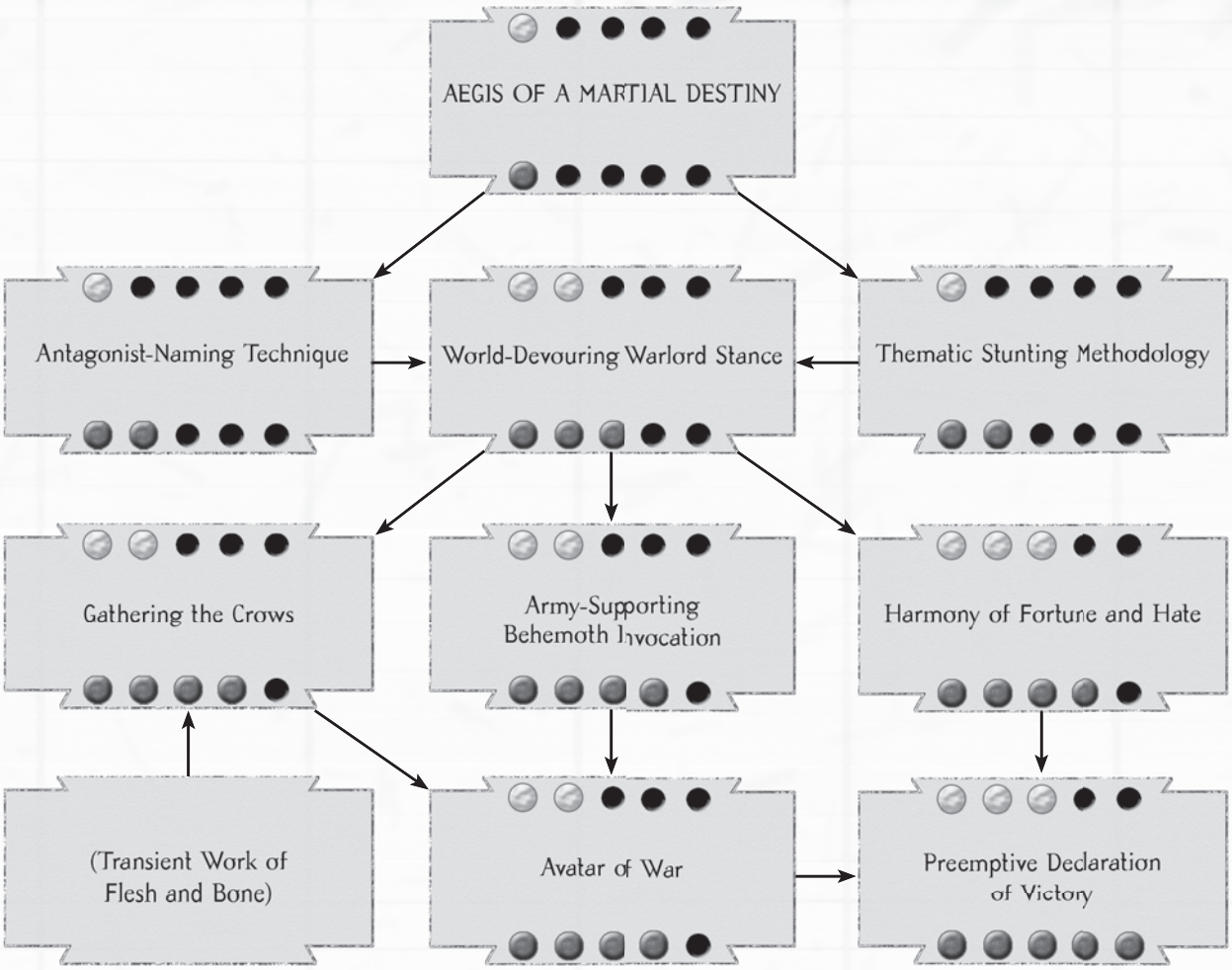
As the undisputed center of narrative focus, the Warlord naturally finds that story elements inevitably conform to her will. While this Charm is active, the raksha adds five extra dice to her stunt pool (see the Style Background on pp. 98-99).

World-Devouring Warlord Stance

Cost: 6m, 0g; **Mins:** Sword 3, Essence 2;
Type: Simple (Speed 3)
Keywords: Mutation, Shaping
Duration: One shaping combat or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Antagonist-Naming Technique, Thematic Stunting Methodology

The Warlord becomes an avatar of the Sword, a living incarnation of idea of battle. In this form, he can devour the world if he so desires. While this stance is active, the raksha's player adds the character's permanent Essence to her Join Shaping Battle roll in the Wyld, to

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her Sword-shaping attack pools and to her Sword damage. She also adds half her Sword (rounded up) to her Sword-shaping DV. She also gains the following innate power in Creation:

Innate Power (*Cost*: 6m): The raksha's player may reflexively add the raksha's permanent Essence in automatic successes to her Join Battle roll.

This is a Stance-type Charm. A character cannot use more than one Stance-type Charm at a time, and activating a new stance terminates the previous one. The innate power granted by this Charm affects only the raksha herself and does not provoke Glamour Resistance.

Gathering the Crows

Cost: 3m, 0g; **Mins:** Sword 4, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Glamour, Mutation, Shaping, Stackable
Duration: One shaping combat or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Transient Work of Flesh and Bone, World-Devouring Warlord Stance

The armies of the Warlord are without number. Nations tremble at their every footstep. The raksha summons servants and minions from the Wyld to bolster his ranks. These summoned troops are gossamer extras that never interact with enemies directly but swell the raksha's forces ominously. In the Wyld, this Charm increases the Defense bonus of the raksha's Sword-shaping weapon by one. This Charm can be activated up to a number of times equal to the raksha's Sword, and subsequent invocations are cumulative. Additionally, a raksha who knows this Charm gains the following innate power in Creation:

Innate Power (*Cost*: 3m; *Speed*: One long tick): The raksha can fashion illusions of additional troops to make his forces look bigger, more impressive and, as a result, more confident. In the context of mass combat, this Charm adds one to the Morale of the raksha's forces for purposes of resisting rout or hesitation. It also inflicts a -1 penalty on Morale rolls for opposing forces to resist rout or hesitation.

Glamour Resistance: The innate power associated with this Charm is a work of glamour. The bonus to the Morale of the raksha's forces always applies, but the penalty applied to the Morale rolls of opposing Creation-born forces does not apply if the (Drill + Might) of that unit exceeds the raksha's War.

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Army-Supporting Behemoth Invocation

Cost: 5m, 0g; **Mins:** Sword 4, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-Basic, Glamour, Mutation, Shaping, Stackable
Duration: One shaping combat or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: World-Devouring Warlord Stance

Unlimited by compassion or restraint, the Warlord unleashes the hell of total war on her enemies. This Charm allows the raksha to summon monsters, horrors, war machines and other grotesqueries of the Wyld to bolster her forces. Each use of this Charm creates the illusion of another great monster or a handful of smaller beasts. In the Wyld, each application of this Charm increases the Damage rating of her Sword-shaping weapon by one, and multiple applications of the Charm are cumulative. In Creation, this Charm confers the following innate power:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 5m, *Speed*: Three long ticks): The raksha summons forth illusions of powerful and terrifying magical creatures to harry opposing forces. In the context of mass combat, this Charm adds one to the Might of the raksha's forces for all purposes against affected units.

Glamour Resistance: The innate power associated with this Charm is a work of glamour that does not affect an opposing Creation-born unit if the (Drill + Might) of that unit exceeds the raksha's War.

Avatar of War

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Sword 4, Essence 2;
Type: Reflexive (Step 9)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Counterattack, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Gathering the Crows, Army-Supporting Behemoth Invocation

The Warlord dares his enemies to strike the first blow, knowing that his reprisal will bring utter destruction. This Charm lets the raksha execute a Sword-shaping attack with his full dice pool against any character who attacks her with any kind of shaping action.

Harmony of Fortune and Hate

Cost: 5m, 0g; **Mins:** Sword 4, Essence 3;
Type: Simple (Speed 4)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Mutation, Shaping, Stackable
Duration: One shaping battle or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: World-Devouring Warlord Stance

The Warlord has mastered the very idea of War. The battlefield knows its mistress and lends aid and comfort to her forces while thwarting the moves of enemy forces, whether through bad weather, hostile terrain or worse effects. Each use of this Charm in conjunction with a Sword-shaping roll reduces the target's Sword DV by one for the duration of the battle, regardless of whether the Sword-shaping attack actually succeeds. The raksha can invoke this Charm multiple times, but the maximum DV penalty she can inflict is equal to her Essence. Also, while in Creation, a raksha who knows this Charm gains the following innate power:

Innate Power (*Cost:* 5m): The raksha casts illusions to alter the terrain of the battlefield, turning it against Creation-born units. In the context of mass combat, this Charm casts an illusion over a battlefield causing Creation-born units to perceive open terrain as difficult terrain and difficult terrain as extreme terrain, with all the movement penalties such terrain inflicts (see **Exalted**, p. 163). At a cost of 10 motes, the raksha can cause Creation-born units to perceive open terrain as extreme terrain. The raksha's own units never suffer the effects of this power.

Glamour Resistance: The innate power associated with this Charm is a work of glamour that does not affect an opposing Creation-born unit if the (Drill + Might) of that unit exceeds the raksha's War.

Preemptive Declaration of Victory

Cost: 5m, 1g; **Mins:** Sword 5, Essence 3;
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Mutation, Shaping
Duration: One shaping battle or Assumption
Prerequisite Charms: Avatar of War, Harmony of Fortune and Hate

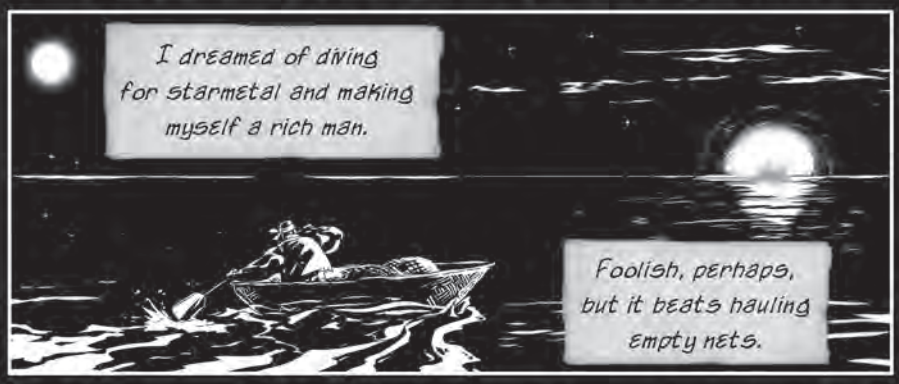
For the true Warlord, victory is assured before the first blow is even struck. When the raksha deploys this Charm in conjunction with a successful Sword-shaping attack, the Charm automatically converts all Sword damage dice into successes. In addition, a raksha who knows this Charm and spends one additional point of gossamer in conjunction with an Assumption Charm gains the following innate power.

Innate Power (*Cost:* 5m)**:** The raksha performs the Dance of the World-Devouring Warlord, a sinuous kata that can be performed bare-handed or with any type of weapon. This dance tells the tale of his inevitable victory, and his story reaches out across a battlefield to instill in the hearts of his enemies the certainty of their defeat. The player of a raksha engaged in mass combat rolls (Dexterity + highest Sword Ability) against a difficulty equal to the Might of the opposing unit. Each threshold success reduces the Magnitude of the unit by 1, as affected mortals lay down their arms in hopeless surrender. If the Dance of the World-Devouring Warlord is used against a solo unit, the player makes the same roll against the target's Dodge MDV. If the roll succeeds, the target suffers a -5 internal penalty on all combat-related rolls for the remainder of the scene.

Glamour Resistance: The innate power associated with this Charm is a work of glamour that does not affect opposing Creation-born units if the (Drill + Might) of that unit exceed Sword Ability used by the raksha's player in the activation roll, nor can it affect any individual whose (Valor + Essence) exceeds that Sword Ability.

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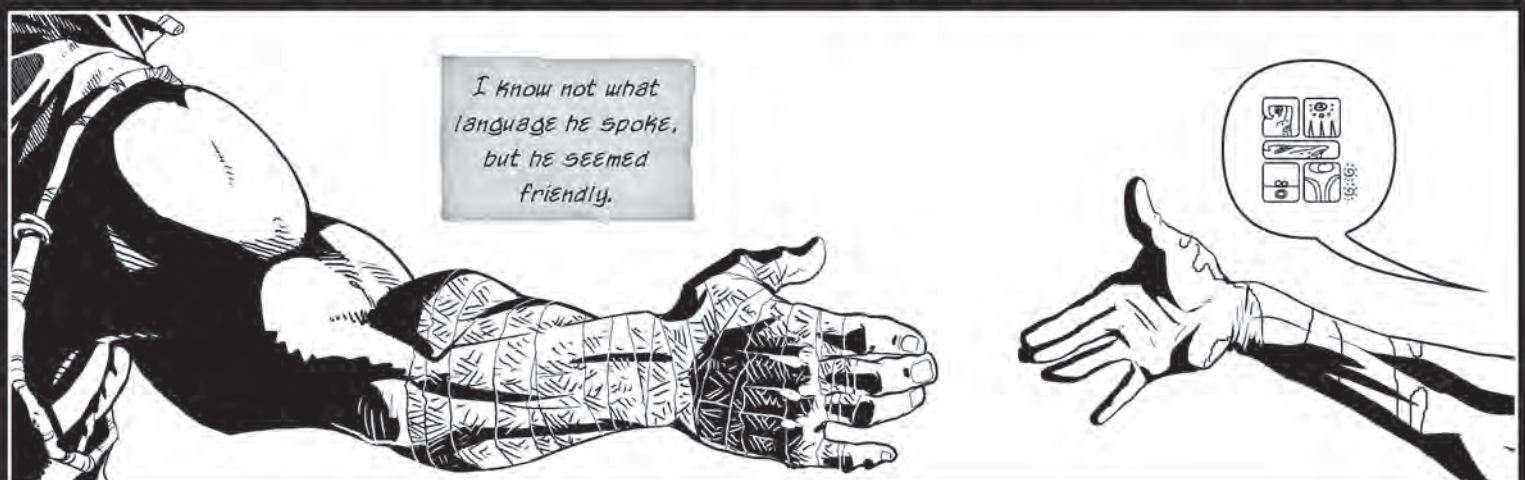












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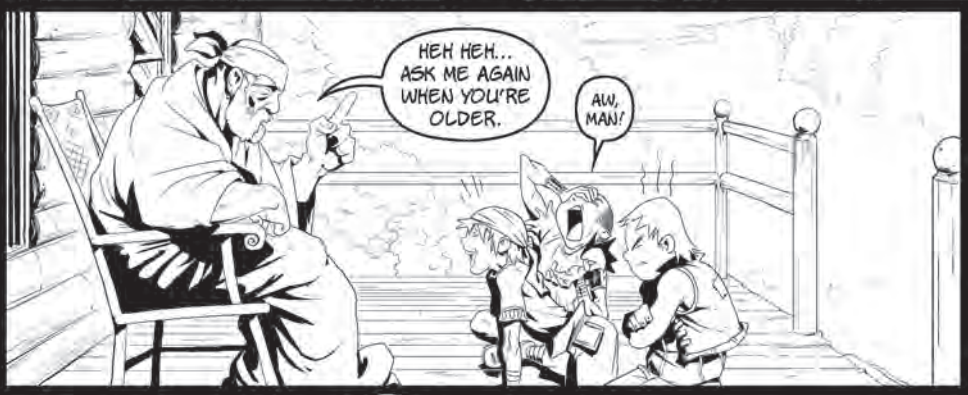














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CHAPTER SEVEN
STORYTELLING

A Fair Folk series is unique among the **Exalted** line because of the inherent nature of raksha characters. Despite all evidence to the contrary, all raksha are ultimately just chaotic vortices of Wyld energy that carefully disguise themselves as coherent beings. To put it another way, a player in a Fair Folk series does not play the part of a *character* so much as an incomprehensible being who is merely pretending to be that character for largely incomprehensible reasons of its own. While it might seem counterintuitive to say that your character is inherently incomprehensible, this aspect of the Fair Folk milieu is easier to understand when one considers the fundamental themes of a Fair Folk series.

Alienness

The Fair Folk are not a part of Creation in any way, no matter how much some Fair Folk might wish to be. Fair Folk are not born as mortals are and have no "life experiences." A shaped Fair Folk comes into being fully grown, whether as a servitor, an oath-child or as a noble self-forged out of a previously unshaped raksha. Even among that last group, such Fair Folk nobles do not remember their prior existence as unshaped raksha except with a hazy dreamlike quality, as if the noble's memories of his prior state are merely on loan from another, even stranger being. Likewise, whatever feeling an oath-child develops for the raksha who made her, it will be nothing like the bonds forged between Creation-born parents and children. Even in the case of servitors, a commoner raksha might define herself by the trade associated with her caste, but she has no memories of "learning" that trade that are not forged into her very being.

Totally divorced from the cycle of life as it exists in Creation, raksha who interact with Creation-born can only imitate the characteristics of such beings. More commonly, a raksha just parodies them crudely. As a Storyteller, you can accentuate the alien nature of raksha existence by playing up how alien Creation-born are to them. Imagine how strange the idea of "food" might be to

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the Fair Folk. Creation-born devote much of their lives to burying tiny seeds in the earth, carefully cultivating them for months, harvesting the resulting crops, preparing them as food, eating them and then expelling them as waste. (What's all *that* about? Do humans go through all that work just to defecate?) Now, imagine Fair Folk becoming fascinated with the concept of "food" and exploring all aspects of that concept, shaping themselves to be able to eat mortal food… as well as things no mortal would touch (just to keep things interesting). Those raksha who seek to understand Creation approach all aspects of the world with the curiosity of a precocious child, the scientific detachment of a savant and all the inventiveness of a being constrained neither by morality nor even the laws of physics.

Lacking any real perspective on Creation-born existence, the Fair Folk must try to approximate it if they are to walk among mortals unmolested. Fair Folk replicate Virtues through their Graces, but a mighty Cataphract, regardless of his Valor, isn't really courageous. He's just playing the part. Similarly, an Entertainer can never truly love one of her patrons, for her Compassion is as artificial as her lovely form. She might mimic the characteristics of a loving woman whom she has observed, but whether she is a doting housewife or a vindictive harlot, a shallow courtesan or a domineering stepmother, none of it is real to her. The only way an Entertainer can experience true love is if a Creation-born wins her heart (from a mechanical standpoint, by instilling an Intimacy for the Creation-born within her), but how she demonstrates that love is determined by the persona she has forged for herself.

So, given the inherent difficulties of maintaining any sort of existence in a realm completely alien to them, why do so many raksha choose to live in or near Creation? Quite simply, because they are mad.

Madness

The characteristic that Creation-born define as insanity is the other pillar of raksha existence, though few raksha conceive of insanity as anything other than "a different way of looking at things." For some reason intrinsic to its nature, Creation exerts a powerful compulsive influence on those raksha who interact with it, as if its crushing stasis represents a taint that cannot be washed away. Most Fair Folk who become aware of Creation in any way lack the capacity to simply ignore it. Over time, Creation burrows through a raksha, like a splinter in his soul. Some raksha grow enamored of Creation's charms and seek to become a part of it. Others become addicted to its pleasures, particularly the subtle delicacies of Creation-born dreams. Even those who reject Creation still become obsessed with it. They constantly scheme and plot to destroy Creation,



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knowing all the while that those schemes and plots must never come to fruition, lest they lose what has become the defining characteristic of their natures.

As this madness insinuates itself into a raksha's soul, she usually fixates on one aspect of Creation that, for good or ill, speaks to her. An Eshu in the North is so impressed by a Fire-aspected general that he refuses to engage in battles unless the opposing army is led by a Dragon-Blood of that Aspect. An Imperial Raksha from the South spies a mother telling a bedtime story to her daughter and, thereafter, constantly seeks out more and more children to sit at her feet and listen to her fairy tales. In the Southeast, a Cataphract observes a Lunar Exalt devouring the heart of a kill and, from that moment on, will eat only the hearts of prey she has slain with her own hands. These quirks and peccadilloes rarely impair a raksha in any way, but they do become defining characteristics… at least until the raksha returns to the Wyld to shape them away.

Stories in Creation

The easiest sort of Fair Folk series to run is one set wholly within Creation. Shaping actions and shaping combat might be the defining feature of Fair Folk nobles, but they are somewhat abstract and avant-garde features. If the Storyteller and players do not care for games in which shaping is a heavy part of the story, it is very simple to run a game set entirely in Creation. Tens of thousands of raksha dwell within Creation's borders and never venture anywhere near a Wyld zone. Some of these raksha are refugees left behind after the failure of the Balorian Crusade, abandoned far from the frontiers of the Wyld. Lost in a strange land, these refugees were forced to adapt to life without access to Wyld-shaping. Others are raksha of the Wyld sent into Creation, whether through banishment or for some quest. Such raksha must seek their fortunes away from the comforting embrace of the Wyld.

For a Fair Folk series set entirely in Creation, remember the following:

• **No shaping actions or shaping combat.** Creation is not susceptible to raksha shaping actions or attacks. Accordingly, Charms that carry the Shaping keyword are of no use unless they also carry the Mutation and/or Glamour keyword(s) and confer some sort of innate power usable in Creation.

• **Assumption Charms are very long lasting.** Separated from the Wyld, a raksha in Creation cannot shape away his Assumption. Accordingly, a raksha character cannot change the mutations that are attached to that Assumption. The character can learn new Charms that carry the Mutation keyword, but he generally cannot use those Charms to grant himself additional innate powers unless and until he can find a Wyld zone. Some Mutation Charms defy this limitation and can be activated even in Creation. The Charm descriptions indicate when such is the case.

• **Essence cannot be respired normally.** Raksha do not regain Essence normally in Creation. To survive there, a raksha *must* have one or more Charms such as Ravishing the Created Form or Banquet of Crumbs. With no access to the Wyld, a raksha without such Charms will probably die soon due to calcification.

• **Dreaming mortals are very important.** Without access to the Wyld, a raksha can regain gossamer only from dreaming mortals through the Oneiromantic Conjuration Charm and other similar Charms. A raksha capable of entering Creation-born dreams with such Charms can treat the dreamscape as a waypoint for all purposes. With the Soul-Carving Artifice Charm, she can engage in shaping actions and combat and can dismiss and reshape her Assumption while within such dreamscapes.

As a result of these details, the player of a raksha character should probably invest in Mutation and Feeding Charms over other types of Charms, which will be of little use. The player should also invest heavily in Attributes and Abilities to take advantage of the higher caps on those traits for a raksha character. Furthermore, players should pay very close attention to the types of Assumption and Mutation Charms that are built into the character design since it will be difficult to refine the character build once the game begins. A character's starting mutations and innate powers are also limited by his Gossamer Background, since the character must be able to pay the activation costs of the Charms that grant those powers at the start of play.

Example: The Laughing Boy, having worn out his welcome in the Opal Court during some controversy predating the start of the series, has entered Creation for an extended sojourn. His player, Conrad, looks to the Laughing Boy's Gossamer Background to determine how many Assumption and Mutation Charms the Anarch can activate for the duration of his stay in Creation. The Laughing Boy has Gossamer 3, which gives Conrad six points of gossamer to spend. Assumption of Fire Shape costs one gossamer, as well as 10 motes of Essence that, once the Laughing Boy has entered Creation, can be regained only through the use of Feeding Charms. The Laughing Boy also activates Sovereign Element Shape (1g), Heart-Stealing Kiss (1g) and the Claws pox (1g). He also spends two gossamer to activate his two levels of Ox-Body Technique, giving his shaped form two additional -1 health levels and two additional -2 health levels for the duration of the Assumption. All of these mutations are assumed to already be in place at the start of the series. Additionally, the Laughing Boy can gain the innate powers of any Charms he knows that have a gossamer cost of 0. For purposes of applying innate powers in Creation, ignore all Charm-activation costs other than the gossamer cost.

Things to Do in Creation When You're Unreal

A raksha in a series set primarily in Creation will generally do the same sort of things that any other type

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of character might do—conquer a domain, plunder, fight against her enemies, quest for glory, et cetera. The biggest difference is that, absent Charms that allow the raksha to pass convincingly as a Creation-born, she will be even more of a pariah than a Solar Anathema. Raksha are generally hated and feared just as much as any type of Anathema, but most of them lack the ability to conceal their own natures. That's not always the case, however. Some locales are known for having obtained some form of détente with the Fair Folk. Raksha are common in the Kingdom of Halta, for example, and nearly anything goes in Nexus. Even in such cosmopolitan environs, however, Fair Folk are distrusted and watched closely. A raksha who expects to fit into a Creation-born culture must work at it constantly, forgoing her natural raksha proclivities (or at least concealing them from her neighbors).

Raksha and the Solar Exalted

Due to their mutual pariah status, some raksha find it surprisingly easy to interact with Solar Exalts. Solars naturally have a high degree of immunity to raksha Charms and powers, and if a Solar has access to certain Charms (such as Integrity-Protecting Prana), that immunity is nearly complete. As a result, a Solar can approach a raksha from a position of great strength. The Bull of the North is not averse to dealing with raksha, having been exposed to Haltan Fair Folk Cataphractoi who fought alongside his armies against the Linowan. Eclipse Caste Solars have little to fear from raksha due to the diplomatic immunity they acquired during the First Age, and many Eclipses (and their circles) find Creation's raksha to be intriguing. The Twilight Caste Exalted also have a tremendous interest in the raksha, both for their historical insights and their experience in Wyld-shaping techniques.

Raksha, in turn, are often drawn to their ancient Solar enemies simply because the Fair Folk are always drawn to passion, and no one is more passionate than a Lawgiver. Those raksha who love Creation often ally with Solars because they consider the resurgent Lawgivers to be the rising power in Creation and wish to be on the winning side of any eventual conflict. Those raksha who wish to prey upon Creation are more cautious when dealing with the Solars but often find the possibility of seducing or enslaving one to be irresistible. Those who hate Creation but still find themselves trapped within it might grudgingly swear allegiance to a Solar in exchange for a promise to help the raksha eventually return to the Wyld. In the meantime, such Fair Folk gain valuable insights into the powers and weaknesses of the Lawgivers.

Raksha and the Lunar Exalted

Creation-bound raksha find Lunars to generally be dangerous and implacable enemies. Totally immune to many raksha powers, Lunars also tend to have very long and bitter memories of the Balorian Crusade. In fact, those old enough to remember the Crusade most commonly destroy Creation-bound raksha out of hand. Younger Lunars are easier to deal with and are also more likely to know how best to find nearby Wyld zones or even shortcuts to the greater Wyld itself, as young Lunars apparently all must journey into the Wyld to receive the tattoos that protect them from raksha shaping. Regardless of her goals, a wise raksha will move cautiously around a Steward until she has taken his measure. Other than outright death, the greatest danger a Lunar presents for a raksha is manipulation. Elder Lunars seem to delight in staging elaborate social experiments on lesser Creation-born, and they are more than happy to use raksha as tools to that end. Many raksha are still bitter over the terms of their treaty with Halta, a treaty many Fair Folk suspect was somehow engineered by the Lunar elders who shepherd that nation.

Raksha and the Sidereal Exalted

Creation-bound Raksha who truly know anything worth repeating about the Five-Score Fellowship rarely live long enough to spread the news, having already been dispatched by Sidereal assassins. Those few raksha who do interact meaningfully with Sidereal Exalted do so while serving as ambassadors to Yu-Shan from the various raksha courts. Even then, however, raksha diplomats are usually kept in the dark about heavenly politics and rarely come away with any understanding of just how influential the Sidereals are. Raksha are just as vulnerable to the Arcane Fate as anyone else, and if a raksha interacts with a Sidereal while the latter wears a resplendent destiny, he is unlikely to ever pierce her disguise.

For the Sidereals' part, opinions on the raksha range from strong dislike to genocidal rage. Most Sidereals have an atavistic hatred of the Fair Folk due to the raksha's existence outside fate. That alone is enough for a Sidereal to have an instinctive distrust for the raksha even before one gets into issues of the Balorian Crusade and the raksha's probable desire to renew it. Several Sidereal conventions devote themselves to the study of the "raksha problem."

Raksha and the Dragon-Blooded

In many ways, the Scarlet Empire considers the Fair Folk to be a much greater threat than any Solar Exalt. The latter, for all their vast power, are individuals, and there aren't very many of them. The Fair Folk dwell in the Wyld in vast and untold numbers and seem utterly inimical to Creation's existence. Though it has been seven long centuries since the Scarlet Empress defeated the Balorian Crusade, that long span has been but a few generations as far as most Dragon-Bloods are concerned. True, only a tiny handful have firsthand memories of the Crusade, but one who did have such memories was the Empress, and her memories were the ones that counted when it came to setting Realm policy.

Consequently, while the most publicized focus of the Wyld Hunt has been on the Anathema for the last seven centuries, it has also expended considerable resources

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Raksha and Fate

The Loom of Fate makes no distinction between Creation-bound raksha and those who dwell in the Wyld, and neither do the Sidereals. When a Creation-born enters the Wyld for an extended sojourn, that Creation-born's destiny fades from the recognition of the Loom of Fate. Even after the Creation-born returns to Creation, the Loom is still unable to track his destiny until such time as the Creation-born interacts with others in such a way that their destinies are altered. Such destiny-altering events create perturbations in the Loom that cause snarls and tangles in its threads, which in turn, disrupt the chain of causality in Creation itself. It is the job of the Sidereal Exalted to correct these disruptions and to eliminate their causes. This job is made easier, for the Loom can realign itself (without too much difficulty) to resume tracking the Wyld-touched Creation-born's destiny once he has disrupted destiny enough to attract Sidereal attention.

The rules work similarly for the raksha. The act of entering Creation through the power of an Assumption Charm causes each raksha to develop the potential for a destiny the Loom can recognize as long as the raksha remains within Creation's borders. This destiny does not attach automatically, though. A Fair Folk newly arrived from the Wyld remains "outside fate" until she has affected the destiny of enough Creation-born and to a sufficient degree to attract the Loom's attention.

Whenever a raksha in Creation significantly changes the destiny of a Creation-born, the Storyteller should roll a number of dice equal to the Creation-born's Essence, adding one bonus die per dot of Destiny in the case of heroic mortals and Dragon-Blooded. If the raksha uses a Charm or innate power as part of the destiny-changing action, add a number of bonus dice equal to the Charm's minimum Essence requirement. The base difficulty for the roll is 5, and the difficulty decreases by one for each destiny-altering act after the first (to a minimum difficulty of 1) within the last month. If and when the roll succeeds, the pattern spiders become aware of the raksha's existence and begin spinning out a new strand that represents the raksha while she remains in Creation. If the raksha leaves Creation and enters the Wyld for more than one lunar month, however, the strand ends, and the Loom becomes once more unable to track the raksha upon her eventual return until such time as she draws its attention once more.

A raksha who has purchased the Mad God Mien Charm is considered to be completely outside fate and can never be tracked by the Loom of Fate unless she is bound into Creation's weave through effects such as the Greater Sign of Jupiter (see **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Sidereals**, p. 211).

on locating and exterminating Fair Folk colonies within Creation. Given the role the Empress plays within the cultural heritage of the Scarlet Empire, it is unsurprising that the Fair Folk—her first and greatest conquest—should play the role of bogeyman. The Wyld Hunt's policy of total extermination of the Fair Folk has historically made no exception for Creation-bound raksha, no matter how much they claim to love Creation.

Of course, with the Empress gone, the Wyld Hunt is changing as much as every other aspect of the Realm is. In many areas, scheming Dynasts have actively diverted shikari away from Creation-bound colonies that might prove useful in the coming civil war. On at least one occasion, a conspiracy of Peleps dynasts actively betrayed a Wyld Hunt to a colony of raksha in exchange for oaths to assist House Peleps in improving jade-mining operations—potentially an act of treason. Other Creation-bound raksha might also forge beneficial relations with one or more of the Great Houses, though such relations must be kept a secret.

Outcaste Dragon-Bloods are easier to deal with. Lookshy is aware of several small Creation-bound colonies in the River Province, and it vacillates between exterminating them and trading with them for gossamer equipment to replace the city's diminishing stores. The Seventh Legion *does not* tolerate the overt selling of slaves to these colonies for purposes of ravishment, but a few Gentes have formed such arrangements anyway. The Forest Witches regularly accept raksha diplomats to their domain, and the Wyld-tainted outcaste pirates Eos and Ossisa welcome Western raksha aboard their ships as honored guests.

Raksha and the Abyssal Exalted

The relationship between the raksha and the Abyssal Exalted is complicated. On one hand, the majority of both groups are openly antagonistic to Creation, and the Balorian Crusade most likely couldn't have happened without the assistance of the Abyssals' masters, whose invitation gave Prince Balor ingress into Creation's heart. At the same time, the raksha are a fractious and fickle lot, prone to suspicion and paranoia. "Why did the Deathlords invite us into Creation?" they ask. "How is it that we failed, even with the aid of such beings?" Many raksha are suspicious of the motives of their erstwhile allies, wondering if the Crusade might have failed by some treachery on the part of the Deathlords themselves.

Many more are simply disturbed by the intrinsic nature of the Deathlords, the Abyssals and the entire concept of the Underworld. The Wyld is a place of infinite possibility.

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The Void seems to be a place of no possibility at all. More than one raksha diplomat who has studied the ways of the Abyssal Exalted has concluded that, once Creation falls to Oblivion, the Wyld might well be next.

Complicating things even further, those raksha who find favor with Creation and its denizens are just as appalled at the Abyssal Exalted as most Creation-born are. The dreams of living mortals are things of wonder and joy. The dreams of ghosts are naught but bitter memories and cold regrets. Creation-bound raksha as a whole have little desire to trade their succulent feast for the thin gruel of the Underworld.

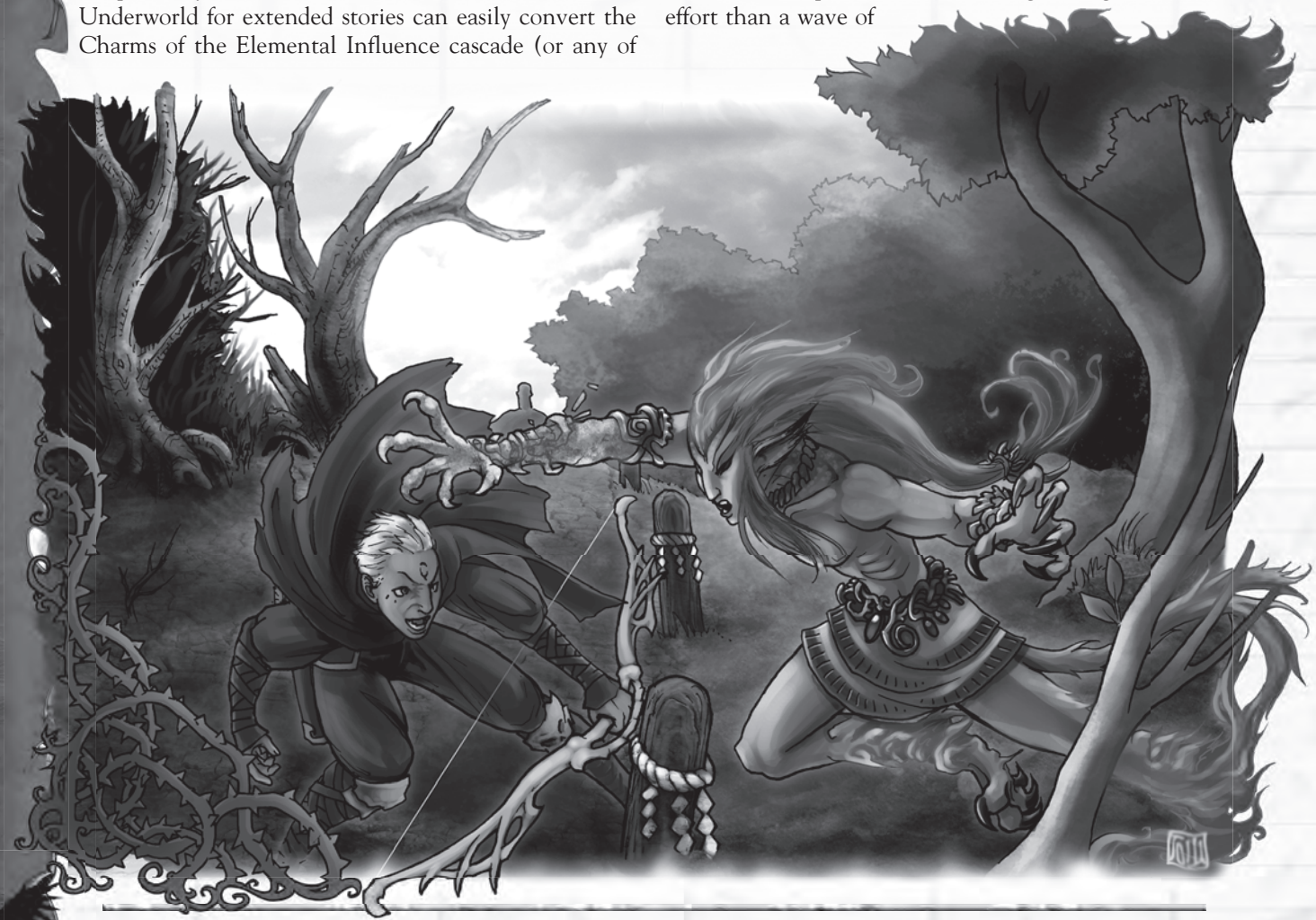
That said, some raksha do find their way into the Underworld and do interact with ghosts, Abyssals and even Deathlords. The Assumption of Cerements and Bone Charm, unheard of at the time of the Balorian Crusade, is now fairly common. With it, a raksha can enter a shadowland or the Underworld in a ghost-like form. While there, she can regain Essence just as she could in Creation, only applying her Feeding Charms to the dead instead of the living. A few raksha have even developed customized Assumption-based Charms that branch off of Assumption of Cerements and Bone just as the Elemental Influence Charms branch off of Assumption of (Element) Shape. Storytellers who wish to allow raksha to enter the Underworld for extended stories can easily convert the Charms of the Elemental Influence cascade (or any of the similar Assumption-based cascades) into a tree of Cerements and Bone Charms, with Charms based on death-related themes and phenomena instead of elements, animals, emotions, et cetera.

Absent the use of Assumption of Cerements and Bone, a raksha who enters a shadowland or the Underworld suffers calcification as if she were a raksha in Creation without a valid Assumption Charm.

Stories in the Wyld

The possibilities inherent in a Fair Folk series truly shine in games set in the Wyld, where the raksha's Wyld-shaping birthright changes the dynamic of the game itself. When raksha characters shape the fabric of the Wyld, their players actively work with the Storyteller to create the setting in which those characters act in a way that few other games permit. Ideally, a Fair Folk series set in the Wyld is a cooperative experience in which the players take on a role that might best be described as that of secondary Storytellers.

Shaping actions permit a raksha character to alter his appearance, his gear and equipment, his surroundings, and even his own Motivation and Intimacies. An Entertainer who sees himself as a wealthy potentate can surround himself with opulence fit for a king through no more effort than a wave of



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his hand. A Warrior who sees herself as a general with an army of thousands can fashion such an army into existence just as easily. It is just as simple for a Diplomat to shape into existence an entire civilization based on his whims regarding how a society should be structured or for a Worker to dream into existence creative works that beggar the imagination. Although such workings are mere fantasies (see pp. 116-117), other raksha, who are loath to deny the "reality" of their crafted existence, will typically treat such fantasies as real… until they can conspire a way to shape them out of existence.

Shaping for Dummies

The first thing to remember when it comes to shaping is the difference between a shaping action and a shaping attack. A *shaping action* is an action undertaken by a raksha (or by a Creation-born with a suitable Grace) that is designed to magically alter any facet of the Wyld, including other raksha and even visiting Creation-born. A *shaping attack* is a specific type of shaping action undertaken with the intention of inflicting shaping damage under the rules outlined in Chapter Five. Normal shaping actions take place under the same sort of abstract, tickless time structure that governs normal roleplaying in Creation. When one character initiates a hostile action, it provokes a Join Shaping Battle roll from all raksha capable of shaping attacks who are currently within the same waypoint. Players of raksha not immediately threatened may choose not to roll Join Shaping Battle. Most minor shaping battles are one-on-one affairs.

Despite its freeform nature, the Wyld works essentially the same way as Creation as far as Storyteller issues such as timing are concerned. A tale is really just another name for a scene. The difference is that a scene in Creation usually changes when the characters change surroundings. Suppose three Creation-born characters have a 10-minute discussion with a server in a teahouse in order to find out when their contact will arrive, then they wait there for three hours to meet with that contact to find the location of an escaped criminal, *then* they move across town to the docks in order to actually confront that criminal. That period represents three scenes—two scenes in the teahouse separated by downtime in which nothing occurred, followed by one scene at the docks, with the journey to the docks also represented by downtime since nothing interesting happened on the way there.

In the Wyld, all those scenes might take place within the same tale. One raksha could shape the teahouse into existence as a shaping action, the other could shape the contact into existence, and the third could reshape the teahouse into the docks, complete with the escaped criminal right there waiting to be captured. (Never mind, for the moment, why three raksha would choose to play out this scenario. They're Fair Folk. Go with it.) Like a scene, a tale simply means "a length of time in which logically connected events occurs." Fair Folk just have greater skill at stretching the definition of "logically connected events."

A Short Exchange of Shaping Attacks

It's been some time since Asira and Citraratha last clashed. When they meet once more, in a waypoint deep within the Middlemarches, Citraratha seeks restitution for a wrong Asira committed against her, and she intends to provide him no quarter.

Join Shaping Battle is rolled. Citraratha's player rolls four successes; Asira's player rolls two.

For her first action, Citraratha makes a Staff-shaping attack using the society weapon. Asira has wronged her and owes her recompense by right. "Society" when used as a shaping weapon has the following traits: Speed 5, Accuracy +1, Damage +0, Defense +2, Rate 3. The dice pool for Citraratha's attack is (Intelligence + Socialize + 1), which she augments with an application of the Second Staff Excellency. She garners seven successes, three more than Asira's Heart DV of 4. The raw damage of the attack is nine (Citraratha's Charisma of 6, plus the society's damage bonus of 0), and Asira's Staff soak is merely seven. Her player rolls two dice for damage, and the courtiers inflict two levels of Staff damage upon Asira with accusatory glares.

The waypoint becomes a palace, in the midst of a grand ball. As Asira moves through the courtiers, they scoff at him behind their paper fans, whispering insults to his reputation and accusing him of breaking his obligations. Asira blushes furiously, and a bead of sweat rolls down his back, but he presses on.

Asira makes his Cup attack next, using the milieu weapon. "Milieu," in the context of shaping combat, is an unarmed shaping attack resulting from the attacker shaping an environment that assaults the defender's sense of purpose. Essentially, it is a quickly spun fantasy that has shaping weapon traits. The dice pool for Asira's attack is (Manipulation + Performance + 1 for the milieu's Accuracy), which he augments with the First Cup Excellency. He gains eight successes, four more than Citraratha's Heart DV of 4. The raw damage of his attack is 10, but Citraratha knew this confrontation would come, and has wrapped her Heart in assertion gauze. Her total Cup soak is 9, which reduces Asira's raw damage to 1. Yet shaping soak, like normal soak, cannot reduce raw damage below the attacker's Essence, so Asira's player still rolls three dice. He gets no successes, and his singing inflicts no Cup damage on Citraratha.

The grand ball becomes an amphitheater, and the courtiers the audience. Asira himself takes his place center stage, and begins to sing. "How could I know I wronged you, Citraratha?" *The song demands.* "I cannot exist without you; nor you without me. Let us both forgive, and depart this place together." *Her heart cold to such entreaties, Citraratha sneers at his feeble attempt, and the crowd begins to murmur its disapproval.*

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The Court

Raksha courts exist as islands of (relative) stability for the Fair Folk. Each of the major courts devotes itself to the advancement of a particular Virtue or to the idea of Willpower. These devotions, however, are mainly the result of the inclinations and proclivities of the ruling Fair Folk, reinforced by whatever incumbrances those rulers have placed on their domains and whatever oaths they insist that their subjects swear. In truth, the courts exist mainly for mutual protection, with the individual members coming together to form societies in a crude parody of the manner in which Creation-born form communities. Many raksha have powerful enemies, and even those who don't might find a solitary existence in the Wyld to be boring at best and terribly dangerous at worst. The empty waypoints between those occupied by the courts are home to wandering unshaped, to raksha bandit groups and even to Creation-born Wyld mutants who have the power to permanently slay a raksha. It is unsurprising that shaped raksha who dwell in the Wyld instead of Creation band together.

Life Within the Courts

Raksha courts are quasi-feudal in nature. If it were possible to strip away the artifice and glamour that gilds the edges of a raksha court, it would stand revealed as having no more sophistication than a pack of wild dogs, with an alpha ruling all others through strength of body and will. For most observers, however, that truth is obscured by layer upon layer of deception and misdirection. Having existed for so long at the periphery of Creation, most raksha courtiers instinctively model their behavior on the social customs of Creation-born court structures, albeit twisted by the funhouse mirror of the Wyld.

Each court is dominated by one or more rulers, almost always powerful nobles with Heart 4 and very commonly nobles who were once unshaped before constructing powerful forms with which to enter Creation. Most court rulers adopt some type of Creation-born honorific to denote their superior station—Duke Aral, Judge Nehemeth, Princess Kyema, et cetera. In addition to considerable personal prowess, the ruler typically exerts ownership over the bulk of the waypoints within the court's freehold structure, and probably ownership over the Heart Graces of the freehold's keeper, pride, vizier and/or general, if the freehold has any or all of the related traits.

The ruler of a court will rarely be a player's character. Instead, the ruler is more likely to be a mentor or source of backing, if the player purchases either or both of those Backgrounds. Depending on the character's personality and political acumen, the ruler is just as likely to be an antagonist, if only a dismissive one. (It is unlikely that a starting raksha character can survive for long in a court against the complete hostility of that court's ruler.) Some characters might possess Motivations that direct them toward becoming the ruler of a court, either by supplanting the current ruler of the court in which the character resides or by leaving the freehold to forge a new court to compete against the established one.

Those who are most loyal to the ruler (including the members of her ring, if she has one) form the second layer of political control. These lieutenants are invariably powerful nobles but beneath the ruler in status and power. Their loyalty is often enforced by powerful oaths and even adjurations, and their role within the court is to act as intermediaries and enforcers for the ruler. Such positions are potentially within the grasp of a starting character, provided she takes appropriate Backgrounds, and it is certainly something for a character to strive for through political machinations. This level of authority, however, is often reserved for powerful nobles (usually with Heart 4 or at least with Heart 3 and 100 or so experience points). Such nobles can serve as mentors and provide backing, or can serve as dangerous and cunning antagonists. Many raksha characters who wish to flourish in the court environment must walk the razor's edge between several such elders who might be loyal to the ruler of the court but still have competing agendas that can be advanced through manipulating the players' characters.

The rest of the court's nobility will make up the bulk of the Storyteller characters in a raksha series. Most players' characters will fit into this category, having enough personal power and status to legitimately call themselves raksha nobles but lacking the power to shape court polity. These characters are welcome to participate in the life of the court, but only at the sufferance of the court's ruler. Below those nobles who exist outside the ruler's inner circle are the commoners who serve the court. Heroic commoner characters can gain at least a modicum of respect from their elders but must be careful never to appear too presumptuous or to aspire to a position above their station. The ultimate goal of nearly all heroic commoners is to become noble, most commonly by gaining the favor of a noble capable of opening a second feeding Grace within the commoner or by evolving through the process of life experience until the commoner can open a second feeding Grace on his own. (The latter tends to occur naturally somewhere around the level of 200 experience points.)

In most courts, the only thing that raises a commoner above the status of slave or even toy is noblesse oblige. It is considered gauche and banal to torment or abuse commoners solely for one's own amusement. There are few social limitations, however, on a noble's ability to harass, bully or mock a commoner, and a commoner who responds to provocation by a noble with anything other than servility risks tasting the full power of raksha shaping attacks. Heroic commoners, unlike most of their station, do have the ability to make shaping attacks, but this ability is less useful than it seems against abusive nobles. A heroic commoner who actually attacks a noble, regardless of provocation,

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invokes the most serious penalties the court can dish out, and one who dares to challenge a ruler or a member of her inner circle has essentially just volunteered to become the bonefire of a new Arcane Redoubt.

Shaping Within the Courts

Shaping combat plays a role in the politics of the raksha courts, but not the one that Creation-born outsiders might expect. Theoretically, it is certainly possible for an Entertainer character to make it a habit of ravishing every other character she encounters or for a Warrior character to vex away the Graces of every raksha he can in hopes of enslaving them all. Of course, it is equally possible for a Solar character to make it her practice to maim or kill everyone who crosses her path. Yet just as there are consequences to playing a Solar Exalt as a homicidal maniac, so too are there consequences to playing a raksha who uses shaping combat like a club instead of a surgeon's scalpel.

Among most raksha courts, there are strong taboos against ravishing or snaring fellow raksha without good cause. Raksha are generally free to incumber commoners as they wish or to vex away non-Grace possessions from anyone. One who capriciously lays a heavy burden on a member of the ruling class, however, or who sets out to collect as many Heart Graces as he can courts social opprobrium from his peers, a thirst for revenge from his victims, and the hostility of the ruling nobles, who resent those who try to enslave their subjects. Generally, a raksha will not begin a shaping battle against another and carry it to its ultimate conclusion (being ravished, incumbered, snared or vexed) unless he is seriously provoked and he knows he can win. While the taboos against frivolous shaping assaults are mainly social strictures, they are social strictures backed up by powerful noble raksha who make it a habit to slap down their impertinent inferiors.

In many courts (or at least, in many waypoints within such courts), these social strictures are also backed up with magical power. A waypoint can be incumbered so that those who enter it must pay some tangible price for ravishing, incumbering or vexing others without consent of the waypoint's owner. For example, one common waypoint incumbrance, "the victor's geas," compels any raksha within the waypoint who successfully vexes another to name some challenge or quest the defeated raksha must complete. If the vexed one does so, the victorious raksha is bound to return the vexed item. The difficulty of the challenge or quest is commensurate with the value of the item vexed.

Additionally, many raksha also swear powerful oaths to freehold lords, who are then honor-bound to retaliate against Fair Folk who assault their vassals. Some dictatorial raksha nobles maintain the civility of their freeholds and waypoints through the deliberate use of ravishment. As a condition of becoming a member of the court, a newly arrived raksha must submit to the ravishment of his Conviction and thereafter becomes unable to contemplate random violence against his fellow Fair Folk.

In other words, there are consequences for any character who initiates a shaping battle within the confines of a court and pursues it to the point of totally draining his rival's Grace health track. Players who think that the relative lack of lethality in a purely Fair Folk game is a license to target every Grace they can find for vexation, for example, should remember one simple truth: In the end, bullies always get what they deserve.

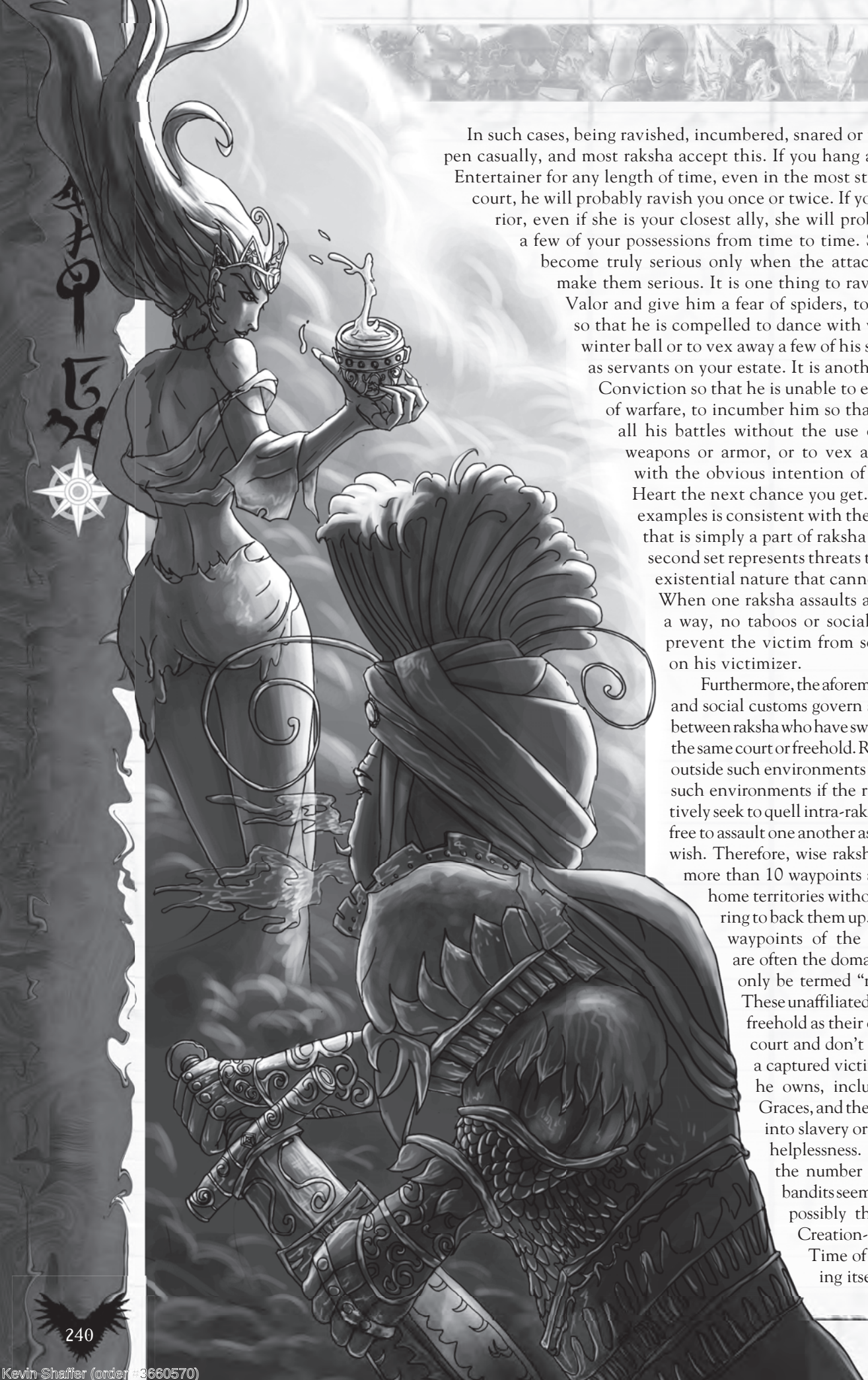
On a related note, all raksha characters have the capacity to reshape their environment in the Wyld through the process of creating fantasies (see pp. 116-117). The shaping of fantasies is considered as much a natural part of raksha existence as breathing is to the Creation-born. That said, a wise raksha (particularly one outside the ruler's inner circle) will be cautious about extending the range of his fantasies. Most court rulers shape the public waypoints of their courts to their own personal tastes and one of the perks of rulership is that social inferiors will generally refrain from challenging them. Fantasies that are confined to a small area of a court waypoint and last for only a few tales are generally tolerated, but those that dominate a huge swath of a court and disarrange the fantasies set in place by the rulers are not tolerated.

For example, in the earlier example of shaping combat between Asira and Citraratha, the two freely shaped the surrounding area into first a crowded ballroom and then a performing stage, but the effect did not extend beyond a relatively small portion of a single waypoint. Had they waged their battle within a waypoint under the control of a court's ruler or her subordinates, there might have been serious repercussions as more powerful raksha chose to involve themselves in the fracas. Had their fantasies disrupted any persistent fantasies previously invoked by the ruler or her inner circle, the ruler might well have taken umbrage at their presumption and punished them severely for their impertinence.

Exceptions to the Rule

Of course, rules are made to be broken and taboos are meant to be shattered. Although characters who invariably pursue shaping duels to their final end are often judged as having poor form, it does happen. Such shaping duels frequently begin as mere social feints—an Entertainer tries to seduce a noble Warrior as part of a Cup-shaping attack, and the Warrior makes a move for his sword to let her know that he won't fall for her charms (or Charms). Sometimes, one raksha overestimates the other's defenses and reduces his victim's Grace health track to zero in one lucky shot. Sometimes, one raksha initiates a shaping combat with a hated rival just to screw with his head and things get out of hand. Sometimes, one raksha is toying with her raksha lover and he forgets the safe word.

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In such cases, being ravished, incumbered, snared or vexed can happen casually, and most raksha accept this. If you hang around with an Entertainer for any length of time, even in the most strictly regulated court, he will probably ravish you once or twice. If you anger a Warrior, even if she is your closest ally, she will probably vex away a few of your possessions from time to time. Such outcomes become truly serious only when the attacker chooses to make them serious. It is one thing to ravish a Warrior's Valor and give him a fear of spiders, to incumber him so that he is compelled to dance with you at the next winter ball or to vex away a few of his soldiers to work as servants on your estate. It is another to ravish his Conviction so that he is unable to endure the sight of warfare, to incumber him so that he must fight all his battles without the use of any shaping weapons or armor, or to vex away his Sword with the obvious intention of going after his Heart the next chance you get. The first set of examples is consistent with the sort of trickery that is simply a part of raksha existence. The second set represents threats to the Warrior's existential nature that cannot be tolerated. When one raksha assaults another in such a way, no taboos or social strictures will prevent the victim from seeking revenge on his victimizer.

Furthermore, the aforementioned taboos and social customs govern shaping combat between raksha who have sworn allegiance to the same court or freehold. Raksha who meet outside such environments (or even within such environments if the rulers do not actively seek to quell intra-raksha conflict) are free to assault one another as brutally as they wish. Therefore, wise raksha do not travel more than 10 waypoints away from their home territories without a retinue or a ring to back them up. The unclaimed waypoints of the Bordermarches are often the domains of what can only be termed "raksha bandits." These unaffiliated raksha claim no freehold as their own, support no court and don't hesitate to strip a captured victim of everything he owns, including all of his Graces, and then incumber him into slavery or ravish him into helplessness. In recent years, the number of these raksha bandits seems to have grown, possibly the result of the Creation-born strife in the Time of Tumult reflecting itself in the Wyld.

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The Church of Balor

Chapter Three briefly discussed philosophies that dominate raksha views on Creation and on how to respond to it. Three of them—the Glittering Train, the Duchy of Mirrors and the Hungry Wolves—truly are nothing more than philosophies, with no more organizational structure than adherents in isolated courts or waypoints wish to give them. The fourth, the Church of Balor, has more definition. The Church is not only a product of the desire for Creation's end, it is also an expression of some raksha's fascination with Creation-born religion. The raksha themselves famously say that they would never worship any gods they didn't create themselves, and the Church itself worships no deities of any sort. What the Church worships is an idea—that Prince Balor's goal of destroying Creation was so noble and pure that, regardless of whether it was even a good idea, all decent raksha should take up his standard and follow in his footsteps. That Prince Balor's footsteps ended with his own demise rather than any sort of victory is not a bug but a feature. For devoted members of the Church, the idea of a glorious martyrdom is actually far more attractive than actual success in destroying Creation.

Indeed, the Church itself is riddled with fifth columnists who seek to undermine all plans for destroying Creation that might actually succeed, lest the Church inadvertently deprive itself of the reason for its own existence. Most Church leaders are well aware of this fact and approve mightily, for this subversion allows them to create inquisitions to root out heresy, always an exciting and provocative aspect of the religious experience.

So What Does the Church Do?

The history and general structure of the Church of Balor, such as it is, is explained beginning on page 50.

If all the players' characters are members of the Church, then the ring's most likely goal is to lay the groundwork for some grand march into Creation to wage war against the forces of stasis and banality. Such a crusade would almost certainly be a futile and self-destructive gesture, which is precisely why it is so attractive to those who would pursue it. For many, membership in the Church of Balor is just another part to play, another fashion to wear. The church member's piety is an illusion designed to provoke a response in those around her, just like every other aspect of her shaped existence.

That said, a certain percentage of the Church's members really are what they claim to be—powerful raksha obsessed with Creation's destruction. These true believers have no intention of martyring themselves, no matter how glorious their deaths will be, unless they are certain of taking Creation with them. Instead, true believers make intelligent and well-crafted plans for Creation's destruction. Unfortunately, these plans are long in scope, as the true believers simply don't have the resources to attack Creation en masse unless they can manipulate the rest of the Church into doing things their way. To that end, most true believers focus on missionary work, trying to increase the Church's membership so that, when the Second Crusade comes, there will be enough raksha who actually keep their eyes on the prize—Creation's end.

Unfortunately for the true believers, at the other end of the spectrum are the apostates. These raksha are devoted to the Church of Balor but only to the extent that it creates a sense of community among the raksha and forms the nucleus for a greater raksha polity. If the Church begins a Second Crusade and fails, it will likely cease to be. If the Church begins a Second Crusade and *succeeds*, it will almost certainly cease to be. Accordingly, to the apostates, it is better for the Church to remain perpetually ineffectual than to actually work toward achieving its goals. Those raksha who are counted among the apostates give every outward appearance of loyalty to the Church but seize any opportunity to undermine its goals, to sabotage its more promising leaders and to promote the glory of the "futile gesture" strategy over anything that might actually endanger the object of their religious hatred.

When true believers and apostates clash, a common result is for local church leaders to call for an inquisition of righteous templars to root out all those who are insufficiently loyal to the Church's goals. Sadly, even the templars of these inquisitions are themselves riddled with the same divisions as the larger Church. Some inquisitors are true believers who genuinely want to root out heresy and treason. Others are apostates who use the inquisition to sow dissent among true believers and spread doubts as to their loyalty. And in the middle stand the bulk of the templars who don't really care about doctrinal differences or theological debates, but who really just enjoy the pomp and ceremony that comes with being a dread inquisitor.

Questing Against the Unshaped

Perhaps the most challenging and intriguing aspect of a Fair Folk series can be found in questing against the unshaped. During a quest, raksha characters must enter the "body" of an unshaped raksha and willingly play parts within a narrative structure devised by the unshaped raksha's component selves. Victory in a quest brings rewards in the form of powerful Wyld artifacts. Failure can mean enslavement to a being whose alien character and madness dwarfs that of even a raksha noble. What makes questing an interesting roleplaying experience is the fact that it forces players to play a role within a role. Each quest represents an epic story created by the unshaped complete with heroes and villains striving against one another. To complete a quest, the questing

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raksha must insert himself into the story in such a way that he becomes its protagonist and then uses the tropes of the story against the author to achieve victory. The questing raksha become like characters in a stage drama who suddenly begin writing their own dialogue, rebelling against the playwright and choosing their own ending for the play that is already in progress.

The mechanical rules for a quest are outlined in Chapter Two.

A Sample Quest

Nlassa, Janiera and the Lady Ayana moved toward the edge of the sleeping Chaos Lord's territories cautiously. The Golden Mirror was strong, even for an unshaped, and the stories it told were known for their unhappy endings. Nlassa was an Anarch, but the other two had none of a Warrior's skill or courage. Still, the three were nobles all, and their need was great. It had come to pass that the Lapis Court had need of a srishti oath, and Neshi of the Double Whips had tasked the trio with securing it. Since Neshi's own arsenal carried no oaths more powerful than the tirobhava, certain liberties would need to be taken with the Heart of an unshaped raksha. And so, here they were. Nlassa, both the eldest and most aggressive, spoke for the trio. "Hail to thee, Orchinast, who is called the Golden Mirror. We challenge you and would take from you what we would have. Let us enter and do as we will, if you have the courage to face us." The miasma of iridescent Wyld energy that lay before them, farther than the eyes could see, shimmered for a moment, and Janiera, the youngest, thought that she heard it growl. Then, the Wyld transformed and resolved itself into a field of cracked obsidian, with the red-hot magma below plainly visible. In the distance, a mile away, or perhaps 10,000 miles (it was difficult to tell), a mighty volcano rose up toward the sky. Reluctantly, the trio stepped into the inhospitable terrain.

Three noble raksha characters—Nlassa, Janiera and Lady Ayana—seek to quest against the Golden Mirror in hopes of improving a four-dot adjuration into a five-dot one. Nlassa makes a Sword-shaping action on behalf of the group to issue the challenge. Since they seek to acquire a five-dot artifact, she must get five successes on the shaping roll. She is successful, and the Storyteller determines how difficult the quest will be. There are three raksha questing against a powerful unshaped, but individually, the nobles are not terribly powerful. Feeling lenient, the Storyteller decides that there will be only be three challenges: a Ring test, a Cup test and a Sword test.

The three nobles marched for days through the sweltering heat of the volcanic plane. High above, giant birds of ash and smoke circled lazily about them, as if waiting only for them to die from thirst. On the fifth day, as despair began to set in, Janiera cried out, for in the distance, she could see an oasis. Ignoring Lady Ayana's warnings, Nlassa and Janiera moved quickly toward the beckoning waters, stripping off their filthy travel clothes as they went and diving head-first into the oasis. Lady Ayana was unsurprised when, after several minutes, her companions did not break the surface again. "Well, honestly, what did they expect?" Ayana paused for a moment to center herself, and then she began to run around the perimeter of the oasis. Faster and faster she ran, until the dust behind her began to spiral up into the air. Soon, the water of the oasis responded to the swirling column of air, and was pulled up into a waterspout. The water spread out across the blackened sky. In due course, it began to rain. Ayana looked up, exulting in the cool rain as it poured down her face. Then, she looked down into the hole where the oasis stood, now empty save for her two nude and befuddled compatriots. "Shall we move on?"

The first test is a Ring test. Koleromense, the Last Mirage, who represents the unshaped's Cup, makes a shaping attack against the trio, attempting to divert them from their trek with the temptation of a cool bath after their long, hot journey. The Cup-shaping attack incapacitates Nlassa and Janiera, but the Courtier, Lady Ayana, is able to resist the attack. She counters with a Ring-shaping attack of her own, using her raw will as a shaping weapon. This shaping battle is resolved in Ayana's favor, and the environmental conditions that represent Koleromense's attack (burning heat and a drowning pool) fade instantly, along with damage inflicted on Nlassa and Janiera. Had Ayana fallen as well, the quest would have ended, and all three would have been subject to ravishment.

Note: Although the results of Ayana's successful attack on Koleromense superficially resembled incumbrance (against a normal target, her attack would have compelled the target to avoid Ayana and her friends at all costs), Emanations are actually immune to incumbrance in the context of a quest. Instead, an Emanation who loses his last Ring health level is simply compelled to leave the environment.

Refreshed by the rain and chastened by near defeat, the trio moves on. The desert dissolves into a deep and foreboding forest of burning trees. In the distance, the raksha hear a strange chanting. Investigating, they see a young man, of scarcely more than 19 summers and with a face of haunting beauty, tied to a sacrificial altar. Dancing around him are a half-dozen hideous fire goblins, even more mutated than those who serve the Lapis Court. Ruling over them is an evil enchanter who is preparing to sacrifice the callow youth in order to gain some form of Wyld mutation for himself. His frenzied prayers indicate that his ritual is "for the glory of Orchinast." Although naturally distrustful of anything they see in this strange place, the three raksha agree that it is fitting that they should rescue this mortal boy from his fate, if only to enjoy the pleasures of his body and soul for themselves. Nlassa and Ayana make short work of the goblins, while Janiera entrances the villain with her wiles and, after robbing him of his Valor, she compels him to flee into the woods.

The boy, who calls himself Rabbit, offers himself freely as a servant and sexual plaything to his beautiful saviors, and he demonstrates remarkable stamina and technique.

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Soon, the three raksha are exhausted and must rest… or at least two of them are so exhausted. Janiera is an Ornamental Raksha, and she knows all too well that some pretty packages contain dangerous surprises, so she feigns weakness and watches through half-closed eyes as Rabbit pleasures Nlassa and Ayana. After the two have fallen asleep, she watches as Rabbit quietly moves to Ayana and Nlassa in turn to whisper sweet words of love in each of their ears. She watches as he draws three tiny brass needles from his pockets and firmly presses one into each of the two raksha's hearts. She even watches as Rabbit does the same thing to her own body… or at least, what he thinks is her body but which is actually a cunningly crafted arrangement of leaves and clothing. Indeed, so perfect and beautiful is Janiera's deception that, even as Rabbit stabs the third needle into the dummy's heart, his own heart breaks. As he tearfully flees into the woods, Janiera smiles.

The next test is a Cup test. The evil enchanter is actually the Crimson Lion, the Golden Mirror's Sword Emanation, here doing double duty by acting as the villain in this Cup-shaping action. The unshaped's Ring Emanation is Nine Rabbits Slayer who seeks to seduce the three Fair Folk ladies, break their hearts and turn them against one another. Had his attack succeeded on all three, he would have ravished each of their Compassion Virtues with regard to each other, turning them into enemies. Fortunately, Janiera was able to see through his stealthy attack and counterattack with a deception of her own.

Note: The results of Janiera's successful attack on Nine Rabbits Slayer superficially resembled ravishment (against a normal target, her attack would have ravished his Conviction and made him unable to bear seeing those he had betrayed), Emanations are actually immune to ravishment in the context of questing. Instead, an Emanation who loses his last Cup health level is simply compelled to leave the environment.

The trio continues on through the woods. There is no sign of the boy they rescued, nor any clearly denoted pathway, but they do find burning footsteps indicating the direction in which the evil enchanter fled. Perceiving no other clues (and remembering that he claimed to worship Orchinast), they head off in that direction. Eventually, the Fair Folk come to a great clearing in the woods, with a tall tower in the middle. Atop this tower is the enchanter, who, singing the praises of Orchinast the Golden Mirror, waves a long candle toward them and summons into existence a behemoth lion forged of pure fire. Although the Anarch Nlassa is eager to hurl herself into battle against such a mighty beast, Lady Ayana urges discretion—surely this fiery lion is but a distraction from their true enemy, the enchanter himself.

Sensing wisdom in Ayana's words, Nlassa has Ayana and Janiera serve as distractions for the lion, while she circles around to surprise the enchanter. Janiera knows that she has little chance of defeating a mighty beast like the lion, but she also knows she might not need to. Instead, she flings herself to the ground and starts begging piteously for mercy, hoping that the



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enchanter pays more attention to her than to Nlassa. Few men are able to ignore the tears of a beautiful Ornamental Raksha, and the enchanter is not one of them. Just as the lion is about to strike, the enchanter calls on it to stand fast. Confused by its master's hesitation, the lion does not see as Nlassa runs forward, leaps onto the lion's head and from there somersaults onto the top of the tower. In one smooth move, the Anarch severs the enchanter's head from his body, and the candle he used to summon the flaming lion rolls across the floor to her feet. As the candle gutters, the lion dissipates into smoke.

The final test is a Sword test. The unshaped's Sword Emanation is Merik the Crimson Lion. Still in his enchanter guise from his role as the villain of the Cup test, Merik initiates a Sword-shaping attack against the trio with his Presence Ability and an artifact behemoth shaping weapon. Because Nlassa is the quest-leader for this test, the other two are incapable of shaping attacks—any shaping action meant to inflict shaping damage on the Emanation at the heart of the test automatically fails. They *can* take non-damaging shaping actions, however, such as actions to confuse, befuddle or even disarm an Emanation. In this case, Janiera first makes a Cup-shaping roll based on Performance to distract Merik. It succeeds and causes Merik to lose his DV against Nlassa's attack. Nlassa's Sword-shaping attack succeeds, and the enchanter is laid low.

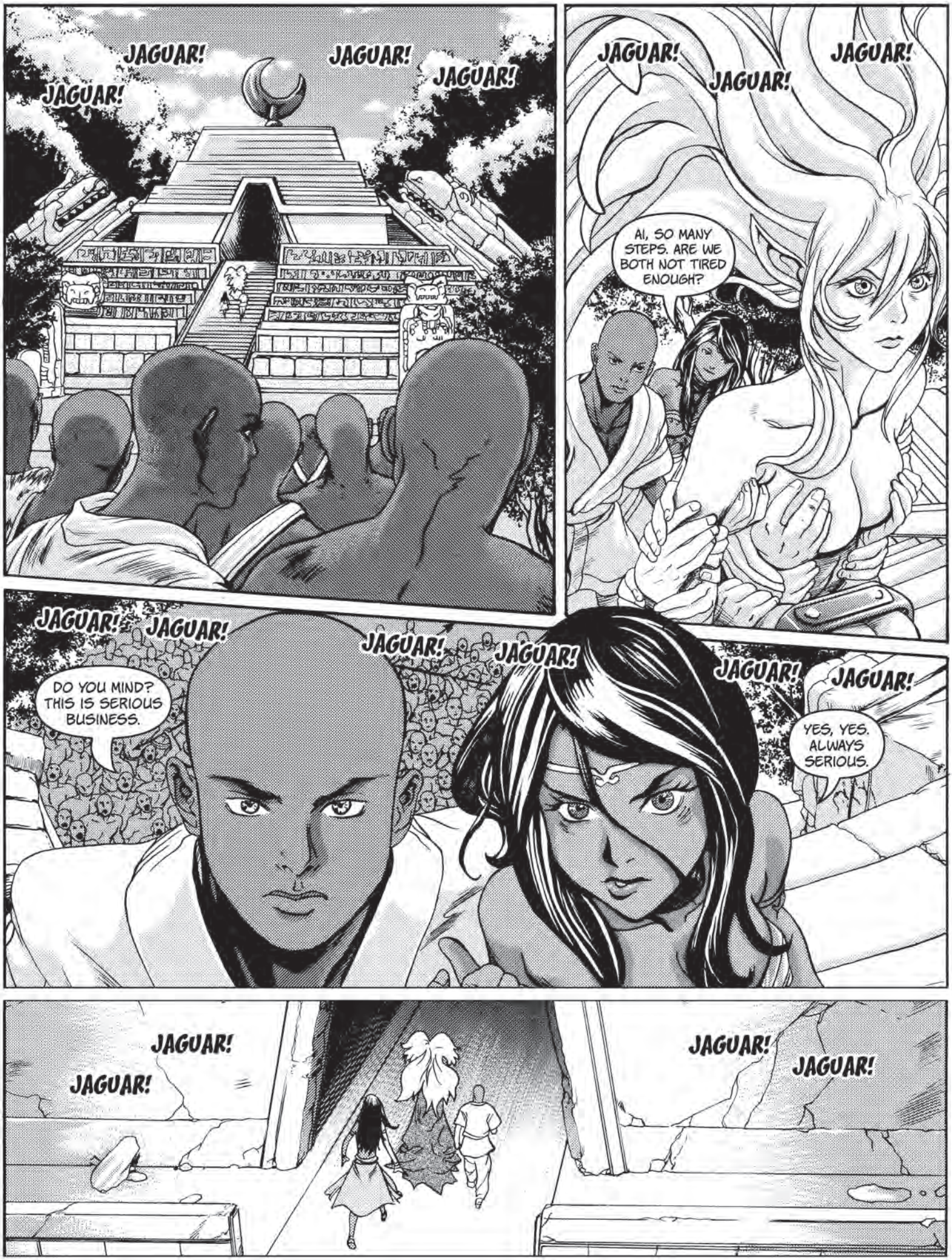
Note: Although the results of Nlassa's successful attack on Merik the Crimson Lion superficially resembled vexation (against a normal target, her attack would have allowed her to steal one or more of his possessions), Emanations are actually immune to vexation in the context of questing. Instead, an Emanation who loses his last Sword health level is simply compelled to leave the environment.

Having vanquished the enchanter, the trio enters the tower and goes deep into its depths. There, the raksha find the one they are searching for—Orchinast, the heart and soul of the Golden Mirror, in the form of a beautiful golden lady reclining on a bed of fire. Drawing her courtier's caul tightly around her, Lady Ayana steps forth and speaks on behalf of the trio, speaking eloquently and passionately about Orchinast's storied reputation, and reminding her of the ancient oaths she has sworn. Janiera sings the unshaped's praises and shamelessly flatters her with song and poem. Finally, Nlassa reminds Orchinast that the three raksha have come far and killed many of the unshaped's other selves along the way. "It would be a pity to add you to that body count." she says, fingering her harness of twisted words suggestively.

Orchinast considers for a moment and acquiesces. "What is it you desire?"

Having won their way through to the Heart Emanation, the raksha need only defeat the Golden Mirror's Heart Emanation in a simple shaping battle to win their prize. Because the Fair Folk desire an adjuration, it is important that they defeat Orchinast in a Staff-shaping battle. Lady Ayana, a Courtier, relies on her courtier's caul and her Linguistics Ability, using eloquence and diplomacy to weaken Orchinast's Staff. Nlassa, as an Anarch, prefers the direct approach, using (Manipulation + Thrown) and the threat of a nasty entanglement to intimidate the Emanation. Janiera, as an Ornamental Raksha, cannot realistically damage Orchinast's Staff Grace, but she can provide a distraction with a well-placed Cup attack. None of the three botch, and so, Orchinast can only try to defend herself. In the face of three determined enemies, however, she decides that discretion is the better part of valor. She grants the three Fair Folk the adjuration they seek.

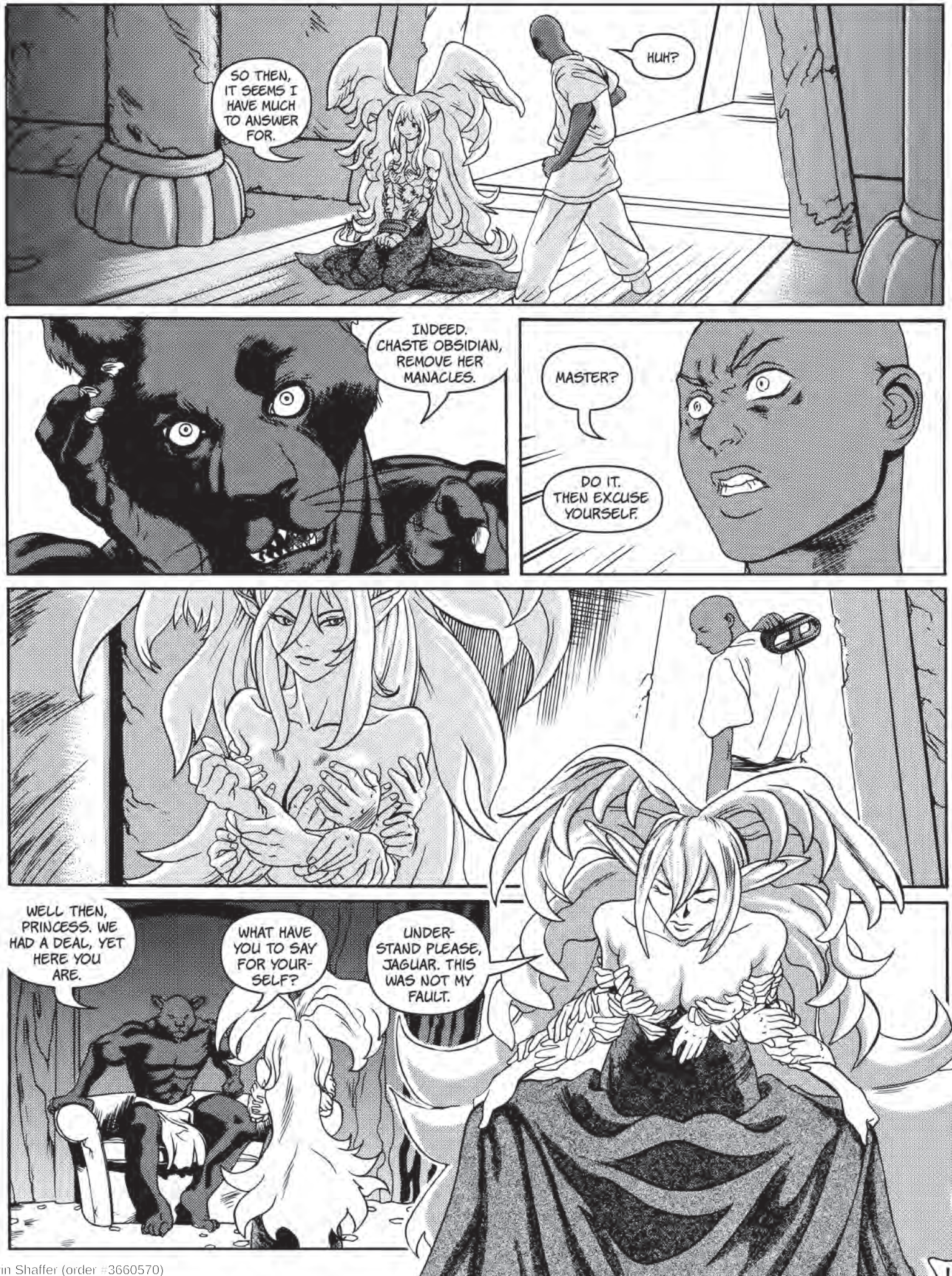
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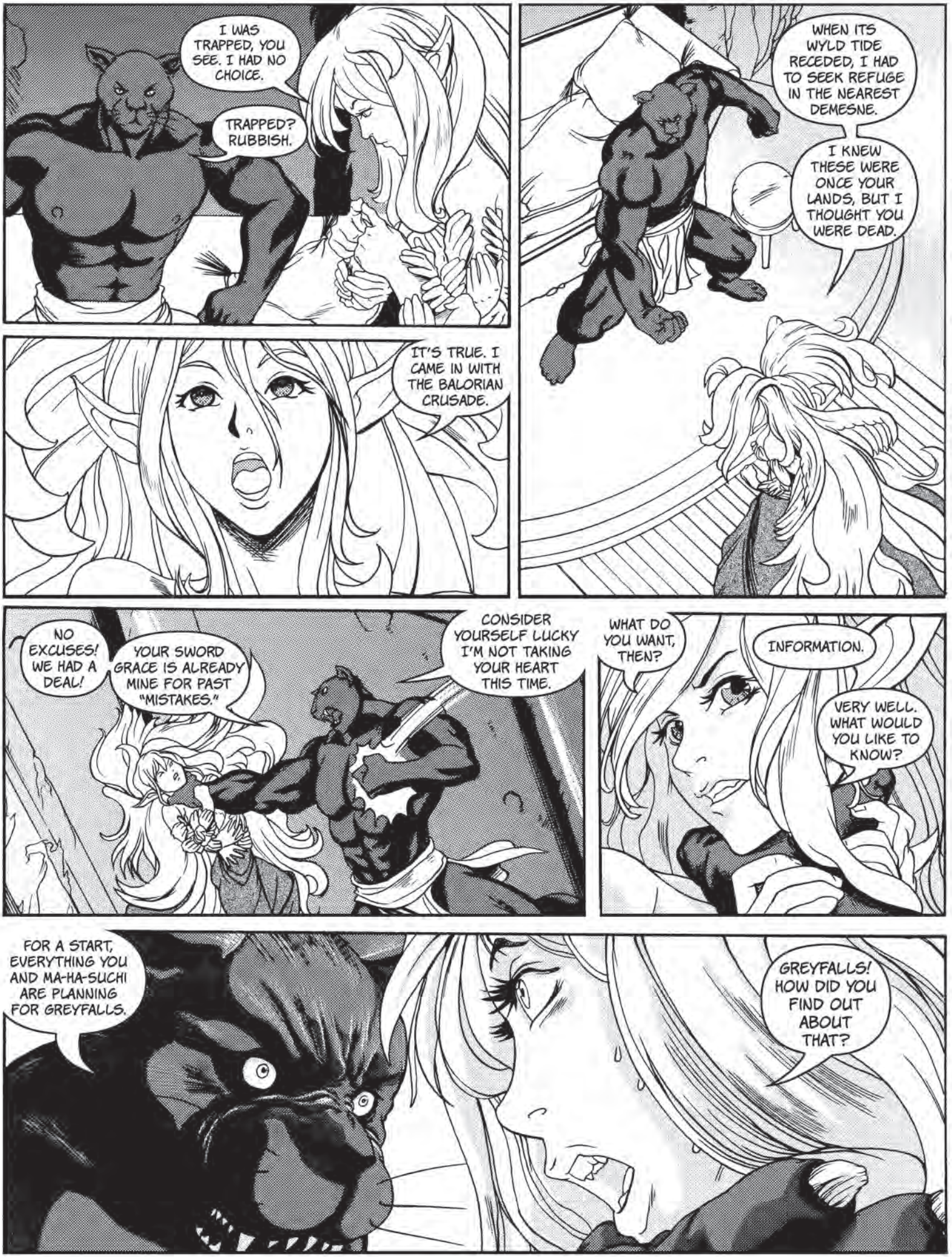
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Graceful Wicked Masques™

EXALTED SECOND EDITION

NAME: _____ CONCEPT: _____
PLAYER: _____ MOTIVATION: _____
CASTE: _____ COURT: _____

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH	●OOOO	CHARISMA	●OOOO	PERCEPTION	●OOOO
DEXTERITY	●OOOO	MANIPULATION	●OOOO	INTELLIGENCE	●OOOO
STAMINA	●OOOO	APPEARANCE	●OOOO	WITS	●OOOO

ABILITIES

DIPLOMAT		ENTERTAINER		WARRIOR	
☐ LINGUISTICS	OOOOO	☐ INVESTIGATION	OOOOO	☐ ARCHERY	OOOOO
☐ OCCULT	OOOOO	☐ LARCENY	OOOOO	☐ MARTIAL ARTS	OOOOO
☐ RIDE	OOOOO	☐ MEDICINE	OOOOO	☐ MELEE	OOOOO
☐ SOCIALIZE	OOOOO	☐ PERFORMANCE	OOOOO	☐ PRESENCE	OOOOO
☐ THROWN	OOOOO	☐ STEALTH	OOOOO	☐ WAR	OOOOO

WORKER		CASTELESS		SPECIALTIES	
☐ BUREAUCRACY	OOOOO	☐ ATHLETICS	OOOOO	☐	OOOOO
☐ CRAFT	OOOOO	☐ AWARENESS	OOOOO	☐	OOOOO
☐ INTEGRITY	OOOOO	☐ DODGE	OOOOO	☐	OOOOO
☐ LORE	OOOOO	☐ SAIL	OOOOO	☐	OOOOO
☐ RESISTANCE	OOOOO	☐ SURVIVAL	OOOOO	☐	OOOOO

ADVANTAGES

BACKGROUNDS

_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO

CHARMS

Name	Cost	Name	Cost

WEAPONS

_____
_____
_____
_____

HEART

● O O O

ESSENCE

● O O O O O

PERSONAL ____ | ____
PERIPHERAL ____ | ____
COMMITTED _____

EXPERIENCE

WILLPOWER

O O O O O O O O O O

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

SOAK

B_____ L_____ A_____

HEALTH

-0	☐☐☐☐☐
-1	☐☐☐☐☐
-2	☐☐☐☐☐
	☐☐☐☐☐
-4	☐
INCAPACITATED	☐

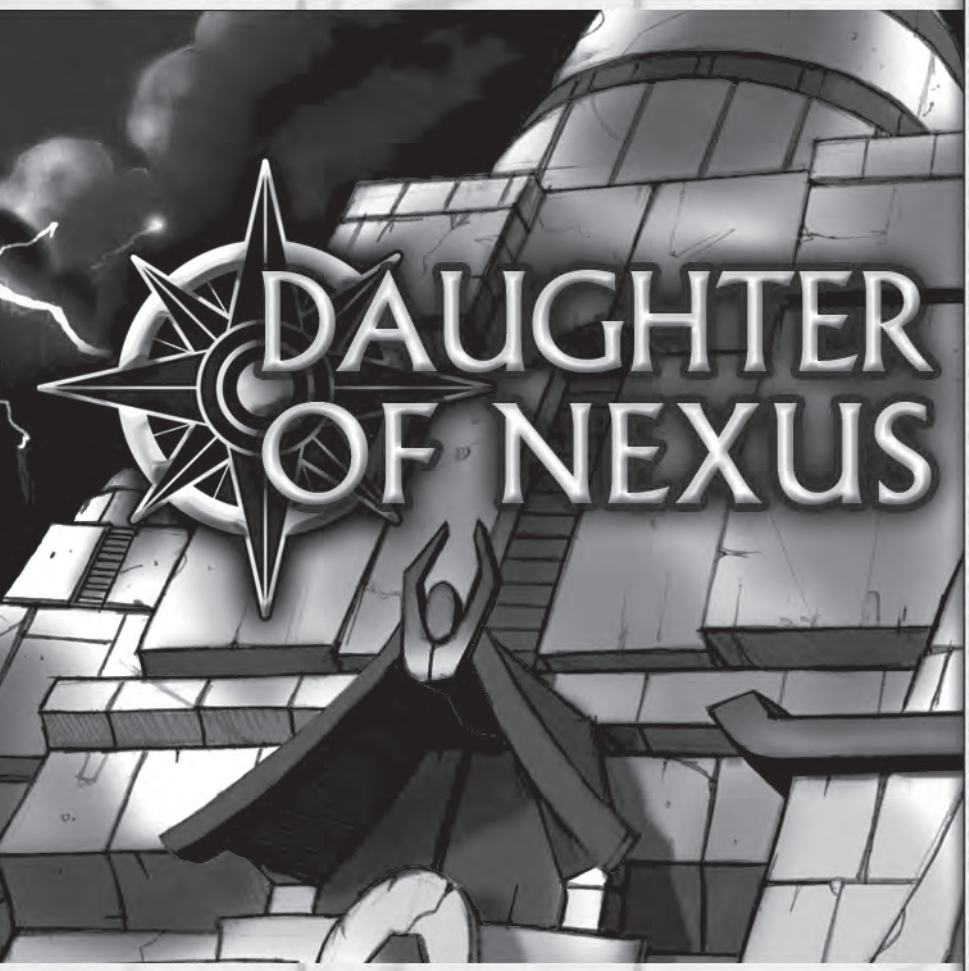
VIRTUES

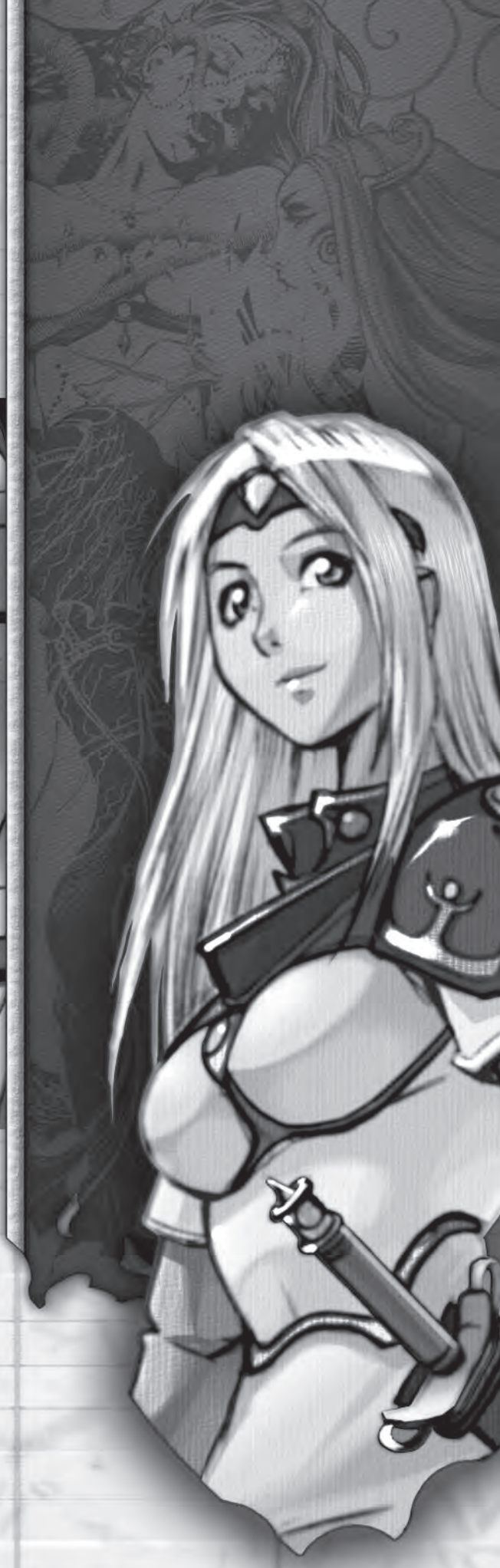
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☐CUP	☐RING
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CUP SOAK	RING SOAK
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APPEARANCE	WITS

CONVICTION	VALOR
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☐STAFF	☐SWORD
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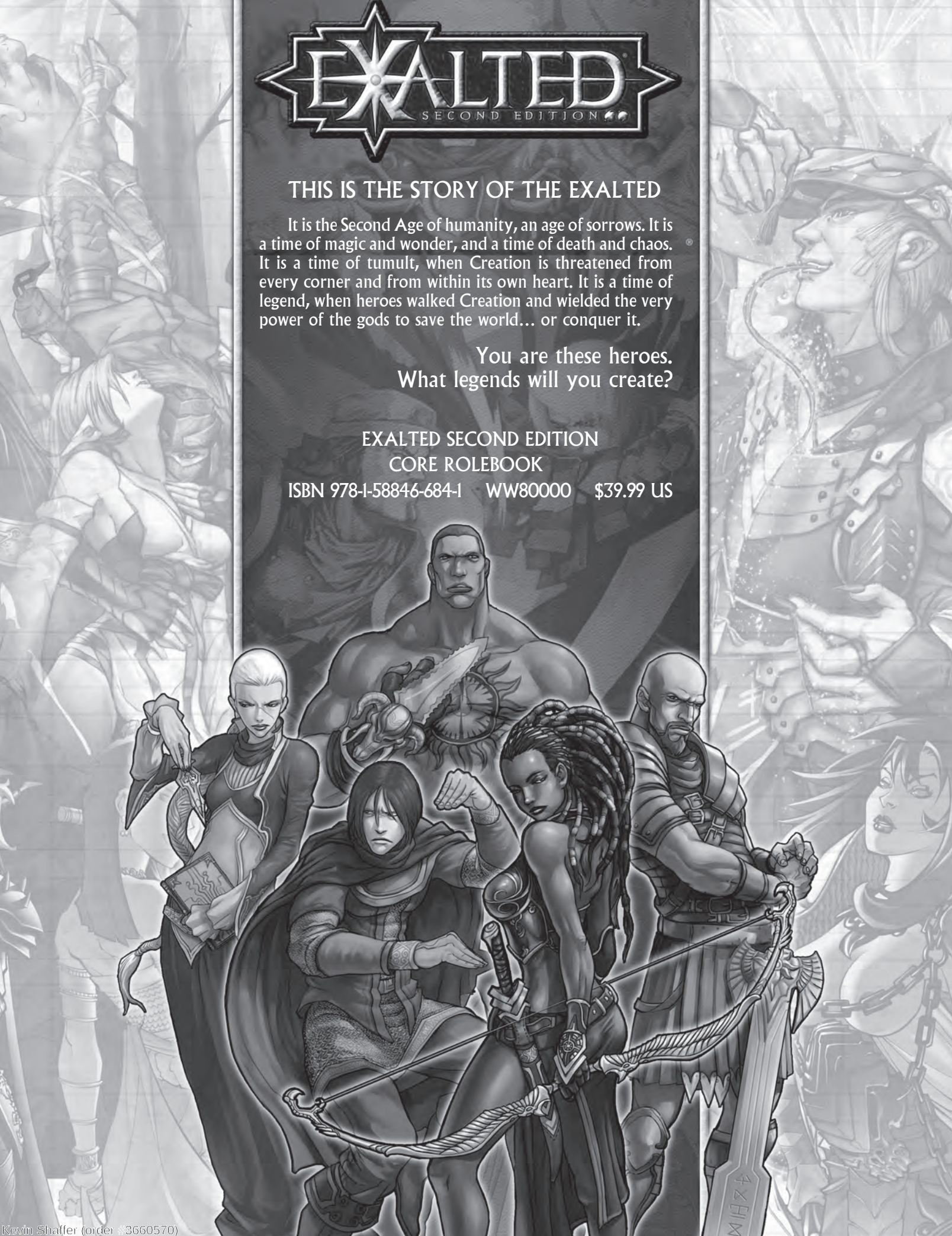


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