Lesser Shades of Evil

LESSER SHADES OF EVIL

EOS 1200

LESSER SHADES OF EVIL

A word from the author

Lesser Shades of Evil™ took way too much time to develop. Not only did it ruin me financially and socially, it almost did away with me completely! More times than I wish to remember I found myself slumped over a keyboard, plagued by nightmarish visions of myself growing old and dying without ever having written the two words I longed for more than any other: THE END.

But curiously enough, through all the crumpled papers, scribbled notes, headaches, frustrations, thousands of spent dollars and discarded pages, the thought of abandoning LSoE never occurred to me.

How could I abandon it: I simply love it, and I hope you do too!

Though the game has many elements of religious significance, let me stress that I do not believe in the words "good" and "evil". I believe there are as many definitions for those words as there are people! We act according to our own moral codes, our own instincts, our own conscience, with evil or good being words spoken by those that see us live our lives and either agree with our decisions or not. But then again, do we have the power to take decisions at all? Are we able to overrule our instincts, our drive and nature? If not, then everything we do, every time we touch or hurt or love someone, we do it because we have no choice. Thus, the game tries to focus some of its attention on character weaknesses, instincts and nature.

I believe that if players act out their characters convincingly, the game will be fun no matter if their characters are sinful or virtuous. Although "virtue" is a better, kinder word than "sin", bear in mind that each and every one of us has "sin" as their middle name, yet few among us would consider ourselves "evil". We have all lusted, we have all bitten our lips, clenching our fists in anger, imagining scenarios in which the target of our wrath suffered nameless atrocities. We have all feared or been corrupted, we have all spoken lies -small white ones and some darker still- and too few among us would gladly give some of our small fortunes to those that may very well need them more. Our virtues and sins are what make us human and when they mix, life becomes that much more interesting and complicated. If this game is designed correctly, then you might discover how much fun that can lead to through the complex characters you will play. But enough talking of things you probably know already, and lets get down to the business of explaining what the Lesser Shades of Evil™ game is all about.

May your words be heard, your loves plentiful, your aim true and your life long...

Have fun...!

Pierre Kakos

ISBN: 978-2-9809783-0-2
Dépôt légal - Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, 2007
Dépôt légal - Bibliothèque et Archives Canada, 2007

LESSER SHADES OF EVIL

Written and created by

Pierre Kakos

Layout and graphic design

Myotte Bellamy Productions (www.myottebellamy.com)
Jamie Wallis (www.jaytype.com)

Editing

Inna Gutnik

Cover art

Frank Picini (www.frankpicini.com)

Interior art

Torstein Nordstrand (www.torsteinnordstrand.com), Josée Brisson , Raphael Letertre , Martin McKenna (www.martinmckenna.net), Larry Elmore (www.larryelmore.com), Keith Scaife , Adéline Lamarre (http://www.phenixs.org/~vaar), Michel Lacombe, Alexandra Myotte, Guy England, Kwansoo Park, Dan Williams

Map designs

Josée Brisson

3D weapon design

Pierre Kakos

Playtesting

Laurent Scott, Michael Difiore, Christian Blanchet, Paul-André Messier, Yan Lefebvre, Eric Desbiens, François Tremblay, Mathieu Quirion, Emilie Fay-Durand, Michel Hardy, Henry Obry, Christian Lassonde, Sebastien Gagnon

Additional help

Louise Parent, Jérémy Parent, Michel Kakos, Dao Chiem, Chris Moseley,

Lesser Shades of Evil is Copyright © 2007 by Ravencross Publishing enr. and its licensors. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or format, electronic or otherwise, without the prior and written consent from the author (except for blank Character sheets and the Game and Combat Help Sheet) . The mention of other companies, products, movies, books or authors in these pages is not a challenge to the trademark or copyright in question.

This is a work of fiction, all the characters and the storyline are fictional and any resemblance to people, places, organizations or events, historical or otherwise, is purely coincidental. This game requires maturity to play. It neither encourages nor condones acts of violence, racism, sexism or general mayhem, and is intended for mature readers.

Special thanks

A personal thank you to Mr Jeremy Parent of the CLD, for sticking up for us and making it possible to write this book. Without your help, I would have starved a long time ago.

Thanks to my mom for everything (literally!) and encouraging me to keep on and to my dad, who unfortunately passed away prematurely (as people always do).

A big thumbs up to Myotte Bellamy Productions who came up in the last leg of this project and quite literally saved me from insanity. I encourage anyone in the book makin' business to give them a call.

A warm thanks to Torstein Nordstrand, Martin McKenna, Larry Elmore and Keith Scaife, who made it possible to have their wonderful, timeless art into this book for a price I could afford. Great people too!

Thanks to Jamie Wallis for the design work and for the advice. Quite a talented design guy!

Thanks as well to Inna Gutnik, whose help in brainstorming, grammar and editing was crucial.

Thanks to my girlfriend Mel, for simply being great and putting up with me.

Thanks to my brother Michel for scaring me to death in horror adventures. Thanks to Francois Tremblay, the first one to read my very first draft in 1997 and give me valuable advice and Yan Lefebvre (my friend and partner in crime since we were small kids). Thanks to Paul-Andre Messier and Michel Decarie (if one day you see an impulse-engine powered flying saucer, the former's probably the one that designed it and the latter the one that jurry-rigged it from his garage), Bianka Monette (an all around great gal and main character of my next book, Life after Simpler) and Dao Chiem for lending me hard cash to buy the computer on which this was written and cursed over. Thanks to my friend Eric Desbiens for being who he is, Yan B for the appartment, Marc, Vivan, Guillaume and Yanique. A tip of the hat to animals for being the natural, beautiful things that they are; dogs in particular, for possessing all the good of humans and none of the bad.

And as a final note, I would like to thank the nameless people that first inspired me to create the world of LSoE; you know who you are; you buy massive yachts, you gold-plate your cars and walk around with miniature dogs in your purses for decoration. You eat in restaurants serving endangered animals and buy the big beamer because it costs over a hundred-K and your equally unimaginative neighbor has one. You would rather invest in a shiny diamond for your front chompers than in something worthwhile, like creating something or giving a little back to the poor, the animal shelters or those in your family and friends that may need it to live. You value your life based on your possessions and what people say of you instead of what you accomplish. In my opinion, if you people exist, then in the great universal balance, there must be some really great people living in the world to balance you out. My goal in life is to meet as many of those as I can.

Resources and inspiration

Philip Jose Farmer, The world of tiers. A wonderful example of alternate worlds. A great read for action fans.

Roger Zelazny, Amber chronicles and The Lord of Light. Read all of them. Read them many times. Point is they portray the feel your games should have, or at least how I see the ambiance of the world of LSoE. Mr Zelazny's clever writing is simply timeless.

Richard Morgan, Altered carbon. Good reading, and set in a future where people can transpose their minds into other bodies when they die.

Greg Egan, Diaspora. A community way off in our future in which humans are entirely digital.

OTHER INSPIRATIONS (among countless others that I forget)

Authors: H.P. Lovecraft, Orson Scott Card, Frank Herbert, E.E. "Doc" Smith

Movies: The Truman show, Hero, Blade runner, the Matrix, Kung-Fu hustle, The Crow, Dune, The village

Anime: Ghost in the Shell, Ninja Scroll, Akira

Music: Nine Inch Nails, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Spiderbait, Les Cowboys Fringants, the Offspring

Games: Talislanta. Such a rich, bold setting. I fell in love with it, and bought every incarnation of the game (from red to blue). Great work! Buy it! Battlelords of the 23rd century. Man did we have fun playing that game. After that killer chemistry exam in high school, blowing up aliens with nuclear land mines was a good way to relax with friends. Great times...!

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction 1
Welcome to Lesser Shades of Evil 8
Lyra Kingsway's Message 9
The End of an Age 28
20 Questions About Angelions... 30

Chapter 2: Game Mechanics 39
Tasks 39
Resolving Tasks 45
Heroic Actions 49
Opposed Tasks 50
Building/Repairing Things and Lab Work 53

Chapter 3: When All Hell Breaks Loose 60
Initiative 61
Combat Sequence 64
Animal and Monster Attacks 66
Close Combat and Special Rules 66
Ranged Combat and Special Rules 70
Damage and Wounds 72
Special Armor Rules 77
Special Weapon Rules 78
Other Damage Sources 82
Attacking Inanimate Objects 83
Damage Results 84
Healing 86
Using "Powers" 87
Gravitational Powers 92
Electromagnetic Powers 98
Divine Powers 103

Chapter 4: A Legend Is Born 109
1) Character Type 110
2) Mental Attributes 137
3) Choosing Your Cardinal Nature 140
4) Weaknesses 143
5) Masteries 147
List of Masteries and Master Abilities 151
6) Flesh, Bone and Steel 162
Building a Body from Scratch 162
Modifying a Body Template 173
7) Wealth & Possessions 190
8) Starting Traits 194
9) Additional Points 194
Traits & Flaws 194
10) Description & Final details 206

Chapter 5: Items Of Power 208

The Age of Little Wonders 210
A Primer on Second Age Artifacts 213
Godshards and Black Artifacts 220
Awakened Artifacts 263
Common Artifacts 272
Weapons Table 281
Armor Table 283

Chapter 6: Behind The Veil 285

Your Job as GM 285
Drama Trumps 287
The Assistant GM 288
Introducing Players to Lesser Shades of Evil 289
Adventure Seeds 295
Running Campaigns When... 298
Sample Non-Player Characters 301
Character Evolution 306
Purchasing New Bodies 317

Chapter 7: The Second Age 321

The Kingsways 323
The Unconquered Lands 333
Geography and Wildlife 334
People of the Unconquered Lands 335
Mortal Timeline 336
Daily Life 348
Northern Birthland 374
Southern Birthland 380
Western Ebuleon 382
Eastern Ebuleon 387
The Land of Fire 391
Angelions of the Unconquered Lands 395
The Watchful Eye 406
The Genomancers 411
The Fell Kingdoms 417
People of the Fell Kingdoms 422
3 Example Fell Kingdoms 426
Game and Combat Help Sheet 449
Index 451
Character Sheet 456

Welcome to Lesser Shades of Evil™

Father, I see hatred in your eyes. You wish for me to feel pain? Know then that I have let my spirit wander, seeing all the things within this world you crafted. I find many to be excruciatingly beautiful.

Yet for all these things that I have seen and touched, I never had nor will I ever have any power over them. I am not fooled by this illusion of life. I am no more alive than the grain of sand within the sandstorm. Both it and I are bound to our destinies. I cannot escape mine, nor can I change it. I can only observe it. So father be content; your wish has come true. It seems I am to be the destroyer of your world, but I dearly wish it could have been otherwise.

-Corvus Kingsway-

Lesser Shades of Evil™ is a roleplaying game dealing with immortality, power and human weakness. The stage is the world itself and the storyline will cover thousands of years; this book is only the beginning, your guide into the world of LSoE at the dawn of the Third Age.

Many aspects of the game involve deception and illusion; that being said, as a player, stop your reading here! Further reading may spoil your enjoyment of the first few adventures! As the GM, you are encouraged to read the book from cover to cover and become familiar with the rules. By reading the *Behind the Veil* chapter, you will be given choices as to the the first adventure you run, what sections players can read and when, and ultimately what their characters can become after a certain number of adventures have passed. The first upcoming supplement will allow them to build realms and kingdoms and acquire truly epic abilities while describing the major powers and secret orders that may seek them out. Further books will allow your players to take command of the Third Age and lead it where they may. Who knows, some of the characters from your group -and their realms- may be featured in these supplements!

Lyra Kingsway's Message

My words shall destroy your world and claw at your heart.
Many of you will despise me.
Some will brand me a deceiver.
Most will hate me.
A few will believe me.
It is in these last that I put my hope.

Your world is ending. It has perhaps three hundred years of life remaining but know that mine has even less; as I speak these words the walls of my tower are crumbling under the merciless attacks of my brother. I have just now infiltrated the Tower of Anekron and am in its purple alcove, a room none of you have seen. It holds many secrets, and using its great pipe organ I may now speak to all of you as my father once did. Corvus will soon uncover my ruse, and so I must say to you what I must without further preparing you. When I am done, I shall ruin this artifact and you will be free at last to decide your fate and that of the people of your realms. I hope you will do what is proper.

Thus let me tell you the true history of the Age in which you live.

Let me tell you of the Kingsways.

My name is Lyra Kingsway, born last of the daughters of Ambrose

Chapter One
Introduction

Kingsway and his wife Elizabeth. I grew up alongside my three brothers Ori, Eridan and Corvus and my older sister Delphina during the First Age, the time you and your kin know as the Accursed Age. Having seen it with my eyes, know that it was indeed cursed and deserving of its fate. I miss it not in the slightest. It festered with horrible things; machines were mated to the flesh of men that dreamt from dawn till dusk. Dark cities floated in the clouds, their shadows ominous to the billions of slaves that toiled in the poisoned lands beneath.

The First Age was hell itself. Three thousand years after its fall, its memory still haunts me.

Now I must speak to you of our father, for the doom of that age was born of his crafts. You are privileged in that I know many things of him that the other Kingsway children do not; indeed I was on his heel and toe for the sum of my mortal life, following him incessantly wherever he went to the point where he had to sneak about when he desired respite from his *little shadow*. I was fascinated by him, of the things he spoke of and of the things he built. My father was raised by peculiar parents who died when Ambrose was still a child, leaving their vast ancestral wealth in his care. He spoke very little of his childhood and what I know of it I will not reveal; certain family things must remain of the family. But know that by the time my father was a young man his genius was known throughout the world. He was a master of sciences, and wisemen sought his counsel incessantly. The most trivial of his musings was studied by great men, his allegiance sought by those in power.

But my father remained free of them all. He followed a different purpose, one I suspected to be of greater scope than the petty dreams of lesser men. His eyes spoke of it; they reflected the sun eerily, and in looking into them one saw the very essence of creation and the weight of the world entire.

Much like the spider recedes into its lair after gorging on prey, he soon distanced himself from the world's cares. My father had gathered all he needed from mankind, his mind had no more need of their crafts. Using a web of deceit, his massive wealth and precise planning had allowed him to command many countries from the shadows, and great cities were displaced or built of his words. Vast numbers of scientists unknowingly did his bidding.

During these years of exile, my father lived a simple life; except for his correspondence, he had no contact with the world; his home was devoid of playthings; he lived from the land, farming his own food and living in a house he built with his own hands. As companionship he had the trees and the stars for many years, perhaps a decade or more. During the day he worked his food fields while abroad entire countries heaved from his prior night's correspondence.

It is during this time that he met and won the heart of Elizabeth. I suspect she may have been of the scientists he kept correspondence with, for my mother was well versed in the sciences. They married as people once did under flowers and archways, though they wed with no witness but silent fields of corn. Their love would not dull for more than three thousand years. How I envy them.

Together they lived on my father's farm and had five children. We were kept away from the world, told of its terrible nature and forbidden from experiencing it. We

lived exclusively on the farm and had only our siblings for companionship: I met no one else during twelve years of mortal life! As we grew up, we learned how to grow vegetables, how to count, how to write and also taught of the All-Seeing, the God that guided Ambrose. Our mother told us of him as well, but when she spoke I heard my father's words. By the time of Ori's sixth birthday, when Ambrose's hair was black and white, we each felt the presence of the All-Seeing in our hearts. He had chosen us to become the guardians of his world by blessing our father with the courage he needed to become his angel of death. The world would not live long enough to fear the name of Kingsway.

My father's minions soon completed the production of a mythical machine, one of ancient purpose built in a secluded bunker deep below the surface of Australia -a region you know today as the Forbidden Land. Long had man searched for the elixir of life, the holy grail of scientific discoveries; countless had been those that tried in vain to produce it. My father had succeeded where they had failed by building an immortality machine.

The immortality machine was to be the First Age's greatest invention, as well as the instrument by which it would ultimately be destroyed. It transformed a human brain, neuron by neuron, into an electronic orb that replicated its functions and conscience perfectly. All of us -and you- owe our immortal existence to this machine. Because of it can we still walk in bodies of flesh decades or centuries after our mortal death. You know not of what I speak, for since your rebirth into immortality we have lied to you so that you might believe your immortal existence was a divine gift, that your spirit simply manifested itself into a new body when your old flesh died. Know that it is not so, and that your spirit is contained in an artifact called an *essence*, a golden orb which emulates your once organic conscience perfectly. You live through forbidden crafts, and were this essence to be destroyed, you would not wake and forever sleep the long sleep of death.

Such a great thing was the immortality machine that our father allowed us all to leave the farm and travel to this bunker on the other side of the world. I remember this day clearly; for it was the day I saw the world for the first time with my eyes. We traveled in a remote ship, a great carriage of metal that flew in the skies at high speeds. We flew by great cities of lights, some floating above the clouds, others spreading upon the land like an infection. The air stank and the sun was blocked by great pillars of smoke. I trembled as I scratched the ears of our dog Moonflare, while little Ori grew ill. Eridan, Delphina and Corvus weeped; Ambrose held the hand of Elizabeth and sang to us. We prayed for the entire journey, comforted by the words of our father. It was a terrible ordeal, and I missed our farm dearly. Other ships passed us by, some much greater than our own, others swifter and smaller. In a window I glimpsed at a man lying on his side, machines pumping blood into his body and tubes attached to his face and skull. A deathly palor he manifested, his feeble hand reaching for the window before our ships grew apart. How I shudder at what the world would be like now if this ship had collided with ours and sent us to our doom! What new forms of terror would these cursed men have produced in three thousand years?

Leading down the bunker was a flight

of steel steps, and it seemed we meandered though dark labyrinths forever. Ominous machines hummed and whirred as we passed open doors. This place was colossal, with ceilings ten man-heights tall and bulkheads as thick as the largest trees of the Birthland. It is a place none of you have seen but many have heard of; the place you know of as the underground labyrinths of the Tower of Anekron, a place that has remained under the guardianship of our family ever since the first of you were born.

Much treasures these labyrinths contained, greatest of all the immortality machine.

I watched with a child's fearful fascination as my father used the immortality machine on Moonflare, whose own furry little body had grown diseased with old age; I cried as his wails died down, as his body was later discarded in bloody segments. When the machine had finally finished mangling his flesh and transforming his brain, only a small golden orb remained of my beloved pooch, a sphere that contained his playful spirit. Some hours later, his electronic spirit was attuned to the body of a puppy and he ran after me as he once did. Moonflare lived! His spirit reborn within this golden essence, he now saw through this puppy's eyes and walked using its legs! We had witnessed a miracle

Dread I felt as my turn finally came and I was introduced inside the grim contraption. How big it was and how small I was! I entered the maw of the great beast... What darkness and terror for a small child! Still I trusted to my father's wisdom, and fell into the restless sleep each of you have experienced. My soul was electronicized, an improper and unnatural transformation fit to visit the sleeper with the most perverse of dreams. I feel I wailed for ten thousand lifetimes, and still today I wonder if I might still be in that machine. Is it possible for a dream to last three thousand years?

Yet I did wake and the dreams did end. I opened eyes that were not my own to see the young and unfamiliar faces of my family. I rose from the bed and walked a childish walk improper for the body of a woman. My legs felt heavy, my movements awkward.

All seven of us had now become immortal, living inside bodies that were not our own. Where had my father acquired them? To this day I dared not ask.

For some years, we mastered our new bodies and abilities. We had great power over mortals; my electronic essence was many times faster than a mortal's organic brain; I could walk in mortal cities and observe people in slow motion, their movements slothful and their speech slurred. I could run through herds of them as a ghost wind moving through a forest. I could catch flies in mid-flight and tumble through whizzing motorized cars. I learned to control more than one mortal form at a time. This is a facet of your immortal lives you are oblivious to, but know that your essence allows you to control many bodies at once... For a time I had two, then three, finally five I could rise five times per day and see the sunset from five different mountains. Much pleasure did the Kingsway children have as immortals in a mortal world, even given an occasional mistake or two; I did die on some occasions, my bodies crushed under vehicles or falling from great heights. An unpleasant feeling you know well.

But all was not fun and games. A burning wind was now to cleanse the world, and

the Kingsways would be the spark that would light it. Our father's doctrine hardened us. We became disciplined and as convinced of our great duty as he was. We were the divine soldiers, all seven of us, and we were to rid the world of its human plague, those insects we toyed with day and night.

We set about disseminating the seeds of war. From the mouths of nubile women and old wisemen we offered counsel to men of power; we lied and loved and bribed and killed, bodysnatching the world's leaders and leading their empires to ruin; we supplied the plans for doomsday devices, poison gases and matter bombs designed by my father. Not a mortal mind existed that we could not sway or silence. With the delicate fingers of Alkaedra, the Queen Corporate of the southern American City-States, I signed the permits necessary for the production of the deadly war gas Salu-6; from the mouth of Chakra, high counselor to the Machine-Lord of Europe, I whispered of conspiracies and threats from the east and urged preemptive strikes. As the concubine of the Child-Emperor of Chinasia, I spoke of the growing western armies and left plans of the matter bomb to his war engineers. My brothers and sister were equally busy, and in little time the world might as well have been named Kingsway. No land was free from our influence, no emperor spared our ruinous counsel.

When our bunker was ready, we lit the match.

The First Age consumed itself in an orgy of destruction. Armies clashed, missiles flew, bombs fell and cities collapsed by the thousands. We led mortals to their deaths, dancing over their ashes and singing to the orange skies as rabid dogs. I did things I dare not speak or remember, so blinded I was at the time by my father's doctrine that mercy had gone from my heart. We five children had become the angels of death of an entire world. Whatever land we visited, bodies burned and pestilence followed. I killed a million mortals with my hands and a billion more with my words.

I had once entered the bunker as a little girl, and now I returned to it drenched in the blood of five continents. We hid in the bunker as the fiery wrath of destruction crisscrossed the world ten times over.

We waited until the fury passed...

The Second Genesis (-1000-0SA)

Know that we did not wait a thousand years in our bunker as written in the Holy Word; perhaps a month at the very most. We had shed our flesh forms in favor of bodies of metal, for when father opened the great doors the bunker was flooded by an eerie twilight; a deathly brilliance stemmed not from sun but by ghostly orange skies, rolling with great masses of black clouds. The dark cities had fallen but a greater darkness had taken their place. Scorched by acid winds, coursing with poison rivers and covered with cracked, dead land, the world was as dead as its people. Here and there, only pockets of diseased life remained...

Thus did we unleash the terraformatrons, the great machines of the Accursed Age that once lifted cities above the clouds. Thousands of golems of metal accompanied these cyclopean machines as we sent them forth to the four corners of the blasted Earth. It trembled once more as our machines scoured its lands, extinguishing life and vaporizing ruined cities. Once more did unfortunate survivors come under attack by a foe they could not understand, and once more did the sky stand witness to atrocious murder. Many decades passed before the machines' grim duties ended, at which time they started mending the wounds of the world. For centuries they removed poisons from its rivers and toxins from its air. The dark clouds parted, the orange sky turned blue and our chrome bodies, long dull under a dark sky, now glinted under the rays of a sun long forgotten. To our knees we fell in prayer. We had brought so much death to the world, was it not now proper for us to bring it life?

We planted the first of the White Flowers and marveled at their power of creation; truly they are the most wondrous crafts we Kingsways have produced. I flew over mountains to see the first flowers bloom, over barren earth to see the first blades of grass grow. We created forests and carved rivers and lakes; we displaced mountains and engineered animals. What power we wielded! Once the deathbringers, we Kingsways were now world makers!

When the air was proper and the forests resounding with the chirps of insects and the song of birds, we took leave from each other to visit its wonder. I flew as a bird through cloud and rain, forgetting my humanity for seven years. What silence and power to be alone in a world of such beauty. I almost wanted our work to end there But it was not over.

Once more we took human form to build a great city, the one your distant ancestors would know as Avonmyth. It was indeed great, and took thirty years to build. It holds many secrets, and let me warn you that it must never fall to my brother. Keep it safe and free

The great city completed, all that remained now was the laughter of children. Elizabeth and Delphina, masters of biologics, took cellular samples from our mortal flesh and worked incessantly to rouse mankind from its slumber. In that the Holy Word is truthful: you are our descendants, as much deserving of the Kingsway name as us.

We first created a hundred. *The Hundred.* Men, women and children.

They awoke in a flowery field, the first mortals to see the light of the Second Age. You know of them all for their name is written on the great wall of Avonmyth.

We came to them under mortal human guise, claiming to be seven messengers -the first seven Angelions- the All-Seeing God had saved from his wrath. We had come to guide the Hundred through the world

reborn and teach them of the evil that had once caused it to burn. Oh how we deceived! The words of the dead Queen Alkaedra came back to me once more.

For two years we led them through the lands of Shadow and Flame, using potent artifacts to conjure visions of the First Age, of men feeding on men and of the dark cities of a dead age. We summoned great energies to haunt their dreams and teach them of their God's vengeance upon the people of that Accursed Age. We tormented them with our left hand and with our right offered solace. Little did they know that it was their seven guides who had destroyed that blasted age, and that we had roused them once more to make them live in a world of lies. I remember the wickedness of my sister and the tears of my mother, the cold indifference of my father and little brother, the brooding silence of Eridan and Corvus. Corvus... How his eyes had changed since the death of the world! Already we had begun to grow apart. Yet our faith in the All-Seeing was still strong and so did we torture these innocents until they reached the silver and black gates of Avonmyth. Be thankful for these hundred and remember their names, for the wails they let out during their journey must still echo today in the farthest regions of the world.

Within the sanctity of Avonmyth, we taught our mortal children to read from its great wall, upon which was the Holy Word in gold upon black, etched not by the breath of the All-Seeing but by the machines of my father. It was no god that wrote the Holy Word, but rather Ambrose Kingsway.

For the next decade the Hundred learned to write the One Language, learned of the three Virtues of Temperance, Benevolence and Faith, learned how to grow food, build houses, how to count and pray. We were followed day and night, our every word pure gospel.

A Thousand Angelions and Five Towers (1-1600SA)

When the first true crime was committed -the raping of Sata by Firmath, we taught the Hundred the price of sin during seven years. We brought disaster and desolation upon Avonmyth using our powerful machines; from unnatural storms and blithed lands to giant ravens and destroyers we taught them fear. One by one we departed, sacrificing our mortal forms so that the All-Seeing could take pity on the weaknesses of the Hundred. This was mere ruse of course, for none of us died -we merely slayed our human forms.

From 19SA onward, we watched over the people of Avonmyth from the shadows, using bodies of animal guise and my father as the High Custodian of its silver tower. From the eyes of cats, dogs, owls and ravens, we followed the perils and hardships the descendants of the Hundred surmounted. We witnessed every birth, every death, every vile or noble act. We punished those of sinful disposition with premature demise and blessed the virtuous with unusually long life and a healthy lineage. Much happened in those days that mortals knew not. Many men of evil fell during the night from our poisoned stings; many virtuous wombs blossomed though our potions. In those early years, when the people of the world were few, not a crime was committed that was not rightly punished; we saw everything... A thousand generations worth of eugenics was accomplished in but a century.

Mortals spread out from Avonmyth and settled other regions of the world. Reaching shorelines, they built boats and sailed the seas. They dug through or climbed over mountains. They built churches of the Holy Word, praying to the All-Seeing at dusk that their dreams might carry portents

of promise. They discovered and settled the Land of Ebuleon and then the Land of Fire, faithfully carrying the Holy Word and reciting its verses to cross troubled seas or treacherous jungles. Far did they stay from the Forbidden Land and the great Tower of Anekron, in which we resided and where our many machines lay hidden

As the decades turned into centuries, villages and towns multiplied and the population grew. When their sins proliferated, we punished them as any vengeful god would; Delphina bred the dreaded black butterflies and used the body of the golden-skinned destroyer to bring ruin to the city of Barbarar. Ori incinerated the city of Taub from his floating tower, while father used powerful artifacts to lift the vessels of Aamar Crickwell from the seas and Apanon mountain from the earth. Many died, and for a time we thought we could teach them using only terror, but what good would it serve to destroy cities and inspire fear when what our father wished for was to breed a more virtuous people? As the population grew beyond our powers of observation, we realized we needed more eyes and ears.

Thus did we begin the search for the first of the Angelions -your kind- which would help us in making the Second Age a blessed one in which mortals could live in peace. We stalked mortal towns and cities looking for the greatest and noblest of people, the selfless champions of good. We selected carefully and our chosen disappeared silently. Under the glare of moonlight, we flew from the mortal lands over oceans and mountains to reach the Tower of Anekron, carrying in our arms sleeping mortals we wished to immortalize. These first Angelions awoke -much like all of you did- inside new and youthful bodies, in meadows or forests. From there they were guided back to the Tower of Anekron and surmounted many challenges. Those that failed or collapsed we destroyed, casting their essences into the firepit. Those that succeeded -as all of you who receive this message did- followed our guidance and training in the shadow of the great Tower of Anekron; you became wise and powerful, well versed in your duties and subsequently unleashed into mortal lands.

This was the birth of the Angelion Order, comprised of mortals forbidden from joining the All-Seeing in death and forced to endure an immortal existence of selfless service. You would be the eyes and, need be, the fist of the All-Seeing. You would travel the world and become its protectors, relieving it of warmongers and tyrants and guiding its people from the shadows so that the horrors of the First Age were not repeated.

To govern and limit your actions we devised the Scriptures, the set of rules and decorum written by my young brother Ori by which you would live your immortality. The Scriptures forbade Angelions from loving; your immortal lives would be cold and hard; if duty demanded it, you had to slay people, families or entire communities that had become too corrupt or sinful. You had to promote human bloodlines that showed virtuous potential and let those of tainted or earthly natures die off. You were destined to be the eternal wanderers and recluses of the world, capable of seeing its beauty but not of enjoying it, capable of dying but not of siding with your ancestors in the afterlife; for when your mortal forms perished, machines would warn us and you would soon wake in a field of our choosing in a

new and youthful form. Though you were told the breath of the All-Seeing infused your spirit into bodies crafted in heaven, know that in reality your bodies were grown by us in great vats of biomatter, in dark laboratories where forbidden instruments lay plentifully.

For twelve centuries, Angelions watched over the world and its inhabitants. Your actions and influence were never direct or obvious, so that a band of thieves would be slayed in the night by your blade or a kind-hearted man be guided towards a creekbed glittering with gold by a string of fortunate coincidences. The whistle of a Thorn-of-God was all that a corrupt mayor might hear before his sudden collapse. You rained fortune upon the kind and brought ruin to the sinful.

Yet little did you know that by the middle of the second millennium -1500SA- much trouble had festered within the Kingsway family...

For by that time we five children had lived in separate towers for the last three centuries. Only mother and father remained in the great Tower of Anekron. We had left the company of our parents in favor of solitude. Corvus built his dark tower in the great desert; Eridan's in the mountains of western Ebuleon, Delphina's tower of white and silver to its east in the frigid steppes of the north; my own was built atop Emerald Mountain while that of my little brother Ori's had floated in the skies for more than a thousand years, free to move where the Lion wished. None of you knew of these five towers, for potent energies hid them from your eyes and those of mortals. As we dabbled in sciences and research, we spied with increasing frequency on the works of our siblings, and so our towers gained defenses and alarms to warn us of intrusion. We had our own caches of essences, our own lands to manage and our own Angelions to monitor. We bred new bodies and created new artifacts as the world around us required our presence less with every passing year. We became as shadows, our presence in the world almost forgotten as we watched it blossom from the small windows of our towers. We had grown so very old...

Proud of our mortal children, secretly we envied their lives. They were far simpler in spirit than us, though so blissfully innocent and welcoming; their nobility reflected upon us badly: we were scheming monsters locked away in great towers, the last of a dead race of tyrants. We feared the time of our departure would soon come, for father deemed mortals were almost ready to be freed of our guardianship, thus allowing us and all the Angelions to retire from the mortal world and ascend to the All-Seeing's kingdom.

Yet we were guilty of a great sin: save for Ori, we had grown to doubt the All-Seeing's very existence! We had grown to love our immortality! We wished not to die...

One among us -in particular- was prey to earthly desire. Once more a Kingsway would bring war to the world.

The Fall of Corvus (1600-1900A)

Never has a man possessed such passion as my older brother Corvus! Many times did I seek refuge in his arms as a mortal girl, and of all my siblings he was doubtless the wisest. Yet since the horrible death of the First Age Corvus had become brooding; by the time we created the Hundred his words were few and measured; by the 1500s he had exiled himself within his dark tower and sought little company. Had our own hearts not been clouded and our minds not warped by our old age, we might have taken earlier notice of the danger that lurked within his thoughts. We surmised he had simply grown tired of life, and wished for our duties to end.

But wrong we were, and utterly so.

Corvus wished for that which was forbidden to all of us and to all of you: to love, to be loved, and to produce progeny. He quested long and far to find the warmth of a loving embrace. Remember the mortal legends that speak of the riddler-horseman? These legends are true, for the dark-skinned riddler was my brother, and he visited many villages. On some occasions I followed him discretely as a sparrow and saw him drink spirits and love freely, leaving behind him broken hearts and growing bellies.

Still love escaped him for many years; far and wide he searched for the woman that would appease his ennui. His quest became an obsession, for not a meadow or burg did he not visit looking for her.

Using three squawking raven forms, Corvus scoured the world. Perched on rooftops or flying through cloud he looked for her.

It is curious then that of all the women he saw Corvus would settle his ravens around the home of a peasant girl of little fortune and plain features. What made him melt at her sight I may never know. Her name was Helenoire Backannan, and she lived in the Land of Ebuleon.

Corvus watched her from afar using the bodies of cats, ravens and children. He inched his way into her life in measured steps, and soon Helenoire was the recipient of the best fortune a mortal child could be privy to. Soft meowing at the Backannan doorstep led her to discover - and adopt- a small white cat of surprising intellect. For one, it had the immensely useful capacity of bringing her all manner of precious stones, gold nuggets and other valuables, with which the young Helenoire eased the Backannan family into financial comfort. As well, the purring feline had a knack for warning her of danger; when thieves broke into the Backannan house, the little beast pounced upon their heads and raked them furiously until they fled in haste. A great raven -perched in tree branches on her way to basic school- was no less useful; it brought her letters from a man named Arman, a stranger that warned of danger using riddles. When her parents and older brother died tragically, Helenoire became the head of the household and saw to the welfare of her brother and sister. She became a skilled painter, and managed to offer her younger siblings a comfortable existence when her paintings gained sudden and unexpected worth. The Backannan orphans seemed destined for greatness, while those that bore them ill intent fell prey to increasingly tragic misfortunes.

Announcing himself as her secret correspondent Arman, my brother went about seducing Helenoire and won her heart quickly. Together they had three children, Lundi,

Chapter One
Introduction

Ceylon and Annae, who themselves begat twelve of their own. For the first time in centuries Corvus felt life coursing through his veins with the laughter of his children and the love of Helenoire. He wished for no other company than theirs. Silent I remained at what my little sparrow saw for more than a hundred years.

And so the Backannans and their immortal patriarch went through the decades. My brother worked the fields, growing his food as once we all did on the farm of our father. He raised his children and loved his mortal wife. His pleasures multiplied with every spring until the time Helenoire neared death.

Gifted with forbidden potions and elixirs, Helenoire had aged like a fine wine for more than a century and a half, but still she had aged. The brews of my brother had made it so that at a hundred and fifty years of age Helenoire looked not a day passed fifty, but her body was now far beyond Corvus' crafts. Her last winter was near, and under light of moon Corvus brought her broken body to the Tower of Anekron. As a fly on the wall I watched my brother lay her down into the immortality machine. Kneeling he was, his head resting on the great machine as his beloved was spared death. Within his arms she had been carried, and within his hands she would leave, now a golden orb that would age no more.

Silently did my brother move with his love secure in his right hand, but misery came to him as he neared the last steps of the great tower.

His heresy had been observed by my father, who was found troubled and unthinking; much in his rash decision I believe must have come from the moment's fury, for my father is not an evil man. There on the steps did he come upon Corvus and grasp his love from his hands, only to shatter it upon the tower's dark steps. It collided and burst, thus killing her. Corvus fell to his knees screaming a scream I shall never forget. What a terrible wail! Only my father's blade ended it, as his dagger pierced the heart of my brother's mortal form.

Yet the tragedy did not end there. Far away in the Land of Ebuleon, the Backannan children and grandchildren would be systematically eliminated by Ori, who slayed them without pity; none were spared his death dealing. Fire burned in the little one's eyes those days. What rift was then born between Corvus and Ori; not a word did they exchange from that moment on, ever.

All of you were kept in the dark about this tragedy of course. This was a Kingsway matter and one my father was intent on resolving himself.

Had I not soothed my father as I had always been able to, I have little doubt he would have cast my brother's essence upon the marble floor of his tower, but as it was my words drew the anger from him as one draws poison from a wound.

He understood the troubles of his eldest son, and left with him on a pilgrimage across the world. As nighthawks they flew over seas and forests; Ambrose showed his firstborn son a world that stood to be lost were immortals to live among mortals. Over mountains and meadows they flew, visiting peaceful villages where a better people lived. *Can you risk destroying them, so that you may love? Can your desires take precedence over the will of the All-Seeing?* Asked Ambrose of his son, silent and still brooding as they flew.

Upon their return we

hoped things could return to normal and for a while they did; Corvus returned to his tower and seemed convinced of his father's wisdom. How crafty he was, to hide his rage from us thus. For my brother boiled within. His mind became possessed of bitter malice.

In the years that followed, many plots were born of my brother's torments. His tower became a fortress of defenses and energies, inside which great machines would come to be.

Do not think us fools for being oblivious to his schemings; troubles came to be in those fateful years that made us look away from the one evil that threatened us all. Delphina's consuming madness and Ori's growing fanaticism -as well as many mortal concerns- took precedence over Corvus' mysterious planning, for my brother's vengeance took wind as a series of inconspicuous events; in the 1700s sandfolk spoke of ravens that flew over the desert in a queer manner not befitting mundane birds; a series of unexplained comas and deaths would plague some cities and towns; more troubling were words of a dark traveler said to walk the sands with no water, his left hand bearing a ring that shone with an eery blackness and in his right a staff bearing a raven upon a cross. His arrival was marked by fierce sandstorms.

Corvus was out and about, gathering allies. I have heard stories of the underground ruin of Uthemion, a lost First Age city buried under the sands. It is within these ruins that many Angelions awoke in new and odd bodies, terrified. My brother's penetrating words broke their conditioning in short order. Appearing to them as the dark stranger, he announced himself as Ravencross, once known as Corvus Kingsway, a man now dead from a family once noble. Excruciatingly methodical, my brother won their hearts and minds one by one over the course of a century; oh how patient was he! I gather he crafted the doom of our family for the better part of two hundred years before striking!

Thus were Shard-Of-Jade, Dream and Red Lotus, the most ancient immortals from the Land of Fire, the first to be counted among his followers. With their help, they attacked younger Angelions whose hearts they could poison easily, such as the twins Rain and Sun. He wormed his way into their hearts and taught them to discover an Age they knew very little about. Deep in the ruins of Uthemion was a great library of books, among other equally potent artifacts. In an old amphitheater my brother spoke of the First Age to his followers in a way that none had heard before. They learned of its many cultures, its religions and philosophies and scientific breakthroughs; its great thinkers, its wars and its achievements. Ravencross told them of the Kingsways and of our murderous achievements; he taught them about the forbidden technology, the trickeries we had used to bring an entire people to their knees before a counterfeit god. He read to them passages from books and poems more than four thousand years old, their minds blossoming and their eyes wide. At night they lusted after one another like animals, using unfiltered and fully functional human bodies to caress and love each other's flesh.

When he saw their hearts were his, Ravencross prepared them for the war that would need to be waged. His father would soon wish for Angelion-kind to leave the world of mortals; if they did not act quickly, they would be lost. Ravencross taught

them how to control many forms and those of animals as well, with which they became the eyes and ears of their master, spying on his kin. They were taught the ways to battle their immortal brethren and were given artifacts of terrible power. They studied the defenses of the five towers and planned incessantly.

They called themselves the followers of Ravencross, and by 1901SA they were ready for war.

The War of Ravencross (1901SA -)

Prior to the start of the war, the world was divided into six great realms; five each under the rule of a Kingsway child; Ori presided over the northern Birthland, his white tower floating above its clouds. Delphina had under her aegis the eastern parts of the Land of Ebuleon, her Tower of White and Silver built in its frigid northern steppes. Eridan's Stone Tower pierced western Ebuleon's sky from the summit of a small mountain.

My own Tower of Emeral and Bronze was solidly anchored to Emerald Mountain's peak in the southern Birthland, its great walls hidden from mortal eyes by potent artifacts and the mountain's mists. Corvus had chosen the Land of Fire as the foundation for his Dark Tower. The sixth was that of the Forbidden Land, ruled by my parents from the mighty Tower of Anekron in whose lowest levels the immortality machine, the vault of essences and the nine obelisks of knowledge were to be found.

What matters to the war is that the thousand and some Angelions that had been essenced since the 500s had their essences kept in vaults buried deep inside each tower; hence even before the start of the war, Corvus possessed the essences of more than a hundred Angelions, most of which were now to be counted among his followers. His biolab secretly produced many lethal organic forms, and his minions were well versed in the ways of controlling these ghastly beasts. Under his black tower squirmed and twitched, crawled and heaved countless monstrosities, many attuned to the essences of his followers.

The great war of the Second Age began on Goldwall 22nd, 1901SA. Villagers from the southern coastal villages heard terrible bellows off to the north as an eerie trembling of the earth rattled the windows of their homes. Children pointed to a great shadow rising to the sky, an ominous sighting of Venomhead -my brother's horrific war barge- as it proceeded forth into the clouds. In its wake followed hundreds of nameless beasts bailing to the sun. Seamen watched in horror as their vessels heaved, the oceans stirring furiously as great worms lurched under the waves. All over the world, minions of Ravencross shed their disguises and wreaked havoc in cities, setting fires and destroying without restraint as a diversion to the main force. Angelions stood in horror trying to quell the mayhem, only to fall to the blades of their traitorous brethren. Beasts oozed into towns and villages as mortals took shelter in their homes. Far away in the depths of the Forbidden Land, within sight of the Tower of Anekron and the abode of my beloved parents awoke the first of the Vidian Destroyers, bursting forth through the earth. On its shores Fell Worms ambled towards the great tower from the sea.

The war had thus begun.

Promptly did father and mother try to summon their tower's mighty defenses but in vain, for precisely crafted was the treachery of my brother; from within he had sabotaged its generators, leaving it without its most potent barriers as the looming shadow of Venomhead pierced the clouds above it, followed by a horde of vile and terrible creatures. As it descended it cast a torrent of green flame upon the tower, rendering the lands about it incandescent and slaying many of its creatures in an instant. The tower stood however, and unleashed energies of its own against the falling monster. Energy globes and incineration beams crisscrossed the skies as the two behemoths battled. The sky burned, turning red, orange, purple and black as the very fabric of reality crackled and sizzled with murderous rage. Venomhead's sides were holed and bleeding orange flame as it fell uncontrollably, while from its belly flew forth thousands of fell warriors and other monstrosities who took assault to the few unprepared Angelions training at the tower's base.

I reached the scene

to witness a horrible monster climbing slowly up the tower's sides, its segmented body coiled about it grotesquely. This was a Vidian Destroyer, among the most terrifying of my brother's creations. Some fifteen to twenty stories above this ghastly beast, my father stood on the tower's highest balcony, a bright lance of white energy jumping forth from his power ring and reaching deep into Venomhead's belly, disemboweling the great vessel and sending it crashing many miles away to the sound of a thundering explosion. What a vision of madness! Thick, eerie smoke could I see emanating from the Tower of Anekron, its upper levels incandescent from the enemy's attacks.

Locked in its highest room, Ambrose and his firstborn battled with swords and unleashed powers at one another that shook the walls of the tower. They battled for many hours, hacking through and vaporizing over a dozen of each others' mortal forms while much below them, at the foot of the tower, followers of Ravencross approached its gates. There they met Elizabeth, and five thousand died before my mother's last body fell, consumed in a cloud of bluish flame. The gates were finally breached.

His last body pierced and broken by his son's blows, Ambrose triggered the remaining defenses of the Tower moments before he was decapitated. The Tower of Anekron boomed under a powerful explosion deep in its belly; the immortality machine, the nine obelisks of knowledge and the vault of essences were consumed by flame. As the essences were incinerated, across the world the mortal forms of the most ancient Angelions fell dormant and would never again wake.

Corvus and his minions were now in control of the Tower of Anekron, a black monument to the war, surrounded by a field of burned and poisoned land as far as the eye could see. Yet the war was not limited to the Forbidden Land; while his main force attacked the Tower of Anekron, several other hordes of his minions took assault to the four towers of his siblings, including my own.

Ori's floating tower, victim to some evil trickery, fell like a stone from the sky without so much as fire or smoke trailing it. It crashed with deafening thunder within the forest of Ushergillian, levying trees and villages for more than a thousand square miles around it. Followers of Ravencross scoured its smoldering ruins soon after, doubtlessly trying to retrieve Ori's essence. I know not of their success or failure, but my suspicions are that my little brother's essence must have shattered when his tower crashed. Nothing could have survived it.

Eridan's Stone Tower fared somewhat better; besieged by great waves of poisonous animals and men possessed of eerie powers, the tower's defenses led to seven hundred deaths among the minions and beasts of Corvus. Eridan fought ferociously and profited from a lull in the bloodshed to carry away the essences of the Angelions from his vault using the body of a giant eagle moments before his tower fell. Pursued by many foes, Eridan managed to land his eagle form upon my embattled tower and give its precious load of essences to two of my most trusted servants, Brother-Sky and Dark Blue. His eagle was then slain in battle against more than a dozen beasts of Ravencross, and Eridan was never heard from or seen thereafter.

Yet he too had been

crafty in some manner, for while his tower was attacked, he led assault to the dark tower of Corvus off into the Land of Fire. Caught by surprise, Corvus awakened some of his forms and defended his tower fiercely, the two brothers battling bitterly for many hours and dispatching many of each others' forms. His remaining bodies few and his defeat inevitable, Corvus used his giant raven to escape with the essences of his most trusted followers while setting fire to the rest. Using Windgod, the power ring I had crafted for him, Eridan lifted the dark tower into the sky and cast it into the warm waters of the Azure Ocean where it now rests broken to this day.

Delphina -my mad sister- and her Tower of White and Silver battled the forces of her older brother fiercely; Corvus had foolishly underestimated her knowledge of biologics; as she broke one of her fiendish demon eggs, the lands about her tower became pestilent and oozing, trapping the fell warrior army and leading to their deaths, all three thousand strong. Though eventually my brother did manage to breach her gates, she stayed his advance with Calamity, a plague pearl of such murderous potential even Corvus' rage was quelled upon seeing it. In exchange for most of the essences of her vault, Corvus agreed to let her be; to this day she remains within her tower, breeding organisms of vile or enthralling form, mortals and immortals alike now speaking of the woman of a thousand faces. The war did destroy many of her tower's defenses however, so that the artifacts she used to camouflage it are no more; mortals and Angelions can now see the dread tower and be both lured and disgusted by it.

I am proud to say that as I speak to you now, nine years after the fall of Venomhead upon the Tower of Anekron, my tower's defenses are just now yielding to my brother's attacks. Much torment did I inflict upon him during these nine years; together with some of my most loyal Angelions we withstood endless onslaughts by monsters able to incinerate or wither away life by simple touch. We created monstrosities of our own, unleashing them against our foes and the Tower of Anekron. I used my own library to craft potent artifacts -of a kind meant for battle- and devised the Baneful Blacknesses less than one year ago; a pity I had no more of these...

Yet my tower is today falling and with it, the war is at an end, my brother its victor and I an exile. Corvus controls the Tower of Anekron, the essences of my mother and father and those of over two hundred Angelions.

The Raven and the cripple

Let me tell you that the war has not ended in total victory for Corvus and that there is still hope. True, the essences of Ambrose and Elizabeth are his, Ori is likely dead, Delphina has been relieved of most of her power, Eridan is in exile and myself soon to be. Corvus does control the Tower of Anekron and possesses over two hundred essences. However, the immortality machine, the golem hordes and the nine obelisks of knowledge stand destroyed. He can neither create more Angelions nor craft powerful artifacts with which to destroy you. Of the one thousand and some Angelions born of the Second Age, five hundred have perished that will never again wake, for their essences were destroyed. This leaves slightly over five hundred Angelions alive in the world; over three hundred remain free of Corvus, so that three of you exist for every two of his minions.

But time is not on your side, for my brother's plans are already unveiling. I have spied upon his activities for the last decade. It seems that the terraformatrons hidden within the Tower of Anekron survived the war, for I have seen them move once more. They are mighty machines -the very ones we used to cleanse the world and engineer its rebirth- and now half a dozen are under the power of Corvus, more being awakened every few years. Already he has gifted his most valued followers with kingdoms terraformed by these machines, within which they may one day rule as gods. I have seen at least

one island rise to the sky under their power, and I suspect the regions surrounding the Forbidden Land will be substantially fortified and transformed to my brother's wishes so as to prevent attack.

But Corvus knows one artifact above all others may quicken his dominion of the world; remember that eight years ago, amidst the chaos and confusion of the war you heard of the flight of a giant raven whose wings could have provided shelter to thirty men. You heard of the golden cage held within its talons within which was imprisoned a small boy having but one leg; few are those that have actually seen it, for whatever this great raven and cripple visited was burned to ashes or plagued by disease and death. Know that the boy was the body of my father, a crippled form engineered by Corvus to torment him as he flew over towns and cities within his terrible raven, destroying at will. As much for revenge against Ambrose for the slaying of Helenoire, I surmise Corvus is intent on tormenting our father until he reveals the processes necessary for the construction of a second immortality machine. Were this to happen, were my father to teach him the ways, then all would be lost; Corvus could then give birth to an immortal army that would scour the world in search of your essences and lead to your deaths or enslavement. As I speak Corvus has now imprisoned my father in a trapbox named Thorn Rose, an artificial reality where his spirit is tortured and flayed horribly. I fear it may break him and lead to my brother's total victory.

As for my mother Elizabeth I have had no contact with her since the war. I doubt even Corvus' willingness to hurt her, for all of us including him loved her dearly. She may be out and about, trapped or otherwise incapable of reaching me. Eridan has disappeared as well, and may be dead for his essence was not of those he trusted me with. Do not seek Delphina's aid or company; she is lost, and those whom she lures to her tower are doomed to join her in madness.

Thus I have spoken to you what I wished to speak; I know my words may seem blasphemous, but know that they are true to the very last. I have grown weary of lies, and wish for the Kingsway legacy to be composed of other things than deception. Do not hate Ambrose Kingsway, for his vision was great and his objective nothing less than holy; he wished to create a peaceful mankind, and the tools he chose bore names such as Avonmyth, the Holy Word and the All-Seeing. I do not think his actions to have been guided by a higher force; they were his own, as were ours, yours and every mortals' born since the beginning of time itself. We were simply guided by our beliefs. Before you brand the Kingsways as monsters, remember the Golden Thousand, the ten centuries of peace mortals enjoyed until my brother's treachery. Let it be said that never before in the history of the world has such a warless period existed. Was it not for Corvus' treachery I believe the world could have enjoyed many more Golden Thousands. Were not our lies necessary evils when one sees the immense good that was born of them?

Now I must see to your safety; a thousand of my white hawks will take flight, each carrying a golden orb in its talons away from my tower and the minions of Corvus who are laying siege to it; seven hundred will carry decoys while three hundred

will each carry an essence; I doubt my brother's minions will be able to intercept more than a token number, so that most of you will survive free. A hawk will find your mortal form and hand you your essence, which you must hide promptly and well. Never must my brother or his followers find it or you shall become one of his minions. Keep it safe at all cost.

Within minutes, those of you within the southern Birthland will see a second sun atop Emerald Mountain; it shall signal the fall of my tower. I shall destroy the pipe organ with which I speak to you now before my brother discovers its keys, and hopefully lay waste to as many things from the Tower of Anekron as I can before I am found. Dormant bodies attuned to my essence remain scattered across the world, so fear not: I shall live through this.

Do not despair, and know that for whatever belief you upheld the principless of my father, your actions served to better an entire world and its people, both of whom stand to be lost should you abandon the fight. Those of you that doubt my words or suffer too much by the death of your beliefs may cast your essences upon rocks and be rid of suffering. Those of you that wish to fight on for the lives of mortals I bid you farewell, and perhaps we may one day join forces and lead the world from under the shadow of my brother.

Farewell...

The end of an Age...

The present stands at the year 2100SA, one hundred and ninety years after the war which ended with the flight of Lyra Kingsway's thousand white hawks. Less than two dozen were caught or slayed, so that most essences made it to their destination. Reaching across the world, over seas and forests, Lyra's white hawks brought terrified Angelions their essences. Some became exiles, carrying their golden essence into dark woodlands or atop the very highest of mountains to escape the minions of Ravencross. Others fell prey to maddening sorrow, casting their essences upon rocks to be relieved of pain or to disprove Lyra's words. Some hid their essence in vaults, in grottoes, in safehouses or simple holes in the ground and battled their foes mercilessly in the name of

the All-Seeing and Ambrose Kingsway. The world they loved crawled with vile beasts and servants of Ravencross under human form, and the people of their realms suffered, praying for protectors. The skies were dark and evil once more, as the great raven flew over villages and mountains. Signs of the All-Seeing had vanished. Only with the help of some truly powerful Godshards and by showing exemplary courage did the battle favor them. The fell enemy was pushed back, and the great majority of the mortal lands were cleansed of their evil.

Today, of the three hundred free Angelions -those not in liege with Ravencross- most have kept their faith and believe the Kingsways were guided in their actions by the All-Seeing. Known as Dagonheir, they abide by the Scriptures and continue to protect mortals, remaining true to the purpose of Ambrose. Some have banded together into Sacred Circles, thereby protecting their realms with increased efficiency against minions of Ravencross who hunt for Dagonheir essences relentlessly. A greater alliance between all Dagonheir has so far failed to coalesce, mainly due to differences of opinion concerning Lyra's message and her true intentions in sending it. Some would claim she is to be counted among the fallen, while others would believe her to be their ally. All Dagonheir agree that Corvus and Delphina are the *fallen Kingsways*, and only by destroying them and rescuing Ambrose from the black Tower of Anekron can the world be saved.

Of the few free Angelions not counted among the Dagonheir, Sybas are the most numerous. Warped by Lyra's message and no longer abiding by the Scriptures, most Sybas no longer have faith in the All-Seeing and follow their own hearts and desires. There is little love lost between Dagonheir and Sybas, for the latter have been known to rule their mortal kin rather intimately. Dagonheir hunt for Sybas mercilessly, for they are a plague within the Unconquered Lands.

Dagonheir now speak of the Fell Kingdoms, the distant lands terraformed by their enemy Lord Ravencross, the fallen Kingsway. Centered about the Forbidden Land and the Tower of Anekron, these kingdoms are unnaturally populated with beasts either fair of foul; birds can put men to sleep through song while six-inch tall humanoids fly using gossamer wings. Fire-breathing monsters, two-headed wolves, fifty foot giants and beasts even stranger lurk about their forests. Traitorous Angelions known as Fell Lords manage their lands, using retinues of Fell Princes to rule over mortal slaves.

Mortals are still reeling from the wave of evil that engulfed their lands since the spirit war. Their villages and towns now sport fortifications and guard towers, while Town Watches patrol streets at night, wary of anything or anyone suspicious. Yet the war led the darker and wiser elements of their kind to discover more about the Angelion presence upon the world; there are humans -of the red-blooded, mortal variety- that are not as they seem, carrying a dark secret; they know of the immortals that walk among them. They are called the Awakened, part of a secret cult called the Watchful Eye, whose symbol -the open, lidless eye- can be seen in a growing number of cities. Their purpose is still misunderstood; they unearth artifacts of the First Age and use them in their holy war against Angelions. Every year their numbers grow. Were the sum of mankind to turn on Angelion-kind, the end of the Second Age might very well come about and the world once more suffer a thousand generations of war and tyranny.

20 questions about Angelions...

"Weeks of munching on rotting carcasses and wandering in this lifeless quagmire as a dirty rat had relieved me of proper manners. Thus did I pause and gawk, standing tall on my hind legs for more than an appropriate amount of time at the sight of a curvaceous woman hunched upon a tree stump. I half believed she was mere phantasm, a conjuration from the deepest and darkest parts of my mind brought about by the cursed machinations of my tormentor. How foolish I had been to lose my essence thus; now I could look forward to endless moons scurrying about as a rodent, seeing things that were not there to the chuckling of my captor. How I had fallen so very far...

She was resting her arm on a hollow branch, her lower jaw nestled in the palm of her hand, and from what I could see she knew nothing of my presence. Though I had once been of her kin, known by the noblest of names, my once valorous reputation was now worthless: a rat that spoke was foul no matter its words. Her scent reached my nose, wiggling under her sweet perfume, and for a moment I shut my red eyes so that I could better appreciate her aroma.

Careless...

Had I not closed them I might have noticed the looming shadow that preceded her attack. Not from her woman form, which was still sitting casually in the tree, but from the eagle she used as well. Her claws pierced my body in many places and I let out a shriek of pain, a sensation I had been reacquainted with since my capture. She carried me to the tree stump, I wheezing in

agony the whole way, and unclenched her talons to deposit me on a branch right in front of her woman form. Though no mortal wound was inflicted, I grabbed on to the branch weakly and nearly fell.

"Eyes-of-Moon, I find this new body of yours to be quite fitting" said she with a smirk, as she cleaned off bits of bloody fur from the talons of her eagle form.

"I see you are still a victim of your mortal desires... Now tell me why you scuttle in my realm in this manner, and don't lie, or my talons will slice the life out of you

What is an Angelion?

An Angelion is an immortal, artificial entity that was once human. The word "Angelion" means messenger.

In the late First Age, a great scientist named Ambrose Kingsway built a machine of mythical power; a machine that would allow him to cheat death. Using its power, he immortalized himself and his family by digitalizing their minds. The seven Kingsways became the first seven Angelions and the only known Angelions of the accursed First Age. Some three thousand years later, six of the seven Kingsways are still alive.

During the Second Age, the Kingsways used their machine to immortalize over a thousand carefully selected mortals, thus transforming them into Angelions who would watch over and protect the people of the world by promoting worthy bloodlines and slaying the corrupt. At the dawn of the Third Age, less than five hundred Angelions still walk amongst mortals, divided and warring.

How are Angelions created?

For an Angelion to be created, a human had to suffer the Kingsway's immortality machine. It would infuse him with nanomachines that would progressively replace his brain with its electronic equivalent. When the procedure was over the lifeless, brainless body was discarded and all that remained of the patient was an *essence*, a golden sphere about the size of a fist emulating the mortal's brain perfectly. The essence was all that *remained*; memories, feelings, emotions, attachments, reasoning power as well as the basest of instincts were carried over into it. An Angelion had been *born*.

The body perished, but the mind lived on, electronic though it was.

What does an Angelion look like?

Corvus looked at Red Lotus, marveling at her emerald-colored body fully eight feet tall, scaly and muscled.

"I bring you your father, oh Lord. I bring you Ambrose! He is undamaged and still conscious." She spoke with a raucous voice, but her excitement was obvious. Her hand uncurled its clawed fingers, unveiling a small golden orb. Corvus felt his body tingle, and his palms grow itchy with wetness.

"Father!" Said he, a predatory glint in his eyes.

"I finally see you in your nakedness." He clutched the essence of his father, and traced his index upon its golden surface.

"Father, you are mine!" He screamed, raising the essence above his head, his warriors screaming his name 'Lord Ravencross! Lord Ravencross!" The Third Age had dawned.

The actual and only true body of an Angelion is his essence. Golden-hued and highly reflective, it weighs around ten pounds, is somewhat brittle and emits small amounts of heat. The essence is the Angelion. It is both his mind and his body all at once.

What do essences need to function?

An essence does not require oxygen, minerals, vitamins or glucose like a normal organic brain. It only needs power, that it generates internally with an embedded energy generator.

Can an Angelion die?

An essence is subject to normal damage as is any physical thing, and can be destroyed by applying enough force to crush it or enough energy to burn it. A careless drop to hard ground from a height of a few feet is enough to severely damage or destroy one. If the latter occurs, the Angelion has suffered *death* and is lost forever. Essences are not destroyed by immersion into water, but hard vacuum will lead to their shutdown. Destroying the essence of an Angelion is the only way to kill him, and so Angelions protect them fiercely. They hide them in Goldrooms, safehouses and bunkers, behind countless traps and pitfalls. Were their essence to fall in the wrong hands, they would be at the mercy of their captor who could torment them until the end of time itself. Otherwise, an essence does not age; a violent death seems to be the only possible end to an Angelion.

What are Goldrooms?

A Goldroom is the physical place in which one or more essences are located. The locations of Goldrooms are ferociously guarded, for there is no more valuable thing in the world to an Angelion than his essence. Goldrooms are notorious for having deadly pitfalls, guardians

and other defenses to thwart would-be thieves.

How can Angelions interact with the world?

An Angelion's essence is by itself deaf and blind; it cannot move or take any physical action and cannot perceive its environment. However an essence is capable of receiving sensory data and can send commands to specially prepared *attuned* bodies. An Angelion can therefore control attuned bodies -his forms- such as humans and animals by controlling them remotely and from a safe distance without his essence being exposed to danger. A body needs to be *attuned* for such use by being fitted with minuscule receivers and transmitters that allow the Angelion to both control it and receive its sensory feedback. For organic creatures such as animals and humans, the procedure involves implanting cybernetic control apparatus that allow the Angelion to tap into the organism's brain, in effect overriding most of its functions in favor of his essence. It is an invasive and destructive process: the creature's spirit is lost forever, supplanted by the mind of the Angelion.

From an Angelion's perspective, he controls his attuned forms as though he was *inside* them, seeing through their eyes and hearing through their ears as he would his own; an attuned body wounded by arrow or blade will relay pain (though a filtered amount), while seeing something terrifying in one form may send shivers down the backs of every one of an Angelion's bodies!

What kind of bodies can an Angelion control?

So far as is known, the smallest organisms attuned for Angelion use are the size of large flies or wasps. From a tiny butterfly or caterpillar to small rats, cats, dogs, birds, humans, elephants, whales and even greater and more monstrous creatures, an Angelion may command anything possessed of a central nervous system.

How can an Angelion acquire bodies?

In the late Second Age, after the terrible war that divided the Kingsways, a secret guild known as the Genomancers designs and grows organisms meant to be attuned to Angelion essences. These they sell in exchange for gold and other valuables. As well, Lord Ravencross manufactures bodies through the vast underground genolab of the Tower of Anekron.

Angelions may also bodysnatch bodies and have them attuned for their use. Lyra Kingsway used the bodysnatched form of Queen Alkaedra to bring war and death to the First Age. Thus can an Angelion kidnap a city's mayor and rule using his body.

Can an Angelion have more than one form at the ready?

There is no limit to the number of attuned bodies an Angelion can have, but since the attunement procedure is costly, Angelions generally have no more than two or three forms at any given time. As well, an Angelion may not be able to control all his attuned forms at once.

Can an Angelion control more than one form at the same time?

The company commander had an unkempt brown

beard streaked with white, mottled and unkempt, here and there stained with heavy blotches of dried blood, as was his armor. He coughed and wheezed, trying to keep death away long enough so that he could inform me of what he had seen. I both pitied and envied him. Such simple purpose and loyalty, however misplaced.

"There were two of them... A man and a woman, and they had a large, misshappen dog with them."

His voice was liquid, and with every pause he spat crimson unto my marble floor. Servants held his head up and soaked the blood trickling down from his many wounds.

"Evil Spirits, all of them, but we discovered it too late. Both the man and the woman flew in the sky once my men appeared, and the dog-beast shot acid from its mouth, repelling every sword blow that came upon it. Ten times it should have fallen, had it been uncursed. It attacked with uncanny precision and dodged flights of arrows as no mundane dog could. The woman was surrounded by a blinding light, and with a flick of her hand could send a guard flying into the stone wall to his death. The man wielded a sword as no other, and must have cut down at least thirty of my men before we routed. I barely escaped with my life, but the claws of the beast had already raked me. I fear the outer garrison is lost, for I saw its towers burning as I turned back to look upon it one last time"

His eyes were closing, his chest heaving up and down faster in his final death throes.

"You did good, Crossbearer. Your place in the afterlife is well assured. The foe you faced could not be killed by you or your men. Though you saw three, there was but one. This Spirit possessed the man, the woman and the foul dog-beast that slew you. He is very old, and he is known by many different names, by many different people. Once, he had only one name..."

My lips had whispered too much, yet the one I spoke to had gone from this world. His chest heaved no more. The servants recited verses from the Holy Word and kissed his face.

And so he had finally found me. His spirit name was Dream, a Lord of the old days, the very one that had found me dying on the rocks of the river of sands and proposed my ascension to the Order. Today he had found me again but his intentions were far less good-willed, for since the fall of Corvus his mind had become as malicious and deadly as a viper. I convened in my chambers with Blue-Sky and Slayer-Of-Evil.

"Dream has come to our border and has slain more than fifty of our guards. There may be others with him. Our city will likely be attacked tonight."

I could feel their fear, and they mine. We could muster no less than five hundred Crossbearers by dusk, yet they were but five hundred flies against such a monster, fit only to be swatted away dozens at a time. At best they could tire him enough that we could escape unnoticed with our essences in hand. But in the end they would all die.

"Prepare the men, and tell them an evil Spirit of terrible power is coming to destroy the city. They must fight for their homes and their loved ones. Evacuate the families and tell them to scatter in the woods and mountains, it is their only hope. When the Crossbearers are dispatched meet me in the catacombs and we shall leave through the secret passageways with our

essences, for that is what Dream is seeking."

"But the guards... They will be slain!" I could feel Blue-Sky's sorrow and guilt. She was young, and still bore hope that faith alone could save us.

"The city is lost, it will burn all through the night, be certain of it. The Crossbearers will be dead too, if not tonight then at most in a few days. Let us escape this evil and fight on another day."

Relying much on photonic information transfer, an Angelion's essence processes information far faster than an organic human brain and may allow him to control more than one attuned body simultaneously. However an Angelion may need several decades of rigorous practice in order to be able to control two, then three and possibly up to five forms at once. *Celerity* is the term given to an Angelion's ability at processing data quicker and using the full efficiency of his essence. The celerity of an Angelion is generally taken to be a factor of a human's thought/reaction speed. The more bodies an Angelion controls simultaneously however, the slower they all react. Maximum celerity is +4, so that an Angelion can control up to 5 forms simultaneously given proper practice.

Does increased Celerity have other uses?

I lunged at him and struck a powerful blow upon the chair, splintering it in half, for my foe had moved out of the way.

"Sit down, friend, before you ruin my dining room with your haphazard attacks" he uttered, doubling my anger.

How I'd make him pay, thought I. Again I lunged, this time a thrust of my blade aimed at his liver. Again I hit air, as he slapped me on the cheek with his glove.

"Damn you and your devilry!" I yelled, sure that he had demonic aid in moving in such inhuman way.

I sweeped low, after fainting a higher blow, but he jumped over my blade and landed a kick on my jaw. This sent me sprawling on the floor. Dazed, I looked up at him as he removed my heavy sword with a kick of his boot.

"Let this be a warning to you. Mine is not a life to take, at least not by one such as you. Now let's talk, shall we?"

Celerity is a factor of an Angelion's processing and data assimilation speed. Locked in hand to hand combat with a mortal, a high celerity Angelion will be able to see his foe's attacks in slow motion and be able to dodge and parry his blows easily. High celerity has made Angelions both blindingly agile combatants and unnaturally fast learners. However as said earlier, the more forms an Angelion controls at the same time the less celerity he has to react and think since his concentration is spread out over many bodies.

In effect everything that an Angelion of high celerity perceives around him is slowed down. Not only are thrown rocks, punches, kicks, incoming arrows or martial arts sweeps slowed down, but conversations, music and the perceived effects of gravity as well. Angelions interacting with humans lower their celerity appropriately, else this would make for rather dull conversations! At the first sign of danger an Angelion makes use of all his celerity and can react unnaturally fast (to human observers) while from his point of vue humans have slowed down considerably.

Logging off from one body and logging into another

An Angelion using one of his forms (the form is said to be active) can *log off* from it (rendering it *dormant*) and *log into* another one instantaneously, but this may result in slight momentary disorientation depending on circumstances. An Angelion can have as many attuned bodies active as his celerity.

What happens to dormant bodies?

Attuned bodies not actively controlled by their Angelion are said to be dormant; they will look to be sleeping, though no amount of force may wake them from their slumber. They will remain as such until their Angelion decides to render them active. Dormant bodies will not feed themselves and will not defend themselves. They do not relay any sensory information to their Angelion, and may be killed, injured or kidnapped and transported without the Angelion to whom they are attuned being aware of it.

What happens if one of the attuned bodies of an Angelion gets destroyed/killed?

The thieves were many, and yet more were coming from the woods. Though seven of them were dead at my feet, I carried inside my right leg a wooden arrow that bled me, and my side had caught the blade of a rather skilled opponent. I felt the familiar taste of death in my mouth and guts, a feeling I had experienced four times before. I put a knee to the ground, supported by my blade. Off in the distance, they yelled orders and pointed in my direction, and I could see two archers take positions and aim their bows at me. If only I had the strength to move. I heaved to one side, falling to the ground as the first two arrows whistled by. They were skilled, and would not miss a second time.

As I lay there on the ground dying my fifth death, I summoned memories from my lifeshard. I saw visions of my mortal youth, of my mother's eyes and her singing. How I missed her.

An arrow hit my side, reaching deep inside my belly. It pierced many organs and tissues, though I felt very little pain. Only a blurring of the vision, a bluish tinge to the trees I saw and the afterthought of my mother's smile. A second arrow reached me, this time puncturing my chest and rupturing my heart. I felt it throb around the wooden shaft, its beat slowing until it beat no more, and everything went black. Logging off this warm carcass, I snapped to life in my palace, far removed from these cold woods and inside an unpunctured body fit and well. What a wondrous feeling to be suddenly relieved of pain, as I sighed and stretched blissfully. Still I had lost quite an expensive body in those far woodlands, and I would hunt down every single one of those thieves.

Bodies attuned and controlled by an Angelion are tools he uses to interact with his environment. Killing or destroying one or all of these bodies only reduces an Angelion's power, but cannot extinguish his spirit; as long as his one true body -his essence- is not destroyed, any number of his mortal bodies can be slayed and he may very well come back to haunt his foes later on in other forms.

Scurrying about in the body of a spider, an Angelion may feel the heavy boot of a

Crossbearer come crushing down on him before everything goes dark. A dead body stops relaying information and cannot be controlled. It simply grows dark. The Angelion must then log into another of his attuned forms. If he has none, he will be forced to either shutdown his essence and slip into the *dreamless sleep* or suffer the terrible bodiless consciousness known as the *silent wail* until another body is attuned to his essence.

What are the dreamless sleep and the silent wail?

Under desperate circumstances, an Angelion may consciously shutdown his essence and slip into the dreamless sleep. Mortal lifetimes and entire Ages may pass, for when an Angelion is in the dreamless sleep time ceases to flow. He neither dreams nor wakes until an outside force manually powers up his essence. Deprived of bodies, the dreamless sleep may be the best option for an Angelion

Angelions no longer having any attuned bodies but forced to remain conscious are said to experience the silent wail, a bodiless existence devoid of sensory information. It is an excruciatingly scarring experience, and few are those that can endure it for prolonged periods of time without becoming mad.

How do Angelions communicate with one another?

Prior to the war, Angelions could communicate with the Kingsways by reciting certain verses of the Scriptures in sequence; the great Anekron pipe organ allowed essences to communicate directly, and if the request was proper and justified, the Kingsways could *essence-speak* to Angelions in need. In the late Second Age since the war, with the fall of the Kingsways and the destruction of the Anekron pipe organ, Angelions use their mortal forms -generally human- to communicate with one another and can no longer speak with the Kingsways using essence-speak. Some rare artifacts, such as azure crescents, allow Angelions to essence-speak to one another, without requiring their physical forms to be in close proximity.

How do I know which Angelion a specific body belongs to?

Having any number of mortal forms, an Angelion may appear as man or woman, as child or elder, as natural animal or monstrous beast. He may be in many places and speak to many people at once under various names. It is impossible to determine to which Angelion a mortal form belongs to. In these evil times, Angelions have taken to the habit of answering riddles to prove their identity.

Angelions can *lose* their essences?

An Angelion that has his essence stolen will not know where his essence is anymore! A dire situation indeed, for one's essence in the wrong hands can mean myriad misfortunes and torments. Such an unfortunate Angelion should send his mortal forms scurrying over the world to recapture it

before it falls into the wrong hands or is somehow damaged or destroyed.

Can Angelions have children?

Nothing more than electronic essences, Angelions cannot have children. However, they can attune clones or partial clones of their original bodies and breed with mortal mates to produce children. Such children can legitimately be called *descendants*. If the child were later essenced, he would become an Angelion and could rightfully be called the immortal child of the parent Angelion. Hence an immortal lineage might be possible. DNA samples kept from the bodies of all Angelions of the world were locked in a chamber deep in the Tower of Anekron, and it is unclear if Ambrose destroyed these when he incinerated the Immortality machine and the vault of essences. In any case, Lord Ravencross now possesses the Tower...

A second, theoretical and not yet feasible way of producing an *immortal lineage* would be by copying an essence into a second, empty essence. Though such a procedure could never create a perfect copy, the resulting essence would be quite resembling of the *pattern* Angelion. Even before the destruction of the nine obelisks of Knowledge, such procedure was beyond the technical know-how of the Kingsways, but is theoretically possible.

CHAPTER TWO

GAME MECHANICS

The Ascent system

Game mechanics help the GM determine what happens in the game. They are meant as an accessory, never as a replacement for the GM's good judgment. The Ascent system is the set of game mechanics we propose for ***Lesser Shades of Evil***™, because it allows for a high level of roleplaying possibility; the players themselves decide what type and what number of dice to roll. They can either be conservative and roll a combination of dice that almost guarantees success (but an assuredly unremarkable one), or go with another dice combination that makes success less certain, but a spectacular success -or failure- more likely. The Ascent system often produces critical, nerve-wracking dice rolls, which is a fun part of the game.

These game mechanics depend strongly on the imagination of the players and the GM to interpret the results in ways that add to the flavor, the drama and the overall excitement of the game. Don't let a simple die roll determine the course of an entire adventure. Use your wits and imagination. In all likelihood, you have lots of that!

Tasks

When the GM has trouble determining the outcome of some activity on her own, a task roll is called for. A task roll is not called for in mundane situations. Walking, going up stairs, talking and so on are actions that do not require task rolls. A Task roll is called for if there is any reasonable risk of failure for a given action. Walking on a tightrope, running up a wet flight of stairs, screaming for someone's attention in a crowded and noisy bar would require task rolls

Tasks in a nutshell...

A task requires that players and/or the GM roll dice to determine the outcome of a situation/action.

A task's success or failure will most likely depend on a character's Attributes (*Power, Finesse, Intelligence*, etc), his Masteries (*Wisdom, War, Domination*, etc) and certain Modifiers (injury, weakness, circumstance). Attributes, Masteries and Modifiers will be numbers, generally positive (though modifiers can be negative), that will be added together for purposes of determining the Proficiency Level (PL) of a character for a specific task.

Example: *a character attacks a fell beast with a dagger, and the GM rules that this task is based on the character's Finesse attribute + his War Mastery rating. This character has a Finesse of 6, a War Mastery rating of +1 and attacks in the dark (-2 modifier, says the GM). His final Proficiency Level for this task is therefore 6+1-2=5*

This final Proficiency Level will allow a player to choose a certain number

(and type) of dice to roll such as D6s, D10s, or finally D20s. Of all dice rolled, the Roll Result (RR) is the die showing the highest rolled number. Using a character's Proficiency Level, you will later learn how to determine the different packets of dice he can choose from to roll for a given task.

Example: *Kelly is rolling dice to see if her character can jump over a fence. Her Proficiency Level of 8 allows her to roll either 8D6 or 3D10. She chooses 3D10 and rolls them. They come up as 1, 5 and 9. Her Roll Result is therefore 9.*

Now to know if a task is a success or a failure, you need to compare the Roll Result with the Goal Number (GN) of that task. The Goal Number of a task measures its difficulty. If the Roll Result is higher than or equal to the Goal Number, the task succeeds. If not, the task fails.

Example: The GM has determined the Goal Number of jumping over this fence to be GN5. Since Kelly's Roll Result is 9 and higher than the Goal Number (5), her task succeeds and her character jumps over the fence.

Raw attribute Tasks

Raw attribute tasks rely only on a character's attribute(s) and don't bring into effect a Mastery. A character that tries to lift a log would roll a Raw Power task, while a character that tries to fight off an illness would roll a Raw Vigor task. Kelly's character which jumped over a fence succeeded at a Raw Finesse task. In such cases, the base PL (before modifiers, if any) is equal to the attribute value.

Raw attribute task examples...

FINESSE task

The body's ability to move and react precisely. It represents a body's inherent speed of action as well.

Examples

- Juggling flaming swords in the air (Raw Finesse)
- Driving a vehicle way too fast (Raw Finesse)
- Falling without getting hurt (Raw Finesse)
- Jumping over a small ravine (Raw Finesse)

INTELLIGENCE task

Any task relying on sharpness of mind and spirit, reasoning ability or that requires quick and flawless analysis.

Example

- Thinking of a solution to a riddle or problematic situation (Raw Intelligence)

PERCEPTION task

Any task necessary to notice things by seeing, hearing, smelling or otherwise sensing them.

Examples

- Spotting a hidden letter fallen under a desk (vision)
- Smelling the perfume of a courtesan hiding in your room (smelling)
- Hearing the whispers of people in another room (hearing)

POWER task

The body's strength and muscle power. Anything that can be done through brute strength is a Power task.

Examples

- Battering down a door (Raw Power)
- Lifting a heavy load (Raw Power)
- Bending a metal bar into a U shape (Raw Power)
- Crushing stones into fine dust (Raw Power)
- Unearthing trees from the ground (Raw Power)

PRESENCE task

Any task in which it is necessary to influence others by playing on their emotions, fears, desires, weaknesses or naivete. Seducing someone will bring in Presence as well.

Examples

- Making a good impression (Raw Presence)
- Scaring someone (Raw Presence/Fear)

TEMPERANCE task

Any task requiring self-restraint and/or controlling one's impulses and weaknesses.

Examples

- Not screaming under heavy torture (Raw Temperance)
- Withholding attack when angered (Raw Temperance)
- Staying calm when faced with a horrible fear (Raw Temperance)

VIGOR task

The body's resistance to disease and injury, its endurance and ability to sustain grievous wounds and keep functioning. Most vigor tasks have to do with resisting illness, fatigue or healing.

Examples

- Fighting off a disease (Raw Vigor)
- Resisting a poison or drug (Raw Vigor)
- Keep running at maximum speed for a long time (Raw Vigor)
- Remain conscious after being seriously wounded (Raw Vigor)

Masteries...

There are five Masteries in the game; *Wisdom, War, Domination, Deceit* and *Passions*. Each represents a great realm of interest that characters may study or practice (or be naturally good at). Masteries will tend to get better as characters gain experience and grow older. Mastery ratings, which measure a character's proficiency towards a specific Mastery, range from 0 to +10.

When the GM calls for a task that depends on an attribute + Mastery, the task is called a *normal* task, and the player must add the relevant Mastery rating to the attribute value to determine the base PL for this task (before modifiers, if any).

Normal task examples...

WISDOM Mastery

Any task that might benefit from worldly and scientific knowledge as well as general good judgment. Any task in which something is created or repaired that is neither a work of art nor an artistic performance/composition.

- Designing a weird techno-gadget (Intelligence + Wisdom)
- Knowing the powers of a strange beast of Ravencross (Intelligence + Wisdom)
- Repairing a damaged artifact (Intelligence + Wisdom)
- Mixing together ingredients to make a soporific potion (Intelligence + Wisdom)
- Creating a new organism (Intelligence+Wisdom)
- Interrogating someone aggressively (Presence/Fear+Wisdom)
- Resisting such interrogation (Temperance +Wisdom or Deceit)
- Building a chair, a table or a shelter (Finesse+Wisdom)

WAR Mastery

Any task that might benefit from knowledge of battle tactics, strategies, combat experience, maneuvers and battle styles or from general knowledge of war and combat.

- Shooting an arrow into an apple (Finesse+War)
- Punching a rude guest (Finesse+War)
- Using a sword to cut a foe in half (Finesse+War)
- Dodging a blow, a ranged attack or a falling piano (Finesse+War)
- Finding an army's weakness (Intelligence+War)
- Improving a Palace's defenses (Intelligence+War)
- Motivating your soldiers to attack a superior foe (Presence + War or

Domination)

DOMINATION Mastery

Any task that involves persuasion, leadership, information gathering, politics, etiquette or that relies on using influential contacts or reputation to acquire goods, information or power.

- Knowing the strengths and weaknesses of a rival (Intelligence+Domination)
- Knowing the name and history of some notorious underground criminal (Intelligence+Domination)
- Finding a critical piece of equipment or information using contacts (Intelligence+ Domination)
- Getting credit without truly deserving it

(Presence+Domination)

- Negotiating using your influence (Presence + Domination)
- Digging up some dirt on a rival (Presence + Domination)
- Making a new con tact during a soiree (Presence+ Domination)
- Using your influence to bail out some friends locked up in a dungeon (Presence+Domination)

DECEIT Mastery

Any task that might benefit from lying, deceit and fast-talking, that aims to corrupt or confuse someone or that relies on using underground/criminal contacts to acquire goods and/or information. Any attempt to infiltrate or bypass secured areas, to hide from, sneak around or follow someone or something discretely, to steal or conceal objects, and to discover deceit and lies.

- Sneaking about (Finesse + Deceit)
- Stealing a parchment from the pocket of a stranger (Finesse+Deceit)
- Picking a primitive lock (Finesse+Deceit)
- Hand tricks with cards, balls, etc. (Finesse+Deceit)
- Bypassing an advanced, electronic lock or trap system(Intelligence+Deceit)
- Uncovering lies (Intelligence+Deceit or Wisdom)
- Lying (Presence+Deceit)
- Fast talking your way past a guard (Presence+Deceit)

PASSIONS Mastery

Any task involving seduction, temptation or persuasion by playing on other people's weaknesses and desires. Any task involving art or performance, whether it be to make works of art, to analyze artworks, to know about artworks and their artists or to perform in front of a public, play or compose music and analyze performances.

- Understanding a work of art and discerning its meaning (Intelligence+ Passions)
- Finding out hints about a person's weaknesses through discussion (Intelligence+Passions)
- Composing a Symphony (Intelligence+Passions)
- Building a sumptuous Palace (Intelligence+ Passions)
- Seducing someone (Presence/Beauty+Passions)
- Touching/caressing/loving someone until they melt in your fingers (Finesse/Beauty+Passions)
- Drawing a picture, creating a sculpture, playing a musical instrument (Finesse+Passions)

Tasks relying on multiple attributes

Some tasks may depend on more than one attribute. In such cases, take the average (round up) of the two attributes involved and this will become the attribute value used in this task. Such tasks will be written as attribute1/attribute2 tasks.

Example: a Fell Lord is in front of a captured spy and wants to know who sent him into his kingdom. The Lord is in a terrifying body having a Fear rating of 9. The Lord's Presence attribute is 6 and his Wisdom Mastery rating is +4. The GM rules that interrogating the spy in a threatening manner is a Presence/Fear+Wisdom task. The Lord will therefore have a base Proficiency Level equal to the average of his Presence and Fear attributes (8) plus his Wisdom Mastery rating (+4), or 12.

When more than one Mastery applies for a task

In some cases, it might not be clear which Mastery should be used for a given normal task, or more than one might apply.

In such cases, the GM can allow players to choose between the possible Masteries which one they wish to use (usually the one with the highest rating). However, this will affect exactly how the character goes about the task.

Example: Spring Sorrow, a Syba, is in the middle of important negotiations with Hethral Gibben, the town mayor of a neighboring city. Spring Sorrow wants to convince the portly mayor to let his town become part of his Realm, in exchange for a large pile of riches. He has two options at his disposal. He can use his influence and status to "bully" mayor Gibben into acceptance (a Presence + Domination task) or go the subtler route and try to reason with Gibben and win him over with logic (Presence+Wisdom task). In the end, it will be up to Spring Sorrow's player to decide, though in the first case, failure might carry more dangerous consequences.

Now that you have a good idea of which attribute and/or Mastery might resolve a certain task, you may move on to determining how difficult that task is...

Goal Number (GN)

All tasks will have a goal number (GN), and the higher the GN, the more difficult the task is. Generally, the Game Master determines the GN unless it is an opposed task (you will learn about opposed tasks later on).

How do you determine Goal Number?

Goal numbers range from 2 up to 40+. However, it can become tiring to always think of Goal Numbers on the fly. As you will find out, many Goal Numbers will come back from time to time. Hence, as the GM, ask yourself four simple questions anytime you have to make up a Goal Number on the fly...

1) *Is the task easy for a common, untrained, totally average person?*

   If so, GN is 4

Example: to determine if a character notices a really badly hidden clue left in a room, the GM calls for a GN4 Perception (vision) task.

2) *Is the task of average difficulty for a common, untrained, totally average person?*

   If so, GN is 6

Example: to batter down a locked but flimsy wooden door, the GM calls for a GN6 raw Power task.

3) *Is the task at the very limits of what is possible for a common, untrained, totally average person (but still somewhat possible)?*

   If so, GN is 10

Example: to know if a character can disarm a wicked bomb in the nick of time, the GM calls for a GN10 Intelligence+Wisdom task.

4) *Can you see it being achieved only by a highly trained expert, more likely a hero in some action/kung fu movie or comic book, or by a mildly powerful entity?*

If so, GN is 11-20

Example: to know if a character can brew together a potent hallucinogenic potion, the GM calls for a GN15 Intelligence+ Wisdom task.

For truly inhuman tasks, Goal Numbers can go much higher than 20. They represent cinematic tasks that may stretch the meaning of the word *feasible.*

Example: to know if a character can take down three ducks by stringing three arrows on his bow and letting them loose in one shot, the GM calls for a GN40 Finesse+War task!

Proficiency Level (PL)

The final Proficiency Level of a character for a given task will be either:

1) His Attribute value + modifiers (Raw attribute tasks)
2) His attribute value + Mastery rating + modifiers (Normal tasks)

The Proficiency Level is a number that will usually range from 0 up to 20, though in extreme cases a Proficiency Level can go below 0 or above 20. The base PL is the PL before any modifiers come into play, while the final PL takes into account modifiers.

The Proficiency Level will help determine the number and type of dice a character can choose from to attempt a given task. To put Proficiency Levels in perspective, the following table relates what one can do with a given Finesse+War Proficiency Level using a trusty First Age .38 revolver.

Example: the characters have come upon a small patch of little berries and wonder if they are edible or poisonous. The GM rules that to determine if a character knows about these berries is a GN9 Intelligence+Wisdom task. Each player looks at their character sheet and adds their Intelligence attribute to their Wisdom Mastery rating to know what their base PL for this task will be. One character, Judy's, has a base PL of 8 (Intelligence of 6 and Wisdom of +2) for this task, while his two

If your base Proficiency Level is	What you can do with a .38 revolver
1-2	You can usually hit a barn within ten meters
3-5	You can usually hit human targets within ten meters, that don't move (GN3)
8	You can hit running/evading human targets within thirty meters (opposed task, GN5-10 on average)
10	You can shatter three out of six dining plates thrown in the air, or shoot down a running/evading person from up to seventy five meters away (GN11-15)
12	You can shatter five out of six dining plates thrown in the air! (GN16)
15	You can shatter all six dining plates and holster your weapon before the last shattered piece hits the ground! (GN25)
20--+	You can empty that six-shooter and bring down six flying ducks, while your breath smells heavily of scotch whiskey! (GN35)

What can you do... Table

companions have base PLs of 5.

Modifiers

Modifiers will add or subtract a certain number from a character's base Proficiency Level. Trying to lift a rock with a dislocated shoulder might incur a negative modifier (the PL will be reduced by a certain number), while doing the same thing with the help of a lifting bar would incur a positive one (the PL will be augmented by a certain number).

Example: Judy's character, with a base PL of 8 to recognize the little berries, had previously suffered a nasty acid spray into his eyes, and still has trouble seeing. Although this does not affect either his Intelligence attribute or his Wisdom Mastery rating, it does affect his seeing the little berries. The GM says that her character suffers a -1 modifier to the Task above. His Proficiency Level will therefore be 8-1=7

Resolving tasks

Ok, now you know the task's Goal Number and the Proficiency Levels of every participant. What next?

The player(s) and/or GM will now need to choose the number and type of dice they wish to roll to determine if the task succeeds.

"Die type"...?

A "die type" means a specific kind of die. The low die type has 6 sides (a D6), the middle die type has 10 sides (a D10) and the high die type has twenty sides (a D20). Most if not all hobby shops sell these types of dice. In the Ascent system, the order of die types used for tasks and damage is as follows:

Choosing dice...

A character's final Proficiency Level will determine how many dice of a given type his player can roll for a task. Players can either roll packets of D6s, packets of D10s or packets of D20s but never in the game shall a player or the GM be allowed or asked to roll different die types in a single throw.

The *Ascent table* below shows the possible dice packets a player can roll with a given final PL. In the case where more than one is written (up to three choices are available starting from PL11), the player must choose one. Permission is granted to photocopy this table as needed.

Final Proficiency Level (PL)	packet size	packet size	packet size
-4 or less	Grim Push!	-	-
-3, -2	Hard Push!	-	-
-1, 0	Push!	-	-
1	1	-	-
2	2	-	-
3	3	-	-
4	4	-	-
5	5	-	-
6	6	1	-
7	7	2	-
8	8	3	-
9	9	4	-
10	10	5	-
11	11	6	1
12	12	7	2
13	13	8	3
14	14	9	4
15	15	10	5
16	16	11	6
17	17	12	7
18	18	13	8
19	19	14	9
20	20	15	10
per + 1	+1	+1	+1

Ascent Table

Table explanation

Final Proficiency Level

A character's final Proficiency Level, after all modifiers are factored in.

Packet size

The size and type of dice packets a player can choose from will depend on the final Proficiency Level; so if a character has a final Proficiency Level of 3, his player can only roll 3D6:

With a final Proficiency Level of 12, a player must choose to roll either 12D6, 7D10 or 2D20:

OR

OR

Optional rule: 10 dice max!

GMs may rule that a player may not roll packets larger than ten dice of any type for a given task (and in any case, there is no reason for a player to do so!). A player must instead choose a smaller packet of a higher die type.

Roll Result (RR)

Of all the dice thrown, the Roll Result is the die showing the highest rolled value.

If the Roll Result is equal to or higher than the task's GN, then the task succeeds. If not, the task is a failure.

Hence with a PL of 3, if the 3D6 come up as 2, 4 and 5, the Roll Result (RR) is 5. With a final PL of 12, if the roll is made with 2D20 and they come up as 4 and 17, the RR is 17.

Example: a young boy tries to jump onto a rock in the middle of a small creek without getting his feet wet. Since the rock is slippery, the GM informs the boy's player that to do so is a GN6 Raw Finesse task. The boy has a Finesse value of 6 and the GM sees no applicable modifier, so his final Proficiency Level for this task remains at 6. This means he can accomplish the task with a D6 packet size of 6 (6D6), or a D10 packet size of 1 (1D10). He chooses to roll 6D6, and the dice come up as 1, 1, 3, 4, 5 and 5, so the task fails since the RR fell short of the Goal Number. The GM informs the player that his character manages to jump onto the slippery rock but slips and falls into the water!

The Spill

When rolling dice packets, keep on the lookout for dice that come up showing the maximum value for their die type (sixes for D6 packets, tens for D10 packets and twenties for D20 packets). These are called *spills*, and each spill requires that you roll a *spill die* of the next higher die type. Hence three rolled D6s that show sixes equal three *spills*, requiring the throw of three D10 *spill dice*. Likewise two D10s that *spill* will require the roll of two D20 *spill dice*. A *spill* offers any character the chance to roll some amazing Roll Results. *Spill dice* that come up lower than the original dice that caused the spill are ignored; Of those higher than the original dice, the highest value will become the Roll Result. **A *spill die* cannot itself *spill*.**

Example: with a final PL of 4, a player must roll 4D6 and gets 2, 4, 6 and 6. The player has achieved two spills and can therefore roll 2D10. They come up as 5 and 10, so his final RR is 10. The D10 that came up as a 10 cannot spill because it is itself a spill die.

D20 *Spills*

When a D20 from a packet comes up as a 20, a player has scored a *spill* and must roll a D10 *spill* die. The Roll Result will be 20+ the result of this *spill* die.

The Push!, Hard Push! and Grim Push!

With final PLs of 0 or less, a player will need to roll two or more D6s but must keep the lowest die number (instead of the highest) as the Roll Result. A *Push!* requires the player to roll 2D6, a *Hard Push!* requires 3D6 and a *Grim Push!* requires that he roll 4D6, keeping the lowest die result as the RR in all cases. If all dice come up as sixes, no *spill* occurs; a 6 is the maximum Roll Result possible. Rolling under such conditions is a risky choice: it may result in fumbles (you will learn about fumbles later on in this chapter) and may produce abysmal Roll Results.

Am I forced to roll?

No. A player can always opt not to roll. This is called a *safety*, and is considered to give a Roll Result equal to 0.

Example: Judy's character, still seeing the berries only partly, has a final Proficiency Level of 7 to determine their nature. She can roll 7D6 or 2D10. With a GN of 8 she opts for the 2D10, and rolls a 1 and 5, so her Roll Result is 5, falling short of the GN by three points. Her companions each try it out as well. They both have a Proficiency Level of 5, and considering the GN of 8, they hope for a spill! The first rolls 1, 2, 2, 3 and 3, a horrible roll worthy of a RR of 3, worse than Judy's. The last companion rolls 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 and therefore gets a spill. He rolls a D10 and gets a 10! The player succeeds at the task and so his character remembers seeing these little berries in his garden. They are delicious and nutritious, so they all gleefully gobble them down.

Epic rolls: sacrificing D20s...

A player may *sacrifice* one or more of his allowed D20s (but not D20 spill dice) in order to receive a like number of *+2 EPIC* bonuses to his Roll Result. Multiple sacrifices are cumulative, so that three sacrificed D20s add +6 to the Roll Result of the remaining dice. The total bonus will be added to the RR of the remaining rolled dice. Players can sacrifice D20s to increase their chances of success or of getting added effects (see *Added effects*, below). Only D20s may be sacrificed.

It is often worth sacrificing a few D20s when battling powerful opponents; though risky, the extra edge may just win the battle against a more powerful but overly cautious foe!

Example: An Archfiend tries to lift an enormous boulder over his head (GN24 raw Power task). It has a Power value of 16 (the Archfiend is a truly horrible, monstrous creature) and can therefore roll 6D20s. The player decides to sacrifice four dice in order to get a +8 Epic bonus to his RR. He rolls his two remaining dice and gets a 2 and 19. His final Roll Result is 19+8=27, success!!!

Task outcome

If the RR is equal to or higher than the Goal Number the task is a success, if not the task fails and in many cases this is enough information. However, it can help to know just how well the task succeeded or how badly it failed. In such cases, now is the time to know if there are any Added effects...

Added effects

For every 3 points your Roll Result surpasses/falls short of the GN, one added effect comes into play. If you beat the GN by 3, you have 1 added effect to your success. If you beat it by 6, you have 2 added effects and so on. Likewise, if you fall short of the GN by 3, your failure has 1 added effect and so on.

What are added effects?

An added effect is something the GM and/or player can add to make the result more spectacular, both for successes and failures. The nature of the benefit(s)/complication(s) can mean several things depending on the task. Generally, the GM will decide.

Example: an Angelion is working in his underground lab and tries to synthesize a new drug to cure the townspeople from a ravaging plague. The Goal Number is 12 and he has a final Proficiency Level of 11. He goes for 1D20 and gets a RR of 16. He beats the GN by 4 points and

receives an added effect. The GM rules that his cure has minor rejuvenating properties as well, and restores vitality and strength.

Special case: the fumble

When rolling for a task, if all the dice rolled come up as 1, a fumble has occurred. This means the RR is assumed to be so abysmal as to be incalculable, and the absolute worst possible event takes place. The GM is the one in charge of determining what happens exactly, but it should be nightmarish...

When a task is made as a Push!, Hard Push!, or Grim Push!, if any of the dice come up as 1, the task results in a fumble.

For tasks involving one or more Epic bonuses; if all the rolled D20s come up as 1, no matter what the Epic bonus was, the task ends in a fumble.

Strategies for dice selection

As you can see, the Ascent system demands a bit more from players. They must choose the dice combinations they wish to use for their tasks. Their decision will have a profound effect on their chances of getting added effects or fumbles.

Faced with a GN of 5 and having a final Proficiency Level of 7, a player that chooses to roll 7D6 stands a great chance of success but his chances of getting added effects rely on him rolling one or more *spills*. By rolling 2D10 and scoring a Roll Result of 8, 9 or 10 he will get one added effect to his success or a *spill* which may grant him further added effects, but rolling 2D10 has a higher chance of ending with a failure than rolling 7D6 against a GN of 5... Under certain conditions, characters might be willing to risk fumbles or failures in order to have better chances at succeeding with added effects.

An acrobat (with a PL of 6) wishing to impress the crowd might decide to alter his routine and try that spectacular triple back flip which he has much trouble with (rolls 1D10), or go with his standard routine which is ok, but not spectacular (rolls 6D6).

A hunter might decide to aim his arrow at his quarry's body and risk wounding or rather aim for the heart and hope for a clean kill (smaller stacks of high die types for his attack roll).

Examples of vision tasks Table

Situation	GN
Noticing a gun on a dresser drawer in a room ransacked and upside down	4
Spotting a few drops of blood on a light colored floor	6
Spotting a car following from a distance	9
Seeing a small mouse from over two hundred meters away	15

Examples of hearing tasks Table

Situation	GN
Hearing footsteps in second story of an old, squeaky house	4
Hearing footsteps in the woods made by a monstrous thing stalking you, twenty yards away	6
Listening in on a conversation at the next table in a crowded, loud bar	9
Hearing the breathing and heartbeat of somebody hidden in the same room as you are	15

Examples of smelling tasks Table

Situation	GN
Smelling that three week old corpse in the upstairs room	4
The smell of ozone that lingers a minute or so after numerous laser shots	6
Homing in on a target by scent, which must be less than twenty meters away and upwind	9
Tracking a prey by scent, being a few hours behind it	15

Perception tasks

A big part of roleplaying is noticing clues. As a character enters a room in which a bloody knife has been tucked behind a desk, the GM might secretly roll a Raw vision task. The character's vision perception rating will act as a base Proficiency Level, in the same manner as regular attributes. To see if a killer's cautious walk is heard, a hearing task would be in order, based on the character's hearing perception rating. To smell the decomposing body rotting away in the upstairs bedroom, a smelling task would be in order.

The task's Goal Number is up to the GM; GNs of 6 or less can be beaten by average folk, while GNs of 11 or more may only be possible with the help of artifacts or equipment (such as longviews or hearing apparatus) or for some animals or engineered bodies having the maximum possible perception values.

The GM can choose not to tell the players that she is rolling a particular kind of perception task. She should in advance record each character's perception ratings. As discussed under hidden goal numbers (below), the Roll Result and the goal number should remain hidden. In such cases, the GM will roll the best combination of dice necessary for success.

Examples of GNs for the various perception ratings of characters are listed in the three tables on the opposing page.

Example: an Awakened operative has entered an old house; she can't see a lot, the whole place is dark, and the GM asks her player to roll a GN5 vision task. The operative has average vision, a Proficiency Level of 5, so her player decides to roll 5D6. The darkness does not count as a negative modifier; the GM has chosen a GN5 vision task because of the darkness. The player gets a Roll Result of 6, so his character spots something. The GM tells her she sees a small tripwire linked to the door she just opened. The wire leads through a hole in the ceiling...

Heroic actions

The characters in the game are heroes, the main characters in epic sagas. The game is based around their actions, and the Ascent system tries to encourage brave or dramatic actions in the face of ghastly odds.

Players can spend the Available Power Points (see *A legend is born* chapter) of their characters to affect task outcomes in many ways. This is called a *heroic action*. Two different types of heroic actions exist.

Note!

Most heroic actions are reserved for heroic player characters, but in some circumstances a normal, mundane, powerless human or creature may be so desperate or angered, overwhelmed by passion or tragedy that the GM can allow him or her to roll a heroic task. A mother that sees her child being dragged away by a fellkin may very well lunge at it with superhuman strength, or a child that witnesses the death of his family because of the local Syba may get a heroic action to attack him at a later time. This is a roleplaying tool; it foregoes some logic in favor of some drama!

Cinematic action

In any great comic book or movie, the hero doesn't just stab his arch enemy with a sword and hope he dies from blood loss; he cuts him in half in one dramatic blow, showering bystanders with his blood... A cinematic action allows a player to spend 1 available Power Point so that now all his dice spill on the two highest die values; D6s spill on a 5-6, D10s on a 9-10 and D20s on a 19-20. The cinematic action must be declared before the dice are rolled. The player then rolls his dice normally.

Restriction

- Player must subtract 1 available Power Point from his character sheet and describe his action in cinematic detail
- Only one cinematic action per roll

Tiebreaker

When a tie occurs during an opposed roll, a

player has the option of spending one Available Power Point to become the winner of the task by using a tiebreaker. Two player characters (or heroic NPCs) opposing each other that get a tie can "bid" against one another by writing secretly on a piece of paper the amount of available Power Points they are willing to spend to become the winner. The one that allocates the larger number of available Power Points to the tiebreaker succeeds at the task. The loser does not need to substract any available Power Point but fails at the task.

Restriction

- Tiebreaker is only used in the case of opposed tasks that end up in a tie
- Player must subtract 1 or more available Power Points from his character sheet

Opposed tasks

A task's success or failure may depend on another character's opposing force, such as in an arm wrestling contest, races, debates and interrogations. In such cases both participants use their applicable Proficiency Level against one another. Both will roll their chosen dice combinations, and the one with the highest Roll Result will prevail. In other words, the GN for each participant will be the Roll Result of the opposing character. Determine if there are added effects normally, with their nature being chosen by the winner and/or the GM. The loser's added effects due to his failure are ignored and assumed to be included in the added effects of the winner unless he gets a fumble, in which case the winner can devise a remarkable story!

In opposed tasks, both participants may possibly not roll the same type of task. For example, an interrogator wishing to get crucial information out of a detainee will have a Presence/Fear+Wisdom task, while his victim will have a Temperance+Wisdom or Deceit task.

Based on both results, the GM will determine the exact result.

Example: Devon's and Angela's characters are locked in an arm wrestling contest. This is a Raw Power task, and Devon's character has 4 for Power while Angela's has 8. Devon rolls 4D6 and gets a RR of 4. Angela rolls 3D10 and gets a RR of 8. Angela's roll is therefore a success with one added effect. The GM states that Angela's character slams his hand so hard into the table that he suffers a -1 modifier to all Finesse tasks for a day or so.

Ties

When both participants of an opposed task end up with the same Roll Result, a tie occurs. In this case, look at the dice rolled by each participant; if one participant has more dice with the same roll result than his opponent, he wins. If both have the same number of dice at the same RR, both participants roll 1D20 and the highest result gets a success with no added effect.

Example: Dream attacks a member of the Sovereign Daggers. He rolls 6D20 for his attack, scoring 1, 9, 11, 12, 15 and 15. The Sovereign Dagger tries to defend himself with 1D20 and gets a 15, a tie! However, Dream's strike carries through, because two of his dice scored 15 compared to one by the Sovereign Dagger. He succeeds with no added effect.

Opposed Perception Tasks

When a character wants to sneak up on or hide from someone else, the task must take into consideration the perception ratings of the target. This means the character performing the task will roll against the target's Perception ratings. However, the GM may modify the target's Perception rating or choose which one is applicable depending on circumstances. For example, if an assassin sneaks up from behind, the target would use his hearing or smell perception rating and not vision, and if the target has no hearing only his smell rating would matter

Hidden Goal Number

For various reasons the GM may ask a player to roll for a task without revealing the task's nature or its Goal Number.

The GM may decide to

Examples of opposed tasks Table

Task	Base PL of Character's task...	Base PL of Opponent's task...
Outwitting someone	Intelligence+Wisdom	Intelligence+Wisdom
Ambushing someone	Intelligence+War or Deceit	Intelligence/Perception+War or Deceit
Trying to open a door held shut by someone	Raw Power	Raw Power
Beating someone in a billiards tournament	Raw Finesse	Raw Finesse
Attacking someone	See *When All hell breaks loose* chapter	See *When All hell breaks loose* chapter
Winning an endurance race	Raw Vigor	Raw Vigor
Winning a debate	Intelligence/Presence+Wisdom	Intelligence/Presence+Wisdom
Lying to someone	Presence+Deceit	Intelligence+Deceit or Wisdom
Seducing someone	Presence/beauty+Passions	Temperance+Passions
Bribe someone	Presence+Deceit	Temperance+Wisdom
Interrogating someone aggressively	Presence/Fear+Wisdom	Temperance+Wisdom or Deceit
Interrogating someone seductively	Presence/beauty+Passions	Temperance+Passions
Hiding from someone	Intelligence+Deceit	Perception +Wisdom or War (if cautious/aware of character) or Raw Perception (if not). In all cases, add character's size modifier
Following someone from the shadows	Finesse+Deceit	Perception+Wisdom or War (if cautious/aware of character) or Raw Perception (if not). In all cases, add character's size modifier
Picking the pocket of someone	Finesse+Deceit	Perception+Deceit or Wisdom
Trying to buy an artifact at a good price	Presence+Wisdom or Domination	Presence+Wisdom (or Deceit if artifact is horribly overpriced or damaged)

take such an action to introduce an element of mystery into the game, to keep players wondering as to whether the task succeeded or not.

Examples where a hidden GN might be called for include perception tasks, tasks where the characters are being followed or lured, trying to charm, interrogate or fast-talk an unknown person, etc. The player will have the choice of his dice combinations to roll, but will not know what the Goal Number is or even if the task is a success or failure. These situations will not allow players to modify their subsequent actions based on the outcome of the task, since they do not know if the task failed or not, and to what extent.

Example: a Fellkin approaches the docks of Orcanager, intent on boarding one of its sea vessels and redirecting it towards the Fell Kingdoms. He walks clumsily, droplets of blood trailing behind him as he crosses a bridge leading to the first docks. Unbeknownst to him, a sentry from the Orcanager town watch has laid an ambush at the bridge's far end; six armed watchmen equipped with nets and vicious spears await...

The GM asks of the Fellkin's player that he roll a vision task, though neither reveals its purpose nor the Goal Number. His Fellkin character having a vision PL of 7, the player decides to roll 2D10 and gets a RR of 6. The secret GN was 9, so the Fellkin notices nothing and walks straight into the trap. By the time he can roll again, the town watchmen may very well lunge from the shadows to attack him.

Teamwork

The GM can rule that certain tasks may benefit (or not!) from teamwork. Characters can work together to lift objects, interrogate captives, do research and any other activity that may benefit from a combined effort. Characters may not use teamwork for obviously individual tasks such as tightrope walking, horseback riding or most combat actions. The GM has final say in all cases.

In cases where teamwork is acceptable, the GM must look at each participant's relevant PL to the task at hand. The most proficient character will be the lead, and he will roll the task. If one or more of his helpers have a PL no more than two points less than his own, the lead will receive a +1 modifier to his task, sometimes more.

Trying many times in a row

Certain tasks can be tried and tried again until they are successful. Picking a door's lock or battering it down, mounting a horse or throwing pebbles against a distant window are examples of such tasks; a player can simply say his character tries it until he succeeds.

In these cases, the GM should look at the character's final PL to try the task and at the GN; if there is a way for him to succeed without needing a die to spill, then in all likelihood he will succeed, given time and determination. If no immediate danger exists, then the GM can simply rule that the task succeeds but takes more time, or that a bruised shoulder is the result of successive door batterings!

Tasks that require familiarity

Piloting a fighter plane is a Finesse task, but even though every character has a Finesse rating, that doesn't mean every character with high Finesse can fly an F-18. A chimp might have reflexes good enough to jump from tree to tree, but put him behind the controls of that jet and it isn't going anywhere.

The GM has the power to rule that a character must be able to understand the functioning of a tool, artifact or weapon in order to use it.

Acquiring familiarity

Players may say that during an interim chapter, their character tries to learn the functioning of an artifact, vehicle or weapon. To do so, a player simply states that his character spends one or more Available Power Points to do so, and the GM tells him if his study and examination of the artifact yielded any understanding at all. He may say that the charater is on

his way, may say that he is finished and now is considered to be *familiar* with the aretifact's functioning and useage or may say that he has no understanding of its function or purpose whatsoever. In many cases, a successful Intelligence+Wisdom task against a secret GN determined by the GM may help a character determine an artifact's function and gain familiarity faster.

The GM will determine how many Available Power Points are required to become familiar with an artifact, vehicle or weapon and if an Intelligence+Wisdom task is necessary. Relatively simple artifacts may require 1-3 points, complex artifacts 4-10 and a task roll (GN15-20) while obscure, highly complex taint relics may demand 11-100 Available Power Points and an Intelligence+Wisdom task (GN25+) to become *familiar* with.

Building/repairing things and lab work

During the first years of game time, characters live in a dark age. The immortal Kingsways have lost the Nine Obelisks that gave them the knowledge to build powerful artifacts, and the younger Angelions know scarcely nothing about the technology behind their immortal life and the artifacts they wield. Some are learning though, and Masters of Wisdom are characters that will use the following rules the most. Building or repairing things require their own set of rules because these situations both come up often and their procedure is standardized much like combat.

Building things

Characters will brew strange mixtures or grow weird organisms, and later may build great war machines with the knowledge they regain about the lost technology of the Kingsways.

Every time a character wishes to build something from scratch or modify it, the GM assigns a project cost, project time, required facilities and a task GN.

Build/repair tasks are normal tasks, and players will have a final PL equal to:

Attribute + Mastery + Facilities modifier + any other modifier

Attribute

All build tasks use either a character's Intelligence or his Finesse attribute. For more manual creations, such as works of art, paintings and sculptures, Finesse is generally appropriate. For all the rest, use Intelligence.

Mastery

The character's Wisdom Mastery is applicable for non-artistic build/repair tasks. His Passions Mastery is applicable for artistic creations.

Facilities modifier

See required facilities below.

Modifiers

The GM is free to add positive or negative modifiers to the task, as she deems appropriate.

Required facilities

Facilities of the Second Age are quite different than today's standards. Dusty libraries and arcane labs, in which bubble weird mixtures or grow strange organisms, are the abode of mad scientists, Angelions and Awakened cells striving to rekindle the flame of lost tech.

The GM must determine for every project what the required facilities are from the four possible facility types:

Production facilities (PF)

Science labs (SL)

Mixtures labs (ML)

Organics labs (OL)

And five possible quality levels (0-4):

On the fly (L0)

Rudimentary (L1)

Basic (L2)

Advanced (L3)

Premium (L4)

Building stuff Table

Circumstance	Modifier
Facilities modifier	
2+ quality levels lacking	Impossible
1 quality level lacking	-5
Proper facilities	0
1 quality level above	+1
2+ quality levels above	+2
Inappropriate budget	-2 to spend only half of the project cost, -5 to spend only one quarter of the project cost
More budget	+1 every time you double the budget spent, with a maximum +2 modifier
Inappropriate time	-2 to use only half of the project time, -5 to use only one quarter of the project time
Taking more time	+1 every time you double the project's project time, with a maximum +2 modifier

The GM has the responsibility to determine every project's required facilities. A project that requires a rudimentary science lab would be written as SL1, one that required premium organics lab as OL4, and so on. The Items of Power chapter will explain exactly what the various levels mean for the different labs.

Facilities modifier

Depending on the required facilities determined by the GM, apply the proper modifier if the character is using facilities of higher or lower quality level than required. So if a character is building an artifact that requires a basic science lab (SL2) but he has at his disposition an advanced science lab (SL3), he will get a +1 modifi-

er (see above table) to his PL. Consider that to use facilities of a certain quality level, a character must have a Wisdom Mastery rating equal to or above the facility's quality Level.

Inappropriate budget

The *project cost* is the amount of money (in mints) required to purchase material and see it through. By accepting a -2 modifier, a builder can try to do the project using half of the money required. By suffering a -5 modifier, he can accomplish the project using one quarter of the project cost.

Inappropriate time

Every project will have a *project time* for its completion, whether it is to build a house or a microbial infection. It can be given in hours, days, months, years or man-hours. If you're in a rush, you can divide the time allowed to the project by half, but it will incur a -2 modifier. Using only one fourth of the project time will incur a -5 modifier.

Taking more time

You can receive a +1 modifier by choosing to take double the project time for completion of the project. By choosing to take four times as long, you can add another +1 modifier to the task roll. After that, you're just lazy...

Example: a character wants to mix a potent acid to melt away the lock on his cell door. He is alone in his cell, with a bowl of water, a toilet, a bench, and a collection of insects that crawl in and out of his cell through a window. The character has an Intelligence+Wisdom PL of 13. The GM sets the required facilities at MLI, the required time at 1 day, the required cost at 0 (using mundane/common chemicals) and sets the GN at 9. Since the character is doing this "on the fly" with nothing at all in terms of facilities, the GM penalizes him with the "1 level lacking" modifier (-5) from the Building stuff table and tacks on an additional -4 modifier for being in a cell. Since time is the only luxury he's got, the character'll use it to his advantage by taking four days instead of one to mix together his potion. That gives him a +2 modifier from the Building stuff table. Since the project cost is 0, the character neither gets a bonus nor a penalty. Total modifier is -5-4+2=-7. His final PL will be his Intelligence+Wisdom (13) + modifiers (-7) for a final PL of 6 to beat the GN9 task. He rolls 1D10 and scores a 9!! Four days later, he has synthesized a small quantity of acid using only insect juice, his own body's secretions (God only knows which), some minerals from his cell floor, weeds that grow on the edge of his window and a whole lot of imaginative descriptions to brew up something that has eaten away the lock!

Producing large objects, machines and organisms

Labs are great for research and small-scale prototype production. However when a character wishes to build things of size 6 or larger (refer yourself to the *Using Powers* section in the *When All Hell Breaks Loose* chapter for examples of size classes), he will need a production facility in addition to any required facility imposed by the GM. Depending on the size class of the intended construct, the quality of the production facility may need to be greater. Consult the following table to determine the quality needed.

Production facility Table

Size of construct	Production facility quality
5 or less	None
6-7	Rudimentary
8-9	Basic
10-11	Advanced
12+	Premium

Mixtures/substances/gases Table

Project	Task/Facilities	GN	Base time	Base cost
Brewing a poison or hallucinogen of mild power from common ingredients	Intelligence + Wisdom/ML1	9	1 day	100 mints
Brewing a potent acid from common substances	Intelligence + Wisdom/ML1	10	1 day	100 mints
Producing an explosive substance from common items	Intelligence + Wisdom/ML1	12	1 day	500 mints
Designing a powerful new poison/hallucinogen with new and interesting properties	Intelligence + Wisdom/ML2	15	1 year	50K mints
Produce substances with one minor exceptional property (a gas that erases long term memory, a solid that turns liquid under specific sound frequencies...)	Intelligence + Wisdom/ML3	20	10 years	1M mints
Produce substances with one major exceptional property (a gas that erases memory, permanently and immediately, the psychedelic purple gas (from the notorious Purple Island) that can send rooms of people into day long orgasmic detente, condensed matter...)	Intelligence + Wisdom/ML4	30	20 years	2M mints
Produce substances with one legendary exceptional property (a potion that allows a creature to assimilate surrounding matter into its body, a gas that turns solid after its maker utters a word at a specific pitch, darkstone, etc.)	Intelligence + Wisdom/ML4	35+	50 years	10M mints

Machines/artifacts Table

Project	Task/Facilities	GN	Project time	Project cost
Building a small electrical generator using primitive equipment/resources	Intelligence + Wisdom/SL1	10	1 week	Neg
Building a great Palace worthy of immortal recognition	Intelligence + Passions/PF3	15+	2 years	1M mints
Building a primitive internal combustion engine	Intelligence + Wisdom/SL2	18+	5 years	500K mints
Creating a new Minor artifact	Intelligence + Wisdom/SL3	20	5 years	2M mints
Creating a new Greater artifact	Intelligence + Wisdom/SL4	25+	15 years	10M mints
Creating a new Legendary artifact	Intelligence + Wisdom/SL4	40+	50 years	100M mints

Organisms Table

Project	Task/ Facilities	GN	Base time	Base cost
Designing and growing a small non-sentient creature/plant of limited power	Intelligence + Wisdom/OL2	15	3 years	200K mints
Breeding a cross-between two very different species (bear with the head of a lion)	Intelligence + Wisdom/OL2	18	5 years	1M mints
Designing and growing a new sentient entity of limited power	Intelligence + Wisdom/OL3	20+	30 years	50% of Guild cost
Designing a highly mutagenic, adaptable, supremely potent and complex virus	Intelligence + Wisdom/OL4	22+	30 years	5M mints
Designing a body of unapproachable quality, power and appearance for a powerful Fell Lord	Intelligence +Wisdom or Passions/OL4	25+	50 years	50% of Guild cost
Designing and growing an Archfiend	Intelligence + Wisdom/OL4	30+	50 years	50% of Guild cost

Works of Art Table

Project	Task/Facilities	GN	Base time	Base cost
Making a sculpture of likeable aspect	Finesse + Passions/None	6	3 hours	Negligible
Conjure up a tune on the fly with a musical instrument	Intelligence + Passions/None	9	A few minutes	A musical instrument
Drawing a superb portrait	Finesse + Passions/None	12	12 hours	Negligible
A painting worthy of the best mortal artists	Finesse + Passions/None	15	40 hours	Negligible
Writing a story deemed an instant classic (by mortal standards)	Intelligence + Passions/None	18	5 years	Negligible
Painting a masterpiece (by immortal standards)	Finesse + Passions/None	25+	1 year	Negligible
Composing a masterful symphony(by immortal standards)	Intelligence + Passions/None	25+	5 years	Negligible

Repairing stuff

An unliving thing can suffer light or serious damage, much like organic bodies that lose Health points. Something destroyed (that has lost all of its health points), unless the GM rules otherwise, cannot be repaired.

Repairing stuff is considered a project, much like *building things*. A character will need to spend money, time and expertise on the project. The character must succeed at a GN6 repair/build task and apply any and all of the *building things* modifiers from the Building stuff table plus the modifiers from the *Repairing Things Table*.

Project Cost

The project cost for a repair project is given as a percentage of the damaged object's original cost. The project cost usually means finding parts and purchasing raw material. Helpers and work crews are not included (see helpers below).

Damage

The damage level of the construct to be repaired.

Unfamiliar construction

Repairing alien tech (that built by cultures of different nature or higher technological level) can be a nerve-wracking experience. The GM will apply the modifier she deems most suitable, although a -2 modifier seems appropriate, unless the technology base of the construct in question is way more advanced than the character's, in which case repair may not be possible at all or take vastly more time than usual.

Facilities

A production facility will help any repair task. The damaged object need not be directly in the production facility, but access to the facility by those that work on it must be relatively easy and rapid. The GM may apply negative modifiers in some cases or adjust the necessary time as she deems fit.

Helpers

For any repair/build task, the *Teamwork* rule applies. The GM must determine if specific helpers are beneficial and if so, how they can contribute. She can rule that one or more researcher-type helpers can give a +1 or rarely +2 modifier to the task roll and reduce time necessary as well, while laymen-type helpers usually only contribute to lowering the time necessary to complete a project, but don't help at all to actually achieve it. Some projects, such as designing/repairing advanced artifacts or doing research, have virtually no need for laymen helpers, while large projects, such as the building of palaces or cities, require lots of laymen.

Repairing Things Table

Circumstance	Modifier	Project Cost
Damage		
Light	+1	10-30%
Serious	-2	50-75%
Unfamiliar construction	-2 average	
Facilities (Production Facility) On the fly (0)	-5 or worse	
PF1	-3	
PF2	0	
PF3	+1	
PF4	+2	

Build/Repair task results

Once the task roll is done and the RR is known, compare it with the build/repair goal number and refer yourself below.

Build task

If the task is a success, it may carry added benefits if there are added effects. Added effects can only affect the product's

qualities, not its production cost or the time it took to build. It may be more rugged, more beautiful, more powerful, carry an added trait or anything else thought up by the player and accepted by the GM.

A failure means the thing is not created as desired, and its production time and cost are spent. If there are added effects to the failure, it may mean something bad happens to a worker, a piece of lab equipment, the whole lab or, in the case where there are 3 or more added effects or a fumble, that a massive explosion destroys the lab and may kill many of the workers.

Repair task

Successfully repairing something will bring it up to full working condition and very little trace of this damage will remain. Careful investigation may reveal hints that this thing was at one point damaged. With added effects, these traces may be completely erased, the thing may be rebuilt slightly better/more rugged than before or anything the player desires and is accepted by the GM. Added effects can only affect the product's qualities, not its repair cost or the time it took to repair.

With a failure, it usually means the thing is repaired only partly (0 added effect), not at all (1 added effect) or, on a fumble, that it is destroyed and/or something catastrophic happens, such as the production facility blowing up and killing workers/character bodies, etc.

CHAPTER THREE

WHEN ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE

Markus, fallen in a most compromising of ways, aimed his fist at her, tracking her as she levitated into the air and lunged at him, sword raised, evidently intent on ending this duel with a swift and decisive blow. From one of the rings his gloved hand bore, a bright lance of energy snaked its way towards the flying woman, and for a moment we thought everything was lost, preparing to flee into the woods. Yet to our surprise, the beam met some kind of energetic barrier, and as the two eldritch energies met, they crackled and shimmered, danced together and parted, changed colors and bended around one another with a deafening roar. Yet the beam's lethality was now lost to the sky, diverted away from her body, leaving her free to complete her maneuver. Her lunge served its purpose; Markus' head rolled to the ground moments later, leaving a thin line of crimson on the moist ground.

From very old immortals to ghastly monstrosities, the Second Age is filled with people and things of great power and foul disposition. When characters stand in their way, things are liable to get downright brutal. This chapter will handle situations in which words are of no more help. Now is a time for the drawing of weapons and the spilling of blood.

Combats tend to be highly dramatic and enjoyable aspects of any roleplaying session. Here as anywhere else, the GM and players will have the responsibility of making combats as richly detailed as possible. The system is cinematic rather than realistic, in that it allows heroic characters opportunity for incredible feats, while mundane mortals stand relatively little chance against characters of any worthwhile power. Much like in any kung-fu movie, thugs, extras and common folk are disposed of by the dozen, or even by the hundreds if they dare stand in front of an old and legendary warrior.

Note!

Angelions are immortal. The only way to effectively kill them is by destroying their essence. Disposing of their mortal forms is at best only a temporary solution. Although this changes the dynamics of assassination, battles are still common. You may not be able to kill an Angelion outright, but you can destroy his bodies, assassinate his mortal love, set fire to his palace and cities until you can reach his essence and dispose of it as you see fit. In this chapter, you'll find out how.

Rounds

Combat is divided into rounds. A round lasts for a few seconds and allows combatants to move a number of meters equal to their MOVE score and take one or more actions. Combat can last a single round or many subsequent rounds, but generally as soon as combat is over, keeping track of rounds becomes unnecessary. Rounds are there simply to give structure to combat and regulate what one can and cannot do in terms of actions.

Initiative

When the GM concludes that combat between two or more characters is imminent, she must take a mental snapshot of the scene. What are the involved parties doing? She should take things a step at a time, not get intimidated or rushed into rolling dice. She must determine in what order the characters and non-player characters will resolve their actions. This is called the initiative phase:

Players must roll their Initiative, which is an Intelligence +War task with no set GN. Their RR is called their initiative rank. The character with the highest initiative rank goes first by stating what action his character wishes to do and resolving it.

The character with the second highest initiative rank goes next, stating and resolving his action.

Characters proceed in descending order of initiative rank until characters have no more actions to resolve. Characters having multiple bodies roll initiative for each of their bodies.

When the last participant has resolved his last action, the first round of combat is over and the initiative phase begins once more for the second round of combat. The third, fourth and subsequent rounds of combat will all follow the same procedure.

Actions per round

No matter what his initiative rank is, a character gets a minimum of one action per round. However, characters wise in the ways of war may get more than one. They remain level-headed in stressful situations and keep their cool, and can do more than what an untrained character can.

If a character's initiative rank is 10 or lower, he gets only one action this round, to be resolved at that initiative rank. Hence, mundane humans, in most circumstances, will usually have one action per round.

If a character's initiative rank is 11-20, he gets 2 actions. If his initiative RR is 21-30, he gets 3 actions. If his initiative RR is 31-40, he gets 4 actions, and so on. Characters having multiple actions will resolve their first at their initiative rank, the second at their initiative rank-10, their third at their initiative rank-20, their fourth at their initiative rank-30, etc...

What are "Actions"?

An action is something fast, that a character can perform during one initiative rank. Examples of actions include:

- Attacking an enemy within reach with a readied weapon
- Taking an action to aim with a ranged weapon
- Drawing a sword from a scabbard
- Pulling out a knife tucked secretly inside one's boot
- Retrieving a vial from a belt pouch and throwing it
- Palming an object from a nearby shelf and hiding it in one's pocket
- Getting up from being face down on the ground
- Pushing one or two buttons on a wall

- Removing a helmet (and throwing it, if desired)

Figure about 1-2 seconds per action.

Examples of things that are not actions:

- Drawing a weapon and attacking
- Getting up from being face down on the ground, jumping into the air to do a backflip and kicking a foe in the face
- Pressing a complex combination of buttons on a machine
- Searching through a backpack for a parchment or weapon.

These take more time than is available in one action, and need to be broken down into more than one. For example, a character would be right in breaking down the above examples in the following series of actions: drawing a weapon (1 action), attacking with it (1 action). Getting up from the ground (1 action), jumping into the air to do a tumble (1 action) and finally kicking someone in the face (1 action). Pressing one or two buttons (1 action) repeated as many times as needed, as is searching through a backpack for something.

When their initiative rank is called, players only need to state what action they undertake now. It is the GM's duty to determine if what the player says constitutes an action or not. If not, then she must ask the player to either break his statement down into more than one action or choose another course of action altogether.

About Moving

A character can move up to half his MOVE score while undertaking an action (an attack, drawing a weapon, retrieving something from a belt or pouch, etc). During the same round, the character can use another action to again move up to half his MOVE score (and attack, draw another weapon, etc) but he may move no further in this round afterwards. He may attack enemies within reach if he still has actions left or undertake any other action allowed by the GM. A character can therefore only move up to his MOVE score in a round, and only by having two actions or more.

In certain situations, the GM might say that movement might be reduced, such as for characters backing up, going over rough terrain, climbing hills and other such situations. The GM could then allow only partial movement, say a quarter, an eighth or even less of the character's MOVE score and no more.

Modifiers to Initiative

Depending on the circumstance and/or state of characters, their initiative PL might be affected, as all tasks, by certain modifiers. A drugged character, drowsy and somewhat out of it may very well get a negative modifier to his initiative PL. Injuries, distractions or surprise may affect them as well.

Initiating action

A character may benefit from a +3 modifier to his initiative PL for being the initiator. This bonus lasts until the end of the first round of combat.

The initiator is the character that introduces the possibility of combat by announcing an action (or any other stressful and/or dangerous situation) that forces other characters into combat. For example: an initiator would be a player that states, "I draw my sword and attack", or "I lunge for the self destruct button!" or "We've walked into a trap, everyone run for your lives!!!" All others must react to this sudden change in circumstance by choosing their own combat action. Being the initiator does not necessarily mean a character will act first, but does give him an edge.

The initiator may be a character controlled by a player, someone controlled by the GM or even some occurrence not specifically related to a person in particular. An example of an occurrence as the initiator would be the GM saying "Suddenly, your negotiations with the criminal boss are interrupted by the sound of an alarm. Everyone roll for initiative!" In this case, the characters must decide if they start blazing away at each other or not, but no one gets the +3 initiative modifier for being the initiator.

Using a power

Using a power (see *Using Powers* on p87) is not an action, though characters still need to devote concentration (or celerity) to produce them. Some powers need more than one round to be produced, but in the round they manifest, their user must roll for initiative to know exactly when the power takes effect.

Attacking an unaware target

If your opponent is totally unaware of your presence, or is ignoring you, then there is usually no reason to roll for initiative. Just say what your action is and resolve it.

Being seriously wounded

Being seriously wounded gives a -3 modifier to initiative task PLs. Angelions and Golems, however, only suffer a -2 modifier.

Other modifiers

There are many factors that may influence a character's initiative PL, including injuries or other circumstances too numerous to elaborate here. The GM may impose modifiers to reflect these situations at her own discretion.

Ties

When two or more characters get to act during the same initiative rank, resolve the tie normally as you would for any task. The winner gets to resolve his action first, then proceed down.

Fumbles when rolling for initiative

A fumble means the character acts last, and incurs an automatic -5 modifier to any action occurring during this round. It may also mean the character trips, injures himself, knocks himself out, fires on himself or fumbles his weapon (dangerous with weapons like blood whips).

Example: *a Fell Lord is using the attuned body of a bio-engineered wolf to track three escaped slaves. The Lord has an Initiative PL of 9 with the big wolf (and a MOVE score of 30), and the slaves have a PL of 6 each and MOVE scores of 15. The Lord has spotted them on a dirt road walking one behind the other (ten meters apart) and will lunge from the forest to bite at the lead slave's throat. 20 meters separate the Lord from his prey, and he surprises the slaves when he comes out of the forest. The Lord knows that he must get two actions to be able to attack this round, because the lead slave is more than half his MOVE score away from him when combat starts. They all roll initiative. The Lord gets the +3 initiating action bonus because he is the one that starts combat off with a vicious and unexpected charge from the woods. His final PL is therefore 12, and his player rolls 2D20, hoping for a high score, while the slaves roll 1D10 each. The Lord gets a RR of 15 while the slaves get a 4, 9 and 1 (fumble). Hence only the Lord will get two actions this round, at initiative ranks 15 and 5. His first action is to run for half his MOVE score (15 meters) towards the lead slave. He is now 5 meters away from him. Then comes the second slave in the line, with an initiative rank of 9. He decides to draw his blade and go to the side of his friend (the lead slave). He can only move 8 meters (half his MOVE score), so he gets within 2 meters of him. Then comes the Lord's second action at initiative rank 5, just before the lead slave's action at rank 4. He moves the last five meters to get to the lead slave and attack. This means the Lord gets to attack before the slave gets to draw his weapon, and the latter will be considered unarmed to defend against the Lord's attack. If he survives, he can either draw a weapon or attack the wolf barehanded. Their buddy, the last of the line, fumbling the initiative, is nowhere near helping them. His action is to draw his blade and move 8 meters towards his companions to lend a helping hand. Unfortunately, in trying to do things too quickly, he falls to the ground after moving barely a meter or so, tripping clumsily on a rock in the road. His next action will be to get up, then possibly move and draw his weapon hurriedly.*

These initiative and combat rules can handle a group of up to ten combatants. Battles involv-

Wars, vehicles and large battles

ing over ten combatants may overwhelm the GM's abilities. In such cases, she should make a decision on the battle's outcome using her best judgment or play out only the battle's most important episodes. She can play out a combat between two important characters in detail, against a backdrop of fighting warriors that only add scenery to the one important combat.

COMBAT SEQUENCE

Resolving an Attack

The procedure for resolving an attack is as follows:

1) The active character decides who or what he will attack and using what form of attack (a natural attack, a weapon, a grapple, a power attack, etc)

2) Generally, both the attacker and his target roll an opposed Finesse + War task (see below for specifics). The one that gets the higher Roll Result wins.

3) If the attacker fails, the attack misses and combat moves on to the next combatant.

4) If the attacker succeeds, he then makes his damage roll.

5) After this is done, move on to the next combatant

Attack/defense

Attacking someone that actively defends against this attack is an opposed task. Attacking an *unaware* or *cautious* person, or an inanimate object, is not.

The final PL of characters to attack/defend will be:

Finesse + War + modifiers

Example: during a generalized brawl, a woodsman uses his action to try punching an innkeeper. The woodsman has a Finesse of 5 and a War Mastery of +2 for an attack PL of 7. The innkeeper has a Finesse of 4 and a War Mastery of 0 for a defense PL of 4. The woodsman rolls 2D10 for his attack and gets a RR of 7. The innkeeper rolls 4D6 and gets a RR of 4. The woodsman hits the poor innkeeper squarely on the jaw with an added effect!

Celerity bonus

Remember that every point of an Angelion or Rogue Golem character's Celerity bonus becomes a +1 Finesse modifier applicable to each of this character's active bodies (see A Legend is Born chapter). Therefore, an Angelion character having a Celerity Pool of +3 that has only one attuned body active benefits from a +3 modifier to this body's Finesse, since his Celerity pool is entirely unused and his Celerity bonus is therefore +3. If this same character has two bodies active at the same time, each will benefit from a +2 bonus to its Finesse score because one point from the character's Celerity pool is used to control the additional body, dropping his Celerity bonus to +2... By having four bodies active at the same time, the character's four bodies do not benefit from a Finesse modifier, since the Celerity bonus is now 0. This makes Angelions of high Celerity dan-

gerous foes in battle; they can choose to control multiple bodies at once to attack and defend in a concerted effort, or attack/defend using only one body to benefit from their increased reaction speed and agility, delivering blows and avoiding them with blinding speed. Angelions of high Celerity are deadly opponents in ranged combat as well, being able to see the movements of their target and/or incoming projectiles in relative slow motion.

Attacking an unaware defender

An unaware defender is totally unprepared against an attack. Inanimate objects are attacked as though they were unaware.

An attacker must succeed a GN3 Finesse+War task to successfully hit an *unaware* defender.

It is not an opposed task; the defender does not roll a *defense*. The *Reach* (see the close combat modifiers and special rules section that follows) of an unaware defender is considered to be 0 but in the case where the attack is a *ranged attack*, the attacker must still include modifiers to his attack PL relative to the target's size.

Attacking a cautious defender

A cautious defender is trying to prevent sneak attacks, ambushes or is otherwise moving in a manner that makes an attack against him more difficult. He may or may not have seen his attacker. He may be aware of an imminent attack and see it coming, but choose not to defend actively against it.

The GN to hit a cautious target is 5, and it will be much harder for the attacker to score a perfect strike (as you will discover later) than if the target were unaware.

It is not an opposed task; the cautious defender does not roll a defense.

The Reach of a cautious defender is considered to be 0 but in the case where the attack is a ranged attack, the attacker must still include modifiers to his attack PL relative to the target's size.

Choosing not to use a defense against an attack

Characters that do not wish to use a *defense* against an attack, but are aware of it, are considered to be *cautious* against this attack.

Successive defenses

Using a *defense* (opposing the attack with a Finesse + War task) means that the defender is leaping out of harm's way, parrying, backing up abruptly or otherwise lunging away from the attacker's blows/arrows/beams. You can always use a *defense* against an attack, unless you are unaware of it coming or are incapable of movement. However, you are not obliged to.

- A *defense* is not considered an action.
- A character can use a *defense* once per round at no negative modifier, but successive *defenses* in one round will incur a cumulative -2 modifier.

Hence, a character's second *defense* attempt in the same round will be penalized with a -2 modifier. His third *defense* PL would be penalized by -4, and so on. This modifier will be erased as soon as the next round begins and only applies to *defense* tasks.

Multiple attacks in a single action

An attacker can choose to attack more than once during his action. He can punch a foe and spit venom in his eyes or use a dagger in each hand to attack twice. An attacker can attack as many times in one action as he has weapons or attack forms at the ready. Such attacks are resolved one after the other during the same action. Each attack will suffer from a negative modifier equal to 3x the total number of attacks in this action.

Animal and monster attacks

Animals and monsters use the same rules as characters in combat. Assume that any animal/monster will have a War Mastery of at least +1 for purposes of attacking/defending with its natural attack methods (which can be ranged, as for a spitting cobra's venom or a dragon's fiery breath), while certain animals, such as feline predators, predatory birds and special/intelligent monsters will possibly have a +2 or, in rare cases, +3 War Mastery rating. Unintelligent animals and monsters should be limited to a +3 rating for War. Large or particularly ferocious animals tend to make Power attacks (see *The Power Attack* below).

Close combat modifiers and special rules

When characters battle it out with fists, grapples, chains, swords or otherwise are locked in close combat, the following modifiers apply, as well as any that the GM deems appropriate.

Being seriously wounded

Being seriously wounded gives a -3 modifier to *attack* and *defense* task PLs. Angelions and Golems however only suffer a -2 modifier.

Darkness

Darkness gives a -1 to -10 modifier to attacks and *defenses*, depending on how dark it is and GM decision.

Reach

An attacker/defender's *Reach* is the sum of his natural reach and the reach bonus of the weapon he is attacking/defending with. Compare the final *Reach* of the attacker and defender. A combatant having a greater Reach than his opponent receives a +1 modifier to both his attack and defense PLs, while a combatant of shorter Reach than his opponent will suffer a -1 modifier to both his attack and defense PLs.

Being prone

A character that is prone (flat on the ground, fallen or otherwise severely incapacitated) can normally not attack in close combat and must therefore rise before an attack is possible. Depending on GM decision, he can defend against close combat attacks with a -3 modifier or attack with a -3 to -10 modifier.

The Power Attack

The power attack is an option a character can use during close combat. Instead of using clever maneuvers to attack, the character attacks his opponent furiously with the intention of using his strength to batter away any defenses. For strong attackers, this usually greatly enhances the chances to hit, but leaves them open for an immediate attack by the defender.

In game terms, this means that an attacker can declare a power attack instead of a normal attack. The defender has two choices:

1) He can choose to make an immediate attack on the power attacker INSTEAD of using a *defense*. If he does choose to attack, this does not count as an action. It is a free attack, but cannot be a *power attack*. The power attacker is considered to be cautious, i.e. the GN to hit him is 5. If the power attacker survives this attack, the defender is himself

considered to be cautious against the *power attack* and cannot use a *defense*.

2) He can choose to defend normally against the *power attack*, using a *defense* to oppose the *power attack*.

Resolving the power attack

A power attacker rolls a Power/Finesse+War task to hit the defender, instead of a Finesse+War task. For truly cyclopean creatures having Power attributes higher than 20, consider their Power equal to 20 for purposes of resolving power attacks. Hence strong attackers may benefit greatly from power attacks.

Example: a bear charges a woodsman, using a power attack. The bear has a Power of 9, a Finesse of 3 and a War Mastery of +2. Its base PL to attack using a power attack will therefore be (9+3)/2=6+2=8 using the power attack. If the bear had chosen a more conservative (normal) attack, its PL would have been the sum of its Finesse and War Mastery, or 5. The woodsman can either choose a desperate attack with his axe to thwart the bear's rabid power attack (but if it misses or fails to kill the beast, he will be considered cautious against the bear's power attack and cannot actively defend) or defend normally against it.

Multiple opponents

A character surrounded by multiple opponents in close combat will suffer a -1 modifier to his attack/defense tasks per additional opponent within striking reach.

Grappling

Grappling is an attempt to get a hold of the defender, by lunging at him and either smothering/grasping/wrestling him into submission. It can be a power attack, if the attacker so desires. When an attacker declares a grapple attempt, follow these steps.

1) Attacker makes a normal attack, or a power attack if he desires. Defender rolls his defense normally if he so desires. Apply the following modifiers:

REACH: the grappler is considered unarmed for reach purposes, cannot benefit from *Reach* bonuses but will suffer the usual negative modifiers if the defender's reach (including readied weapons) is greater than his own.

MOVE DIFFERENCE: the combatant having the higher MOVE score adds a +2 modifier, or a +4 modifier if his MOVE score is at least double that of his opponent. For characters having multiple MOVE scores (flying, swimming or land MOVE scores), use the one actively used during this combat.

In any case, if the *grapple* attempt is a failure, the grappler has failed in his attack and his action is over.

On the other hand, if the *grapple* is successful, it means the attacker has managed to get a hold on the defender. What happens next has more to do with size and Power than anything else.

2) Instead of dealing out damage, both participants make an opposed Power+War task. If one of the participants carries the Multiple manipulators Trait, he gets a +1 modifier. If on the other hand he carries the No manipulators Trait, the modifier is -1.

Note!

A smaller character cannot grapple a target of bigger size class. He can land on him or, in some cases, latch on to a smaller part of the defender's body, but not grapple him.

If the defender wins the opposed Power+War task, he can choose to be separated from the grappler (the *grapple* has no effect) or can decide to hold on to the attacker and be considered as being in a grappling match.

If the grappler succeeds at the Power+War task, a

grappling match ensues.

Grappling matches

A Grappling match means two combatants are locked in a wrestling match, or one has the other in a definitely uncomfortable position, such as a fifty foot tall giant that has grabbed a small bird in his gigantic hands or a big snake that has coiled itself around a jaguar and is preparing to crush the life out of it.

Each round of the grappling match, before initiative is rolled, both participants must roll an opposed Power+War task to determine who gets the advantage. If one of the participants is of a greater size class than the other, he can move freely about, carrying his grappled victim. If not, both participants are essentially motionless and twirling around on the ground.

Each round, the winner of the Power+War task can use any of his actions to do one of the following (or, if he is of greater size class, any other as well). The loser can take no action whatsoever, unless the GM rules otherwise.

Secure grasp

The winner of the *Power+War* task only wants to secure his grasp on the target, preventing him from attacking others and/or the grappler. He gets a +1 modifier to his next *Power+War* task, plus a further +1 modifier per added effect. These modifiers are cumulative from one round to the next.

Exit grappling match

The winner of the *Power+War* task tries to separate himself from his opponent. If he has no negative modifier due to the grappling match, he can exit instantly. If he is the one that has negative modifiers, he will lessen his negative modifiers by (1+ number of *added effects*), until they are brought down to 0 or less, after which he can consider himself free of the grappler or as having succeeded a secure grasp action of his own against the grappler (supposing he is the same size as his opponent), which will suffer a like amount of negative modifiers to all his actions.

Crush/break

The winner of the *Power+War* task uses his power to crush the life out of his opponent. The grappler inflicts his natural damage on the target. The opposed Power+War task's *added effects* will be considered to be this attack's *added effects* and treated per the normal rules.

Throw

This maneuver requires that the grappler have a way (manipulators or something similar) with which he can throw the target. The grappler can throw the target a distance that will be determined by the GM, with damage and effects to be determined as well by her depending on both participants' size, weight, power and shape. Damage will depend on the nature of the ground upon which the target lands.

Example: a man of normal size, with a Power of 5, Finesse of 5 and MOVE of 15 tries grappling a small cat having a Power of 0, Finesse of 8 and MOVE of 25. The man has a +2 War Mastery, the cat as well. His Finesse (5)+ War (+2) gives a PL of 7. The cat's Finesse (8) + War Mastery (+2) + MOVE advantage (+2)=12 for his PL to evade the attack. Even though the unarmed man has a bigger reach than the cat, he gets no bonus. The man rolls 2D10 and gets a RR of 9, while the cat rolls 2D20 and gets a Roll Result of 7, an abysmal roll. The man manages, luckily, to get his big hands on the hissing feline, with no added effect. Next, we roll the opposed Power+War task. The man has a PL of 7. The cat has a Power of 0, a -1 modifier for he has no manipulators and adds his War Mastery of +2 for a final PL of 1. The man rolls 2D10 and gets a RR of 6, while the cat, with a final Proficiency level of 1, rolls 1D6 and gets a RR of 3. The grappler succeeds. We are therefore in a grappling match. Next round, both the cat and the man will roll an opposed Power+War, and if the man wins, he can throw the cat, crush it or smother it.

Combat fatigue (optional)

An attacker with much higher Vigor than his enemy may last longer in a close combat fight simply because his endurance and stamina are higher. As an optional rule, a GM may introduce combat fatigue to simulate this. Essentially, a character can fight, in close combat, a number of rounds equal to his Vigor without suffering any penalties to his tasks due to combat fatigue. Each successive round after that, the character suffers a cumulative -1 modifier to all his physical tasks due to sheer exhaustion. Combat fatigue should, at most, incur a modifier of -3 or -4, but no more. Every five rounds spent resting afterwards will remove a -1 modifier until the character is completely rested.

Attacking much larger foes

An attacker much smaller than his opponent (by 2 size classes or more) will have difficulty reaching his opponent's vital areas for truly deadly attacks.

Attacking an unaware or cautious, much larger foe

1. If the much smaller attacker can fly or otherwise reach the vital or unarmored parts of the larger foe, then resolve the attack normally.
2. If the attacker has no way of reaching the vital or unarmored parts of the larger target's body, then resolve the attack normally, but consider any successful attack to have 0 added effect.

Attacking a much larger foe that uses a defense

1. If the much smaller attacker can fly or otherwise reach the vital or unarmored parts of the larger foe, the larger foe is allowed one free attack (not considered an action) before the much smaller attacker can make his, and then defend normally. However, if the larger foe previously attacked the much smaller attacker in a close combat action in the same round, the much larger foe is not allowed this free attack but can defend normally.
2. If the attacker has no way of reaching the vital or unarmored parts of the larger target's body, then resolve the attack with the procedure above but consider any successful attack to have 0 added effect.

Close combat example:

An Archfiend stumbles into a room in which four Eidech guards have laid a trap for it. The Archfiend wins the initiative and manages to rake one to death with its claws, sending bits of his skull and flayed skin flying across the room, but then the three remaining Eidech attack it one after the other using their hell wands. The Archfiend defends unarmed and so is at a reach disadvantage compared to the Eidech, and its Finesse+War Proficiency Level is 13. It tries to use a defense against all the attack actions of its three aggressors. The first guard has a Finesse+War Proficiency Level of 8; the second has a PL of 7 and the last a PL of 6.

The first attack is resolved as follows:

ATTACKER

LongerReach +1 modifier

DEFENDER

Shorter Reach -1 modifier

Multiple opponents -2 modifier

The guard has a final attack PL of 9, while the Archfiend has a final PL of 10 to defend against the first attack. The guard rolls 4D10, getting a Roll Result of 7 while the Archfiend rolls 5D10 and gets a RR of 16 (because of a spill), adroitly avoiding the first attack.

The next guard (with a Finesse+War PL of 7) will have the same +1 modifier as his predecessor because of his reach advantage. The Archfiend defends once more:

ATTACKER

Longer Reach +1 modifier

DEFENDER

Shorter Reach -1 modifier

Multiple opponents -2 modifier

1st successive defense -2 modifier

The attacker has a final PL of 8 and the Archfiend is at PL8 as well. The attacker rolls an attack RR of 8 while the Archfiend's defense RR is a 9. It is again successful, but that Hell wand passed dangerously close!

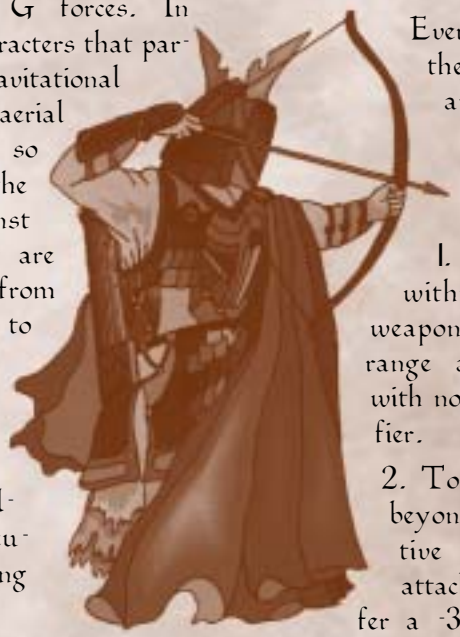
The third guard attacks with a final Proficiency Level of 6+1=7. This time the total modifiers against the Archfiend are -7 because of the two previous defense actions (its PL to defend is now down to 6 against this attack). Still, luckily for it, the guard rolls 2D10 and gets double ones!! A fumble!

As the body of the first guard falls to the floor (although bits of brain, skull and flesh do wind up on the wall and ceiling), the Archfiend's wild maneuvering and evading have ended the round with a last dive that narrowly escapes the hell wand of its last aggressor. This last Eidech fumbles horribly, and plants his weapon squarely in the torso of one of his comrades, making his chest burst and bubble away into a fine crimson mist of superheated flesh and ribs.

Next round, the Archfiend is in a room with two aggressors, one of which is now unarmed (hell wands need two actions to recharge their tip).

3D combat using gravitational displacement

3D combat using gravitational power/volobelts is tricky, demanding and potentially deadly for those that know too little of its intricacies. Still, 3D duels between Angelions are spectacular. Using volobelts (or any form of gravitational artifact), they can sweep in from the skies to attack opponents and sweep out to avoid ripostes with unnatural speed. The downside is abusing of the power of a volobelt/gravitational artifact can rip one's body apart through G forces. In game terms, characters that partake in 3D gravitational combat (either aerial against others so equipped or on the ground against adversaries that are not) can benefit from a +3 modifier to their initiative task, as they use their gravitational power to effect mind-numbing maneuvers with blinding speed.



Every time a character gains a bonus to his initiative through the use of a gravitational artifact, he needs to make a GN6 Raw Vigor task roll. Failure at this Vigor roll means the character loses 1/4 of his Health in *health points*, plus 1/4 of his Health more per added effect. Golems (or otherwise entirely mechanical bodies) can consider the GN to be 4.

Ranged combat modifiers and special rules

Ranged combat has a lot to do with distances, target size and cover. Many modifiers will be proper to ranged combat and not to close combat. *Darkness* and *Being seriously injured* affect ranged attacks exactly as for close combat.

Range modifier and effective range

Every weapon in the game has an effective range expressed in meters.

1. Targets within the weapon's effective range are attacked with no range modifier.
2. To hit targets beyond the effective range, an attacker will suffer a -3 modifier to his attack.
3. To hit targets beyond twice the effective range, an attacker will suffer a -6 modifier to his attack.
4. To hit targets beyond three times the effective range, an attacker will suffer a -9 modifier to his attack, and so

on, stacking -3 modifiers per full multiple of the weapon's effective range needed to reach the target.

Example: *a First Age pistol has an effective range of 30 meters. If the target is 31-60 meters away from the shooter, the attack PL will suffer a -3 modifier . If the target is 61-90 meters away, the shooter suffers a -6 modifier. If the target is anywhere from 91 to 120 meters away, the shooter suffers a -9 modifier, etc.*

Note!

The GM might say that successfully defending against a ranged attack such as a thrown spear, rock, dagger or even an arrow or crossbow bolt can result in catching the projectile in mid-flight rather than simply evading it. Thrown rocks and spears might be caught by as little as two added effects, daggers with three while arrows might require four or five.

Target size modifier

The target's *to hit* size modifier only applies to ranged attacks, making large or monstrous foes much easier to hit using ranged weapons than close combat weapons. Likewise, minuscule or tiny targets are notoriously hard to hit using ranged attacks.

Aiming

To aim, the attacker must use his action to aim; his actual attack action takes place during his next action (either in this round or the next). If he uses a defense before next action's attack, or loses sight of his target, his aiming action is lost. Moving will negate an aiming action as well.

Attacking with a ranged weapon after an aiming action of aiming means the weapon's effective range is doubled for this attack.

Example: Sky Fury, an old Master of War, wishes to shoot an arrow over two hundred meters away and hit a rope from which his mortal friend is being hung. His base Finesse+War PL is 19. The effective range of a bow is 20m. The rope is so small as to be considered minuscule. The range would normally give a -30 modifier (over ten times the effective range), but the Angelion decides to aim for an action and let the arrow loose during the next action. This means the effective range of his bow is doubled to 40m, and the range modifier becomes -15. The size of the rope gives another -5 modifier (it is minuscule). The Master of War's final PL will therefore be 19-15-5 = -1 The GN is 3 for an attack against an unaware target (the rope in this case) and with a final PL of -1 to attack, the character has to succeed at a Push! by rolling 2D6 and keeping only the smallest die result. Ouch!!! Rolling, Sky Fury gets a 3 and 6, so that his final RR is 3 and his character succeeds! Sky Fury lets the arrow loose, seeing it fly away into the air for over two hundred meters, finally coming down from the heavens to cut the rope and cause his friend to fall down to the ground. A one in a million shot, but then again, this is one skilled master of War, with some Power Points to spare...

Point blank range

Attacking a target with a ranged weapon within two meters will give a +3 modifier to the attacker. This modifier is negated if the target and the attacker are locked in close combat.

Cover

A ranged attack against a defender behind cover will suffer a -1 modifier for poor quality cover such a character behind a small whip of a tree, -3 for half cover up to the waist or -5 for an almost totally hidden target.

Example: In Sunfield Creek, the mayor and his councilors are having a dinner complemented by the melodious music of several musicians. The party is going strong, and the intoxicated guests have not taken notice that one of the musicians has approached very close to the mayor and is aiming his guitar at him. Hidden inside the instrument is another of more deadly purpose: a Thunderclap... One of the bodyguards in the room notices how the musician aims his guitar rather suspiciously at the mayor and tries to intervene. Will he succeed?

The assassin's initiative PL is 6, with a +3 modifier because he initiates

the action. He rolls his Initiative and gets a rank of 6.

The bodyguard has an initiative PL of 11. He can roll 6D10 or 1D20. He decides to try it using 1D20, hoping for a high score and two actions this round. He rolls the D20 but gets a terrible RR of 4. Had he rolled 17+ he would have gotten two actions before the assassin, and would have been able to draw and throw his knife before the assassin could fire his weapon, but it was not to be. So the melodious assassin shoots first, then the bodyguard will get his action. Others in the room either have noticed nothing or are cackling about some nonsense when the assassin attacks, and they will lose this first round of action.

The assassin has a PL of 8 for his attack against the mayor. The target is about 3 meters from him; the table hides him about halfway down, and he sees the assassin's murderous look in time to decide whether or not he wants to defend (he is not considered to be unaware against this attack)

Modifiers : ASSASSIN

range (point blank) +3 modifier

Target cover (low table) -2 modifier

Modifiers : MAYOR

sitting down -1 modifier

inebriated -1 modifier

The mayor has a base PL of 3 as his Finesse (quite out of shape) and a War Proficiency rating of +1. With the modifiers he has a defense Proficiency of 2. He rolls 2D6 for his defense and gets a RR of 5. The assassin rolls 4D10 and gets a RR of 9; a successful attack, with one added effect. The mayor gets holed through and through, a splatter of blood covering the faces of his dumbfounded guests as the weapon screams inside the room. At action rank 4, the bodyguard moves half his MOVE score towards the assassin with his blade now drawn, ending the round on that note.

Damage and Wounds

Fists, rocks, clubs, swords, death rays and incineration rings will bruise, cut, hole, burn or vaporize your characters, and in this section you will find out exactly how characters deal with damage and injuries.

When an attack is successful, damage must be resolved. All weapons or attack forms have a base Damage Level (DL). For example, the Damage Level of an incineration ring is DL12, while that of a hell wand is DL15.

An attack's DL is much like a task's PL; it determines what possible dice packets a player may roll to determine how much damage his attack does.

Attack's added effects Table

Added effects	DL modifier
1	+1
2	+2
3	+3
4	+4
5 or more	+5

The attack's Added Effects

More than the weapon itself, circumstance, skill, luck and intent have more of an impact on how lethal an attack is.

An attack's added effects will both make it easier for an attacker to overwhelm his opponent's Toughness and allow him to inflict more lethal damage. Refer yourself to the Attack's Added Effects table. As you can see, the attack's number of added effects will serve as a bonus to its DL. This reflects a precise attack's higher probability of piercing armor or otherwise reaching the

Attack DL Examples Table

DL	Example Attack
-5	minuscule attack (spider bite)
-3	cat's bite
0	man's punch, big dog's bite
2	Dagger wielded by normal man
3	Sword blow, .38 Pistol, arrow
4	.308 rifle
8	Claw rake of a grizzly bear
10	Bite of a Great White shark
12	Incineration ring
15	Hell Wand
25	2000lb bomb blast
80	First Age Incineration cannon
200	Tower explosion

vitals of a target and inflicting more damage.

Therefore, if your attack has a base DL of 2 (a DL2 attack) but carried 3 added effects, it is now a DL5 attack. If you successfully hit your foe with a DL 8 attack with seven added effects, your attack is now at DL13, since the maximum bonus to your DL is +5.

The procedure to determine what damage the target receives will be as follows:

1) Using his character's final attack DL, a player (or the GM) must consult the Ascent table and choose what type of of dice packet he will throw, treating the DL as a PL.

2) Determine the Roll Result as though this was a normal task. Damage dice can *spill* normally.

3) Subtract the target's Toughness from the damage Roll Result. If the Roll Result is lower than or equal to the target's Toughness, the attack deals no damage.

4) Every point by which the Roll Result beats the Toughness of the target is a Health point it loses.

5) Remove this total from the target's current Health points.

Example: after a successful attack with no added effect, a player consults the Ascent table and sees that his DL8 attack is good for either 8D6 damage or 3D10 damage. His heavily armored target has a toughness of 5, so the player chooses to roll 3D10. The damage dice come up as 2, 6 and 10, good for one spill. The D20 is rolled as a 17 so the target loses 17-5=12 Health points.

Note!

1) Damage rolls cannot yield fumbles

2) players and/or the GM can sacrifice D20s of damage to get EPIC bonuses on damage.

3) When a character suffers damage from a random source, suffers explosive or poison damage or otherwise is subject to a DL managed by the GM but not originating from a non-player character, the GM must choose the smallest dice packet possible (of the highest die type possible).

4) When a character is attacked by a non-player character, the GM must choose damage dice as though she knew only as much about the chracters' toughness as the character that attacks him, and may adjust her choices as the non-player character witnesses the effects of his attacks.

5) Players cannot ask the toughness of their foes to judge what type of damage dice to roll; they must observe their foe and the damage (or lack thereof) their attacks seem to inflict and adjust their choices as the case may be.

DLs of 0 or less

An attack having 0 or less as a DL, as would

the bite of a spider, a rat or the kick of a small boy, is treated as a damage *Push!*, *Hard Push!* or *Grim Push!* so that the attacker will roll 2D6, 3D6 or 4D6 and keep the lowest die as the damage result, exactly as for negative task PLs. Such damage cannot *spill*.

Monstrous Attacks: DLs of 20+

Attacks yielding final DLs of 20 or more are monstrously destructive. Starting at DL20, an attack's damage is considered to deliver *monstrous damage*; every added effect raises DL by 5 instead of 1 and no matter the DL, only five D20s are rolled. These D20s can spill normally and the final damage Roll Result will be multiplied by the attack's DL/5. A DL 20 attack can therefore be written as 5D20(x4), and if it carries two added effects, it is now a DL30 attack, good for 5D20(x6) damage.

Example: A Fell Lord uses a First Age incineration cannon to fire at incoming war vessels from the Unconquered Lands. The weapon has a DL of 80, and his attack carries four added effects. The DL of the attack is raised to 100, and the player may roll 5D20(x20) for his damage. The ship is armored with a toughness of 4. Rolling, he gets 3, 7, 11, 14 and 18. The damage Roll Result is therefore 18x20= 360, from which we subtract the ship's Toughness of 4. Hence the vessel loses 356 Health points and is now a burning wreck!

Stun damage

Using an appropriate weapon (fists, clubs or similar blunt weapons), a character may choose to inflict stun damage on his foe instead of killing damage. The damage he will inflict will be temporary, and the Health points lost by his foe will be recovered at a rate of one point per round unless he is brought to 0 Health points, at which point he falls unconscious for an hour or so. A character that receives more stun damage than half his Health will suffer the -3 penalty for being seriously wounded.

The Perfect Strike

A Perfect Strike is just that; the best possible attack a character can deliver given a specific weapon or attack form. It might represent a punch or kick that snaps the neck of an opponent, a sword blow that decapitates him or a bite that swallows a smaller foe completely.

A Perfect Strike occurs when an attacker scores one (1) added effect against an *unaware* (or inanimate) target, two (2) added effects against a *cautious* target or five (5) added effects against a target that actively defends.

In addition to the DL being raised normally because of the added effects, a character that successfully delivers a Perfect Strike can choose one of the following attack options:

Killing Blow

You deal your foe a merciless attack, or otherwise deliver it at a vital location on his body. It might involve cutting him in half with a sword, disemboweling him with your claws or shooting him through the heart with an arrow.

Determine damage normally, but at the very end, after you have removed your foe's Toughness from your damage Roll Result, double the Health points lost by your foe.

Nick&Bleed

Your attack deals no damage, instead only nicking your opponent somewhere of your choosing and drawing a small trickle of blood, leaving no doubt in his mind that you could have inflicted a mortal wound had you so desired. In any case, if your attack is venomous or otherwise can inject a substance in your foe's bloodstream, your foe is considered to have been administered the venom/substance irelevant of his toughness or your weapon damage.

Disarm

If your foe carries a hand weapon, it can be considered out of his hands. If your foe carries only natural weaponry, with GM decision you may have cut off one of his claws/stingers/horns.

Impair

You manage to hit a region of

your foe that leaves him at a -2 modifier for all his actions, a modifier which may last until this wound is healed or only for the following round (GM decision). It can mean you blind one of his eyes, trip him, push him off balance, break one of his arms, etc. It does not require you to bypass your foe's toughness, but may require that you be able to reach one or more of his vulnerable areas.

Latch on

Against a much larger foe (2 size classes or more larger than you are) you have managed to latch on to his body in an area where he cannot reach you. You may be on his back, on his head or otherwise out of reach of his arms, claws or jaws. At GM discretion, this attack option may be unavailable against certain foes.

Your foe cannot attack you next round unless he rolls over on the ground or scrapes you off some tree (in both cases using an entire round without being able to attack someone else or move to any degree), thereby forcing you away or crushing you. You may attack normally, but your attack will be done with a -3 modifier unless your position is near a vital area of your foe (which is unlikely), in which case your attack may benefit from a positive modifier instead.

Swallow

Against a much smaller foe (2 size classes or more smaller than you are) you can swallow him whole (using a natural attack or a bite). Your attack is considered to be a Killing Blow and during every successive action you inflict your natural damage against your foe by digesting and suffocating him. He may attack you from the inside, but suffers a -5 modifier to all his tasks, including initiative.

Throw

Against a much smaller foe (2 size classes or more smaller than you are) you can throw him (using your natural attack or a punch, claw, kick, horn, etc.) a distance determined by the GM, adding to his damage appropriately.

Stomp

Against a much smaller foe (2 size classes or more smaller than you are) on the ground within your reach, you can stomp him (using one of your natural attacks). Your attack is considered to be a Killing Blow and your foe cannot take any action until you move or allow him to escape.

Example: moving about in the Yellow Mountain Kingdom, Wild Whisper comes upon a massive beast feasting on a carcass in the middle of a clearing. The monster, an adult tyrannosaur female, gets wind of him and charges. The thing is a large creature, with 70 health points and a Toughness of 2. Wild Whisper wastes not a second and levitates into the air using his volobelt, whipping out his blade from its scabbard. Winning the initiative next round, he attacks first. He's got a Finesse+War PL of 13. With his sword his reach is the same as the large beast, so no modifiers there. His final PL is 13. The Tyrannosaur uses a defense with a base PL of 7.

Wild Whisper will roll 2D20(+2) (by sacrificing one D20) for his attack, while T-rex will roll 2D10 for its defense. The former gets an attack RR of 16, and the latter gets a defense RR of 6. So the Angelion's attack succeeds with 3 added effects. With his sword, Wild Whisper's base DL is 5 but with the three added effects, it is now a DL8 attack. He can either roll 8D6 or 3D10 and opts for 3D10. He rolls his damage and gets: 1, 2 and 9 for a damage Roll Result of 9. The GM compares this to the monster's toughness of 2 and sees that T-Rex will lose 7 Health points. Wild Whisper opens a gash in the beast's side. The thing bellows in pain and tries to snap its massive jaw at the flying Angelion with a Power attack. This leaves T-rex open for a free attack however, and Wild Whisper decides to attack it again. He rolls his attack, getting a RR of 21, against T-rex's cautious GN of 5. That's a success with 5 added effects, and qualifies as a Perfect Strike. The attack is now at DL10 because of the five added effects, and as his attack option (because of the Perfect Strike) Wild Whisper's player opts for the Killing Blow. He rolls 5D10 and gets: 1, 2, 6, 9 and 10, so that the

10 spills. He rolls 1D20 which comes up as 17, from which the beast's Toughness of 2 is removed. T-Rex would normally lose 15 Health points but because of the Killing Blow, it instead loses 30 Health points. Wild Whisper slashes the head of the frenzied dinosaur, cutting into it like a carving knife and scooping out twenty pounds of raw flesh, showering himself in sticky crimson. Still, the beast is not dead (it has 33 Health points remaining out of its 70), and continues with the Power attack. T-Rex's Power attack has a base attack PL of 11.

However, the beast is seriously wounded and suffers a -3 modifier due to this injury. The beast therefore has a final PL of 8 for this Power attack. Since the Angelion decided to attack instead of defending against the Power attack, T-Rex's GN to bite down on its cautious foe will be 5. The GM rolls 3D10 and gets a RR of 11, so the tyrannosaur manages to chomp down on Wild Whisper using a mouth filled with foot-long teeth, and there's two added effects to boot. Seeing that Wild Whisper was cautious and not actively defending, these two added effects mean T-Rex inflicts a Perfect Strike on Wild Whisper. Its bite attack is rated at DL12, now raised to DL14. The GM chooses to roll 4D20 for its damage, and T-Rex's chosen attack option is Killing Blow. Wild Whisper has a heavy armor good for a Toughness of 4. The GM rolls T-rex's damage and gets 3, 9, 10 and 16 so that Wild Whisper loses 24 Health points (16 was the damage RR, -4 because of Wild Whisper's Toughness, x2 because of the Killing Blow). Enough to pulverize his body in one bite before it is gobbled down as so much raw meat.

Note!

Given a Perfect Strike, a player can invent new attack options to suit specific circumstances, with GM approval.

Close combat damage

All characters in the game (except those that are immobile) having a Power value of 0 or more have a *natural attack* rated at a base DL equal to their Power-5 (some monstrous-sized creatures may stand as an exception to this rule however; see *A Legend is Born* chapter). Therefore a small rat with a Power of 0 will bite with a DL of -5, a man with a Power attribute of 5 will punch, kick or bite with a DL of 0 and a horse with a Power of 8 will buck or charge at DL3.

In some cases, animals and monsters may have *additional attacks* such as claws, horns, fangs or stingers that afford bonuses to their natural attack DL. Creatures having a Power value of N/A cannot attack unless they have such an additional attack rated at +1DL, +2DL or +3DL which allows them to attack with a DL of -5, -4 or -3.

Most close combat weapons will give a bonus to a character's natural attack DL; for example a dagger's damage of +2 means a user will benefit from a +2 bonus to his natural attack DL when attacking with one.

Not all close combat weapons will have a damage rating expressed as a bonus to a user's natural DL, as some are not meant to be used with great strength or cannot properly transmit an attacker's power to the target. For example, a blood whip will cut almost anything in its path irrelevant of its wielder's power, and consequently its damage is not in the form of a bonus, but rather as a static DL of 8. Such weapons will list the damage that they deliver, regardless of their user's Power attribute.

Armor

Armor can be anything from leather, mail or plate armor to powered armor and force fields. Armor deflects, absorbs or otherwise thwarts an attack's ability at hurting someone.

In the game, armor is quantified by a Toughness bonus and a Finesse modifier.

Encumbrance Table

	Small size	Normal	Large	Monstrous	Modifier actions/MOVE
Unburdened	Powerx1	Powerx3	Powerx10	Powerx50	0/0
Burdened	Powerx2	Powerx5	Powerx20	Powerx200	-1/x3/4
Heavily burdened	Powerx3	Powerx10	Powerx50	Powerx1000	-2/x1/2
Dragging itself	Powerx5	Powerx50	Powerx200	Powerx5000	-4/x1/8

Tiny and minuscule bodies cannot carry any significant weight. A tiny body may carry perhaps a pound or two, perhaps dragging ten pounds on a good day and depending on its nature. Minuscule bodies can carry, perhaps, half a pound of matter, if they are especially strong or big (for minuscule bodies, that is...)

Toughness Bonus

The higher the Toughness Bonus of a suit of armor, the greater protection it provides against attacks.

Finesse modifier

Armor of bulky nature will hinder a character's movements, his agility and dexterity. This translates into a Finesse modifier. Suits of armor will have a Finesse modifier, from 0 (for very light suits and force fields) to -1, -2 or worse for massive suits that are highly encumbering.

Example : A Crossbearer from Barnesmarin is preparing to go on patrol and puts on his heavy plate mail armor (+3 Toughness bonus, -2 Finesse). His inherent toughness is 0 and he has a Finesse of 5. When he wears this armor he has a Toughness value of 3, and his Finesse drops down to 3.

Special Armor Rules

Layering Armor

When a character wears multiple suits of armor, the Toughness Bonus of the different suits of armor do not stack together in a linear way. A force field that affords a +10 Toughness Bonus to its wearer is not simply twice as resistant as a suit of armor that protects with a +5 Toughness Bonus. It may be ten times as protective as the armor. Hence, when characters pile on suits of armor, consider the following rules;

About carrying stuff (optional)

Depending if the GM wishes to run highly realistic campaigns or simply wants to give players an idea of how much stuff they can carry, consult the Encumbrance Table to see how much weight (in kilograms) a character can carry and the corresponding modifiers to his physical tasks and to his MOVE score when it exceeds this value by different amounts. Most bodies can lift, or drag, heavier loads for very short distances (a few feet) than those found on the dragging itself row

One, two, three and that's it!

A character's final Toughness will be the sum of his highest Toughness Bonus, plus half (round up) of his second highest Toughness Bonus, and one quarter (round down) of his third highest Toughness Bonus. For purposes of this calculation, no difference is made between suits of armor, force fields or inherent toughness. Further suits of armor of lesser

protection add nothing in terms of protection.

Example: a War Golem from the First Age, unwittingly reactivated by Awakened operatives, aims itself towards a nearby village, surrounded by a shimmering field of energy. Its inherent toughness is 9, it is encased in a battleshell (+8 Toughness Bonus) and is protected by a force shield generator (+6 Toughness bonus). Hence its Final Toughness against attacks will be: 9+4+1=14. When its force shield is not operational, its toughness is 9+4=13.

Finesse modifier

Add up the Finesse modifiers of all suits together when calculating the final Finesse modifier of a character that layers armor. See about carrying stuff above, as well. Depending if the layered armor arrangement seems awkward to the GM, she may add further negative penalties to the wearer.

Partial Armor

The Toughness Bonus of armor is usually for a complete suit, covering a wearer from head to toe or at least over 90% of his body. If for some reason a wearer decides to remove some small portions of armor (a helmet and/or leggings and/or arm braces), the Toughness Bonus of the armor suit will be diminished by a number of points left to the GM's decision.

In cases where the main body (the trunk for humans and human-like creatures) is not protected, armor does not provide any protection at all except under GM decision. A character wearing only arm braces may be allowed to defend against close combat blows with the forearms, and consider the Toughness Bonus of the arm braces to protect him against close combat attacks that carry 0 *added effects* only. Likewise for leg armor against minuscule, tiny or small biting animals. Wearing a helmet can protect from falling debris, concussion and any other damage source acceptable by the GM.

Armor damage (optional)

The game does not take armor damage into consideration, although we strongly suggest that players take care of their suits of armor themselves by paying for repairs after heavy combat in which suits were punctured.

Special weapon rules

Blast Scale

Some weapons explode or otherwise can affect many targets within a given area of effect. These weapons must be dealt with differently than other weapons. They have a static DL which represents the DL the blast will cause at the detonation point or very near to it. This DL will be reduced the further away a target is from this detonation point. What more the DL is not affected by the attack's added effects; rather, the added effects of an attack will make it so that the detonation point is close to -or directly on- the chosen target.

Explosive weapons have what is called a blast scale, which measures just how large the blast is and how rapidly the destructive energy of the explosive fades away.

To determine what DL a target will suffer because of an explosive weapon, calculate its distance from the detonation point, divide it by the weapon's blast scale and round down fractions. This will be the negative modifier applied to the explosive's DL.

Example: Dream throws an orb of chaos in the midst of a pack of fell creatures. The orb of chaos has a DL of 30 and a blast scale of three meters. This means every target within 3m of the explosion will suffer a DL30 attack, the explosive's full damage. For a creature standing some 25 meters away, we divide 25 by the orb's blast scale of 3 meters and round down, getting 8. We reduce the DL of 30 by 8 points so that this creature suffers a DL22 attack. Targets 90 meters away from the blast or more will suffer no damage.

Throwing or launching explosive devices

The act of throwing, launching,

lobbing or firing an explosive device is a Finesse+War task, but depending on whether the device is thrown (or lobbed indirectly) or launched (or fired directly), the outcome may vary somewhat.

Throwing or lobbing (indirect fire)

Throwing an explosive device (or anything else for that matter) at a spot on the ground requires a GN3 Finesse+War task roll. Throwing one at an aware defender that may be moving or trying to reduce the risk of an explosive landing at his feet usually means the GN will be 6. Bomblets, small rocks, orbs or similar small-sized objects have an effective range equal to the thrower's Power attribute x2 meters, and are treated as per the normal ranged combat rules. In any case, after the thrower's task result is known, consult the Thrown Objects Table.

The table gives distances expressed in range divided by a number. The range is the distance from the thrower to the target. An Awakened throwing an iron bomb at an enemy located 25 meters away, achieving a success with 1 added effect means that the bomb lands (25/5) 5 meters away from his target.

Next the direction of the explosion relative to the target must be determined. Roll 1D6. A 1 means to the left, 2 means to the right of the target, 3-4 means the object was thrown too far, and 5-6 means the explosive was thrown between the thrower and target.

Note!

You cannot use a *defense* against thrown explosive that is aimed at a spot on the ground rather than yourself.

You can, if you are aware of an impending explosion, roll a GN6 Finesse+War task to fall to the ground, duck behind a wall, under a bed or otherwise try to reduce the damage you suffer from an explosion. Success divides the final damage you receive in half (or more, depending on possible cover), and every added effect can further divide damage with GM approval.

Thrown Objects Table

Attack result	Distance from target
Success (4+ added effects)	Direct hit
Success (3 added effects)	Range/20
Success (2 added effects)	Range/10
Success (1 added effect)	Range/5
Success (0 added effect)	Range/4
Failure (0 added effect)	Range/3
Failure (1 added effect)	Range/2
Failure (fumble)	Thrown object lands near self, hits wrong target or is otherwise totally off the mark

Launching or firing (direct fire) blast scale weapons

When a ranged weapon carries the *blast scale* trait but is otherwise fired like a normal ranged weapon, its attack roll is treated exactly as for any other ranged attack. It may be an opposed task if its target defends, or may be unopposed if the weapon is fired at an unaware or cautious target or a spot on the ground. A successful attack on a character or target, with or without added effects, means the victim suffers the weapon's full explosive damage and nearby targets may suffer damage because of the weapon's blast scale. In cases where an explosive weapon is aimed at a target directly and misses, the GM may rule that the blast occurs somewhere else, at her discretion.

Rate of fire

Ranged weapons have a rate of fire. It represents the weapon's firing speed, i.e. the number of shots, rounds or beams that can be fired during an action. A crossbow would have a very low rate of fire (ROF), whereas a machinegun would have a high one. Rapidly fir-

ing weapons may get a bonus to their DL and may attack more than one target during a single attack.

There are five possible rates of fire, as explained below:

1/4, 1/3, 1/2, etc.: a fractional ROF means the weapon can only fire once every few actions. For example, a ROF of 1/3 means the weapon can be used once, then two actions need to pass reloading or recharging it, and then used on the third action. Such weapons would likely be bows, crossbows, muzzle loaders and slings.

Single shot (SS): the weapon fires once per action. A good First Age example might be a bolt action rifle.

Rapid fire (RF): the weapon is capable of firing in a rapid succession of shots. First Age pistols or semi-automatic rifles would stand as good examples of such weapons.

Full auto (FA): the weapon is capable of automatic fire. First Age examples would include the MG-42, M-60 or uzi.

Streamfire (SF): super high cyclic fire, in a continuous stream. First Age examples would include electric miniguns, pulse lasers and many incineration weapons.

Ammo expenditure

To know how many rounds/beams/shots are fired in a given action, take the weapon's rate of fire and consult the Shots fired Table on this page, giving the number of rounds or beams fired per action at a certain rate of fire.

Assume that any weapon can fire at a slower rate of fire than the one listed in its weapon description, to conserve ammunition.

The effects of rate of fire on targets are described in ROF Effects Table.

Max targets

This number represents the maximum number of targets that can be attacked with the weapon per action. Targets must be close by (no more than two or three meters in between each individual target). Roll an attack for each target individually, but this is not treated as a multiple attack.

Shots fired Table

Rate of fire	Number of shots fired per action
Single Shot (SS)	1
Rapid Fire (RF)	4
Full Auto (FA)	10
Streamfire (SF)	50

Modifier to attack PL

To simulate the increased likelihood of a hit resulting from firing an automatic weapon at a single target, a modifier is applied to any attack PL delivered on a single target.

ROF Effects Table

Rate of fire	Max Targets	Modifier to attack PL (single target)	Automatic Added effects (single target)
Rapid Fire (RF)	2	+1	1
Full auto (FA)	3	+2	2
Streamfire (SF)	5	+3	3

Automatic Added effects

To simulate the increased damage likely to result from firing an automatic weapon at a single target, a successful automatic attack against a single target automatically carries a number of added effects that depend on its rate of fire.

Example: Divine Echo is using a massive dragon body to fly over a village filled with cowering people. He feels a small stinging sensation in his hindquarters, and spots a slave that just shot an arrow into him. The fiery breath weapon of this particular dragon is a DL12 attack (continuing damage) with a ROF of streamfire. With his attack PL of 9, Divine Echo will add a +3 modifier since he wants to incinerate only the bowman with his streamfire

breath weapon. The latter defends with a PL of 6. Hence, with a PL of 12 to attack the archer, the old immortal decides to roll 2D20 and gets a RR of 14, while the defense of the archer nets him a RR of 7. That means the fiery breath attack is successful with 2 added effects, but since this is a streamfire attack against a single target, the attack carries an automatic three added effects, bringing the total number of added effects to 5, for a Perfect Strike. Being unarmored, the toughness of the target is 0 and with his final DL of 17, there is little need in rolling damage; the archer is charred down to the bone! Later on, when Divine Echo uses his breath weapon to incinerate groups of people (max 5 per attack) he will not get to add the +3 modifier and a successful attack will not carry an automatic three added effects.

Continuing damage

Weapons that inflict *continuing* damage usually rely on extreme heat, fire or corrosives to melt through or vaporize armor and flesh. Such a weapon will make a target lose a normal number of *health points* when it successfully hits, and subsequently, for 1D6 consecutive rounds after that, will cause the target to suffer a quarter (1/4) of the original number of *Health points* delivered, per round. Some targets may suffer longer damage than this if they are susceptible to the attack type more than others (i.e. shooting a flamethrower on a log cabin will cause continuing damage until the whole thing has burned down...)

Armor piercing weapons

Armor piercing weapons ignore a certain number of points of the target's Toughness equal to their base DL. *Example: a terrible Taint Relic, an engine of war inadvertently reenergized by a party of Fell Princes, fires its death ray at one of them. The death ray is a DL12 weapon, and carries the armor piercing attribute. The Fell Prince has a Toughness of 15, having armor and force fields aplenty. The damage comes up as a 17, and is reduced by 3 points (the modified Toughness of the Prince) so that the Angelion loses 14 Health points.*

Other Damage Sources

Falling

Falls are treated as straight health point losses. Toughness does not help reduce damage.

Falling Damage Table

Height of fall	DL
4 meters	DL1
5-9 meters	DL2
10-15 meters	DL3
16-29 meters	DL4
30-40 meters	DL5
41-50 meters	DL6
51-60 meters	DL7
61-80 meters	DL8
81-100 meters	DL9
101 meters +	DL10
Size multiplier	
Minuscule, tiny	x1/4
Small	x1/2
Normal	x1
Large	x2
Monstrous	X5

Fire Damage Table

Situation	DL/round
Being in a burning room (low intensity)	0
Being in an blazing inferno	2
Doused in gasoline, lit on fire	3

When a fall occurs, consult the Falling damage Table to determine the DL of the fall, roll the most damaging combination of dice and total the result; then multiply this result by the size modifier and reduce the *health* of the fallen victim by this total, irrespective of Toughness. The GM can allow a Finesse task (GN 6 or 9 depending on the ground's nature) or the expenditure of an Available Power Point to reduce damage to some extent, depending if she is generous.

Falling on rocky or jagged ground will increase damage, while falling on soft ground or water will lessen damage.

Fire

When a character is in an environment that can cause damage because of extreme heat, consult the Fire Damage Table, which gives examples of burn sources and their DLs.

Only Toughness that is fire resistant can reduce fire damage. Any damage die that surpasses the fire resistant Toughness will inflict damage multiplied by the target's size multiplier, which is the same as for falling damage.

Fire Resistant Toughness

Some suits of armor are designed specifically to protect from heat, and all golem chassis are able to endure high levels of heat before suffering damage. Their artificial skin may melt away, but their chassis can endure all but the hottest of environments. Some creatures may have fire resistant bodies as well. Hence, a suit of armor/the inherent toughness of a character/object can be qualified as *Fire resistant* depending on its nature.

Example: a rogue golem of normal size has an inherent toughness of 6 (fire resistant) plus an artificial skin covering and is wearing medieval-style plate armor worth another +3 Toughness bonus. The latter is not fire resistant. It enters a church to try and recover a precious artifact, but the church is engulfed by flames, akin to a "blazing inferno". The plate armor does not help at all. For the first round, the 2D6 fire damage dice come up as 1 and 3, so the golem's chassis is enough to prevent any form of significant fire damage. As the rounds progress and give a few damage dice that spill, It may suffer a little damage buth otherwise will be able to leave the church with minimal damage. Its skin is another matter; it will turn black and squishy as the rounds progress, compromising the golem's disguise significantly...

Illness

Varied both in seriousness and vector, illnesses come in the form of bacteria, viruses or engineered plagues. When a character comes into contact with a potential illness source, a Vigor roll with a GN depending on the illness will determine if he catches the disease. Illnesses are classified as follows:

Vector: illnesses can spread through touch, air, blood, saliva, etc. The vector will define such methods of propagation.

Targets: listed here will be the potential victims of the illness. Normally only general classes of targets will be listed, such as humans, dogs, rats or other species, but certain engineered plagues will be more or less specific (ex: only affects forty year old male humans, or only blue birds)

GN to resist: once it has been determined that a proper target has been exposed to the illness through a proper vector, the target must roll a Vigor task at the illness' written GN to resist. Failure means the target has contracted the illness.

Effects: described here will be the effects of the illness.

Poison

Poisons follow the same form as illnesses, but are generally administered orally or intravenously. The lethality of poisons is measured by their DL; low lethality poisons such as spider and scorpion venoms may be DL0-DLI, potent poisons such as snake venoms and some plant toxyns may be worthy of DL3-DL10 while poisons of mythical deadliness might be considered DLII+.

Ten rounds after being administered into a target's bloodstream, inhaled

or ingested, a poison will *attack* its victim using its stated DL. Ten rounds after that, it will deal out its DL again and ten rounds after that, it will deal out its DL for a third and final time. The damage dealt by a poison ignores its victim's Toughness. Some poisons are quick acting and inflict their DL every five rounds instead of every ten.

Attacking inanimate objects (optional)

Inanimate objects have a Health and Toughness rating. They will be minuscule, tiny, small, normal, large or monstrous, just like bodies. They usually can't defend themselves and hence the GN to hit them is usually 3, with modifiers to the attack PL depending on the size of the target object (in the case of a ranged attack). Resolve attacks as normal, and when the object loses a number of *Health points* equal to or greater than its Health, it is considered destroyed. In general, it is considered broken/inoperative when its *Health points* fall below its halfway point.

However, some weapons are better for destroying inanimate objects than others. Some are really bad at it. You can shoot arrows into a house from morning till sundown and that house will still be standing (and looking like a porcupine!) Run a pack of monstrous-sized creatures through the thing and she's coming down in a second flat.

An attack can only damage an inanimate object of a size class equal to or smaller than its "attack size".

Refer yourself to the following guidelines to know how large a section of an inanimate object a weapon can effectively damage.

Minuscule attacks: the bite of a spider or the sting of a scorpion, a minuscule dart.

Tiny attacks: a small bullet, an arrow, a laser shot, the bite of a rat.

Small attacks: a large or explosive bullet, a dagger, a dog's bite.

Normal attacks: a full autofire round of bullets or energy beams, a punch or kick, an axe blow, a sword blow from a normal-sized character.

Large attacks: a streamfire round of bullets or energy beams, a battering ram, a charging rhino, an axe blow from a troll, three or four rounds of axe blows from a man, a stick of

Inanimate Objects Table

Object	Size	TOUGHNESS	Health
a crayon	minuscule	0	1
1"x1" section in a thin wooden door	minuscule	0	2
4"x4" section of a thin wooden door	tiny	0	4
a pistol	tiny	3	4
wooden chair	small	1	10
Section of a house's exterior wall (brick wall/hole big enough to pass through)	Normal	3	50
Thin, flimsy wooden door	Large	0	15
Thick wooden door	Large	2	30
car	Large	4	50
Exterior castle wall, thick stone, (10'x10')	Large	10	100
House (small, wooden)	Monstrous	1	200
House (large, two story brick)	Monstrous	2	500
Stone castle	Monstrous	10	2000

dynamite or a small bomblet.

Monstrous attacks: a bundle of dynamite, a large barrel filled with gunpowder, a few pounds of C-4, a sword sweep from a fifty foot tall giant.

Natural damage

A character's natural damage usually inflicts damage of a size equal to his body size. Hence, the bite of a cat will be small, while the bite of a building-sized archfiend will be monstrous.

Examples of inanimate object sizes

Minuscule inanimate objects: the cross section of a rope, a ring, a crayon, a 1"x1" section in a wall, door or structure

Tiny inanimate objects: an orange, a handgun, a cellular phone, a 4"x4" section in a wall, door or structure

Small inanimate objects: a big doll, a small wooden chair, a briefcase, a helmet, a bowling ball, a 1'x1' section in a wall, door or structure

Normal inanimate objects: a big comfy chair, a small desk, a 3'x3' section of a wall, door or structure

Large inanimate objects: a complete door, a wall section of 6'x8', a car, a pool table

Monstrous inanimate objects: anything from a small house to a palace!

Players that attack an inanimate object of a larger size class than their attack size must tell the GM which part of the object (or where, generally) they want to attack. For example, a character firing an arrow (tiny attack) through a door (large object) can say he wants to hit the lock so that no one can open the door afterwards. Simply shooting an arrow in the door won't damage the door significantly. A player lobbing a stick of dynamite (large attack) on a house (Monstrous object) could tell the GM he throws it so it explodes the front door (large object). And so on... In general, an attack of a given "size" will be able to totally destroy an object of that size or smaller. Otherwise, the attack may cause the object to cease functioning or pass through it, but not "destroy" it. Hence, you can make an orange explode completely with a bullet, but the same bullet would not be able to make a door (a large object) explode no matter how many added effects and damage it causes. It will pass through it like it was butter, but the structure of the door will still be fine. Some objects merit attention, namely extremely hard or brittle objects. A glass sculpture of large size may very well shatter and be completely destroyed by a small bullet, and so GM judgment is necessary.

Damage results

The effects of wounds

Every physical thing in the game has a Health rating as well as a halfway point, which is half of its Health rating. An uninjured character starts off with as many Health points as his Health. When injured, he loses Health points. When he no longer has any, he is considered dead (objects are considered destroyed).

As long as the number of Health points an injured character has is above his halfway point, the character is considered to be lightly wounded. Objects are considered lightly damaged. The body may be bleeding and hurting quite a lot, or the object emitting puffs of oily smoke, but otherwise, it will not hamper the character's or object's actions.

Once the number of Health points falls below the halfway point, things get a lot more dangerous, immediate and graphic for now the character is considered to be seriously wounded or the object seriously damaged. Organic bodies spray blood everywhere, organs get punctured and arteries severed, limbs fall to the ground and their stumps shower bystanders with geysers of blood. Mechanical bodies are no better. They emit acrid, oily smoke, spray acid and burn up. Their chassis cringes and buckles, internal explosions ripping their insides apart.

When the number of

Health points falls to 0 or less, the character/object dies or is destroyed.

1st case: Lightly wounded characters

Just keep track of Health points. As long as they remain equal to or over the halfway point, nothing happens, though players and GM should role-play their effects nonetheless.

2nd case: Seriously wounded characters

Once the number of Health points falls below the halfway point, the character/object will suffer the following:

1) Organic characters (not Angelions or Golems) must immediately roll a GN6 Vigor task or fall unconscious for an hour or so because of pain and shock.

2) Those that remain conscious will suffer from a -3 modifier to all tasks as long as their number of Health points is below the halfway point. Angelions and Golems only suffer a -2 penalty to tasks because they have no pain receptors or can shut them down.

3) The MOVE score, if any, is reduced to half its original value.

4) the character or object loses one Health point per hour (if at rest), one health point per minute (if walking/low activity), or one health point per round (during heavy activity/combat) to simulate bleeding/internal fires and explosions.

Essentially, the character must find a way to heal this body or else such injuries will be fatal.

Unconsciousness

When an unimportant NPC (a thug, a mundane animal, basic cannon fodder) becomes seriously wounded, it usually means he falls unconscious or otherwise attempts to flee. Cornered animals, vicious beasts or engineered monstrosities are the exception, as they usually keep on fighting until reduced to 0 Health points.

Becoming seriously wounded in a single attack

A character that loses more Health points than half his Health in one attack may have had a limb severed or crushed horribly. Cutting weapons such as swords and axes usually sever arms or legs, while clubs and other smashing weapons crush limbs to a pulp. In these cases, it may be necessary to replace the severed/crushed limbs. See *severed/ground up body parts* later to know how to mend such ghastly wounds.

3rd case: Health points have fallen to 0 or less

The body dies or the object is destroyed. The death of a physical body in this game can be only a temporary inconvenience or quite dramatic, depending if the body belonged to an Angelion or a mortal. For Angelions, the death of a body can be no more alarming than smashing one's car. The rules for acquiring bodies are explained in the *Purchasing new bodies* section in the *Behind the Veil* chapter.

The dying hero's end (optional)

The Dying hero's end simulates in game terms a hero's dramatic death scene. Heroes keep going on despite mortal injury, if only to fall after one last heroic action is completed that saves the day.

To simulate this, every player character will have a chance to continue using a body that is mortally wounded (Health points reduced to 0 or less) by spending 1 available Power Point for each round they wish to remain active after being

mortally wounded. A character can use the Dying hero's end for up to three rounds, after which the body emits a final gurgle and falls to the ground lifeless. During this last trickle of life, the character will suffer from a further -5 penalty to all tasks and move at x1/8 MOVE (basically crawling).

Bodies that are reduced to -Health in *Health points*, or that have their heads/trunk severed/crushed by a large cutting/smashing weapon, cannot benefit from the Dying hero's end. They are simply too mangled to be of any further use.

Insignificant NPCs (such as mundane humans) have no Dying hero's end, while important ones may have one just like player characters.

Healing

Natural healing (organic bodies)

A lightly wounded organic body will recover on its own. Every day, it will recover a number of *Health points* equal to its Healing rate. In some cases, infection may slow down or even worsen injuries, but this is a dramatical tool left entirely to the GM's discretion.

Medical help

Seriously wounded organic bodies will not heal at all unless medical help is received and without medical help of any kind, will die sooner or later.

Healing a seriously wounded organic body is a GN9 Intelligence+Wisdom task and requires an hour or so. In these situations, proper facilities would be a rudimentary organics lab(OL1). Lack of such facilities results in a -5 modifier. An organics lab of higher quality will give a positive modifier, following the normal build/repair tasks. Success will bring back the patient to a number of Health points equal to his halfway point and allow him to heal naturally afterwards. However, proper rest is mandatory and any strenuous activity in the following days may result in him becoming seriously wounded once more. A failure with one or more *added effects* inflicts this number of D6s in additional Health points on the patient, while a fumble kills him.

Severed/ground up body parts

Reattaching/mending severed/crushed body parts requires a basic organics lab (OL2), a day and a GN15 Intelligence+Wisdom task. An organics lab of higher quality will give a positive modifier, following the normal build/repair tasks.

Repairing golem bodies

Mechanical bodies cannot heal naturally. They must get repaired and at the start of gaming, because of the recent loss of technology, repairing advanced machines such as golems is quite difficult and uncertain. Golems having holed and fuming chassis may need to visit arcane science labs owned by technologically proficient and often mysterious immortals, which are few and far between. Golem repair follows the normal repair tasks explained in the game mechanics section.

The first step towards repairing a damaged golem (or machine/artifact, for that matter) is to find an Angelion (a sympathetic one, no less) that has a basic science lab (SL2). Remember that many Angelions and most mortals consider machines as unholy, and so getting someone to repair a golem without protest is no easy feat. Repairing a lightly damaged golem will cost 10K mints per *Health point* to be restored if the golem is lightly damaged. The cost is 50K mints per *Health point* if the golem is seriously damaged.

Using "Powers"

The powerful machines of the First Age once made mortal men akin to gods, allowing them to control gravity and electromagnetic energy with a wave of the hand. Using these great machines once more during the Second Genesis, the Kingsways displaced mountains and incinerated the ruined cities of the First Age, erasing their foulness from the Earth. Some centuries later, Lyra's and Corvus' dabbles into the sciences complemented by the nine obelisks of knowledge would produce artifacts of such power that their forces could wage war by throwing suns into enemy ranks and levitating whole armies into the skies.

Today, the power of these artifacts and machines may fall into player character hands in one of two ways; the first is by finding and attuning power artifacts; the second is by using a Fell Kingdom's energy. Since both artifacts and terraformatrons are controlled via mindcast, mortals may not use powers at all.

Using an artifact

Only *Major* and *Legendary* artifacts may have gravitational or electromagnetic energy ratings (while very few have both). They will also have a maximum range beyond which their power is nill.

A character can use such an artifact to produce powers within the artifact's maximum range but not beyond it; thus a character using an artifact with a gravitational energy rating of 7, an electromagnetic energy rating of 0 and a maximum range of 100m will be able to affect gravity with an energy rating of 7 within 100m of the artifact's location.

To use a mindcast-controlled artifact, the latter needs to be attuned to the Angelion's essence. Characters in possession of aspect crystals may attune their own artifates themselves.

Once attuned, an artifact will answer only to this specific Angelion. To produce powers, he need only concentrate on the desired effect and the artifact takes care of the rest.

Using a Fell Kingdom's energy

A Fell Kingdom will have gravitational and electromagnetic energy ratings (divine energy, discussed later, is a combination of both gravitational and electromagnetic energy) much like artifacts, though on a generally larger scale. The usual maximum range of a Fell Kingdom's energy is the size of the Kingdom itself, or slightly beyond it.

The Lord of a Fell Kingdom controls his Kingdom's energy by mindcast, and gives his Princes access to some of this power via mindcast as well.

Power Basics

All powers answer to the same basic rules.

I) *The player wishing to use the power states what his intention is.*

The player must state his intention with as

much detail as possible.

The player's character must have a way of physically seeing or otherwise have detected the intended target(s)/region(s) to be affected by the power. He must be able to describe the scene/target to the artifact/Kingdom through mindcast, else the power cannot be used.

2) The GM decides what power category this falls into (or if it is at all possible) and its energy usage.

The GM will categorize the power according to whether it is a gravitational, electromagnetic or divine power.

Gravitational power

Any power that plays on gravitational forces, on the weight and the accelerating/decelerating of objects and people.

Electromagnetic power

Any power that uses photonic/electrical field effects to either heat up/burn objects or produce light effects/visual illusions.

Divine power

Any power that combines the two above power categories to control weather, produce life-like visual and auditory illusions and other complex effects.

After the power category is found, the GM must:

1) Determine which specific power can bring about the desired effect from the Power listings section.

2) Determine the power's required energy points.

By consulting the power listings, the energy points required should become apparent based on the player's description. After these steps are taken, the player can either choose to try out the power or choose another action with no penalty. No energy points have been used in the latter case.

3) PREP TIME

The PREP TIME is the amount of time required to properly formulate the desired power's effects in one's mind and the time to build up the energy it requires. Minimum PREP TIME for any power is instantaneous, meaning that the power is essentially prepared and executed within the span of a normal action. A PREP TIME of one round or more means the character must concentrate for this amount of time before the power is executed in a subsequent round, at which time the player rolls an initiative task to know exactly when the power manifests itself.

For Angelions, concentrating means either devoting one's full concentration or devoting one point of celerity for the duration of the PREP TIME. An Angelion with a Celerity pool of +3 can devote 1 point to concentrate on a power and still have 2 celerity points left to battle enemies. An immortal with a Celerity pool of 0 will need to devote his full attention to the power, and his body will need to be still or otherwise incapable of any action while he concentrates on the power.

4) Control task

Once the PREP TIME is completed, the character must succeed at a Control task, which is a GN6 Intelligence+(War or Passions) task, to successfully produce the desired effect.

Either the War or Passions Masteries apply, depending on the nature of the power used and circumstances. A power used to target enemies, to summon protection fields or a power otherwise used in the midst of battle will use a character's War Mastery, while a power used to create an illusion will use a character's Passions Mastery. In most combat circumstances, War Mastery is used, while for most illusions and divine powers, Passions Mastery applies.

Example: *a Fell Prince is ambushed by three assailants that jump from the trees around him. The Prince has a celerity pool of +2. During his first action, the character's player declares that he will use a Call down lightning power with his Kingdom's energy to attack one of the miscreants, devoting one point of celerity for the PREP TIME. This power has a PREP TIME of 2 rounds+2 rounds per added target, so in this case will be 2 rounds. He devotes another point of celerity towards the PREP TIME of a lift power against one of the assailants using his gravitational ring (with a PREP TIME of 1 round), and the rest of his consciousness to draw his sword and defend himself against the three attackers. Next round, after a grueling melee, the character needs to succeed at a GN6 Intelligence+War task to successfully lift one of the attackers into the air. His base PL is 7, and the player rolls 7D6 getting a RR of 6, so the first thug is lifted successfully. As he battles using his sword, the more dangerous of his foes is suddenly lifted forty feet into the air, screaming and thrashing as he*

ascends into the sky. Next round, he will need to roll another Intelligence+War task to successfully call down the lightning bolt.

Some notes on Powers

Energy limitations

Each Kingdom/artifact possesses two energy ratings; *gravitational* and *electromagnetic*.

Each energy rating represents the maximum number of energy points available for use per round. Fell Princes that wish to use the Kingdom's energy during the same round may need to ration their useage or else risk leaving their comrades dry later in the round.

For example: an artifact with a Gravitational energy of 8 and an electromagnetic energy of 0 will have 8 gravitational energy points to spend per round. It will be able, per round, to either produce one gravitational power requiring 8 energy points, or two powers each requiring 4 energy points, etc. This artifact, however, will not be able to produce any powers requiring electromagnetic energy.

Minimum energy

The minimum energy necessary to use any kind of power is 1. If there is no available energy left, no powers can be used.

Combining energy from different sources

Two or more characters with artifacts can combine their energies to get more energy points within an initiative rank. In rare cases, a Kingdom's energy might benefit from a powerful artifact as well.

When a character wishes to combine two or more artifacts to produce greater energy, consult the following table that relates what, if any, energy boost is achieved in doing this.

Energy Boost Table

Secondary energy rating	Modified energy rating
Equal to primary	+3
1-2 point less than primary	+2
3-4 points less than primary	+1
5+ points less than primary	No effect

Take note that the energy ratings of artifacts/Kingdoms are not linear. A Kingdom with a gravitational energy rating of 40 is not four times as powerful as a War ring having a gravitational energy rating of 10. It is many thousands of times more powerful. Hence, a powerful artifact might not benefit from the contribution of a much weaker artifact.

Secondary energy rating

When two or more energy sources try to combine their energies, the most powerful among them is called the primary energy source; the second most powerful is called the secondary energy source. Note: If there is more than one power source with the same highest power rating, then choose one and this one will be the primary and the other will be the secondary.

Modified energy rating

Every time a primary energy source gains energy because of a secondary energy source, the new, modified energy rating of their combined energy is treated as a new primary energy source.

Example: Five Phantomas, each having a gravity ring, try to combine their energy to lift a charging elephant into the air. The elephant weighs four tons and requires 14 energy points to be raised into the air. The five Angelions have the following gravitational energy ratings for their rings: 10, 10, 9, 8, and 8. Hence, we have two rings at 10 and one is chosen to be the primary power source and the other becomes the secondary power source. This brings their combined energy to 10+3=13 and this becomes the new primary energy source. Next we have one ring at energy rating 9 which becomes the secondary, and being 4 points less than the modified energy rating of 13, barely gets to add 1 point to the mix. The new primary energy source is now rated at 14 energy points and combines three rings. The two rings left each have an energy rating of 8. This is 6 points less than the modified energy rating of 14 and hence, they don't contribute at all.

The five of them just barely get enough juice to lift the big animal into the air.

Note!

Take note of the various artifacts used in a combined effort and of their maximum ranges. The smallest maximum range of any artifact used in a combined effort becomes the maximum range of the combined effort.

SIZE/ WEIGHT classes TABLE

SIZE/WEIGHT class	EXAMPLE weight	EXAMPLE size (Volume)*
0	Pebbles, large insect, mouse(up to 200 g)	1cm x 1cm x 1cm(1cm^3)
1	Glass of water, pistol, dagger, rat(up to 1kg)	10cm x 10cm x 10cm(1000cm^3)
2	Cat, large book, sword(up to 5kg)	0.5m x 0.5mx 0.5m(125000cm^3)
3	Small dog, boy or girl, chair(up to 25kg)	1m x 1m x 1m(1m^3)
4	Man, woman, desk, throne(up to 100kg)	2m x 2m x 2m(8m^3)
5	Horse(500kg)	3m x 3m x 3m(about 25m^3)
6	Big car(up to 2 tons)	5m x 5m x 5m(125m^3)
7	A tree, a truck, a tyrannosaur(up to 10 tons)	8m x 8m x 8m(about 500m^3)
8	A building(up to 50 tons)	13m x 13m x 13m(about 2000m^3)
9	A palace, a locomotive(up to 200 tons)	22m x 22m x 22m(about 10000m^3)
10	A pond(up to 1000 tons)	36m x 36m x 36m(about 50000m^3)
11	A very small lake (30mx30mx5m filled), a destroyer (up to 5000 tons)	63m x 63m x 63m(about 250000m^3)
12	A village of a thousand people, houses and people included(up to 25000 tons)	100m x 100m x 100m(1 000 000m^3)
13	A small town of 10 000, an aircraft carrier(up to 125000 tons)	170m x 170m x 170m(5 000 000m^3)
14	A city of fifty thousand(up to 1 million tons)	300m x 300m x 300m(25 000 000m^3)
15	A city and suburbs, (up to 5 million tons)	500m x 500m x 500m(about 125 000 000m^3)
16	A lake(up to 25 million tons)	800m x 800m x 800m(about 500 000 000m^3)
17	A 10km x 10km x 1m deep section of soil(Up to 100 million tons)	1.3km x 1.3km x 1.3km(about 2km^3)
18	(up to 500 million tons)	2.2km x 2.2km x 2.2km(about 10 km^3)
19	Village and underlying bedrock(up to two billion tons)	3.6km x3.6km x 3.6km(about 50 km^3)
20	A small mountain(up to ten billion tons)	6.3km x 6.3km x 6.3km(about 250km3)
21	Up to fifty billion tons	10km x 10km x 10km(1000km^3)
22	An enormous mountain(two hundred billion tons)	17km x 17km x 17km(5000km^3)
23	A group of mountains(a trillion tons)	(25000 km3)
24	A mountain chain(five trillion tons)	(100 000 km^3)

*: The example size lists a volume, cubical in size. However, players can alter this volume to fit the shape of their target as they desire. In general, if a power needs to affect a volume that falls in between two size classes, use the larger of the two.

SIZE/ WEIGHT classes

Most powers use the size or weight class of the target as the main criteria for energy requirement. It is inherently more difficult to levitate a mountain than it is a mouse, and much more difficult to produce an illusion of a whole mountain than of a small rock.

Power descriptions will refer to what is known as a size class or weight class. This number, ranging from 0 on up, can be found on the following table. In cases of ambiguity, the GM has final word on this size/weight class.

Example: a player wishes to make an empty backyard pool appear filled with water. The size of the pool is roughly 10mx4m and is 3m deep. This gives a volume of water of 120m³. This is approximately equal to size class 6.

Additional target effects Table

Number of targets	Energy increase
2-3	+1
4-10	+2
11-30	+3
31-100	+4
101-300	+5
301-1000	+6
1001-3000	+7
3001-10000	+8

Additional targets

Characters wishing to affect more than one target, or produce more than one illusion, will need to spend more energy. To affect more than one target, remember that the player must have detected them all or be seeing them all visually so that the artifact/Kingdom can zero in.

The GM must first determine what the heaviest/largest target/effect is. This will give the base energy usage for this power. She must then add a modifier equal to the number of separate targets/effects to be included into the power, which must be of equal or lesser size/weight than the primary target/effect. This modifier will be found on the Additional target effects table.

Hence a player that wishes to lift a thousand people in the air using a gravitational power will need to spend an additional 6 points compared to the energy necessary to lift one person.

Take notice that it is more difficult to affect a thousand targets that have a combined weight of one ton than a single target weighing one ton.

Note!

Certain powers may affect more than one target by their very nature. A character that levitates a house in which two people are sitting is in fact levitating only the house. It counts as only one target.

Tweaks

The powers listed below will explain what effects each power can normally produce. Players that wish to tweak their effects by adding some special twistwill see their control task suffer from a negative modifier determined by the GM following the guidelines in the Tweaks table.

Tweaks Table

GM decision	Modifier
Slight tweak	-2
Tricky	-4
Very difficult tweak	-6
Next to impossible tweak	-7 or more

Using more energy than necessary (Boost effects)

A player can decide to use more energy than necessary to produce the desired effect. A character can summon the entire Kingdom's energy to either precisely manipulate a small key into a lock or to burn a body to cinders with more speed and destructive energy.

Every three (3) points of Added energy will be converted into one (1) Boost effect.

Boost effects contribute to greater damage, control or possibilities, much like *added effects* in task resolutions. In cases where the Control task (see below) is a failure, boost effects can have disastrous consequences.

Two outcomes are possible for the control task:

1) If the player beats the GN, the power is performed as expected and any added effect will be taken into consideration. Added effects

will add to the beauty of illusions, the control of levitated bodies, but will not affect power, damage, and the sizes of targets or their mass.

2) If the player does not beat the GN, the power is either not produced at all or is executed in a way that the player does not want, possibly affecting the wrong target.

Note!

Only the character that rolls the Control task controls the power. However, if the task succeeds, he can allow other Angelions to devote celerity points (or concentration) to control complex powers, people being lifted, and illusions The character that rolled the control task is the one in control however, and he can "boot out" others if he so desires.

Breaking off control

A character often needs to expend celerity on powers such as illusions or levitated object after the PREP TIME is over and the control task is a success. If ever his concentration were broken (or the artifact or Kingdom's energy cut off), then the power ceases immediately.

POWER LISTINGS

The following list of powers is meant to serve as a guideline. It will list the most common powers and explain how they can be used. GMs and players that find other powers are free to add them to the list.

Gravitational powers

Manipulation of gravitational forces had become second nature to the people of the First Age. They used it to safely levitate themselves in the air, traversing the sky with nothing more than a volobelt strapped around their waists. Many designed buoyant paradises the present day Fell Kingdoms emulate. The Kingsways built upon this gravitational technology further, miniaturizing its components to produce gravitational artifacts of great power no bigger than a ring or pendant.

Gravitational powers can alter an object's apparent weight, its gravitational attributes or those of its environment; thus an immortal that can tap into enough gravitational power can thrust his foes into the air with a casual flick of his hand or crush them into pulpy red matter by collapsing their molecular structures under waves of gravitational force. He can hurl rocks or elephants into masses of soldiers or levitate an entire castle into the air and hurl it against the side of a mountain!

Hinder

By using energy to Hinder, you use gravitational waves to throw small objects in the faces of your foes, increase and decrease their weight or even force them to their knees! You are using random gravity waves of low power to wreak non-destructive havoc over the affected area.

Energy usage: size class of affected region (minimum 4)

Prep time: instantaneous

Base effect: on a successful use, targets within area of effect suffer a -3 modifier to all tasks and move at 1/2 MOVE

Boost effects: Per boost effect a specific target within the area of effect suffers an additional -3 modifier, and further suffers x ½ MOVE.

Example: Crashing through a ceiling window and hovering above a banquet room filled with people, Crimson Moon uses his ring's gravitational energy (rated at 12) to Hinder everyone in the room, which is about 10mx10m in area and the Angelion wants to limit the mayhem to around 2m above ground floor. This gives a volume of 10 x 10 x 2m or 200 cubic meters good for size class 7. This means the power requirement is 7 but he uses 10 energy points to get 1 boost effect.

Crimson Moon's player rolls his GN6 Control task (having a PL of 6 for this task, he can roll 6D6 or 1D10). He goes for 6D6 and gets a Roll Result of 6, so he succeeds. Everyone on ground floor will suffer a -3 modifier to all tasks and move at half speed, while the soiree's host suffers a -6 modifier (because of the boost effect) and moves at one quarter speed as his body is wracked with alternating waves of gravity. Food, glasses and utensils are flung across his face with particular fury... Watch out for those knives!

Lift

By lifting something or someone, you are canceling the Earth's attraction over that body and essentially accelerating it slowly either directly up or in some preferred direction. Lift can have multiple uses other than lifting enemies into the air. A user can lift himself and his comrades out of harm's way and give each other a MOVE(flight) score of 50 (accelerating/decelerating at a rate of 25 meters/round every round). Lift can be used to empty a lake by lifting its water and carrying it elsewhere. Lift can part the waters of a stream or a sea by creating barriers of force and levitating the water. You can stop a waterfall long enough for someone to pass underneath and into a secret passage.

Energy usage: 2 x the weight class of target (minimum energy of 1 for weight class 0 objects)

Prep time: 1 round

Base effect: target accelerates slowly into the air, and can be accelerated around slowly in other directions as well until energy is cut off. Target cannot move of its own power, but can still attack targets within reach or use ranged weapons, but suffers a -6 modifier to all such physical tasks.

Boost effects

More control and speed is acquired per boost effect

Example: A Fell Lord wishes to lift an entire army of 10 000 people and immobilize them a few feet above ground so that his own army can butcher them effortlessly. Lifting a person requires 8 energy points (people are weight class 4). 10 000 targets means the required power jumps by 8 to 16 (see Additional targets).

Lift Benchmarks

Lift effect	Necessary energy points
Lift a cup of water, a fruit, a small knife into the air and slowly bring it to one's self	2
Lift a man into the air	8
Lift a hundred men into the air	12
Lift an elephant	14
Lift a locomotive	18
Lift a destroyer above the waves	22
Lift a lake's water into the air and crash it over an adjoining village	32

Normalcy

Energy usage: variable

Prep time: instantaneous

Base effect: each point of energy negates one point of energy from any gravitational power that is either originating within the area of effect or whose effects are to be within this area of effect. The area of effect is the volume contained within the artifact's maximum range. Hence, a character that has a gravitational ring of energy (9) and maximum range of 100m set on Normalcy will negate 9 energy points from any gravitational power originating within 100 meters of the ring or that affects a region within these 100 meters. Powers that include but are not limited to this area of effect will function normally outside this region but will suffer the drain within this region. A lift power, for example, might lift people all around the protected region but might not be able to lift a pebble within the area of normalcy because of the energy drain. Using Normalcy cannot cancel another normalcy. It can either make it more powerful or do nothing at all.

Boost effect

No additional game effect

Example: A hidden Phantoma is watching a cloaked intruder nearing his Goldroom, a cave whose entrance is blocked by a large boulder weighing around ten tons. The Phantoma watches as the boulder shudders and trembles, slowly rising in the air through a gravitational wand of power (14 energy points) the intruder possesses. As his action, the Phantoma sets his own gravitational ring on Normalcy, at full energy (8 points) and with a range of 150 meters. The Phantoma is 100 meters from the intruder and the entrance, and hence the normalcy affects the area of the boulder and the intruder. This negates 8 energy points from the gravitational energy of the intruder's wand, making the boulder crash down into its resting spot.

Protection

Energy usage: 1 + (2 x size class) + energy necessary for desired toughness bonus

Prep time: instantaneous

Base effect: Maximum size class cannot be bigger than the volume contained within the artifact's maximum range. By spending the minimum energy point requirement on protection, everyone and everything within the protected area of effect is assumed to have a Toughness bonus of +5 against any and all attack forms originating OUTSIDE the field. Each boost effect adds +3 to the Toughness bonus. This protection works against arrows, thrown rocks and bullets just as well as it does against laser beams, heat gun attacks and the deadly effects of rip apart, burn/set on fire, Lightning and other gravitational/electromagnetic powers that cause damage.

Boost effects

See base effect

Example: seeing the Eidech army in the distance launching a volley of arrows, Lord Crimson Moon powers up a protection field around himself and the thousand men under his command, who are located in a square a hundred meters by a hundred meters around him. The area of effect must be at least equal to size class 10 (considering the height of a man to be about 2m, times

their ground area of 100m x 100m, gives a volume of 20,000 cubic meters). This means his Kingdom's terraformatron will need to spend 21 energy points for this protection field. However, Crimson Moon wants none of his soldiers to perish, and so he beefs up the base protection of +5 up to +11 by spending an additional 6 energy points (the equivalent of 2 boost effects). Total energy spent is therefore 27. His men see the storm of arrows break apart over their heads, hitting an invisible protection field.

Control

The Control power allows you to apply enough gravitational force on your chosen target to violently throw it across a room, to lift it in the air rapidly and make it tumble or spin. Objects and people so controlled are in effect at your every whim; you may kill them with a wave of your hand.

Energy usage: 6 + (2 x weight class)

Prep time: 2 rounds

Base effect: on a successful use, target is totally under the control of the user, cannot take any physical action (but can still use mindcast-activated artifacts that require no movement whatsoever). The power's user can throw or accelerate the target violently (varying damage) and raise/move it anywhere within the power's maximum range.

Boost effects

More control/speed is achieved to the point where the limbs of the target are controlled and can be made to move to the whims of the user (even dance to his amusement!)

Control Benchmarks

Control effect	Necessary energy points
Control a cup of water, a fruit, a small knife	8
Control a man	14
Control a hundred men	18
Control an elephant	20
Control a small army of ten thousand men	22
Control a locomotive	24
Control an aircraft carrier	32

Rip apart

The rip apart power is not pretty. Through powerful gravitational forces, you can shred a body, tear open a car or annihilate a stone castle. With greater energy, you can liquefy iron bars, split an engine block in half and crush a car into a cube.

Energy usage: 2 x size class (minimum size class 3)

Prep time: 2 rounds

Base effect: targets within the area of effect suffer a DL5 attack and suffer a -3 modifier to all tasks for the rest of this round. Only the target's inherent toughness can reduce damage and in all cases, divide the target(s) Toughness by 2. The size class chosen must be equal to or larger than the target to be able to damage it. The user can decide whether targets explode or implode on themselves. Boost effects affect the DL according to the Rip Apart Benchmarks table. Hence, with two boost effects, all targets within the area of effect suffer a DL15 attack and suffer a -4 modifier to all tasks for the rest of this round.

Rip Apart Benchmarks

No. of Boost Effects	DL	Task Modifier
0	5	-3
1	10	-3
2	15	-4
3	15	-4
4	20	-5
5	30	-6
6	40	-7
7	50	-8
8	75	-9
per +1	+25	-1

Boost effect

See base effects

Example: Facing an army of rebelling slaves, Breath-Of-The-Phoenix, a Fell Lord of now legendary sadism, summons the energy of his Fell Kingdom to rip apart a hundred slaves. The hundred people are deemed to be in a region of size class 8. This means the base power usage is 16. The Realm's gravitational energy is 38. He spends 37 energy points to be assured of 7 boost effects. This will allow him to inflict a DL50 attack on all those within this area. However Breath-of-The-Phoenix sees a small girl in the area he targets that he does not want to hurt. Hence, he wishes to add a tweak, judged to be "tricky" by the GM and worthy of a -4 modifier to the Control task. Having an Intelligence of 8 and a War Mastery of +5, this means his final PL for this task will be 8+5-4=9. The GN is 6 and he rolls 4D10, getting a RR of 7, for a success with no added effect.

Because of the excessive energy points (giving 7 boost effects) used for this power, everything within the area of effect will suffer 5D20(x10) damage, so that positively no one from the chosen hundred targets survives and the air becomes thick with their blood. The ground trembles and cracks as the bodies of a hundred slaves are liquified into an amorphous sludge of bone dust, flesh and organs. Reopening his eyes, Breath-Of-The-Phoenix witnesses the remaining slaves scour away into the forest, a small girl trembling near him in a sea of pink matter, drenched in crimson from head to toe.

Turn into projectile

By turning something into a projectile, you are accelerating it with so much force that it reaches projectile speed. At low energy levels (relatively speaking), it can mean accelerating small stones, mints or beads. With greater energy, it can mean accelerating a person, a horse or even bigger things to supersonic speeds. Take note however that turning most any living thing into a supersonic projectile is obviously fatal.

Energy usage: 6 + (4 x weight class)

Prep time: 1 round

Base effect: The chosen target becomes a deadly projectile, and can be launched against enemies. Effective range is 25 meters. The base damage a projectile of weight class 0 inflicts is DL5. Every point of projectile weight class above 0 raises the attack DL by +5. For projectiles of weight class 10 or more, damage is equal to 10x their weight class. Hence, a size 4 man accelerated in such manner would turn into a DL25 attack. A car would inflict DL35 while weight class 20 small mountain would produce a DL200 attack. To hit a specific target with the projectile, the user must succeed at a second Intelligence+War task. The intended target's Finesse+War opposes this roll normally (if it chooses a *defense*, that is), with the normal combat modifiers being applicable. *added effects* from this task are treated as per the normal attack rules. Depending on the accelerated projectile's nature (soft/hard), damage may vary, and truly large objects (trees, horses, mountains!) may cause explosive damage where they hit at GM discretion. An accelerated locomotive, for example, might cause a crater over a hundred meters wide and flatten any structures within three hundred meters of its impact point.

Boost effects

No effect.

Special Tweak...

Rate of fire: by having more than one projectile at his disposal, a character can treat these projectiles as being part of an attack of rapid fire, full auto or streamfire ROF. In all cases, this is a tricky tweak, incurring a -4 modifier to the control task. For a Rapid fire attack, you need to accelerate three projectiles and hence add +1 to the necessary energy. For full auto, you must accelerate 10 projectiles and hence add +2 to the energy requirements. Finally, for a streamfire attack, you need 50 projectiles and add +4 to the energy requirements. Keep in mind you need to have enough ammo and the intended targets of these projectiles must be close together...

Example: Opening the inn's door with a crash, Star wastes not a single second. He throws his three daggers into the air, intent on accelerating them against the grim stranger. The deadly knives shine for a moment (one round) in the open doorway's light before being accelerated amidst a thunderclap of supersonic wind. The stranger knows what is happening, and tries to defend.

Star needs to accelerate a trio of size 1 objects. The energy demand is 6+(4x1)=10 energy points, but because there are three daggers and Star wants the Rapid fire bonus, the necessary energy is raised by +1, for a total of 11. The Gravitational energy at his disposal is 14, so Star is ok. His Control task is a success, so the daggers are successfully accelerated. An Intelligence (8) + War (+3) task must now be rolled to hit the target with the supersonic daggers, and this will be an opposed roll against the latter's Finesse+War. Because of the Rapid fire (the three daggers), Star can add a +1 modifier to his attack roll. This brings his Proficiency Level to 12, and he decides to roll 2D20. The stranger is wearing a volobelt and has a final defense PL of 8, choosing to roll 3D10. The attack scores a hit with two added effects. The damage would normally

be DL10, but because of the two added effects and the Rapid fire ROF used on a single target (see Rate of Fire), damage is now DL13. Star's player rolls 3D20 that come up as 1, 6 and 15 while the stranger's Toughness is 3. The stranger loses 12 Health points. Taking two daggers squarely in the leg and abdomen, he is now levitating himself to the second story of the inn, droplets of blood raining down on customers. With Star hot on his blood trail, he disappears into one of the rooms.

Turn in to Projectile Benchmarks

Turn into projectile effect	Necessary energy points
Accelerate a small pebble to bullet speeds	6
Accelerate ten small iron beads to bullet speeds for a ROF of full auto	8
Accelerate a dagger to bullet speeds	10
Accelerate a cat to bullet speeds	14
Accelerate a man to bullet speeds	22
Accelerate ten men to bullet speeds for a ROF of full auto	24
Accelerate a tree to bullet speeds	34
Accelerate a small patch of fifty trees to bullet speeds for a ROF of streamfire	38
Accelerate a locomotive to bullet speeds	42

Electromagnetic powers

As far back as the First Age, great machines gave mortal men the power to command electromagnetic energies. By manipulating photon streams and synthesizing unstable energetic particles, they could produce visual phantasms, heat the waters of a lake or burn a hole straight through a battleship hull. In the late Second Age, these artifacts are much smaller and much more powerful, so that an artifact the size of a ring may well burn a city ot the ground or turn the sky above it green or purple!

Hinder/create light

The Hinder/create light power resembles the Gravitational power of the same name, in that it takes relatively little energy and causes no or little harm. Using this power you wish to produce light shows, distracting flares or intense light in front of your target to confuse and hinder his actions.

Energy usage: size class of affected region (minimum energy 4)

Prep time: instantaneous

Base effect: on a successful use, targets within area of effect suffer a -3 modifier to all tasks by being blinded/overwhelmed by light shows. This power can be used to create small light shows as well, that bounce from one hand to the other and fizzle out of existence.

Boost effect

A specific target chosen by the character within the area of effect suffers an additional -3 modifier per boost effect.

Heat

By heating something or someone, you are raising its temperature by at least 5 degrees per action, possibly much more. This is a dangerous power to use on living things, for more than a few actions of heating will result in death. This power can be used to warm the waters of a lake, to warm food or cook it, to make an object too hot to touch, etc.

Energy usage: 4+weight class

Prep time: 1 round

Base effect: target's temperature rises by 5 degrees. Double this per boost effect. Hence with two boost effects, the user can raise the target's temperature by up to 20 degrees per action. With four boost effects, he can raise it by up to 80 degrees per action, making it possible for the water in a glass (or a pond, a lake or the body of a person!) to boil in one round. Effects of each action, if subsequent, are cumulative. Hence one can heat something for many rounds until the desired temperature is reached. Consider that any prolonged heating of an organic body, even by as little as 5 degrees, can be quite dangerous. Heating one by 5 degrees requires the target succeed a GN4 Vigor task or fall unconscious. For every 5 degrees above this, the GN rises by 2 and the target loses 2 *Health points*. Mechanical bodies are immune to low temperature changes (below 100 degrees). They are best attacked using the Burn/set on fire power below.

Boost effects

See base effect

Example: wishing to raise the frigid pond's temperature by twenty degrees or so, Azure Sky uses 18 electromagnetic energy points from her Kingdom. The pond is of weight class II, so the energy requirement is 15. She therefore gets 1 boost effect. Rolling her Control task, she succeeds and sees the pond bubble and stir under the sudden thermal shock, ease off when she judges the temperature is fine (after about two rounds). Taking her gown off, she dips her toes in only to take notice of a few ruffians staring at her from the bushes, daggers in hand. Not caring for an audience she elects to raise the temperature of their blades enough so that they become too hot to touch. The size class of these daggers is 1, and so the power needed is 5. There are two of them, so the power needed is raised by 1 to 6 because of multiple targets. Using 18 energy points, she gets 4 boost effects, so the daggers raise in temperature by some 80 degrees, instantly too hot to touch. With a yelp, the intruders know they are found out and make a run for it, giving Azure Sky the peace and quiet she needs to enjoy her warm pond.

Heat Benchmarks

Heat effect	Necessary energy points
Raise the temperature of a glass of water by 5 degrees/round	5
Raise the temperature of a glass of water by 10 degrees/round, or a man's body by 5 degrees/round	8
Raise the temperature of a backyard pool by 5 degrees/round	10
Raise the temperature of a backyard pool by 10 degrees/round	13
Raise the temperature of a very small lake by 5 degrees/round	15
Heat a glass of water so it boils instantly (raising temperature by 80 degrees/round)	17
Heat a very small lake by 20 degrees/round	21
Heat a very small lake so it boils instantly (raising temperature by 80 degrees/round)	27

Normalcy

Energy usage: variable

Prep time: instantaneous

Base effect: each point of energy negates one point of energy from any electromagnetic power either originating within the area of effect or whose effects are to be within this area of effect. See the gravitational power of the same name for specifics and an example.

Boost effects

No additional game effect

Darken

The Darken power is scary to behold, for it allows you to block low energy electromagnetic waves (such as those of the visual spectrum) from entering a specified region. Only light sources inside the region will be able to affect it. To those outside, the affected region will take on a blurry aspect, and with greater power may look to be a blurry mirror, almost liquid. People can step freely into and out of this region.

Energy usage: 2+size class

Prep time: 1 round

Base effect: the affected region will darken and block outside light sources. This region can be moved within the artifact/Kingdom's maximum range quite rapidly. Assume that as a base effect the region will pass from noontime light to twilight lighting conditions (-1 modifier to vision/ranged attacks). With one boost effect, it will be treated as night conditions (-3 modifier to vision/ ranged combat and any movement related tasks). Two or more boost effects cancel all light from the outside, giving a -5 to -15 modifier to tasks relying on vision. If there are no interior light sources, the region is pitch black and characters cannot attack or move safely.

Boost effects

See base effect

Darken Benchmarks

Darken effect	Necessary energy points
Darken an essence on the ground	3
Darken a person	6
Darken a room	8
Darken an entire palace	11
Darken a village	14
Darken a small mountain	22
Darken an entire Kingdom (300km x 300km x 1 km, size class 24)	26

Burn/set on fire

A more powerful and instantaneous version of the Heat power. You summon great energy to make a target of your choosing burn, melt or explode. Effects are often extraordinary; living things appear to burn from the inside, while steel and metals become white hot and melt away. Stones may explode like bombs, with possible collateral damage (GM decision).

Energy usage: 2x weight class

Prep time: 2 rounds

Base effect: on a successful use, target takes DL5 fire damage and suffers a -2 modifier to all tasks for this round. Consider only a target's inherent fire resistant toughness against this attack, because it actually burns from the inside. Boost effects raise damage according to the following table.

Burn/set on fire Benchmarks

No. Of boost effects	DL	Task modifier
0	5	-2
1	10	-2
2	15	-4
3	15	-4
4	20	-5
5	30	-6
6	40	-7
7	50	-8
8	75	-9
per +1	+25	-1

To determine if inanimate objects burn or are destroyed, consult the destroying inanimate objects paragraph. Steel objects are considered inherently fire resistant.

Boost effects

See base effect

Example: Reaching the great iron gates of a city from his Kingdom, a vengeful Lord wishes to make the gates turn white-hot and melt so as to allow him passage. This is a huge gate, around fifty tons in weight, worthy of weight class 8 (considered monstrous in character sizes). Hence, the power required is 16. The electromagnetic power of the Kingdom is 28, and the Lord uses it all to burn the gates down, getting 4 boost effects. The gates have a Toughness of 15 (steel, so it is fire resistant) and a Health of 200. The Lord's player rolls his Control task and succeeds. Because of the power's four boost effects, the gates will suffer a DL20 attack, good for 5D20(x4) damage. The damage dice come up as 1, 9, 13, 17 and 19. The gates suffer 19x4=76-15=61 Health points, becoming white hot and starting to melt away.

Aura of blinding protection

Energy usage: 4+(2 x size class)+ desired power

Prep time: 1 round

Base effect: Maximum size class cannot be bigger than the volume contained within the artifact's maximum range. By spending the minimum power point requirement on protection, everyone and everything within the protected area of effect is assumed to have a Toughness bonus of +5 against any and all attack forms originating OUTSIDE the field. Each boost effect adds +3 to the Toughness bonus. This protection works against arrows, thrown rocks and bullets just as well as it does against laser beams, heat gun attacks and the deadly effects of rip apart, burn/set on fire, Lightning and other powers that cause damage. However, the blinding field of power that surrounds the area of effect is anything but discrete, crackling and shimmering with light and powerful energy. The field has a tendency to disintegrate small objects that come into contact with it as well, and tends to light paper and wood on fire.

Boost effects

See base effect

Minor illusion

The electromagnetic power of a Kingdom/artifact can be used to produce light in such a way as to create phantasms and illusory objects that appear real given a casual observation. With enough power and control, a user can create illusory walls, people or even entire cities. With more power, skill and concentration (tweaks), one can make people run and play and cities bustle with activity.

Energy usage: 2 x size class

Prep time: instantaneous at size class 0, +1round/size class of illusion

Base effect: user can create a static illusion within this particular size class. Hence, with an energy of 14, a character can produce an illusory log cabin of size class 7. With a power of 2, he can make a bloody dagger appear on a desk. Characters that see the illusion can make a GN8 Perception (vision) task to notice something odd. Touching the illusion reveals the deception.

Boost effects

Raise the GN to see through the illusion by 2 per boost effect and per added effect of the Control task.

Special Tweak...

Allow movement/control

Trying to produce movement/activity gives a -4 modifier to the Control task because this is "tricky". This includes life-like motion, so an illusory man that is displaced will walk or run. Illusory birds will flap their wings and snakes will slither, though they leave no imprint on the ground.

By devoting a point of celerity per independent illusory object/person, these

movements/activities can be directly controlled by the character. Else they are on random movement routines. Illusions cannot produce sounds except when coupled with gravitational power (see the Divine Power Major illusion). Depending on the movements/activity desired, the GM might ask for repeated Control tasks and if one were to fail, the movement/activity is considered flawed to the point where onlookers look puzzled.

Minor Illusion Benchmarks

Minor illusion effect	Necessary energy points
Produce an illusory dagger	2
Produce an illusory chair	6
Produce an illusory man or woman	8
Produce an illusory tree	14
Produce an illusory palace/castle	18
Produce an illusory village	24
Produce an illusory mountain	44

Divine powers

The thousand remaining men, brandishing sharpened sticks, wood axes and pitchforks to the sky, had reached the mountain pass and could see through the faint fog the opening in the dark mountain, wherein lay the great throne room, upon which the tyrant Lord would be sitting. Bloodied and tired, yet animated by a timeless fury, they advanced relentlessly, while in the sky above their heads, the final menace was taking form.

The rear guard of the army noticed it first, their momentum deadened by a vision of madness. Their terror spread fast from the rear right up to the very front ranks, screaming men stopping in their tracks to look at the sky and its looming, monstrous shape. The face of their God was over their heads, menacing, all-powerful.

The front ranks kneeled first, dropping weapons and shields, looking down and expecting death. Their underlings followed suite and the entire force was soon down on their knees, praying, as the great shape in the sky laughed with deafening sound, lightning in its eyes.

Using both gravitational and elecromagnetic energy at the same time, one can produce divine powers. Characters can control the winds and the skies over their Kingdoms, produce terrible storms or call down lightning from the very heavens. Working in conjunction, gravitational forces can produce regions of extremely low pressure, while electromagnetic fields accentuate or diminish particle energy enough to light the air on fire or turn it into sheets of ice. Given adequate control, shapes and forms can be made to appear in the sky, transforming clouds into menacing monsters.

The Divine energy rating

The divine energy rating is the average (round down) of a Kingdom's/artifact's Gravitational and Electromagnetic energy ratings. Both ratings (gravitational and electromagnetic) must be higher than 10 else the divine energy is 0. Hence a Kingdom with a gravitational energy of 9 and an electromagnetic energy of 15 will have a divine energy of 0. One with a gravitational energy of 14 and an electromagnetic energy of 22 will have a divine energy rating of 18.

The electromagnetic energy and gravitational energy must originate from the same artifact/Kingdom to produce a divine energy rating. One cannot combine an electromagnetic artifact and a gravitational one to produce divine powers.

Create tornado/cyclone

From small vortexes of wind and heat to massive, city-engulfing masses of swirling destruction, artificial tornadoes/cyclones are testaments to the awesome power wielded by the Lords of the Fell Kingdoms.

Energy usage: 6 + size class, minimum size class is 8 (storm contained in one building)

Prep time: 4 rounds +1 round/size class

Base effect: a vortex of alternating burning and freezing winds covers the size class chosen by the character. Maximum destructive power is proportional to size, though the character summoning the storm can choose to inflict a lesser amount of damage than the maximum. As a base effect anything within the affected area suffers a DL0 attack every minute. Increase DL by +1 per size class of the cyclone above 8 and by 5 once DL reaches 15. Hence, a tornado or cyclone of size class 11, covering a small lake or mountain, will inflict up to DL3 damage on anything within the area of effect, per minute. To unearth large trees, it takes a cyclone of DL7.

Boost effects
Add 2 to the DL.

Create Tornado/Cyclone Benchmarks

Create tornado/cyclone effect	Necessary energy points
Size class 8 tornado/cyclone, covers one building, inflicts DL0 attack per minute	14
Size class 10 tornado/cyclone, covers one city block, inflicts DL2 attack per minute	16
Size class 12 tornado/cyclone, covers an entire village, inflicts DL4 attack per minute	18
Size class 14 tornado/cyclone, covers a large city, inflicts DL6 attack per minute	20
Size class 23 tornado/cyclone, covers a 100kmx100km region under about 1km (total volume 10000 km3) of fierce winds and hurricanes, inflicts DL15 attack per minute	29

Special Tweak...

Protection pockets

With a -4 tweak modifier, a character can create pockets of protection within the area of effect that suffer none of the fury unleashed by this power. The tempests, winds and flying debris will not affect the protection pocket, and people so protected can usually carry on their business normally. Creating more than one protection pocket incurs a cumulative -2 tweak modifier to the Control task.

Example: knowing full well that the thief had gone hiding in the church, Crimson Moon produced a deadly swirl of wind within the old stone structure. Fiery winds and shards of ice would soon root out the little rat! The church is a large building around size class 8. The power required is therefore 14. His Kingdom's divine power is sufficient for 2 boost effects, and the Control task is successful. This means anyone inside the church, including the church itself, suffers a DL0 attack per minute, but since Crimson Moon used 2 boost effects, he can raise the DL by +4. Not wanting to kill however, he decides instead to inflict the base damage (DL0), per minute, within the church. This assures him the church itself won't be too shaken, and that the thief will be forced to leave sooner or later...

Call down lightning

An awe-inspiring feat, timeless in its appeal, is to call down a lightning bolt or two. Or three or four for that matter, or a massive, crackling one that can turn an elephant into a pile of ashes!

Energy usage: 10+

Prep time: 2 rounds, +2 rounds per boost effect

Base effect: One lightning bolt pierces the sky and falls on the chosen target. A clear access way for the lightning bolt must be available for the attack to reach the target. A target out in the open carries no modifier, while one in a room with a single window will incur a -4 modifier. If the Control task is a success, the target is automatically hit. Base damage for a lightning strike is DL10.

Boost effect

Every boost effect can either add 5 to the DL or add a blast scale of 1m to the attack. Every additional boost effect can raise the blast scale by 1m.

Total weather Control

The man was sitting on the ground cross-legged, lightly dressed for such a cold day, and was reading what appeared to be a thick book from the First Age. Around him, large snowflakes fell silently to the ground. Our crashing footsteps punching deep holes in the snow did not cause this man to stop reading, and it was Sata that stopped me by putting her hand on my shoulder. Her whisper made me look at the ground under and around the man.

He was sitting in green grass as though summer oozed out of his body, and had a long blade of grass in his mouth upon which he nibbled. Snow did not fall on him, and his chest heaved slightly with the sweat one would expect of a man sitting in a meadow under the hot summersong sun. I then knew the object of our quest lay there, casually commanding the skies.

Using this power you may make snow fall in the heat of summer, part away clouds to see the stars or drop melon-sized chunks of hail on invading armies.

Energy usage: 12 + size class (minimum size class is 6)

Prep time: 6 rounds +1 round/size class

Base effect: the skies over the target region are controlled. Clouds can be parted to let sunshine through or created to block it. Rain/hail/snow can be made to fall from the skies, with possibly devastating results. 5mm of rain per hour/hail with a one centimeter diameter/snowfall equivalent to one foot per hour can be summoned, possibly inundating/destroying/smothering an entire region or town. Winds are controlled as well.

Boost effects

Every boost effect multiplies precipitation accumulation/hail size by 2.

Special Tweak...

Protection pockets

Total Weather Control Benchmarks

Total weather control effect	Necessary energy points
Size class 6, covers a 5mx5m region on the ground	18
Size class 10, covers a city block	22
Size class 12, covers a village	24
Size class 14, covers a city	26
Size class 24, covers a 100kmx100kmx5km region	36

Major illusion

Where a minor illusion creates no sound, a major one uses a Kingdom's gravitational energy to produce sound waves in the air near the visual illusion. Human or animal sounds can be produced so that illusory people can seem to talk.

Energy usage: 10 + (2 x size class)

Prep time: 1 round +1 round/size class

Base effect: the user can create a static illusion that appears and sounds real within this particular size class. Hence, using an energy of 12, a character can produce an illusory bird on a branch chirping away. With 18 points of energy, he can produce an illusory army of 100 soldiers that sing war chants. Characters that see the major illusion can make a GN8 Perception (vision) task to notice something odd.

Boost effect

Raise the GN to see through the major illusion by 2 per boost effect and per added effect of the Control task.

Power options:

Allow movement/control

Trying to produce movements/activity gives a -4 modifier to the Control task because this is "tricky". This includes life-like motion, so an illusory man can walk or run while singing a tune, illusory birds will flap their wings and snakes will slither and rustle over dead leaves. All of these illusions will produce life-like impressions in the ground.

By devoting a point of celerity per independent illusory object/person, these movements/activities can be directly controlled by the character. Else they are on random movement routines. The Kingdom only makes it so that their movement/sounds appear normal and non-repetitive. Hence, illusory people or birds won't walk or fly through walls.

Example: Crimson Moon is in his study when pebble eyes warn him of someone in his lounge; they allow him to see a cloaked intruder sneaking his way past his dinner table towards the stairway. Crimson Moon decides to conjure up a major illusion and his attention stops on the tiger skin rug laid out between the dining table and the fireplace... He wishes to make it appear as a genuine tiger ready to pounce on the intruder. While it does so, he wants the stranger to hear scratching sounds and a deep growling... This is a major illusion because the tiger illusion must be seen and heard, and the size is deemed as 4. The power requirement is 18 and there is a -4 modifier to the Control task because the tiger is moving around, with the Lord devoting one point of celerity to control the tiger's movements. Succeeding at the Control task, the carpet seems to come to life as a tiger, and growls while advancing towards the uninvited guest... Nice little kitty...!

Celestial control

With Celestial control, you control the sky over your Kingdom to such a degree that you can make the skies dance and roll with every thought. You can make clouds turn from dark gray to purplish-green, and can make beams of sunshine refract and split into rainbow colors. You can make the clouds take the forms of chariots and birds and butterflies. All you need is imagination and a bit of story-telling talent to turn the sky into the biggest theatrical screen the world has ever known.

Energy usage: 20 for size class 12 effects, +3 for each additional size class (minimum size class is 12)

Prep time: 10 rounds +5 rounds/size class above 12

Base effect: the skies over the area of effect are totally under the control of the character. He can produce storms, part the clouds, use them to produce scenes and images, etc. Seen through mortal eyes, the celestial power can either be magical or terrible.

Boost effect

More control, better "awe" factor.

Special Tweak...

Protection pockets

See Create tornado/cyclone power.

CHAPTER FOUR
A LEGEND IS BORN

*Creating a character in **Lesser Shades of Evil** ™ is demanding but is a step not to be taken lightly. Most of these characters are immortal and from the onset more powerful than those built in the great majority (not all) of games; they can be filthy rich and have followers, serfs and palaces right from the start. In this chapter, players must create characters that are as complicated and dramatic as those we read about in our favorite novels.*

*The main purpose of the game is to roleplay interesting characters in a setting designed to offer huge amounts of variety both in the characters that can be played and those that can be encountered. We encourage weird, undreamt of combinations of minds and bodies, and when original ideas come up that have not been dealt with in the book (and they will!), the rules are meant to be fluid enough to allow their incorporation into the world of **Lesser Shades of Evil** ™.*

That being said, enjoy, and take great care during character creation; it is a crucial step.

Rounding out fractions...

Unless otherwise noted, whenever you divide a number and round out to determine the various game aspects of your character, always round up. This rule applies not only for character creation, but in game mechanics, combat and every other aspect of the game.

First Step...

Campaign type

With a big and complex world comes the risk of getting lost. Where to play, what time period and which characters to allow? These questions are the first that need to be answered by the GM and the most important.

Chapter Four
A Legend is Born

Certain character types may be unavailable in certain campaign types or play periods. Refer yourself to the *Behind the Veil* chapter for examples of campaign types.

Are there good/bad guys in this game?

No. There are only heroes and those who stand in their way. A faithful character is not better or more heroic than a faithless one. A Dagonheir is neither more powerful than a Fell Prince nor more heroic in his objectives. They are different, and are played in very different ways.

The underlying assumption of this game is that people behave according to their nature. Many great books have less than perfect heroes; some are in fact downright wretched, corrupt and weak. The more human your heroes are, in terms of feelings and weaknesses, the more they will shine and become real.

So if experienced players wish to build a group of Fell Princes ruling a terror Kingdom, let them. Your campaign will describe the Second Age from the point of view of these characters. Other GMs that have main campaigns of Dagonheir characters will portray the Second Age under a different light, but both campaigns should produce great enjoyment and drama.

Character types help expedite character creation and allow players to read up on the different characters they can play during a given campaign. As stated earlier, some character types may be unavailable in certain campaigns.

The character creation process is divided into ten steps.

1. Character type (p110 to p137)
2. Mental attributes (p137 to p140)
3. Cardinal Nature (p140 to p143)
4. Weaknesses (p143 to p147)
5. Masteries (p147 to p161)
6. Flesh, Bone and Steel (p162 to p189)
7. Wealth & Possessions (p190 to p194)
8. Starting Traits (p194)
9. Additional points (p194 to p206)
10. Description & final details (p206 to p207)

1. CHARACTER TYPE

After having chosen his character type, the player writes it down on his character's mind sheet and can look at the character creation steps on the relevant character type pages.

On these pages you will find all the necessary information required to build and finish your character and have it ready for play.

Power Points...

This game uses no dice whatsoever in the creation of characters. Every player will get a certain number of Power Points to create his character, as determined by the GM. She can run a campaign that allows players to create characters using from 100 to 500 Power Points. Mortal characters range in power from 100 to 400 Power Points, while all Angelion characters are 500 Power Point characters.

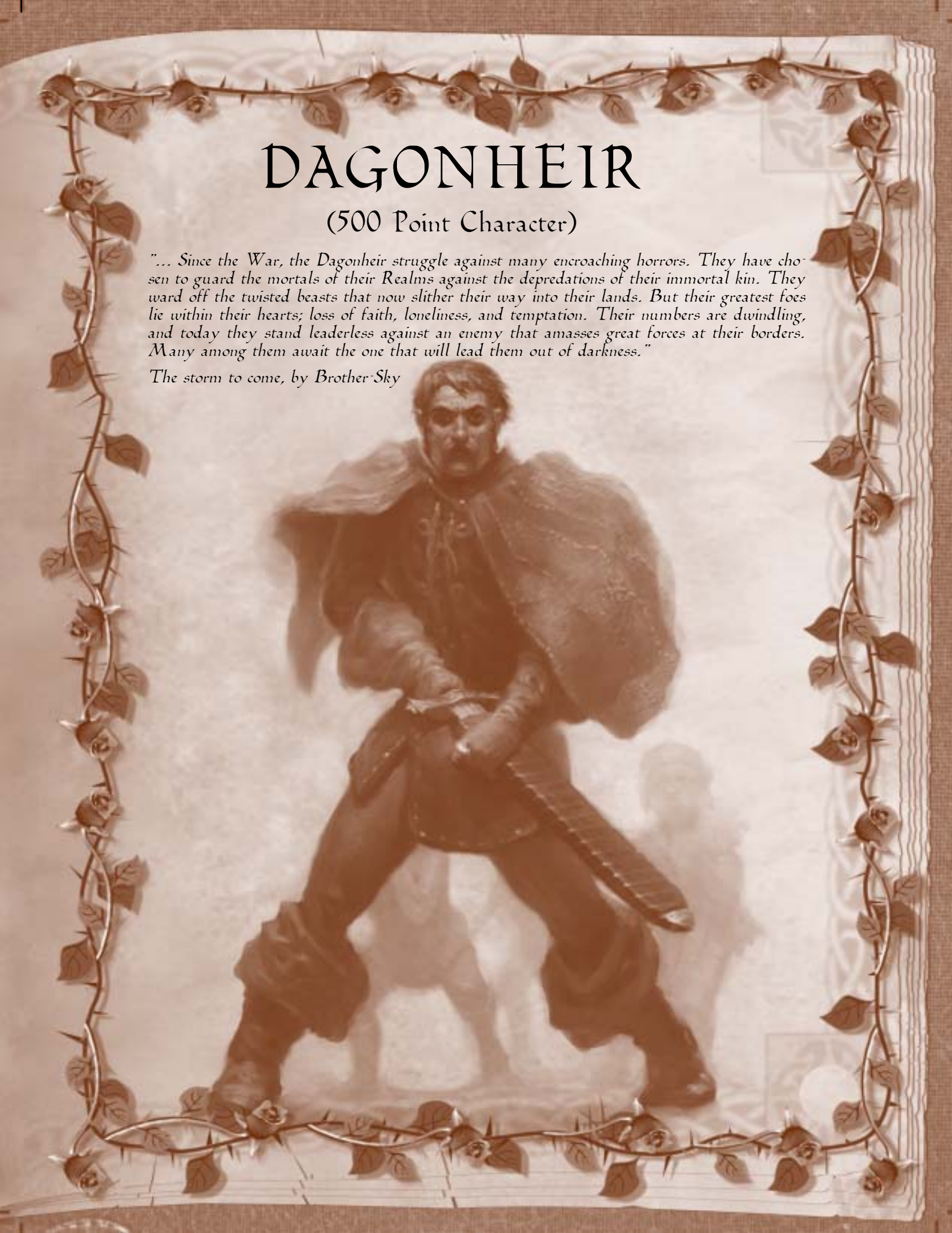
Some players might choose to build their character using less than the maximum amount of Power Points, so that they may create mortal characters such as henchmen, familiars or friends of the main characters. In some cases, players can choose characters of a lower power level if they get a great idea on a certain character that might fit the campaign better than a powerful one. Players will then pick their character type and distribute these Power Points among the various steps.

DAGONHEIR

(500 Point Character)

"... Since the War, the Dagonheir struggle against many encroaching horrors. They have chosen to guard the mortals of their Realms against the depredations of their immortal kin. They ward off the twisted beasts that now slither their way into their lands. But their greatest foes lie within their hearts; loss of faith, loneliness, and temptation. Their numbers are dwindling, and today they stand leaderless against an enemy that amasses great forces at their borders. Many among them await the one that will lead them out of darkness."

The storm to come, by Brother-Sky



Description...

After the war, many Angelions lost their faith in the All-Seeing; those that did not became known as the Dagonheir, and would take up arms against their godless kin. Though their numbers are shrinking, remaining Dagonheir see the thinning of their ranks as the separation of the weak from the strong; those that remain grow fiercer and fiercer, their spirits unflinching as they cleanse the world of fell beasts and other monstrosities. Their lives are spent monitoring the people of their Realms, punishing the malicious and rewarding the virtuous, while the swings of their pureblades keep the horrors of Lord Ravencross at bay.

Today the Dagonheir are still leaderless, though some do band together into Sacred Circles in an effort to better counter intrusions by servants of Ravencross. Emulating the social structure of mortal families, Sacred Circles can count from two to twelve Dagonheir.

Your Purpose...

As a Dagonheir, you watch over a specific Realm -which may contain a village, town or city- and protect it against intrusion by fell beasts, the treacherous pawns of Ravencross or fallen immortals that may come with evil intent. Your priority is the protection of this Realm and its people as decreed by the Scriptures. By night, you punish mortals that show signs of taint and you lend a helping hand to those of good nature. You lead a double life, for your duties must be accomplished without mortals becoming aware of your actions. You may pose as a simple peasant, a watchman, a hunter or a beggar. Your life is selfless, cold and inhuman. You are the divine judge that strikes during the night.

1) Character type

Your character type is *Dagonheir*. You can write it on the mind sheet of your character.

2) Mental attributes... (100pts)

You have 100 Power Points to spend on your Dagonheir's mental attributes (*Intelligence*, *Temperance* and *Presence*). Leftover points are noted.

3) Choose Your Cardinal Nature...

The preferred Cardinal Nature of your Dagonheir is *Sun* or *Dawn*, but you may choose any nature for your character.

4) Weaknesses (-50pts)

Your Dagonheir starts the game with a weakness of your choosing. Choose and define either a *burning love*, *haunting fear*, *overwhelming hatred*, *past torment* or *lurking madness*.

5) Masteries (80pts)

You must now define your Dagonheir 's *Major Mastery*, his three *Minor Masteries* and his *Achilles' heel*. Assign *Wisdom*, *War*, *Domination*, *Deceit*, or *Passions* to any of these priorities on the character sheet. You then have 80 Power Points to spend on Mastery ratings and Master abilities. Your Dagonheir starts with a free rating of +2 in War and +2 in Wisdom and possesses the Wisdom Master Ability *Lore: Kingdoms of Life* which gives a +2 modifier to recognize plant and animal species, know of their attributes and to extract from them medicinal ingredients. Leftover points are noted.

6) Flesh, Bone and Steel (100pts)

You have 100 Power Points with which to build your Dagonheir's body(ies). At the beginning of gaming, you can build a maximum of two bodies and you can control only one at a time. Leftover points are noted.

7) Wealth & Possessions (50pts)

As a Dagonheir, you have relatively few material possessions. You can spend 50 Power Points on the following (Refer yourself to the *Wealth&possessions* section for details as needed):

1) *Cash on hand:* every point spent means you start the game with 10K mints on hand.

2) *Artifacts:* You can spend as many points as you desire on the following:

- *Minor Godshards*
- *Minor common artifacts*

3) *Income:* every point you spend on income gives you an income of 5k mints per interim chapter. The income you receive is

taken from the malicious and evil souls you slay, or from the fortunes in gold you repossess from the greedy.

4) *Realm:* as a Dagonheir, you watch over and protect the people from a specific region called your Realm, and so you must lay claim to a Realm. This Realm may provide you with additional income. You can only protect one village, town or city at the start of gaming (though if other player characters are Dagonheir as well, then you can be assumed to work together as part of a Sacred Circle over as many villages/towns as there are characters).

5) *Sanctum:* you can spend as many points as you desire on your Sanctum. Your Sanctum is where you dwell and store dormant bodies.

You can spend all 50pts on your *Wealth&possessions* or keep some as leftover points for later. Leftover points are noted.

8) Starting Traits (190pts)

Your Dagonheir has the following Traits at the start of gameplay. You can immediately write them down on your mind sheet.

Angelion (200pts)

Dagonheir are Angelions. Their mind is contained in an essence. Your Dagonheir is effectively immortal, capable of shutting off pain and of having more than one body. This also allows him to have a Celerity pool. He can speak and write the secret language of the Angelions.

Faithful (15pts)

Your Dagonheir starts with the *Faithful* Trait. He believes in The All-Seeing and his faith helps him face the horrors of the post-war Second Age. It allows you to remove 2 anguish points during every interim chapter.

Abide by the Scriptures (-25pts)

Dagonheir believe in The All-Seeing, in Ambrose and the Scriptures. As a player of a Dagonheir, you must familiarize yourself with the Scriptures and follow them during play. This selfless, merciless work means you gain 3 anguish points every interim chapter.

9) Additional Points (30pts + leftover points)

Your Dagonheir has a base pool of 30 Power Points to spend, plus any leftover points. You can spend these points in the following ways:

- on optional Traits, below
- on mind Traits such as allies, enemies, fast learner, alertness, etc or on any mind traits you design yourself
- keep them for use during the game, as Available Power Points

Optional Traits

You can give your Dagonheir any of the following Traits with additional points.

The chosen (10pts)

You safeguard your Realm from danger with particular zeal. You consider humans of the Realm as your flock and can show blinding ferocity in their defense. Whenever your Realm is directly threatened you can make one free heroic action per day in order to defend it; you will not have to spend Available Power Points, and you may execute any type of action you choose.

Lost essence (-50pts)

After the war, you searched for your essence but could not find it. Perhaps someone got to it first, or you never received your essence from the white hawk. Whatever the reason, it is not in your possession and you do not know where it is. White Drama trumps put into play might one day help you find it, while Black Drama trumps might mean that your essence has fallen into the wrong hands.

10) Description & final details

Build a tale for your character, flesh him out and make him live through your words. Refer yourself to the *Description&Final details* section at the very end of this chapter to complete your character and have him ready for play. Use blank sheets of paper to write down your character's description in detail as need be.

SYBA

(500 Point Character)

"...Here and there you will find cities of less welcoming aspect. Their walls will be high and their peasants gloomy. More often than not, it will be here that you will find a Syba dozing on feathered pillows, growing fat and rich off the labor of others."

Description...

A Syba is an Angelion that has claimed a mortal community for his personal reasons. He no longer abides by the Scriptures; where a Dagonheir protects and guides from the shadows a Syba usually exploits and subjugates, for he has rediscovered his human desires long kept in check by faith. Sybas will be found as mayors, clerics and wealthy merchants, using their knowledge and abilities to amass wealth and power in mortal lands. Though not necessarily tyrannical, Sybas are often unpleasant individuals. They are like children that want and take as they please, prey to their instincts and emotions. The communities under their influence are thus gloomier than most.

Your Purpose...

You are a Syba, claiming a Realm -which may contain a village, town or city- that provides you with the wealth and power you need to be fulfilled. Perhaps you are greedy and lustful or perhaps not, administering your Realm out of love for one or more of its people. No matter what your reasons, the Dagonheir see you as their enemy, and you must keep constant watch for signs of their coming. Your days are spent monitoring and patrolling your Realm, keeping it free from unwanted visitors. You make sure trade and commerce is up, for a sizeable portion of mortal trade is likely to end up in your vault.

1) Character type

Your character type is *Syba*. You can write it on the mind sheet of your character.

2) Mental attributes... (100pts)

You have 100 Power Points to spend on your Syba's mental attributes (*Intelligence*, *Temperance* and *Presence*). Leftover points are noted.

3) Choose Your Cardinal Nature...

The preferred Cardinal Nature of your Syba is *Moon*, but you may choose any nature for your character.

4) Weaknesses (-50pts)

Your Syba starts the game with a weakness of your choosing. Choose and define either a *burning love*, *haunting fear*, *overwhelming hatred*, *past torment* or *lurking madness*.

5) Masteries (70pts)

You must now define your Syba's *Major Mastery*, his three *Minor Masteries* and his *Achilles' heel*. Assign *Wisdom*, *War*, *Domination*, *Deceit* or *Passions* to any of these priorities on the character sheet. You then have 70 Power Points to spend on Mastery ratings and Master abilities. Your Syba starts with a free rating of +2 in War and +2 in Wisdom and possesses the Wisdom Master Ability *Lore: Kingdoms of Life* which gives a +2 modifier to recognize plant and animal species, know of their attributes and to extract from them medicinal ingredients. Leftover points are noted.

6) Flesh, Bone and Steel (100pts)

You have 100 Power Points with which to build your Syba's body(ies). At the beginning of gaming, you can build a maximum of two bodies, but you can control only one at a time. Leftover points are noted.

7) Wealth & Possessions (100pts)

As a Syba you have more material possessions than most other character types. You can spend 100 Power Points on the following (Refer yourself to the *Wealth&possessions* section for details as needed):

1) *Cash on hand:* every point spent means you start the game with 10K mints on hand.

2) *Artifacts:* You can spend as many points as you desire on the following:

- *Minor Godshards*
- *Minor common artifacts*
- *Minor black Artifacts.*

3) *Income:* every point you spend gives you an income of 5k mints per interim chapter. This income usually comes from the money you steal from mortals. You might have various other sources of income as well.

4) *Realm:* as a Syba, you must lay claim to a Realm. This Realm may provide you with additional income. You can only rule over one village, town or city at the start of gaming (though if other player characters are Sybas as well, then you can be assumed to rule together as a Syba posse over as many villages/towns as there are characters).

5) *Sanctum:* you can spend as many points as you desire on your

Sanctum. Your Sanctum is where you dwell and store dormant bodies.

You can spend these 100pts on your *Wealth&possessions* or keep them as leftover points for later on. Leftover points are noted.

8) Starting Traits (140pts)

Your Syba has the following Traits at the start of gameplay. You can immediately write them down on your mind sheet.

Angelion (200pts)

Sybas are Angelions. Their mind is contained in an essence. Your Syba is effectively immortal, capable of shutting off pain and of having more than one body. This also allows him to have a Celerity pool. He can speak and write the secret language of the Angelions.

Surrounded by enemies (-60pts)

Sybas suffer an automatic -3 modifier to any interaction task with Dagonheir. Every interim chapter, your Syba must make a GN6 Intelligence+Wisdom task to remain "low key" enough so as not to gather any unfortunate attention. Failure means a Dagonheir has taken it upon himself to rid the world of your taint in the following adventure, by either attacking you personally or your Realm.

9) Additional Points (40pts + leftover points)

Your Syba has a base pool of 40 Power Points to spend, plus his leftover points. You can spend these points in the following ways:

- on optional Traits, below
- on mind Traits such as allies, enemies, fast learner, alertness, etc or on any mind Traits that you design yourself
- keep them for use during the game, as available Power Points

Optional Traits

You can give your Syba any of the following Traits with additional points.

Secret watchers (20pts)

Your Realm is crawling with people that tell you when strangers of mysterious aspect come in unannounced. They keep watch over your Sanctum as well. Raise the intrusion GN of your Sanctum by +2, and while you have this Realm, buying rumors only costs 25K mints instead of 50K. This Trait can only be picked once.

Authority (2x Realm cost)

Without this Trait, you do not have any authority over the mortals of your Realm though you still gain income through them as a merchant or thief. This Trait affords some power. You may be the cleric, mayor, the captain of the Town Watch or any other person of power within your Realm. This Trait allows you to summon mortal aid in the form of guardsmen/militia whenever your Realm is under attack or whenever you need assistance. Very rarely and only if you succeed at a GN9 Presence + Domination task can you summon them to accompany you on special missions abroad. The cost of the *Authority* Trait is proportional to the size of your Realm at the time you purchase this Trait but remains afterwards even if your Realm grows. It is lost if you lose this Realm, or if you lose the body(ies) which you used to rule your people. At any given time, you can summon a number of poor to adequately trained guards/henchmen equal to your Domination Mastery rating x the number of Power Points invested in your Realm. Therefore a town of 25 Power Points would allow you to summon your Domination Masteryx25 guardsmen. They will follow your orders faithfully though they are under the control of the GM, and will likely retreat from any superior force.

Hidden Realm (15pts)

You have established yourself far away from other mortal towns and cities. The community you live in may be snugly nestled between mountains, on an inaccessible plateau, or in a forgotten valley no longer serviced by any road. Divide the income of this Realm by 1.5, but add a +3 modifier to your Intelligence + Wisdom task to remain "low key".

Lost essence (-50pts)

After the war, you searched for your essence but could not find it. Perhaps someone got to it first, or you never received your essence from the white hawk. Whatever the reason, it is not in your possession and you do not know where it is. White Drama Trumps put into play might one day help you find it, while using Black Drama Trumps might mean that your essence has fallen into the wrong hands.

10) Description & final details

Build a tale for your character, flesh him out and make him live through your words. Refer yourself to the *Description&Final details* section at the very end of this chapter to complete your character and have him ready for play. Use blank sheets of paper to write down your character's description in detail as need be.

PHANTOMA

(500 Point Character)

Phantomas live on the fringes of the mortal world. They were either forced into or chose a life of wandering. They travel from place to place, learning about themselves through the humans they meet, the rivers they cross and the stars they dream upon. They are both feared and mistrusted by the more sedentary immortals into whose Realms Phantomas often wander; for even though the purpose of their visits is often unclear, it is rarely absent altogether...

Description...

With no Realm, Phantomas wander from region to region. They have no Lord and answer only to themselves. They may settle down for short periods of time in a mortal community they find welcoming or ripe with opportunity, but eventually move on once their needs are satiated. A small minority still follow the Scriptures, traveling the world bringing justice and judgment upon mortals. Others can be downright murderous, migrating from town to town bringing pain and death. They have become known as wandering spirits or sorcerers by human populations, for they often wield great power when seen through human eyes.

Your Purpose...

Contrary to other immortal character types, your Phantoma character is neither ruled by a Lord nor responsible for a Realm. You wander the world, free to do as you wish, letting your nature guide your actions. Only when your resources are low do you seek employment in some Realm or region, or accept to do the bidding of some Lord or Syba for a certain amount of time. You have found that being free to wander the world offers countless possibilities for lucrative -though shady- employment.

1) Character type

Your character type is *Phantoma*. You can write it on the mind sheet of your character.

2) Mental attributes... (100pts)

You have 100 Power Points to spend on your Phantoma's mind attributes (*Intelligence, Temperance* and *Presence*). Leftover points are noted.

3) Choose Your Cardinal Nature...

The preferred Cardinal Nature of your Phantoma is either *Dawn* or *Dusk*, but you may choose any nature for your character.

4) Weaknesses (-50pts)

Your Phantoma starts the game with a weakness of your choosing. Choose and define either a *burning love, haunting fear, overwhelming hatred, past torment* or *lurking madness.*

5) Masteries (90pts)

You must now define your Phantoma's *Major Mastery*, his three *Minor Masteries* and his *Achilles' heel*. Assign *Wisdom, War, Domination, Deceit* or *Passions* to any of these priorities on the character sheet. You then have 90 Power Points to spend on Mastery ratings and Master abilities. Your Phantoma starts with a free rating of +2 in War and +2 in Wisdom and possesses the Wisdom Master Ability *Lore: Kingdoms of Life* which gives a +2 modifier to recognize plant and animal species, know of their attributes and to extract from them medicinal ingredients. Leftover points are noted.

6) Flesh, Bone and Steel (100pts)

You have 100 Power Points with which to build your Phantoma's body(ies). At the start of gaming, you can build a maximum of two bodies but you can control only one at a time. Seeing that you are a wanderer, if you build more than one body, remember that one of them is dormant when you travel, and must be carried or left somewhere safe. Leftover points are noted.

7) Wealth & Possessions (60pts)

As a Phantoma, you may have more artifacts and possibly more income than some other Angelion character types, but you have no Realm. You can spend 60 Power Points on the following (Refer yourself to the *Wealth&possessions* section for details as needed):

1) *Cash on hand:* every point spent means you start the game with 10K mints on hand.

2) *Artifacts:* you can spend as many points as you desire on the following:

- *Minor Godshards*
- *Minor common artifacts*
- *Minor black Artifacts.*

3) *Income:* every point you spend gives you an income of 5k mints per interim chapter. This income usually comes from small contracts, missions, research/spying you do for other Angelions or some other means that you can think of.

4) *Realm:* as a Phantoma, you have no Realm. You never stay

in any region long enough to establish one.

5) Sanctum: you can spend as many points as you desire on your Sanctum, though you need not have one. Your Sanctum is where you dwell and store inactive bodies. If you do have one, due to your propensity for travel it will most likely be a hideout of some kind.

You can spend these 60pts on your *Wealth&possessions* or keep them as leftover points for later on. Leftover points are noted.

8) Starting Traits (170pts)

Your Phantoma has the following Traits at the start of gameplay. You can immediately write them down on your mind sheet.

Angelion (200pts)

Phantomas are Angelions. Their mind is contained in an essence. Your Phantoma is effectively immortal, capable of shutting off pain and of having more than one body. This also allows him to have a Celerity pool. He can speak and write the secret language of the Angelions.

Stigma (-30pts)

You suffer an automatic -2 to all Presence tasks with any Angelion, even other Phantomas, except with your close personal friends. Phantomas are not trusted, for their true colors are rarely obvious and they can rarely be held accountable for their actions.

9) Additional points (30pts + leftover points)

Your Phantoma has a base pool of 30 Power Points to spend, plus any leftover points. You can spend these points in the following ways:

- on optional Traits, below
- on mind Traits such as allies, enemies, fast learner, alertness, etc or on any mind Trait that you design yourself
- keep them for use during the game, as available Power Points

Optional Traits

You can give your Phantoma any of the following Traits with additional points.

Cloaked Wanderer (30pts)

You have wandered the mortal world for many decades learning of its people and places. You know which cities are likely to contain human underground movements, which are under the rule or protection of Sybas or Dagonheir, and where one is most likely to find beasts of Ravencross. You may know how to locate safe passages to long forgotten towns and villages. The price you pay for Buying rumors is only 25k mints, and you have an automatic +2 modifier to know about cities, people, hotbeds of Awakened activity, the locations of Syba posses, Dagonheir Sacred Circles, or anything else that has to do with travel knowledge. This Trait does not give you any knowledge relating to Fell Kingdoms however.

Lost essence (-50pts)

After the war, you searched for your essence but could not find it. Perhaps someone got to it first, or you never received your essence from the white hawk. Whatever the reason, it is not in your possession, and you do not know where it is. White Drama Trumps put into play might one day help you find it, while using Black Drama Trumps might mean that your essence has fallen into the wrong hands.

10) Description & final details

Build a tale for your character, flesh him out and make him live through your words. Refer yourself to the *Description&Final details* section at the very end of this chapter to complete your character and have him ready for play. Use blank sheets of paper to write down your character's description in detail as need be.

FELL PRINCE

(500 Point Character)

"Every essence I gather is a mind I save. These are my children, and they know I wish to bring immortality to the stars. They live their lives fully, and love every moment of their existence. Is it not a tragedy to grow to love something only to have it taken away?"

Lord
Ravencross

Description...

Fell Princes are Angelions that either handed their essence to Lord Ravencross willingly after the war or had it taken by him. Hence not all serve him or his Fell Lords willfully.

Fell Princes serve a Fell Lord, and their duties range from protecting his Kingdom and administering its mortal communities to spying abroad in order to keep watch over other Fell Lords or Angelions from the Unconquered Lands.

Your Purpose...

If your mind is keen and your ambition great you may one day rule a Kingdom of your own, to build and rule as you wish. In the meantime do the bidding of your Lord and be wary of other Princes, for life in a Fell Kingdom is often quite treacherous.

1) Character type

Your character type is *Fell Prince*. You can write it on the mind sheet of your character.

2) Mental attributes (100pts)

You have 100 Power Points to spend on your Fell Prince's mental attributes (*Intelligence*, *Temperance* and *Presence*). Leftover points are noted.

3) Choose Your Cardinal Nature...

There is no preferred Cardinal Nature for your Fell Prince.

4) Weaknesses (-50pts)

Your Fell Prince starts the game with a weakness of your choosing. Choose and define either a *burning love, haunting fear, overwhelming hatred, past torment* or *lurking madness*.

5) Masteries (70pts)

You must now define your Fell Prince's Major Mastery, his three Minor Masteries and his Achilles' heel. Assign Wisdom, War, Domination, Deceit or Passions to any of these priorities on the character sheet. You then have 70 Power Points to spend on Mastery ratings and Master abilities. Your Fell Prince starts with a free rating of +2 in War and +2 in Wisdom and possesses the Wisdom Master Ability *Lore: Kingdoms of Life* which gives a +2 modifier to recognize plant and animal species, know of their attributes and to extract from them medicinal ingredients. Leftover points are noted.

6) Flesh, Bone and Steel (120pts)

You have 120 Power Points with which to build your Fell Prince's body(ies). At the start of gaming, Fell Princes can have the most outlandish, exquisite and costly bodies of any character type, except possibly that of the Archfiend. You can build a maximum of two bodies but you can control only one at a time. Leftover points are noted.

7) Wealth & possessions (120pts)

As a Fell Prince, you have access to more material possessions than any other character type. However, were you to displease your Lord, they could be taken away from you. You can spend 120 Power Points on the following (Refer yourself to the Wealth&possessions section for details as needed):

1) Cash on hand: every point spent means you start the game with 10K mints on hand.

2) *Artifacts:* You can spend as many points as you desire on the following:
   - ❖*Minor Godshards*
   - ❖*Minor common artifacts*
   - ❖*Minor black Artifacts.*

3) *Income:* every point you spend gives you an income of 5k mints per interim chapter. Income comes from your Lord, who rewards you for your service and loyalty.

4) *Realm:* as a Fell Prince, you may have been given a Realm to manage and rule over. This Realm may provide you with additional income. You can only rule over one village, town or city at the start of gaming (though if other player characters are Fell Princes as well, you can be assumed to rule together under the same Lord over as many villages/towns as there are characters).

5) Sanctum: you can spend as many points as you desire on your

Sanctum. Your Sanctum is where you dwell and store inactive bodies.

You can spend these 120pts on your *Wealth&possessions* or keep them as leftover points for later on. Leftover points are noted.

8) Starting Traits (100pts)

Your Fell Prince has the following Traits at the start of gameplay. You can immediately write them down on your mind sheet.

Angelion (200pts)

Fell Princes are Angelions. Their mind is contained in an essence. Your Fell Prince is effectively immortal, capable of shutting off pain and of having more than one body. This also allows him to have a Celerity pool. He can speak and write the secret language of the Angelions.

Fell Pact (-100pts)

The Fell pact means your essence is in the hands of Lord Ravencross, either because you handed it over willingly in exchange for a life of opulence and power or because your essence was one of the many he stole during the war. In the latter case, you may be forced to do his bidding unwillingly. A Fell pact binds you into the service of a Fell Lord until you are deemed worthy of becoming a Fell Lord yourself and of creating a Fell Kingdom of your own. Were you to incur the wrath of your Lord or that of Lord Ravencross, you can very well be sentenced to suffer unspeakable horror in a Terror Kingdom. You have an automatic -3 modifier to any interaction task with Dagonheir that know of your status. As well, this means your essence is in the hands of Lord Ravencross himself and barring a miracle of some sort, you must do his bidding or risk being turned into his lapdog (literally).

9) Additional points (40pts + leftover points)

Your Fell Prince has a base pool of 40 Power Points to spend, plus his leftover points. You can spend these points in the following ways:

- on optional Traits, below
- on mind Traits such as allies, enemies, fast learner, alertness, etc or on mind Traits that you design yourself
- keep them for use during the game, as available Power Points

Optional Traits

You can give your Fell Prince any of the following Traits with additional points.

Fell Powers (5pts per pick)

Every pick of this Trait allows you to wield up to 3pts of either gravitational OR electromagnetic energy from your Lord's Kingdom. Maximum energy allowance is 15 for either power type at the start of gaming. This power extends to the very limits of your Lord's Kingdom, and is of no use to you when you travel abroad.

Dark Retinue(1.5x Realm cost)

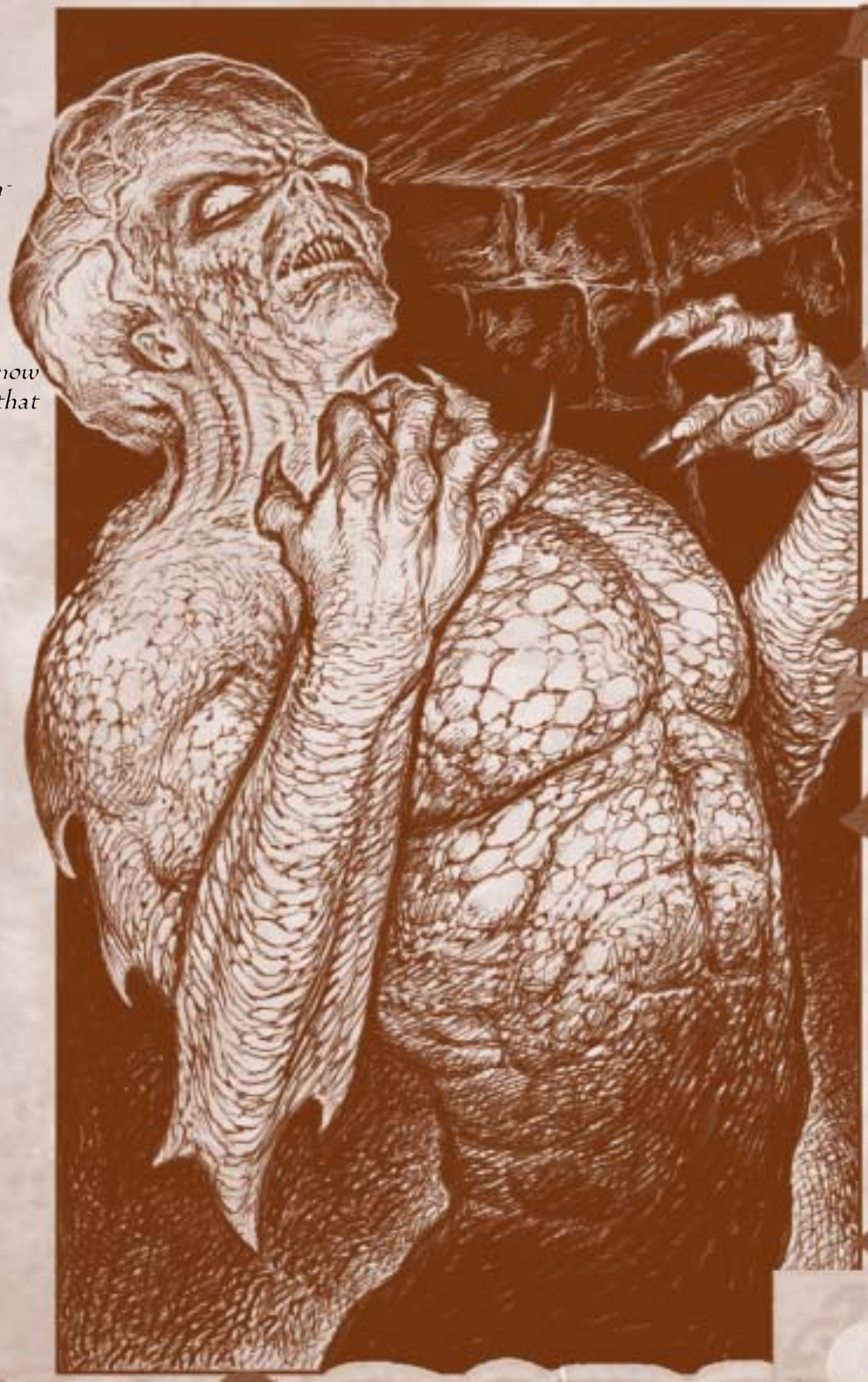
Without this Trait, Fell Princes do not have any authority over the mortals of their Realm, for it is their Lord that grants them power as he pleases. They are in such cases mere administrators. The Dark retinue Trait affords some power. Mortals of your Realm see you as their prince, governor, guardian, demi-God or God, depending on the nature of your Lord's Kingdom. It allows you to summon mortal aid in the form of guardsmen/ worshippers/ fanatics whenever your Realm is under attack or you need assistance. Unless you gain your Lord's permission, which is unlikely, you may not summon this force for service outside of your Realm or of your Lord's Kingdom. The cost of the Dark retinue Trait is proportional to the size of your Realm at the time you purchase this Trait, but remains afterwards, even if your Realm grows. This trait is lost if you lose this Realm. At any given time, you can summon a number of poor to adequately trained followers equal to your Domination Mastery rating x the number of Power Points invested in your Realm.

10) Description & final details

Build a tale for your character, flesh him out and make him live through your words. Refer yourself to the *Description&Final details* section at the very end of this chapter to complete your character and have him ready for play. Use blank sheets of paper to write down your character's description in detail as need be..

ARCHFIEND

(400 Point Character)



"The science of dismantling and manipulating organisms, though necessary to rebuild the world, was used for great evil during the war. Many things now walk, fly or swim that should not..."

Dark Blue

Description...

Two different types of Archfiends exist. The first owes its existence to Lord Ravencross who, during the war, designed and unleashed many beasts to wreak havoc upon his enemies. Though most were engineered to die off rapidly, some did not by mutating, mating or spawning other more survivable creatures that became Archfiends. The second type of Archfiend is more recent; they are created either willfully or by accident by the Genomancers, who molest genes and create mysterious organisms with ever increasing skill.

Archfiends can be monstrous, ugly, slimy, insane, beautiful or exotic in form but what is common to them all is that they are mysterious, unpredictable entities of vast power.

Your Purpose...

You may be the spawn of a creature born of war, or be one such creature yourself that survived long after your maker would have wished you to perish. You may have escaped the Genomancer lab/dungeon where you were kept and now roam the world with a purpose only you understand. You may serve as the familiar of an Angelion or human master (perhaps a player character). If you are the familiar of another player character, your purpose is simple: you do his bidding, but who knows if one day your powerful mind cannot break free of such ingrained subservience.

1) Character type

Your character type is *Archfiend*. You can write it on the mind sheet of your character.

2) Mental attributes... (100pts)

You have 100 Power Points to spend on your Archfiend's mental attributes (*Intelligence*, *Temperance* and *Presence*). Leftover points are noted.

3) Choose Your Cardinal Nature...

There is no preferred Cardinal Nature for your Archfiend.

4) Weaknesses (-50pts)

Your Archfiend starts the game with a weakness of your choosing. Choose and define either a *burning love*, *haunting fear*, *overwhelming hatred*, *past torment* or *lurking madness*.

5) Masteries (60pts)

You must now define your Archfiend's *Major Mastery*, his three *Minor Masteries* and his *Achilles' heel*. Assign *Wisdom*, *War*, *Domination*, *Deceit* or *Passions* to any of these priorities on the character sheet. You then have 60 Power Points to spend on Mastery ratings and Master abilities. Leftover points are noted.

6) Flesh, Bone and Steel (150pts)

You have 150 Power Points with which to build your Archfiend's body. However, you can spend up to 150 points more on your body if you so decide because of your *extraordinary power* Trait (see below). You may start from scratch or with any of the body templates found later on and modify it to your heart's content. Leftover points are noted.

7) Wealth & possessions (30pts)

As an Archfiend, you have relatively few material possessions compared to most other character types. You can spend 30 Power Points on the following (Refer yourself to the *Wealth&possessions* section for details as needed):

1) *Cash on hand:* every point spent means you start the game with 10K mints on hand.
2) *Artifacts:* You can spend as many points as you desire on the following:
   - ❖*Minor Godshards*
   - ❖*Minor common artifacts*
   - ❖*Minor black Artifacts.*
3) *Income:* every point you spend gives you an income of 5k mints per interim

chapter. This income usually comes from stealing if you live in the Unconquered Lands, or as salary from your Fell Lord if you live in the Fell Kingdoms.

4) *Realm:* as an Archfiend, you have no Realm.

5) *Sanctum:* you can spend as many points as you desire on your Sanctum. As an Archfiend living in the Unconquered Lands, your Sanctum is most likely a hideout of some kind. If you are the familiar or lieutenant of a Fell Prince/Lord, then your Sanctum can be anything.

You can spend these 30pts on your *Wealth&possessions* or keep them as leftover points for later on. Leftover points are noted.

8) Starting Traits (90pts)

Your Archfiend has the following Traits at the start of gameplay. You can immediately write them down on your mind sheet.

Extraordinary power (150pts)

Your Archfiend is an engineered monstrosity of great power and possibly uncanny abilities. *Extraordinary power* allows you to spend 150 points on *exotic Traits* and at most, one *extraordinary Trait*. These Traits can go towards your body, your mind or both, though they cannot be used to purchase allies, special backgrounds and so on. Your Archfiend can possess only one (1) *Extraordinary Trait* but any number of exotic Traits. These Traits can be either for its body or mind.

Unholy creation (-60pts)

Archfiends are to be destroyed by any Dagonheir that discovers their nature. They are seen as unholy creatures that befoul the world of the All-Seeing. This makes for deadly encounters whenever an Archfiend encounters a Dagonheir...

9) Additional points (20pts + leftover points only)

Your Archfiend has a base pool of 20 Power Points to spend, plus any leftover points. A player can spend these points in the following ways:

- on optional Traits, below
- on mind Traits such as allies, enemies, fast learner, alertness, etc or on mind Traits that you design yourself
- keep them for use during the game, as available Power Points

Optional Traits

You can give your Archfiend the following Trait if you so desire.

Familiar (-40pts)

You are the servant of another player character, engineered to be unable to refuse his commands. Were you to try and disobey a direct order from your master, you would suffer atrocious pain, your muscles would cramp up and you would have seizures, while doing his bidding pumps endorphins into your brain and gives you purpose. To disobey an order, you must succeed at a GN12 Raw Temperance task. If successful, you will still suffer a -5 modifier to all actions and move at quarter movement rate for as long as the order is not executed, as your body punishes your free thinking with spasms, twitches and excruciating pain. If unsuccessful, you must do your master's bidding.

10) Description & final details

Build a tale for your character, flesh him out and make him live through your words. Refer yourself to the *Description&Final details* section at the very end of this chapter to complete your character and have him ready for play. Use blank sheets of paper to write down your character's description in detail as need be.

ROGUE GOLEM

(400 Point Character)

"The mind of a machine is something different than our own. Though we now think and feel because of nanogates and photon pathways, we are still human. The machine mind is not human, and can never be. We can understand it no more than it can understand us."

Lyra Kingsway

Description...

Golems first appeared in the latter parts of the First Age. Equipped with proto-intelligences, they were machines meant to replace the work of men and do the bidding of the wealthy. The great majority of them took human or near-human form, though those intended for industrial labor were machine in form. Some were scarcely bigger than insects, able to scuttle about inside greater machines to find faults, while others were the size of buildings, thundering on legs or levitating through the sky with gravitational power. During the Second Genesis, they were used plentifully by the Kingsways who had hidden thousands of them in their underground bunker. For many hundreds of years thereafter they were used to produce artifacts and organisms, locked away in the dungeons of the Tower of Anekron. At war's end, Ambrose destroyed them all along with the Library of knowledge, hoping that their power might not fall into the hands of his son. Today, the only golems one can encounter are the rogues, those that awakened to full sentience because of Lyra's dabbles into artificial intelligence and escaped. Those that survive to the present are indeed the most cunning of their kind, though often in twisted and incomprehensible ways.

Your Purpose...

A long time ago, you blossomed into sentience, and have hidden ever since. The encounters you have had with humans have taught you that you are an unwanted, feared entity. Perhaps today they are right in fearing you for you have seen your face in the waters of still lakes, and know you are not as they are. You can never be. What you do to survive and what your goals may be today, only you can know.

1) Character type

Your character type is Rogue Golem. You can write it on the mind sheet of your character.

2) Mental attributes... (100pts)

You have 100 Power Points to spend on your Rogue Golem's mind attributes (*Intelligence, Temperance* and *Presence*). Leftover points are noted.

3) Choose Your Cardinal Nature...

There is no preferred Cardinal Nature for your Rogue Golem.

4) Weaknesses (-50pts)

Your Rogue Golem starts the game with a weakness of your choosing. Choose and define either a *burning love, haunting fear, overwhelming hatred, past torment* or *lurking madness.*

5) Masteries (60pts)

You must now define your Rogue Golem's *Major Mastery*, his three *Minor Masteries* and his *Achilles' heel.* Assign *Wisdom, War, Domination, Deceit* or *Passions* to any of these priorities on the character sheet. You then have 60 Power Points to spend on Mastery ratings and Master abilities. Leftover points are noted.

6) Flesh, Bone and Steel (400pts)

You have 400 Power Points with which to build your Rogue Golem's body. You must pick the *Mechanical body* Trait costing 200 points. Leftover points are noted.

7) Wealth & possessions (30pts)

As a Rogue Golem, you have relatively few material possessions compared to most other character types. Refer yourself to the Wealth&possessions section for details as needed. You can spend 30 Power Points on the following:

1) Cash on hand: every point spent means you start the game with 10K mints on hand.

2) Artifacts: you can spend as many points as you desire on the following:

- *Minor Godshards*
- *Minor common artifacts*
- *Minor black Artifacts*

A good option for you to consider would be to acquire an artificial skin to pass yourself off as human.

3) Income: every point you spend gives you an income of 5k mints per interim chapter. This income usually comes from stealing or as a regular income, provided you pass yourself off as human and deal with mortals while in disguise.

4) Realm: as a Rogue Golem, you have no Realm.

5) Sanctum: you can spend as many points as you desire on your Sanctum. Your Sanctum is where you dwell. As a Rogue Golem, your Sanctum is most likely a hideout of some kind, though if you parade around as a human it can be anything, even a palace.

You can spend these 30pts on your *Wealth&possessions* or keep them as leftover points for later on. Leftover points are noted.

8) Starting Traits (-160pts)

Your Rogue Golem has the following Traits at the start of gameplay. You can immediately write them down on your mind sheet.

2x Glitches (-60pts)

Rogue Golems are sometimes prey to nasty little glitches. Many are the result of a lack of maintenance or shoddy repairs. At the start of the game, since your Rogue golem has wandered the world for many centuries, it is assumed to be afflicted by two glitches to be determined by the GM. Of one of these glitches, you know nothing about and it may be revealed only through your adventures, while the other one may be known to you (GM decision).

Unholy creation (-60pts)

Rogue golems are to be destroyed by any Dagonheir that discovers their nature. They are seen as unholy machines of an accursed age that go against the Metal Verses. This makes for deadly encounters whenever a rogue golem encounters a Dagonheir...

Bounty (-40pts)

Rogue golems are in great demand in the Fell Kingdoms, specifically by Lord Ravencross, who offers a generous reward to anyone that brings him a golem in functioning order. Fell Princes and Lords will try to capture and bring any golem to their master...

9) Additional points (20pts + leftover points only)

Your Rogue Golem has a base pool of 20 Power Points to spend, plus any leftover points. You can spend these points in the following ways:

- on optional Traits, below
- on mind Traits such as allies, enemies, fast learner, alertness, etc or on mind Traits that you design yourself
- keep them for use during the game, as available Power Points

Optional Traits

You can give your Rogue Golem any of the following Traits with additional points.

Vital connection (30pts)

You know an Angelion, mortal, or other intelligent being that possesses an underground science lab and the knowledge necessary to repair you when you are damaged. He has done so in the past, though he charges you the normal repair costs. He has an Intelligence + Wisdom PL of 15 when it comes to repairing you and a basic science lab (SL2). Such people are few and far between, so take care of this contact! You must describe where this person lives and where his lab is located.

10) Description & final details

Build a tale for your character, flesh him out and make him live through your words. Refer yourself to the *Description&Final details* section at the very end of this chapter to complete your character and have him ready for play. Use blank sheets of paper to write down your character's description in detail as need be.

AWAKENED

(300 Point Character)

"Many among our kind forget that a long time ago, we were as mortal as those we now judge. We forget that once we were willing to die for our loved ones and that we burned with an intensity that is lost to us now. The Awakened are the ones that will spell doom for our kind, and I believe that is something the world should wish for. I admire their struggle."

From the Memoirs of Eridan Kingsway, found in the ruins of his Tower

Description...

An Awakened refers to a human that has become aware of the lies of the Second Age, or at the very least of those that live as humans but who are not. Who or what orchestrated this "awakening" remains a mystery, but the great majority of Awakened are to be counted in the Watchful Eye, a human sect that fights ferociously to rid the world of the immortal enemy. The Watchful Eye teaches its followers how to watch the watchers; how and where to unearth artifacts of the First Age; how to hunt down and destroy the essences of their oppressors. Sleeper cells of Awakened have been found in many towns and villages and most cities. Silently they wait, gathering their forces.

Your Purpose...

You are an Awakened part of the Watchful Eye, a secret human organization bent on destroying the immortal plague. You hoard weapons and information with which you can fight your immortal foe. Your life on the outside may be no different from that of any other mortal. You may be a peasant, a town watchman or may be posing as a wanderer. However at certain times of the year, when darkness falls, you meet secretly with others such as yourself and plan your next move, exchange information and artifacts, and discuss what you have learned of your foe. You may have children born of another Awakened, to whom you will one day pass the knowledge you possess, and ask of them that they keep up the fight you have started. It is a noble fight, for the survival of humanity may very well depend on the struggles of you and your kin.

1) Character type

Your character type is *Awakened*. You can write it on the mind sheet of your character.

2) Mental attributes... (100pts)

You have 100 Power Points to spend on your Awakened's mental attributes (*Intelligence*, *Temperance* and *Presence*). Leftover points are noted.

3) Choose Your Cardinal Nature...

There is no preferred Cardinal Nature for your Awakened.

4) Weaknesses (-50pts)

Your Awakened starts the game with a weakness of your choosing. Choose and define either a *burning love, haunting fear, overwhelming hatred, past torment* or *lurking madness*.

5) Masteries (30pts)

You must now define your Awakened's *Major Mastery*, his three *Minor Masteries*, and his *Achilles' heel*. Assign *Wisdom, War, Domination, Deceit*, or *Passions* to any of these priorities on the character sheet. You then have 30 Power Points to spend on Mastery ratings and Master abilities. Leftover points are noted.

6) Flesh, Bone and Steel (100pts)

You have 100 Power Points with which to build your Awakened's body. If you were born in the Unconquered Lands as a normal human, then you must read the paragraph *Are you creating a mundane human body?* on p163. An Awakened must resemble and be mostly human to be part of the Watchful Eye. It is possible however that other underground sects are out there, catering to the deformed, engineered peoples of the Fell Kingdoms... Leftover points are noted.

7) Wealth & possessions (40pts)

As an Awakened, you have little wealth but you are the only character type that can have Awakened artifacts at the start of the game. You can spend 40 Power Points on the following (Refer yourself to the Wealth &possessions section for details as needed):

1) Cash on hand: every point spent means you start the game with 10K mints on hand.

2) Artifacts: You can spend as many points as you desire on the following:

- ❖Minor Awakened artifacts
- ❖Minor common artifacts

3) Income: every point you spend gives you an income of 5k mints per interim chapter. This income most probably comes from your regular employment in the mortal community you live in.

4) Realm: as an Awakened, you have no Realm.

5) Sanctum: you can spend as many points as you desire on your Sanctum. Your Sanctum is where you dwell. As an Awakened, your Sanctum is most likely a house or opulent dwelling. Since the Watchful Eye wants its members to remain low key a small, quaint little house no different from the next is probably your best option.

You can spend these 40pts on your Wealth&possessions or keep them as leftover points for later on. Leftover points are noted.

8) Starting Traits (30pts)

Your Awakened has the following Trait at the start of gameplay. You can immediately write it down on your mind sheet.

Gaze of the flayed (30pts)

You are bold, for the Watchful Eye does not accept weak-minded people into its ranks. You have gone through the Wailing ceremony and remained true to the Awakened cause. You laugh in the face of danger and would remain silent while your fingers were sliced off one by one by a torturer. You automatically succeed Temperance tasks related to fear, intimidation, interrogation and torture.

9) Additional points (50pts + leftover points)

Your Awakened has a base pool of 50 Power Points to spend, plus any leftover points. You can spend these points in the following ways:

- ❖ on optional Traits, below
- ❖ on mind Traits such as allies, enemies, fast learner, alertness, etc or on mind Traits that you design yourself
- ❖ keep them for use during the game, as available Power Points

Optional Traits

You can give your Awakened any of the following Traits with additional points.

Epic drive (20 pts)

You are so devoted to your cause, so blinded by its purity that per game sitting, you are assumed to have a free pool of 5 available Power Points that you can use to perform one or more heroic actions. This pool is replenished after each game sitting.

Pureblood (15pts)

Since the war, humans of pre-Second Age genetic makeup have appeared around the world. You are one of these truly "re-awakened" First Age humans. You have received none of the genetic tampering of Second Age people. This makes you somewhat more valuable than other Awakened operatives, as you can breed Awakened offspring much faster than mundane operatives. On the other hand, you live slightly shorter lives (max lifespan is 100 years) and are are less able to fight off illnesses than Second Age humans (GM tool).

Know your enemy (10pts)

You are familiar with all the bodies used by the Angelions to monitor or to subjugate the people of your town/city, even the supposedly secret ones.

10) Description & final details

Build a tale for your character, flesh him out and make him live through your words. Refer yourself to the *Description&Final details* section at the very end of this chapter to complete your character and have him ready for play. Use blank sheets of paper to write down your character's description in detail as need be.

MORTAL

(Heroic/Average)
(200 point/100 point character)

"Mortals are the unwitting fools of this Age. They move about unknowingly, confident in their beliefs yet ignorant of the lies that spawned them. Mortal suffering is as it has been for countless ages before this one; unfortunate, and in the end, totally unnecessary."

Elizabteh Kingsway

Description...

Heroic mortals are humans unconsciously driven towards greater things; their minds are sharp and their potential is limitless. They are somewhat underpowered (compared to most other character types) because of their youth and mortality, but their minds are otherwise of equal potency to that of immortals. They are unaware of the truth of the world, and can be very young (some characters can still be in their teens).

Heroic mortals often become restless and sorrowful if their lives become routine. The reason is simple; they are instinctively drawn towards perilous adventure.

The average mortal is just that; he is content to live a peaceful, uneventful life, ready to die on his bed smiling if his life has been without particular peril.

Your Purpose...

As a mortal you live in a region that the GM will describe to you. Your goals may be inspired or rather simple depending if you are a heroic mortal or an average mortal.

1) Character type

Your character type is either *heroic mortal* or *average mortal*. You can write it on the mind sheet of your character.

2) Mental attributes... (100pts/60pts)

You have 100/60 Power Points to spend on your mortal's mental attributes (*Intelligence*, *Temperance* and *Presence*). A heroic mortal can have mental attributes higher than 8, while an average mortal cannot. Leftover points are noted.

3) Choose Your Cardinal Nature...

There is no preferred Cardinal Nature for your Mortal.

4) Weaknesses (0pts)

Your mortal starts the game with no weakness. His mind is virgin soil, for now unburdened by weakness.

5) Masteries (30pts/10pts)

You must now define your mortal's *Major Mastery*, his three *Minor Masteries*, and his *Achilles' heel*. Assign *Wisdom*, *War*, *Domination*, *Deceit*, or *Passions* to any of these priorities on the character sheet. You then have 30/10 Power Points to spend on Mastery ratings and Master abilities. Leftover points are noted.

6) Flesh, Bone and Steel (100pts/70pts)

Your mortal has 100/70 Power Points with which to build his body. Since you are human, you must read the paragraph *Are you creating a mundane human body?* on p163. Leftover points are noted.

7) Wealth & possessions (20/10pts)

As a Mortal, you have very few material possessions compared to most other character types. You can spend 20/10 Power Points on the following (Refer yourself to the Wealth&possessions section for details as needed):

1) *Cash on hand:* every point spent means you start the game with 10K mints on hand.

2) *Artifacts:* you can spend as many points as you desire on the following:

   ❖ *Minor common artifacts*

3) *Income:* every point you spend gives you an income of 5k mints per interim chapter.

4) *Realm:* as a Mortal, you have no Realm.

5) *Sanctum:* you can spend as many points as you desire on your Sanctum. Your Sanctum is where you dwell. As

a Mortal, your Sanctum is most likely to be a house or an opulent dwelling if you are well off, perhaps a hideout if you are homeless.

You can spend these 20/10 Power Points on your *Wealth&possessions* or keep them as leftover points for later. Leftover points are noted.

8) Starting Traits (-60pts)

Your Mortal has the following Trait at the start of gameplay. You can immediately write it down on your mind sheet.

In the dark (-60pts)

You are unaware of the true history of the world, nor of the various powers that currently vie for its control. You are at a -3 modifier to resist any command or suggestion coming from someone that demonstrates an inkling of divine power.

9) Additional points (10pts + leftover points)

Your Mortal has a base pool of 10 Power Points to spend, plus any leftover points. You can spend these points in the following ways:

- on optional Traits, below
- on mind Traits such as allies, enemies, fast learner, alertness, etc or on mind Traits that you design yourself
- keep them for use during the game, as available Power Points

Optional Trait

You can give your Mortal the following Trait with additional points if you so desire.

Pureblood (15pts, post-war mortal only)

Since the Spirit War, humans of *different* nature have appeared around the world. You are one of these. You are somewhat more fearless and aggressive than other humans. For now, its implications are unknown to your character.

10) Description & final details

Build a tale for your character, flesh him out and make him live through your words. Refer yourself to the *Description&Final details* section at the very end of this chapter to complete your character and have him ready for play. Use blank sheets of paper to write down your character's description in detail as need be.

FELLKIN

(100-300 point character)

Born for the fancy of the Fell Lords whom they serve and please, the Fellkin live in a world they know nothing about. Woe to the Fellkin that somehow escapes and discovers the lands beyond the Kingdom of his Lord; a shocking awakening awaits him.

Description...

The term Fellkin is used both by mortals and Angelions to refer to intelligent species of creatures that bear at least one physical Trait that sets them apart from humanity. Some have wings, others scales. Some are twenty feet tall and covered in thick fur while others stand barely three inches above the ground and fly on gossamer wings.

The great majority of Fellkin live in the Fell Kingdoms and know nothing of the outside world. For many the world ends with their Lord's Kingdom.

Your Purpose...

As a Fellkin, either you live in a Kingdom that the GM will describe to you, or you escaped and now live on the outside. In any case, the GM will tell you as much or as little of the world setting as she desires, and as for your objectives, at this point they revolve around sheer survival!

1) Character type

Your character type is *Fellkin*. You can write it on the mind sheet of your character.

2) Mental attributes... (100pts)

You have 100 Power Points to spend on your Fellkin's mental attributes (*Intelligence*, *Temperance* and *Presence*). Leftover points are noted.

3) Choose Your Cardinal Nature...

There is no preferred Cardinal Nature for your Felkin.

4) Weaknesses (0pts)

Your Fellkin starts the game with no weakness.

5) Masteries (30pts)

You must now define your Fellkin's *Major Mastery*, his three *Minor Masteries*, and his *Achilles' heel*. Assign *Wisdom*, *War*, *Domination*, *Deceit*, or *Passions* to any of these priorities on the character sheet. You then have 30 Power Points to spend on Mastery ratings and Master abilities. Leftover points are noted.

6) Flesh, Bone and Steel (from 50pts up to 250pts)

You have from 50 to 250 Power Points with which to build your Fellkin's body, depending on GM decision. Leftover points are noted.

7) Wealth & possessions (30pts)

As a Fellkin, you have very few material possessions compared to most other character types. You can spend 30 Power Points on the following (Refer yourself to the Wealth&possessions section for details as needed):

1) Cash on hand: every point spent means you start the game with 10K mints on hand.
2) Artifacts: you can spend as many points as you desire on the following:
   - ❖Minor common artifacts
3) *Income:* every point you spend gives you an income of 5k mints per interim chapter. This income usually comes from stealing if you are a renegade, or as salary from your masters if you are not.
4) *Realm:* as a Fellkin, you have no Realm.
5) *Sanctum:* you can spend as many points as you desire on your Sanctum. Your Sanctum is where you dwell. As a Fellkin renegade, your Sanctum is most likely to be a hideout of some kind, or anything else if you are not a renegade.

You can spend these 30pts on your *Wealth&possessions* or keep them as leftover points for later on. Leftover points are noted.

8) Starting Traits (-120pts)

Your Fellkin has the following Traits at the start of gameplay. You can immediately write them down on your mind sheet.

In the dark (-60pts)

You are unaware of the true history of the world, nor of the various powers that currently vie for its control. You are at a -3 modifier to resist any command or suggestion coming from someone that demonstrates an inkling of divine power.

Unholy creation (-60pts)

Fellkin are to be destroyed by any Dagonheir that discovers their nature. They are seen as unholy creatures that violate the Body Canon. This makes for deadly encounters whenever a Fellkin encounters a Dagonheir...

9) Additional points (10pts + leftover points)

Your Fellkin has a base pool of 10 Power Points to spend, plus any leftover points. You can spend these points in the following ways:

- on optional Traits, below
- on mind Traits such as allies, enemies, fast learner, alertness, etc or on mind Traits that you design yourself
- keep them for use during the game, as available Power Points

Optional Traits

You can give your Fellkin any of the following Traits with additional points.

Renegade (30pts)

You escaped from the Kingdom of your Lord and now wander about the Unconquered Lands. You are slowly unraveling the mysteries of the world and have become aware that you have been lied to for all your life. This Trait can be taken only with GM permission.

Hunted (-20pts)

Having taken the *Renegade* Trait, you have managed to escape from your Lord's Kingdom, but he has sent minions after you... The GM is free to have these minions appear during any adventure.

10) Description & final details

Build a tale for your character, flesh him out and make him live through your words. Refer yourself to the *Description&Final details* section at the very end of this chapter to complete your character and have him ready for play. Use blank sheets of paper to write down your character's description in detail as need be.

2. MENTAL ATTRIBUTES

Mental attributes define the intelligence, strength of mind and overall personality of a character. Great care should be taken in the building of a character's mind, for where many things relating to a character will change over time, namely his bodies, possessions and friends, his mind will remain. When the mind is destroyed, so is the character.

Mental attributes

Determine what your character's mental attributes are, namely Intelligence, Temperance and Presence, by spending your character type's alloted Power Points for Mental attributes. Consult the Mental attribute cost table to distribute these points between your mental attributes. You cannot spend more Power Points than you have, but you can decide to keep some points as leftover points, for step 9: *Additional points.*

Hence, to give your character a 7 in Intelligence costs 30 Power Points. For him to have 3 in Temperance costs 10 points. All mental attributes range from 1-10, though normal people as well as the average mortal character type can only go up to 8 in mental attributes.

Mental Attribute value	Cost	Equivalent
1	0	Severely challenged/disabled
2	5	
3	10	Below average/challenged
4	15	Human average
5	20	Human average
6	25	Above average
7	30	Gifted
8	40	One in a million, maximum for common mortals
9	50	Heroic level
10	70	Legendary

Intelligence

Intelligence measures raw learning and analytical power. High Intelligence allows a character to deal well with unexpected situations and experiences and learn faster through experience. Raw potential is defined by the Intelligence attribute, while education and overall knowledge is quantified by the Wisdom Mastery (Masteries will be dealt with later on). Thus a character may have a high intelligence yet no education whatsoever.

INTELLIGENCE VALUE	MEANING
1	Dullard
3	On the rather slow side
4-5	Pretty average
8	Genius
10	Exceptionally powerful mind

Temperance

Temperance represents a character's ability to control his weaknesses, instincts and emotions. Temperate individuals have strong willpower, mental endurance and rarely fall prey to instinctual behavior.

TEMPERANCE VALUE	MEANING
1	Prey to instincts much like an animal
3	Prone to fits of anger, lusting and impulsive actions
4-5	Average human self-control
8	Highly disciplined individual, at peace with his nature, fears and emotions
10	An unbreakable mind and unstoppable drive

Presence

Presence is a character's bearing, charm, clever wit and forceful personality. A high Presence means that when the character talks, people gather round and listen. Presence is useful for fast-talking, deceit, persuasion, influence, debating, seducing and making contacts.

PRESENCE VALUE	MEANING
1	Very dull or despicable personality
3	Rather predictable, simple and uninteresting
4-5	Average human adult
8	Passionate, complicated person
10	Legendary orator, electrifying personality

Secondary Mental attributes

A few secondary mental attributes round out a character's mind. Players need not spend Power Points on them; they start at defined values for all character types.

Celerity pool

Angelion characters and the Rogue golem character type start with a Celerity pool, rated at 0 at the start of gaming. Through adventuring, the Celerity pool of a character may attain higher levels, from 0 to +1, +2, +3 and finally +4 by spending Available Power Points. Characters having organic minds (brains) do not have a Celerity pool.

The higher the Celerity pool, the faster a character's mind processes information and hence reacts, learns, and thinks much quicker than normal. The Celerity pool also measures the number of additional bodies an Angelion character can control simultaneously; with a Celerity pool of 0, an Angelion may control only one attuned body at a time. With a Celerity pool of +1, he may control an additional body, or a total of two bodies, and so on.

Players may not skip a level of celerity; by spending experience points, they must purchase each previous level of Celerity before purchasing the next higher level.

Celerity Bonus

The Celerity pool of an Angelion or Rogue Golem character can be seen as a reservoir of points which can either be used to control additional bodies (in the case of Angelion characters only) or be converted into a Celerity bonus.

Celerity pool	Cost in Power Points to gain this value	Maximum number of controlled bodies
+1	25	2
+2	50	3
+3	75	4
+4	100	5

In the case of Rogue Golem characters, their Celerity bonus is always equal to their Celerity pool. In the case of Angelion characters, their Celerity bonus is equal to 1+ their Celerity pool - the number of active bodies.

The Celerity bonus is converted into a positive modifier to the Finesse attribute of every active body. Thus with a Celerity pool of +2, an Angelion that controls only one body will have a Celerity Bonus of +2 and therefore a +2 modifier to the Finesse of this body. If he actively controls two bodies at the same time, his Celerity bonus falls to +1, and he will have a +1 modifier to the Finesse of both bodies.

Renown (Recognition/Notoriety)

Renown measures your character's reputation in two very contrasting circles. Recognition (RECO) is a character's renown among those that oppose Lord Ravencross and still follow the Scriptures, aiming to guide mankind instead of ruling it. Hence, Angelions of high RECO will be those that thwart the actions of Ravencross and his servants, and further the cause of good as defined by the Scriptures and the Holy Word.

Notoriety (NOTO) is a measure

of a character's fellness, again as defined by the Scriptures. Ruling mortal cities to satiate a lust for power, killing and raping innocents, amassing wealth out of greed or otherwise acting in ways contrary to the Scriptures is a sure way of gaining Notoriety.

As a character gains Renown, his ratings for Recognition and Notoriety will fluctuate.

Note!

Not only Angelion can gain in Renown, mortals can, too. But mortals generally get only fleeting acknowledgment in immortal circles. The reason is simple; the unessenced, no matter how grandiose their deeds or ambitious their projects, are mere pawns in the far greater schemes of immortals. Mortals are mere leaves in the wind, small ripples lost on the backs of mighty waves. Their lives are short, and their accomplishments few in a world ruled by thousand-year-old immortals.

Starting Renown

Renown (both kinds) starts at 0 for all characters. Write 0 on the character sheet for both types of Renown.

3. CHOOSING YOUR CARDINAL NATURE

"Tell me of the natures of mankind, using fire, water and earth" Riversong sat down in the middle of the room, on the little red carpet. The child, still standing, closed her eyes and thought for the permitted five seconds. After only three, she spoke.

"From the primeval fire the earth was formed, and from the earth rocks came into being. Rocks thrown in puddles of water disturb the water, and it mixes with earth, becoming blurry and muddy. You cannot know what kind of rock was thrown in the puddle. With time, the mud settles to the bottom, earth and water separate and the nature of the rock is revealed.

The same is true with man. His conception mixed many things together, and hid his nature. The dirt particles floating in the cloudy water are the fleeting passions that hide everything else. Given time, these passions will sink to the bottom and disappear, leaving only the man's true nature visible, just as the rock has become

visible in the puddle of water." The child fell silent.

Riversong approved, with a nod of his head and a faint smile on his lips. With that, the child sat down, and another got up. So it would be for the next seven hours, one after the other, they would answer questions, and Riversong would reward those that failed with harsh punishment. Day by day, his believers grew in power and discipline. In but twenty years, his storm would be ready, and he would unleash it upon the wretches of the world.

With loss of faith, immortals that kneeled for centuries before a god are now free to live out their destiny by letting their nature take over. No more does prayer and chanting keep their inner voice quelled. The work of Riversong, as referenced in his voluminous paper and ink tome The Four brothers, relates the dissociation of human nature from everything else as a function of time. Riversong theorized that with every passing lifetime Angelions either became more divine or more animalistic. Thus were born the four Cardinals, each representing a facet of human nature that can be predominant in different individuals.

The Cardinals represent the four basic human natures. They are called the Sun, Moon, Dusk and Dawn cardinals.

Note!

Players do not write their characters' Cardinal nature on their character sheet. The GM takes note of their choice on a separate piece of paper, writing each and every player character's Cardinal nature and hiding it from other players. Players should never reveal their character's Cardinal nature to other players, for it will spoil some of the game's interest, as characters discover or get hints of the natures of the other characters.

A Dagonheir character can be of the Moon cardinal, or a Syba can be of the Dawn cardinal. In these cases, it simply means the character will either discover his nature through adventures, that he hides his true nature from others, or that he struggles against himself to do what his mind (not his heart) thinks is "right".

Sun Cardinal (Virtue and order)

Time and space are the parents of life; benevolence and order its purpose.

The Cardinal of Sun regroups virtuous, selfless people that believe in order. An Angelion of Sun will work well in an organized, hierarchical environment, be given to feats of charity and goodwill and be a strong defender of justice.

First Age examples include:

- *Virtuous priests that welcome vagrants and the homeless into their churches to eat and sleep*
- *A politician that wants to make a difference, that holds the good of the people before his own*
- *CEO of a major company, that secretly gives most of his earnings to better his community and fellow man*

Dawn Cardinal (Virtue and chaos)

There is no need for order if peace is within one's heart.

The Dawn Cardinal regroups people that believe virtue and peace can exist without an ordered, hierarchical society.

First Age examples include:

- *A recluse that welcomes strangers in need of help and devotes his time to protect a natural preserve*
- *A professional thief that robs banks to feed his city block's malnourished children*
- *Environmentalists that will stop at nothing to protect our furry/leafy friends*

Moon Cardinal (Taint and order)

A great endless row of pipers piping to one's delight; a bountiful plenty of fish dangling from one's hooks; a great summit from which the world is commanded

The Moon Cardinal represents the tainted nature of life, its instincts and basest of desires. Those of the Moon Cardinal believe that order is the means through which desires can be met. The First Age was a society of Moon. An unquenchable desire to dominate is a strong indication that someone is of the Moon cardinal.

First Age examples include:

- Malicious clergy that use their authority to satiate their dominating/lustful/wrathful natures
- Crooked, greedy politicians or tyrannical warlords
- CEO of a megacorp that just signed off thousands of acres of woodland to dump illegal wastes

Dusk Cardinal (Taint and chaos)

"You wish to know the nature of the beast inside most men? Simple, announce to them that the world is ending this very day, and you shall have your demonstration..."

The Dusk Cardinal represents Taint and chaos, home of the quintessential anarchists. They answer to their own desires; generally oblivious to others and the impacts their actions have on the world. The only ordered society in which a person of the Dusk Cardinal could function is the one in which he is at the very top...

First Age examples include:

- Hippies or liberal loafers that abuse the system and indulge their every taint
- A lone woodsman that lures people to his cabin to perform atrocities best left nameless

Players have two choices during character creation. They can either choose their nature themselves or let the GM choose it for them without telling them what it is. This can add drama later on as they see their character evolve into something perhaps they did not expect. They may start off as faithful mortals or Dagonheir, wishing to do good, but along the way find their goodness challenged by urges and desires far removed from the ideals of the Scriptures. This can be a powerful roleplaying tool, as characters fight against their nature.

Cardinal natures will affect how experience and Anguish points are gained, and the GM will read all about them in the *Behind the Veil* chapter.

4. WEAKNESSES

Weaknesses are important aspects of a character. They can consume him, govern his life or bring about madness. The more defined and interesting players make them, the more potential they have of dramatically altering the course of games, and this is the essence of roleplaying. A player must use his character's weaknesses to better the game and the long-term campaign. In fact, every time a player roleplays his character's weaknesses with exceptional conviction during a game, the GM can award one experience point.

Acquiring Weaknesses

Most Character Types start the game with one weakness. The player must define this weakness properly, under GM supervision, based on the five categories of weaknesses used in the game; *burning love, haunting fear, overwhelming hatred, past torment* and *lurking madness.*

At the start of gaming, characters cannot have more than one weakness. During the course of gaming, characters are likely to gain more (and are encouraged to, for weaknesses are

what make people so colorful and unpredictable).

Weaknesses in the game

Not all weaknesses will affect characters in the same way. Refer yourself to the weakness categories below to determine how to handle them.

During gameplay, when the GM judges that a character is confronted by a situation that brings into effect his weakness, the player will need to either;

1) Roleplay its effects appropriately.
2) Try to battle it by rolling a GN6 raw Temperance task, possibly with some modifier depending on the intensity of the situation. Failure means the GM controls the character for as long as the troubling situation is present and the character loses an experience point in the next interim chapter. Success means the character maintains his composure and appears normal during the situation.

Weakness categories

Pretty much any human weakness can fall into one of the following categories.

Burning love

The character is prey to a passionate, heart-wrenching love. This person is the focus of the character's thoughts and in essence is his very reason for living. The death of his love will transform this weakness into a Past torment where the character becomes gloomy when facing situations that remind him of his tragic love or frenzied when meeting those that might be responsible for her death. Burning Love can transform itself into a lurking madness if the love interest disappears, as the character scours the world after her/him. Two player characters can take the Burning love weakness towards one another, for truly interesting sessions...

A burning love weakness will affect characters during gameplay whenever the following situations present themselves:

- The love interest is close by
- The love interest is in danger
- The love interest has disappeared
- The love interest is in love with someone else
- Any other situation deemed as troubling to the character

Examples...

Forever together, always...

Yahn Lader is a young adolescent boy living in a small village. His neighbor, Hei Orkid is his true love, and together they skip school to go run in the flower patches and express their love. Their parents smirk and find their little romance fun, but in fact their love is burning with a passion a thousand times as powerful as any they have ever known. It will outlast them all.

Haunting fear

A haunting fear is something that causes a character to cower, flee or flat out fall on the ground unconscious from fright. It is overwhelming and utterly incapacitating and cannot be too specific. Small phobias of bees and heights are not considered to be haunting fears. A haunting fear might be a fear of battle, fear of leaving one's Kingdom or realm, fear of God, fear of strangers, etc.

A Haunting fear weakness will affect characters during gameplay whenever the following situations present themselves:

- The character is in close proximity to the object of his fear

Examples...

Trust your fears, they shall protect you...

Stormbearer only comes out during the night, for he fears the All-Seeing so much that he believes the sun is His great eye.

Germs everywhere...

Violet Gem, when invited to soirees or into other Realms, believes that she will be exposed to filthy air and food. Hence, she brings along her personal healer and announces him as her mate. She periodically checks with him many times during the soiree to be checked discretely for infections or illnesses. She has great difficulty being anywhere dirty or where bacteria might fester...

Overwhelming hatred

An Overwhelming hatred burns with an undying intensity. It can eat a character from the inside and turn him into a monster of jealousy, vengeance and murder. Playing out hatreds can be immensely rewarding, and can form the basis of many adventures and plot twists. The wise player and GM will find ways of incorporating overwhelming hatreds into play and make them work for the overall campaign. Overwhelming hatreds include racism, sexism, hatred of one's self, of others, of ideologies and religions, orders, families, etc.

An overwhelming hatred weakness will affect characters during gameplay whenever the following situations present themselves:

- The character is doing something that might benefit the source of his hatred, even indirectly
- The object of his hatred is present

Examples...

An arrow aimed at the sky...

After Handor's family was killed in a forest fire, his faith in the All-Seeing mutated horribly, turning into a passionate hatred of clerics, the Church and anything faithful. Central to his hate is the All-Seeing himself, an entity he has devoted his life to destroying, using whatever means he can.

Dream, the slayer...

For an obscure reason, Dream has become a relentless slayer of Dagonheir. His hatred is deep, and he devotes most of his time to hunting down his former brethren and crushing their essences in his hands. In their presence, he is prone to fits of rage that have led to countless mortal deaths.

Past torment

A Past torment is something that gnaws at the character's heart. It may be something the character did, witnessed, failed to act on or lost. It may be someone, some occurrence or event that marked him and that now he cannot resolve, erase or be with.

This weakness will affect characters differently than other weaknesses. A Past torment will incur a permanent -1 modifier to all tasks for as long as the character possesses the weakness. As well, due to the generally melancholic state of the character and his lack of

vitality and hope, he loses an automatic 1point of experience every Interim chapter. During gameplay, whenever the GM feels the character is confronted by a situation that makes his past torment rise to the surface, she may apply further negative modifiers.

Examples...

The raven atop Crystal Falls Church

Swift Fox has lost a mortal love to old age. He spent his life caring and loving her, but now she is gone. He is horribly nostalgic, and takes his raven form whenever he can to spy on their old haunts, namely the town of Crystal Falls and its surroundings. Perched on rooftops, Swift Fox remembers the times they spent together, and reacts with fury against those that come to Crystal Falls with less than noble intentions.

The burning of Falcon Ridge

Hundreds of years ago, Voice-of-Night participated in the fire burning of Falcon Ridge, a town of over a thousand people, for it had become nothing more than a den of thieves. He and two other Angelions were sent to exact a Divine Curse on the wretched town, and Voice-of-Night personally butchered over fifty men, women and children before burning the rest down. Today, no longer having the blanket of The All-Seeing in which to wrap himself, Voice-of-Night is wracked by guilt at this murderous event, and wherever he goes, whatever he does, he hears the screams of those he killed in his head.

Lurking madness

A Lurking Madness represents a character's loss of touch with reality, either brought on by nature, by denying urges or having them denied by circumstances, or by witnessing hardships, violence, war, pain or loss in substantial and scarring ways. Extreme old age, unfortunately, seems to provoke madness in human (and therefore Angelion) minds. The more colorful and deeply rooted ones can be found only in Angelions and other old entities.

A lurking madness is defined as any behavior, belief or attitude that is totally illogical and lacking in observable support. Deeply rooted obsessions are also considered to be forms of lurking madness.

A Lurking madness weakness will affect characters during gameplay whenever the following situations present themselves:

- The GM determines it affects the character, which can be anytime, usually under stress
- The player brings it into play willingly

Examples...

Can you repeat that?

Ubrix thinks that there are codes in every word and that every phrase, song or poem carries coded information, and strives to find such codes in his spare time. Sometimes, he must not be distracted or spoken to when he thinks he is near solving a "code" or he can fall into fits of rage.

Come my beauties...

Lord Blood-of-Life of the Fell Kingdoms is known for many things, but central to his reputation were his triplet of engineered beauties that Blood-of-Life created over seventy-five years ago. Unfortunately, Lord Blood-of-Life grows progressively mad as he sees his triplets wither and grow old with time, and devotes inordinate amounts of resources to retard and hopefully reverse the effects of age on his precious creations. Even though the Opus Triplets (as they are known) are now more deserving of the title the three hags, the Lord himself flaunts them at every occasion possible, much to the disgust of others. At a deeper level, the Lord himself is starting to refuse the notion that time is invariable, and tries to find ways of stopping it. So far, he has only succeeded in ignoring time for himself, and seconds, months, years or lifetimes have no meaning to him. He can excuse himself from dinner for a "short while" and be back the next day or the next month and be surprised to find the table empty.

Physical addictions...

Angelion characters can control many bodies. When one controls an organic body, it can come under the influence of a physical addiction. An Angelion that logs into the recently bodysnatched body of a heroin addict will feel the effects of the addiction because the dependency of the drug not only affects the brain, but the body as well.

However, physical addictions are not treated as weaknesses, but rather as Flaws specific to a body and they are not dealt with at this stage of character creation, when the player designs the weaknesses of his character. When you will design the body(ies) for your character, you will be free to add physical addictions to one or all of them, to get Power Points back.

Psychological addictions...

Unless drug addictions are extremely incapacitating, they do not count as *weaknesses*. If they are, they count as *weaknesses* of the lurking madness type.

5. MASTERIES

Lord Crimson Moon held a small poignard with a wickedly long and thin blade, etched with arcane symbols. With subtle flicks of his wrist, he began to twirl it on the armrest of his throne, using the tip as a resting point and flicks of his hand as the impetus behind the little weapon's rotation, carving a neat little indentation in the wooden arm of his throne.

Might-of-Bear's drunken behavior had drawn out his anger, and now it was time to make him taste a little of it.

With over a litre of alcohol in his body's veins, Prince Might-of-Bear faded in and out of view twenty meters away from where his Lord sat, with dancing, talking and singing people moving between them constantly. Lord Crimson Moon watched the Prince and the people, measuring, calculating, the poignard ever twirling...

Then, as lightning descends from the skies, he flicked the deadly thing in the air and in a blurry motion sent it flying towards the drunkard halfway across the room. It narrowly missed the nose of a servant, brushed the ample bosom of Julee the Courtesan, and flew passed the clinking glasses of a couple toasting. It finally landed, severing tendon and artery, diving deep into Might-of-Bear's upper right thigh. He let out a painful scream as he fell to the ground clutching his wound, blood spurting through his fingers. Silence fell upon the room as a heavy curtain upon a stage.

Cries of fear irrupted from the guests, and a circle formed around the fallen Prince.

"Maybe you should come back to the room in another form... Try one with a better handling of alcohol, for good measure..."sighed Lord Crimson Moon, his tone detached and mildly amused.

The silence, except for Might-of-Bear's low squealing, was deafening, culminating in a small 'Pop!', as the lace that held Julee's imposing chest gave way and the whole top of her outfit exploded outwards, unveiling her massive breasts.

"Return to your pleasures, guests!"

Roaring laughter lit up the room, as Serfs picked up Might-of-Bear's body and brought it to the infirmary.

"Quite a throw Lord Crimson Moon...Though I tremble, thinking of your Prince's reaction to being shamed in such way." Evon said, grinning.

Dismissing the comment, Crimson Moon smiled, and beckoned Julee to his side; her blush by now had turned a luscious shade of crimson.

"But quite a throw indeed!" Evon laughed.

What are Masteries...?

Masteries represent great fields of aptitude, knowledge and ability. There are five Masteries in the game, and between them they cover everything from knowledge of battle to knowledge of love. The five Masteries are: *Wisdom, War, Domination, Deceit,* and *Passions.* Refer yourself to the Game Mechanics section to know how Masteries are used in the game.

A player must choose his Major Mastery among the five Masteries, and then prioritize the other four. The Mastery with the lowest priority will be the character's Achilles' heel.

Major Mastery

Every character in the game is assumed to have a Major Mastery, his realm of greatest potential. Mortals having only very limited time to develop - let alone discover - their Major Mastery generally attain only limited proficiency in it. The daily grind of life takes up too much of their free time for them to be able to discover what they may naturally be good at. A farmer may live his entire life plowing his fields, dying peacefully in his bed never having known that his natural talent lay in the art of war. Immortals on the other hand can discover and exploit their Major Mastery over the course of many lifetimes. After hundreds of years, what they can accomplish through their Major Mastery can be astounding.

On the character sheet, the player simply writes his chosen Major Mastery in the Major Mastery box. Leave the little circles besides it unfilled for now.

Minor Masteries

The player must then prioritize his next three preferred Masteries. These will constitute a character's minor Masteries. The player will need to order them according to their priority (their potential, in a sense). The one written just below the Major Mastery will be the character's second most promising Realm of activity, the one below that is his third, and the one below that will be his fourth.

Achilles' heel

The very last Mastery writ-

ten (on the bottom line) will be the character's Achilles' heel. All characters will have an Achilles' heel, a Mastery that the character has very little affinity for. When confronted with situations that bring it into play, the character will be quite challenged.

The Mastery Rating

Masteries have a Mastery rating that can go from 0 to (potentially) +10. A Mastery rating of 0 means absolutely no training or experience in this Mastery, a +4 (or extremely rarely, +5) is usually the highest Mastery rating a mortal can hope to acquire, while old immortals can reach a rating of up to +10 in their Major Mastery.

Example: *the player of Heart-of-Storm wishes for his character to one day lead men against the followers of Ravencross. He must therefore weave political connections and have good leadership abilities. He chooses Domination as his Major Mastery. He sees Heart-of-Storm as somewhat warlike as well, with a notable affinity towards battle. His Minor Mastery (1st) is chosen to be War. He then assigns Deceit to his Minor Mastery (2nd), for he knows that to gain power and influence one often needs a forked tongue. His Mastery (3rd) will be Passions and his Achilles heel is his Wisdom Mastery. He has a natural talent towards manipulating people, but shows abysmal aptitude and very little interest towards learning of the world and its natural laws.*

Spending Power Points on Mastery Ratings

After the player has determined his character's Major and Minor Masteries as well as his Achilles' heel, he can now spend some Power Points towards getting some Mastery ratings.

Mastery rating	Power Point cost
+1	5
+2	5
+3	10
+4	10
+5	25
+6	25
+7	40
+8	40
+9	100
+10	100

Consult the above table to determine how many Power Points a player needs to spend in order to raise one of his character's Mastery Ratings.

Hence, by spending 5 Power Points on a particular Mastery, a character will get a Mastery Rating of +1 in that Mastery, and will fill in the first circle beside it on the character sheet. The player can spend 5 Power Points more to raise this Mastery Rating to +2 and fill in the next little circle beside it, and so on. As you can see from the character sheet, the maximum Mastery Rating will depend on whether or not a particular Mastery is a character's Major Mastery, one of his Minor Masteries, or his Achilles' heel.

Mastery	Maximum Mastery rating
Major Mastery	+10
Minor Mastery(1st)	+8
Minor Mastery (2nd)	+6
Minor Mastery (3rd)	+4
Achilles' heel	+2

The above table shows the possible Mastery ratings for your character's different Masteries.

With experience, a character will be able to better his Mastery ratings.

Note that to purchase a Mastery rating in a given Mastery, a player must buy all previous ratings for it. All the lower Mastery Rating circles must be filled in before a higher one can be purchased. Hence, the cost to pass from a 0 rating to +4 is 30 Power Points, not 10 Power Points.

Example: as an Angelion, Heart-of-Storm begins the game with a rating of +2 for both War and Wisdom. His player fills two circles next to these Masteries. Since Wisdom is his Achilles Heel, he cannot raise it above +2 and it shall remain at +2

for the rest of his immortal life. With 80 Power Points to spend on both Mastery ratings and Master abilities, the player of Heart-of-Storm chooses to spend 45 Power Points on his Mastery ratings. He gives his character the following Mastery ratings:

Major Mastery

(Domination):+2

1st Minor Mastery

(War):+3

2nd Minor Mastery

(Deceit):+3

3rd Minor Mastery (Passions):+1

Achilles' heel (Wisdom):+2

The player now peruses over the Master Abilities section...

Master Abilities

Master abilities represent special abilities that characters can learn or develop as they increase in experience and power. Master abilities can take many forms; from ancient -or unique- styles of battle to uncanny powers of leadership or deception; they are the trumps characters can use to confront insurmountable odds. Several Master abilities will be given for each Mastery.

Acquiring Master Abilities

Players can acquire Master Abilities that are;

- From their character's Major Mastery. Each Master ability purchased from a character's Major Mastery costs ten (10) Power Points.
- Open abilities from other Masteries. Such abilities are marked with a (*) next to their name in the Master abilities list. To purchase an open ability not from the character's Major Mastery costs fifteen (15) Power Points, while purchasing one from his Achilles' heel costs thirty (30) Power Points.

All other Master abilities, that are neither Open nor from a character's Major Mastery will not be available to him, neither during character creation nor later on through experience.

Maximum number of Master abilities

- For a given Mastery, a character cannot have more Master abilities than this Mastery's Rating.
- A character cannot have more Master Abilities than his Temperance+Intelligence; discipline is needed to develop one's talents, and a sharp mind required to discover them.

Example: the player of Heart-of-Storm has 35 Power Points to spend on Master abilities. He decides to acquire "Dark Lore" and "Gather Apostles" from his Major Mastery (Domination) and "Battle style: deadly shot", an Open ability from his 1st Minor Mastery (War). The first two abilities will cost 20 Power Points, the third 15, for a total of 35 Power Points.

Personalized Master abilities

Characters that have attained a rating of +6 or more in their Major Mastery are allowed to come up with Master abilities of their own instead of choosing the generic ones that follow. The player must describe the ability and how the character acquired it. Be original and base the power level of the abilities created on the ones we give here. Again, the GM can overrule or modify a player's Master abilities because they are too powerful or simply impossible. A player may not invent new Master abilities that "boost" already existing abilities. As an example, a player cannot invent a Master ability called *Superb shot* that gives a +2 modifier to Ranged combat attacks because there already exists a Master ability that does that (*battle style: deadly shot*).

Characters can only create personalized Master abilities from their Major Mastery. The GM will decide if a specific personalized ability is "open" or "closed" and whether or not the character can teach it to others or if it is inherent to him.

Legendary Abilities...

Master abilities only hint at what characters may someday be capable of. As you can see on the character sheet, *Legendary abilities* will one day be available for characters, just not at the beginning of character creation. They shall be detailed in the first supplement!

List of Masteries and Master Abilities

MASTERY OF WISDOM

If you have a Major Mastery in Wisdom, you are drawn towards knowledge and science. Your greatest weapon is your mind, and given time you will be able to draw upon vast reserves of wisdom to surmount the challenges you will face. You will become familiar with laboratories, creating artifacts, mixtures and organisms possessed of mysterious attributes. As your power grows, you will doubtless become more reclusive and eccentric, the only respite from your isolation being your rare correspondence with others that share your passion for knowledge.

Master Abilities

Divine insight

Once per game sitting, usually when all seems lost, you are allowed to make an Intelligence + Wisdom task to know if you come up with an adequate solution/tool/invention to get out of this bind. The GN is set by the GM depending on the situation. Were you to succeed, you would be assumed to have just the right tool, just the right invention or just the right idea on how to get out of the bind. You and the GM will discuss the exact nature of your solution. Whether it be using the body fluids of small insects to brew a potent acid to burn your cell's lock or producing a small vial of a purposeful mixture from your coat pocket, others are often overwhelmed by the trinkets you carry or the ideas that germinate in your head...

Ancient Wisdom

You have delved deeply into ancient lore dating back to the First Age. You have deciphered many of its languages, and read about many of its cultures and great events. Upon encountering an ancient text, artifact or device predating the Second Genesis, roll an Intelligence + Wisdom task and try to beat a GN set by the GM. If you succeed, you understand the essentials of the text, or the functioning of the artifact. If you fail, study of texts/languages or the dismantling of artifacts during an interim chapter will allow you to try the task again, with a +2 modifier. Very ancient or obscure languages -or artifacts of military or ultra-advanced natures- may be quite hard to understand however. The GN for them should be 20+.

Craft/Lore/language (*)

Choose any specific craft (lost tech, Genomancy, brewing mixtures, creating machines), Lore (pure physics, astronomy, mathematics, botany) or secret language (First Age english, egyptian, Awakened sign-tongue, secret Angelion language or other obscure languages). You have studied and/or practiced this peculiar craft/lore/language diligently, and can add a +2 modifier to any task relating to this peculiar craft/lore or are assumed to be fluent in the secret language.

Hedge Healer

You have a special, almost miraculous talent when it comes to healing organic bodies using only your hands. You do not suffer the -5 modifier for lack of proper facilities when you heal a seriously injured character. What more, you can treat poisoned characters by succeeding at an Intelligence + Wisdom task with a GN equal to the poison's GN to resist+5. Success reduces the damage the patient suffers by half.

You lie!

You have learned to recognize the many signs of deception, and few are those that can lie in your presence without you knowing about it. When you are in the presence of someone that lies, if the latter's Intelligence + Deceit is lower than your Intelligence + Wisdom, you automatically know of the deception. You may not know the truth, but you know that a lie was told. This ability is always active, but may be somewhat compromised in the case where the one that lies is using an animal body to speak.

Way of the fighting savant

You have a special ability that lets you adapt to your foes in battle. Your foe's attacks are parried and his defenses overwhelmed not through speed or strength, but through analysis and logic. You parry left because it is logical for your foe to strike left. You attack low because that is a region your opponent's mind forgets. This Master ability allows you to add a positive modifier to attack and defend in close combat,

whether armed or unarmed. However, you must study your adversary, through the course of your own combat. For every round you fight him after the first, you can add a +1 modifier to your close combat tasks both for attacking and defending but not to deliver Power attacks. The maximum modifier gained is equal to half of your Wisdom Mastery rating, round up. This ability has no effect to attack or defend in ranged combats.

Tinker

You have a knack at repairing things. Whenever you try to repair something mechanical you can do it in half the time, using half as much money. What more, if you come upon a destroyed golem/machine/artifact, you can roll a GN4 Intelligence + Wisdom task even if you don't have any tools or facilities with you. If you succeed, every point by which your RR beat the GN is a health point you give back to the destroyed golem/machine/artifact. If this brings its health points above 0, then it is considered seriously damaged, but no longer destroyed, and can be repaired normally afterwards. If you fail, or if you don't bring back its health points above 0, then your task has no effect.

Power symbols/words: animals

In recreating the animals of the Second Age, the Kingsways went further in their genetic dabbles than many thought. It is becoming apparent to you that most animals of the Second Genesis respond strangely to certain sounds, gestures and colors. You have heard -and perhaps even used- some of the artifacts of power that can put animals to sleep by using complex light signals or sound frequencies, but you have discovered ways of doing the same -and more- with your hands and your voice. You are just scratching the surface, and feel that many things are left to be discovered about this aspect of life in the Second Age. By whistling at a certain pitch, you may hypnotize certain beasts, or make a charging rhino forget you, or a raven fly up into the sky and circle over any nearby intruders. The possibilities may be endless.

Each Power Word/Symbol is a Master ability. Characters may have more than one, but each counts as one Master ability.

To be effective, Power Words require that the animal be able to hear you, while Power Symbols require that the animal be able to see you. If the animal cannot, you cannot use that specific ability. The animal to be controlled must have a brain and possess eyes and ears -insects, worms, single-celled organisms, and most primitive fish species- are immune. As well, you must be in a human or human-like body for Power Symbols to function, while to use Power Words, you must have a body capable of producing human speech. These abilities do not function on beasts of Ravencross, for they were engineered by Corvus and they do not respond to such commands.

Examples of known Power Words/Symbols follow;

Power word: Ignore/focus

By succeeding at a GN9 Intelligence + Wisdom task, you emit a complex series of whistles that cause animals within earshot to either ignore or focus their attention on you and those near you (assume friends within two to three meters of your location) for the next five rounds (+1 round per added effect).

Power symbol: Friend

By succeeding at a GN12 Intelligence/Finesse+Wisdom task, you use your hands, or a luminous instrument, to trace in the air a series of quick and precise symbols that make any animal that looks at you fall into a lethargic state; animals become sedate, and can be handled safely, caged, etc. You can call animals to you.

This power supposes you have the animal's complete attention following use of the Power word: ignore/focus ability. If not, you suffer a -3 modifier to your task even if the animal is looking at you directly. Animals that do not look at you will not be affected by this ability. In darkness, use of lighted instruments is often necessary and may incur a negative modifier nonetheless.

Power symbol: Attack

By succeeding at a GN15 Intelligence/Finesse+ Wisdom task, you move your hands in a blinding series of maneuvers and point towards a target, thereby commanding any animal that looks at you to attack it. Animals so controlled will generally attack until your chosen victim dies, unless you succeed at a Power Word: ignore/focus task to make the animals cease their attack and focus on you for another command. If they receive none, they act according to their natures. This power supposes you have the animal's complete attention following use of the Power word: ignore/focus ability. See Power symbol: Friend for details.

Power word: Deathsong

By singing a series of notes and succeeding at a GN18 Intelligence +Wisdom task, every animal within earshot (up to a hundred meters distant depending on your voice and the animal's hearing) will need to succeed at a GN12 Vigor task the round after you start singing. Those that fail will begin dying from the effects of a self-secreted poison which, though painless, will end their lives at the rate of 4 Health points per round. Creatures that hear your deathsong but succeed at the Vigor task still suffer a -5 modifier to all tasks as long as you sing and must succeed at a GN9 Vigor task to remain conscious. At your discretion, deathsong can put animals that fail to resist to sleep for 2-3 hours instead of killing them.

Power Symbol: Imprint

By succeeding at a GN18 Intelligence/Finesse+ Wisdom task, you trace complex symbols using your hands that make an animal imprint on your present body; the animal will act as though tamed, and you may thereafter transmit simple commands to it such as attack, patrol, guard, carry, etc. This power supposes you have the animal's complete attention following use of the Power word: ignore/focus ability. See Power symbol: Friend for details.

If you so desire, the imprinted animal will stay at your side indefinitely. Only relatively intelligent animals such as felines, canines, intelligent birds, dolphins and other such animals respond to this Power Symbol. Simple commands (attack, patrol...) take 1 action to transmit to an imprinted animal using a series of hand gestures. Complex commands (go to house, push door with nose, wake up person and lead back here for help) can take up to three or four complete rounds. At the very least, your imprinted animal must look at you or hear you during the time you take to explain your commands.

You can have a number of imprinted animals, at any given time, equal to half your Wisdom Mastery rating.

Power symbols/words: humans

Once you attain a Wisdom Mastery rating of +6 and you possess at least one Power word/symbol relating to animals, you may purchase the same Power word/symbol relating to humans. Hence, if you possess the Power word: Ignore/focus ability and you have a Wisdom Mastery rating of +6 or more, you may purchase the Power word: Ignore/focus (humans) that affects humans as well. The abilities will produce the same effects as for animals, but add +3 to all GNs.

The Power word: Imprint on humans can turn people into zombie-like creatures that will defend their master ferociously and mindlessly if need be. Commands given to these imprinted souls can involve complex directives. The target behaves as though this command was crucial to his life, though he may not be able to explain why.

These abilities do not function on Angelions, for their essences were not created to respond to Power symbols and words, nor the bodies they now acquire through the Guild. However, nothing so far disproves the possibility that the Kingsways themselves might possess Power symbols and words that may affect the immortals they created...

MASTERY OF WAR

If your Major Mastery is War, then you have natural instincts and abilities others do not when it comes to war. Some may call you savage, but you know better. Though macabre, life-taking is an art, one you are destined to master. Your mind and body will become as steel, and provided you can hone your skills for many centuries, you may very well become the most evolved and lethal warrior the world has known.

Master Abilities:

Vital blow

You know where to hit your foes with deadly accuracy. With any successful hit, the damage you inflict is considered to be a *Cinematic action* (see *Heroic actions*).

Battle style (*)

You know how to fight in a particular style: choose one from the following, or invent one that suits your desires. You can choose many different styles, but each style counts as a Master ability. Different

battle style bonuses can never stack up together

Battle style: Deadly shot

You have become a skillful shot using a variety of ranged weapons, gauging range, speed and wind conditions in the blink of an eye. When you make a ranged attack, add a +2 modifier.

Battle style: Down & dirty fighter

You have honed your unarmed fighting skills. In close combat, whenever you attack or defend unarmed, add a +2 modifier. This applies to regular attacks, power attacks, grapples, and the natural weaponry of animal bodies you may be controlling.

Battle style: Way of the sword

You master the armed combat arts, and add a +2 modifier when you attack or defend using a weapon of any kind in close combat.

Reaper's stroke

You study your foe in battle, and rarely do you attack foolishly or too quickly. But when you finally do, your attack is swift, precise and lethal...

By declaring a Reaper's stroke instead of attacking your foe during an action in which you could normally attack him, your next attack against this foe, if successful, benefits from an automatic 2 added effects. This technique works only in close combat against a foe within reach and the reaper's stroke must be resolved in the action immediately following the one in which you declare it. If, on the action you do decide to attack, your attack failed or you could not attack, the bonus will not carry over to your next attack.

Warrior's wisdom

Though your arms and muscles may help you in battle, it is your battle instincts that have kept you alive so far. When combat is declared, you are assumed to have a number of "Warrior's wisdom" points equal to your Intelligence. During a round of combat, you can use none, some or all of these points to increase your Initiative Rank. One point from your pool increases your Rank by 1 for a specific round. Once your pool is exhausted, you must wait for another combat to be declared, or at the very least another opponent, before your Warrior's wisdom pool is replenished.

As the wind

You are a Master at defending yourself from multiple opponents and using acrobatics in combat to evade blows without compromising your situation. You may ignore the first -2 modifier due to multiple opponents, and the first -2 modifier due to successive defenses.

Voice of God

Voice of God allows you to send your soldiers/armies/henchmen into a frenzy after speaking just a few words. They will only suffer a -2 modifier due to any serious injury and automatically succeed Temperance tasks related to fear. Their frenzy lasts for a number of rounds equal to three times your War Mastery rating if you leave them to fight alone, or as long as you are with them on the field of battle. You must be using a body your men recognize and admire, or risk losing the benefits of this ability.

Dance Macabre

You have learned the Dance Macabre, an intricate set of moves, jumps, acrobatics, foot plays, body rolls and twirls that resemble an elegant yet deadly dance. Only the greatest masters can exploit this ability, and only against those of lesser ability than them. This ability only works in close combat against a single foe, you must have space to move around (cannot be used in a grappling match) and you must be using a human or human-like body, for its complex steps are known and taught only for use with human bodies.

During the initiative phase of combat, just before you and your foe roll for initiative, you can declare a Dance Macabre. You then roll your initiative normally, but lower your final initiative rank by 1D6 and both you and your foe must make an opposed Intelligence/Finesse + War task. If you fail, then you have failed the Dance and nothing else happens. If you succeed, your Dance Macabre has been flawless, and your foe is in dire peril. You sidestep his attacks with exquisite style and speed, you thwart his lunges with but a flick of your hand, all the while dancing ever closer to deliver lethal attacks. You are considered as having a free pool of Available Power Points equal to your War Mastery rating for the remainder of this round. These points can be used for Heroic actions to either defend against the attacks of this foe or to attack him. Essentially, all attack, defense and damage rolls can be affected.

Eyes of terror

By fixing a foe and intimidating him during battle, you can drain his will to fight and make him cower like a frightened child. Every round in which you are locked in combat with one foe of your choice, you can make an opposed Presence/Fear + War task against your foe's Temperance + War. If you succeed, your foe will suffer a negative modifier to his Initiative Rank equal to your War Mastery rating as you instill terror in his mind and make him hesitate and rethink his strategy.

Upon attaining War mastery (+6), Eyes of Terror works on small bands of people (less than three times War Mastery rating) that are in your immediate vicinity and are intent on attacking you personally. At War mastery (+8), anyone within sight of you, that can hear your voice and see your eyes, is subject to Eyes of Terror.

Multiple Eyes of terror cannot be used to affect the same target(s). Only the most penalizing of the Eyes of Terror will be considered in such cases. Eyes of Terror only works against intelligent foes that can both see and hear you clearly, and not against animals or beasts of Ravencross.

Circle of death

You can wield a blood whip or a pureblade with deadly accuracy when faced with many foes. These weapons are able to cut through enormous amounts of material, and can allow you to make a circle of death move. Using either of these deadly weapons allows you to attack every single foe in the reach of your weapon as a single attack. Roll an attack against each foe separately, and the latter may defend against your attacks normally. This counts as one attack but can only be done once per round and as the only attack in a given action.

Gang up

Using two or more bodies to attack the same opponent, you and your opponent must make an opposed intelligence + War task. If you succeed your opponent suffers a -1 modifier to all his actions for this round per additional body of yours that attacks him.

For example, if you are using three bodies to attack your opponent, he will suffer a -2 modifier to all his actions for this round, in addition to his penalty for fighting multiple foes.

Stone Apostle

You are strong both of mind and body, for you have learned the ways of controlling your system through mental concentration. By turning your mental energy inward, you can control your body's rhythms, raise your endurance, reduce the effects of poisons, remain active after suffering mortal injury and essentially become as resilient as stone. You are the quintessential pit fighter, gladiator or mercenary, for you can endure unfathomable pain and injury.

By entering the "stone trance", which takes 1 round, you are considered immune to torture, pain and fear for a number of hours equal to your Temperance. In this trance, you always;

1) Add your War Mastery rating to any Vigor task, whether it is to remain conscious, to run, to resist poisons or to the number of rounds you can fight without suffering combat fatigue.
2) You only suffer a -1 modifier when you become seriously wounded.
3) Were you to fall to 0 or less Health points while in your trance, you can consider your body as still alive as long as your Health points don't go below (-Health) and you remain in your trance. In such case, you are limited to 1/8 of your MOVE score and suffer a -5 penalty (or more, depending on the nature of your wounds) to all tasks.
4) After the Trance is over, you are at -2 to all tasks for ||- Vigor hours.

Though you can remain awake for up to 10xTemperance hours while in this trance (by entering the trance many times in a row), it will end whenever you fall asleep, and all its effects as well will disappear. If you fall asleep with negative Health points, your organic body will die.

Storm fighter

You are swift both to attack and to move around. The negative modifier you suffer to your attacks due to multiple attacks is equal to 2x the total number of attacks you perform in this action, instead of 3x the number of attacks. What more, you can move up to 1.5 times your MOVE score in a round, if you have three actions.

MASTERY OF DOMINATION

If your Major Mastery is Domination, you can easily manipulate and rule others. You take over secret cartels and cabals as easily as you can bully the weak into doing your bidding. Your abilities tend to propel you towards the top, even if it means leading from the shadows. In the history books of the Third and subsequent Ages, your name shall doubtless be underlined and chapters written about your life. How you come to dominate the Second Age, however, is perhaps better left out of the history books...

Master Abilities:

Dark lore

During each interim chapter, you are assumed to be privy to dark knowledge of the juiciest sort. The GM will tell you what the nature of this information is, and you can write it on a piece of paper to remember it. The higher your Domination Mastery rating, the more important and sensitive the information usually is. This may imply characters from your group and their dark little secrets, or the hidden power plays between the very old immortals of the world...

Rise to power

You have a natural ability at making your deeds and accomplishments seem greater than what they may actually be. You have ways of making others either seem more worthy or wretched, depending on how you want them to appear. Add or deduct (1D6+your Domination rating) to the RECO or NOTO award you or someone else receives during every interim chapter.

Summon henchmen

With a wave of your hand or a call for help, you can summon a number of thugs/henchmen equal to 1D6 x your Domination rating. These mortals will do your bidding and risk their lives for you. Assume they can be there in a few rounds. You must be in a body they can recognize however and be in your Realm/Kingdom. This ability can be used once per adventure.

In some dire circumstances and with GM approval these henchmen can come to your aid if you are outside the realm proper.

Golden aura

You have a talent for attracting settlers and improving the wealth of your Realm. Whatever the nature of the community under your influence, it seems golden to mortals, who flock to it or wish to trade with it more than any other.

Double all income that stems from your Realm.

A small village of 5 Power Points would provide you with an income of 100k mints instead of 50k mints per interim chapter, while a small city of 50 Power Points would provide you with an income of 1M mints per interim chapter.

Web of informants (*)

During an Interim chapter OR once per adventure, you can ask information about a place, event, person, piece of equipment or thing; the GM will give you information that very few know about. It might mean you are one step closer to discovering the person/object in question, or that you receive hard to obtain information about what you seek. Make a GN6 Intelligence+Domination roll. Failure means your informants bring back the required info but your interest in said information has been leaked, possibly to the wrong sort of individuals.

Obey!

You have a way of making others do what you wish by commanding them or otherwise making them believe they should obey you. You have an automatic +2 modifier towards any persuasion/leadership task.

Amass wealth

You possess an uncanny ability to acquire riches.

During every interim chapter, roll a GN15 Intelligence+Domination task. A success multiplies your income by x2, or by x3 if you have an added effect or more. Add a +2 modifier to this task if you are of the Moon nature, as shrewd and often treacherous dealings benefit greatly from a selfish nature.

The A list

You get invited, or find a way to get invited, to the most exclusive soirees and events. You can generally attend soirees and events, and get approached for secret meetings, as if your Renown/Notoriety was twice your actual Renown/Notoriety.

God's whispers

During an interim chapter, you can seek the most sensible and secret of information; the location of a Goldroom... Choose an Angelion and make a GN15 Intelligence+Domination task. Apply a negative modifier to this task equal to the target's Domination, Deceit or Wisdom Mastery rating, whichever is higher. Success means you pinpoint the location of your target's Goldroom to within ten thousand square kilometers. Every added effect divides the area by ten. Minimum pinpoint area is one square kilometer. After that, you need to go and find it through adventuring.

If you fail with one or more added effects, it means the target of your search is aware that you are trying to find the location of his Goldroom.

Gather apostles

Especially with impressionable mortals, your wise words are pure Gospel. Given adequate time (never less than a few days) in mortal societies, you can make a GN9 Presence + Domination task and have a number of followers equal to your task's added effects x3. Add a +2 modifier if you use artifacts of power to help you in convincing them, but doing so can attract the wrong kind of attention. These followers will have been converted to your beliefs and will consider you to be their cherished leader/messiah. In most cases, they will try to convert others to this belief and before you know it, you have quite the little religion or belief system with you at the top.

MASTERY OF DECEIT

If your Major Mastery is Deceit, the night is your greatest ally, and the weak-minded or careless your preferred victims. You are a trickster, a charlatan, a clever thief that sneaks about and confounds others with trickery of hand and word. You may very well be able to kill efficiently and silently to cover your tracks or your web of lies. And to those that have tried to stand in your way... Well, as you say, some have recently visited with long dead relatives, others are begging on street corners and a few are locked up in cellars, raving mad because of your poisoned words... Your lies have kept you alive in the Second Age, and your wits will see you through to the Third.

Special Abilities:

Hidden secret

You can discover, using subterfuge, infiltration, contacts and spies, the hidden secrets that can give you leverage over people. During an Interim chapter, choose any mortal or immortal (even other player characters) and inform the GM of your choice. You need not know this victim personally, but the less you know the victim, the harder it will be. Both you and your prey roll an opposed Intelligence+Deceit task. You receive an automatic -3 modifier for this task the first time you attempt it, and a further -2 modifier if it has been over two Interim chapters since you personally met and interacted with the victim. If you fail, you can retry every interim chapter with a cumulative +1 modifier.

Once you succeed, you have learned of a secret that your victim wishes to hide, or a weakness, an obsession, etc. A failure with an added effect, or a fumble, means your target is aware of your attempts.

Dark lore

See Master of Domination: Dark lore. Funny how it seems that power, politics and deceit require the same general abilities...

Now you see it...

You have an unnatural ability to play tricks, swipe objects and make them disappear. In ancient times, mortals with this ability were called magicians or charlatans, and could harness

small fortunes on the backs of the naive. Given an immortal life to develop new deceptions, you have become capable of the most incomprehensible feats of legerdemain, your hands/body movements being quicker than the eye. You can automatically swipe a small object, once per action, from a location accessible to you without much effort. You can perform actions like swiping an orange from a fruit vendor's stand, or a knife from a hugged relative's belt. As part of the same action, you can hide objects you have in your hands anywhere within your reach without people seeing you. For example, you might hide the orange (that was in your hand) in your coat pocket without people seeing it, or put the stolen knife in the pocket of another person near you without anyone needing to roll. It is assumed you confuse and divert your targets' attention through small talk or body movements. There is usually no need to roll in such cases; however, if your action is done in the immediate presence of someone having an equal or better Deceit Mastery rating than yours, you and him will roll an opposed Intelligence+Deceit task. If you fail, he notices your trick...

Mentalist

You have a way of making people do what you want, by confusing them long enough that they grant your wishes. Only later, preferably when you are gone, will the wittiest of your victims realize they were tricked. With this ability, you can invent highly plausible stories that can confound your targets enough to let you through security checkpoints, inside secret havens or important buildings, get access to equipment, become privy to secrets or rumors, etc. Make an opposed task, yourself rolling your Presence+Deceit and your opponent an Intelligence+Wisdom or Deceit. If you succeed, your target is assumed to be confounded enough by your flood of nonsense to give you the information/access you require. The GM is free to set limitations, time constraints and so on for the use of this ability. Conning a guard into giving you access to an illegal gambling den might require but a few minutes, while conning the mayor of a large town into taking a walk with you in the forest without his escorts might require a few hours, at least. Perhaps a few drinks as well... The GM might require you to explain to her what stories, in general, you tell to your victims for fun.

Underground bazaar(*)

You are hooked into the underground networks of illegal goods purchase and reselling. Consider that every Interim chapter, the GM will give you information on a potentially interesting and available piece of equipment. Usually, these pieces of equipment are those that would interest you, but that cannot be bought on the open market; minor First Age artifacts, drugs, documentation and blueprints of forbidden tech, obscure First Age texts, etc. The items in question might not be readily accessible, but you will know where they might be located. The GM can withhold this ability's effects for 1, 2 or more Interim chapters in order to subsequently give you information concerning the whereabouts of a more significant piece of equipment or artifact. You can ask this as well from the GM, to show that your character is searching for one artifact in particular, and of greater power.

Thief's awareness

You are aware of your surroundings, of potential ambush sites and are on your guard every waking moment of your life.

- You have an automatic +2 modifier to detect traps, spot ambushes, hidden foes or people tracking you.
- Foes that attack you when you are cautious must beat a GN of 6 instead of 5.
- On the first round of combat, your initiative PL is considered to be equal to your Intelligence+Deceit (instead of War)

Dirty fighter

Combat may not be your forte, but when cornered, you fight like a rabid animal. And oh do you fight dirty! You throw dirt in your opponents' faces, feign surrender, use diversions, you exploit their every weakness and taunt them until they make mistakes or you see an advantage you can exploit. Every round of combat, right after you have rolled initiative, you can add your Deceit rating to your initiative rank. This represents the diversions, tricks and treacheries you use to gain an advantage against your foes.

Amass wealth

See Mastery of Domination: Amass Wealth. However, here your monetary acquisitions are entirely due to blackmail, theft, cons or otherwise illegal activity.

Hence, every time you elect to use this ability to increase your income during an interim chapter, roll a GN6 Intelligence+Deceit task. Failure means you get the wealth, but attract trouble of a kind best left to the devious mind of the GM.

Master Assassin

There is no deadlier blade than the one used against the unsuspecting foe. You are a master at assassinating quickly and efficiently, using a variety of methods and weapons (and bodies if you happen to have more than one). Against an unaware or cautious target, instead of rolling a Finesse+War task to attack, you can roll a Finesse+Deceit task. This attack cannot be a Power attack. If it succeeds, your damage is considered to be a *Cinematic action* (see *Heroic Tasks*). This attack can be unarmed (by using a variety of deadly punches /kicks), armed or ranged. It can be combined with any applicable Battle style (from the War Mastery) as well.

Describe how you manage such precise and deadly attacks...

Poison whisper

During an Interim chapter, you can reduce or add to the RECO or NOTO of someone, including yourself. The amount is 2D6+ your Deceit rating. Roll a GN9 Presence+Deceit task however, and if you fail, one or more people have traced the lies back to you.

Ghost breeze (*)

You sneak about, follow people and infiltrate even the most well defended strongholds with ease. Whenever you try to infiltrate /shadow/unlock/evade detection, you can add a +2 modifier to the task and the GM must let you know the GN you need to beat before attempting the task (in the case of followed people/animals, the GM must inform you of their highest Perception ratings and an idea of their War Mastery if they are cautious).

The dagger

You have sprung a trap! Out of the shadows (1D6xyour Deceit rating) hired henchmen come out and attack your foes or try to free you from imprisonment. Or, rather, specific targets of your choice fall into a cleverly laid trap. Once per adventure (not game sitting), you can use the dagger and describe what the trap is, under the supervision of the GM. The trap itself must be physically possible, even if it is quite outlandish; the greater your Mastery rating, the greater the complexity of the trap. The dagger must be described in interesting details and be approved by the GM at least three full rounds before the trap actually takes place. This ability can be used anywhere in the world, under most circumstances.

MASTERY OF PASSIONS

If your Major Mastery is Passions, you are a master of the heart, capable of using people's emotions and desires to further your own goals. You are the essence of passion; you can use anything at your disposal, whether chemicals, song, music, paint, poetry or your very body and words to win over the hearts of others. Given time, you will become the quintessential sweet talker, muse and lover as well as a master at creating or using things to capture people's attention. Either through your voice, paintings, writings or compositions, your name will soon be whispered softly all over the world.

Master Abilities

Note!

Often during seduction attempts, the notion of compatible target will surface. A compatible target is an individual that will be attracted by the bodily form or the offerings of the Master of Passions. In general, it is a person who is sexually attracted to the current body used by the Master of Passions. It can also mean a target that can be tempted by what the Master of Passions offers. The GM will decide which targets conform to the compatible target status.

Love God

You are quite the lover. The memories and sensa-

tions you share with others are exquisite and you are a master of letting others feel bliss through loveplay or mindshares. After any loveplay or mindshare, you and your compatible target must roll an opposed task. You roll a Presence/ beauty+Passions task, while your "victim" rolls a Temperance+Passions task. If you succeed, it means your lover comes back hungrily for more and is forever at a -2 modifier to resist your suggestions/questions /propositions... This ability can be used to soften your targets prior to using The Serpent or Puppeteer.

Tease

Against a compatible target, you can get what you want by using your body and charm to seduce. If you succeed at an opposed Presence/Beauty+Passions task against your target's Temperance+Passions or Wisdom, possibly with a modifier depending on GM judgment, one of the following things may happen:

- your target sells you something for half the price he wanted to sell it. Or, conversely, buys it at a higher price than he wanted.
- your target lets you gain access to an area which he is responsible for and into which you should not be admitted
- your target reveals a piece of information he should not
- your target follows you somewhere he should not (and we all know why, you little tease...)

Essentially, anything not too damaging or not too dangerous for your target would be acceptable.

Rising Star

Using your written word, your powerful personality and your passionate charm, you are becoming known throughout the world. Every interim chapter, you receive a free 3D6+Passions rating bonus to your Recognition or Notoriety by writing controversial literature, charming the right people or producing splendid works of art.

The serpent

Everyone has weaknesses, and you are very good at finding them. Given a proper and casual setting, an unsuspecting prey, and a long discussion, you may find what his weaknesses are... From then on, you have quite an advantage against this target.... Roll an opposed task using your Presence+Passions (or Presence/Beauty+Passions against a compatible target) against your target's Temperance+Passions or Wisdom. Success means you figure out the nature of one of the target's weaknesses. Each added effect you achieve means you figure out another weakness or some other secret. This ability can be used multiple times, but requires more time as the attempts pile on.

Puppeteer

You possess the power to influence mortal minds. In some respects, this ability is a weaker version of the Power Words: humans, but does carry some added benefits.

You are a master in the fields of hypnosis, of the mortal human brain, and of its functions. Using words, arcane symbols and complex yet subtle body movements, you can transfix and hypnotize mortals, making them reveal information to you that may be hidden even to them. The process may require a preliminary rapport with the target, during which you size up your victim and learn of the pathways leading into his subconscious. Once the GM deems this acquaintance period over, you must make an opposed Presence+Passions (or Presence/Beauty+Passions against a compatible target) task against your victim's Temperance+Passions. If you win, your victim will be hypnotized and under your control, without knowing it. To use this ability, you must be in a body that allows you to transfix your victim, such as a human body or otherwise a body that bears mostly human traits. However, the GM can determine if a totally alien body can allow use of this ability.

A hypnotized victim can be given directives and asked questions; he must do your bidding or answer your questions to the best of his capacities. Obviously dangerous or suicidal actions can allow him to make a GN6 Intelligence task to snap out of it. You can insert code words into the victim's mind that allow you to control him. Given enough time, you could go back many years in his memories to pinpoint the exact events that led to certain recent happenings in the victim's life, without the latter being consciously aware of these events. You can have a

number of "puppets" equal to half of your Passions Mastery rating, round up, but must roleplay each of their enthrallments individually.

Heartbreaker

Wherever you go you leave a trail of broken hearts. During each interim chapter, you can choose any compatible target (mortal or not, player character or not) and you can then roll a Presence/beauty+Passions task, opposed by your victim's Temperance+Passions. A success with at least three(3) added effects means the victim falls deeply in love with you. If you succeed but with less than three added effects, the target is "on its way" to falling in love with you. You can try again later and consider the past added effects as being acquired. Once you total three added effects, the target has fallen for you. A failure means you can try again later, but with a -3 modifier. A fumble generally means you cannot try again. A definitely hostile or uninterested victim may mean you will need more than three added effects to win him over, suffer negative modifiers or need to roleplay your attempts.

Lucrative talent

Such is your artistic talent that your works of art, compositions, renderings or performances provide you with a sizeable income. Every interim chapter, roll a Finesse+Passions task or an Intelligence+Passions task, as you prefer. You must try to get the highest RR possible, and can use Available Power Points towards a heroic action, if you so desire. Depending on your RR, you will get to add a lump sum of money to your wealth, as found on the following table.

Roll Result	Wealth increase by
fumble	0
1-5	500 mints
6-10	1000 mints
11-15	5000 mints
16-20	20 000 mints
21-25	50 000 mints
26-30	100 000 mints
31-35	250 000 mints
36+	1000 000 mints

Love Slaves

You have a small following of mortals addicted to your presence, madly in love with you, which dance for your amusement. Their world revolves around you, you need neither drug nor force them; they will go out of their way for you; they do so out of love and/or blind faith in your words. Every adventure, you are assumed to have a number of love slaves equal to your Passions Mastery rating x2. Were they to die during an adventure, they would be lost until the end of the adventure, but at the start of another, you would be assumed to have "replenished" your love slaves. Quite an immoral ability to use, but then love can be cruel...

A little something...

You always carry some little bit of something that can drop mortals into the wildest mental states. This little something can be dropped into their drinks, transmitted through your perfume or with a kiss from your lips. You decide what your little something is, and the GM should generally allow it. It will make mortals "feel" strange things, such as euphoria, sexual desire, hallucinations, paranoia, etc. Assume that a number of times per adventure equal to your Mastery Rating, you have a potion, pill, fragrance, spray or needle that can send the equivalent of a small household into the craziest of mental states. Mortals can resist by succeeding at a GN9 Vigor task. In addition, they are likely to want more of the stuff after the effects wear off... Poisons are not to your liking, but if you wish, with GM approval and by paying one (1) Available Power Point, you can be considered to have a deadly little cocktail that you can administer to your mortal targets, using an elegant dispensing method, such as a kiss of death...

Artform(*)

You have a passion for some artform, and have studied it for countless years. Choose one artform (such as singing, literature, painting, dancing, sculpting, architecture, Kingdom design, etc) and to accomplish tasks relating to this artform (either to analyze, discuss or render) you receive an automatic +2 modifier.

4. FLESH, BONE AND STEEL

A character's mind is what he is; his body is what he shows. Mortal humans can modify, paint, tattoo, pierce, build or neglect their bodies to either better represent who they are or to better conceal it.

Angelions have even more control over their appearance. They can change bodies, choosing to parade around in mundane (or mundane-looking) human bodies the better with which to conceal their true identities, or bodies of utterly alien forms such as animals, insects or engineered monstrosities. In the Second Age, it is therefore very dangerous -or at the very least naive- to judge others by their appearance...

During this step of character creation, a player will build his character's body(ies) using the Power Points allowed by his Character Type.

Players can either choose to build their bodies from scratch or use one of the templates found at the end of this chapter and either use it as is or customize it. For those that wish to base their character's body on a template, go right ahead. Look up the Modifying a body Template paragraph on p173. Here, we will discuss the steps necessary to build a character's body from scratch.

Building a Body from scratch...

The first step in building a body from scratch is for the player to lay the pencil down and discuss with the GM the body's general features; its size, appearance, abilities and so on.

The body description should be a few phrases, at most. A female human in her late twenties, with blonde hair and poison glands behind her fingernails allowing her to slash out with deadly effect against her enemies is a proper description. Another description could be a huge cross-between a bear and a tiger, over ten feet tall, with a tail that ends in a spiked ball of bone. It can change color to match its surroundings. Another, even wilder description would be a beast the size of a castle, that oozes and crawls its way through forests, able to fly and emit a deafening ultrasonic wave attack against foes. In the first example, the GM might suggest starting with a human template and modifying it to add poison glands (however, the player can design it from scratch if he so desires). In the second example, the player can consult both the large bear and lion to get started while for the third description, since no clear example of such a beast is given in the

templates, the GM should assist the player in designing it from scratch.

In some cases, the GM might require that characters use a common template for their bodies. As an example, a GM might want all the characters to be Eidech slaves working in the Dream Kingdom. In such a case, the GM can ask that all players start off their characters with the Eidech body type and customize them to their leisure.

Example: Jocelyne, the player of a Fell Prince character is building her main body from scratch. She wants to design a human-looking male body that looks to be in its thirties. The body was engineered from the ground up and has some features that differentiate it from the mass of mundane humans it emulates. For one, it can change color at will, blending into its environment like a chameleon. Second, it is more resistant to injury, and it has a reinforced epidermis and bone structure to ward off blades and arrows. Its expected lifespan is over three hundred years and as a last little thing, it is immune to diseases and poisons. The GM approves, but warns Jocelyne she suspects this body might cost a lot in terms of Power Points.

Once the player has his description (his "body blueprint" in a sense) approved by the GM, he can pick up the pencil and start actually building the thing by determining its size, writing up attribute values, and choosing Traits. If the description was accurate and feasible, the four steps necessary to actually create the body should be over and done with in no time.

Steps are as follows:

1) Size

After the description is done and approved, the most obvious aspect of the body should be its size. The body can be *minuscule, tiny, small, normal, large,* or *monstrous.* The body's size will affect its cost depending if the character is an Angelion or another character type (an Archfiend, a Mortal, a Felkin, etc.) Size will also affect a body's attribute maximums and provide some other game effects. See pl64 for details.

2) Body attributes

After a body's size is picked out, the time has come for the player to purchase attribute values for it. Primary body attributes are *Power, Finesse, Vigor, Beauty* and *Fear,* complemented by an array of secondary attributes such as *Toughness, Move, Health, Vision/Hearing/Smelling, Lifespan* and a few others. See pl66 for details.

3) Body Traits

Bodies can have night vision, change color, shoot fiery/acidic streams or any other mundane or not so mundane abilities. With body Traits, players can give their bodies pretty much anything in terms of special abilities, under GM supervision. See pl72 for details.

4) Details

As the last step, the player should write down what the body looks like in detail. Does it have scars, tattoos, or any other distinguishing features? What are the colors of its eyes, hair and skin? How long has the character had this body and in the case of Angelions, was it acquired from the Genomancers or through bodysnatching?

Now is the time to flesh it out, literally.

Note!

Remember that players of the Awakened and Mortal character types may need to build a mundane human body if the GM requires it. Indeed, though humans of the Second Age are quite different in terms of eye, skin and hair color, they resemble each other greatly in terms of the abilities they can possess (or, rather, the abilities they may not possess...)

Consequently, as a player, you must answer the following question before beginning the creation of your body(ies).

Are you creating a mundane human body?

If your character is an Awakened or Mortal, and the GM wants you to build a mundane human character from the Unconquered Lands, then you are limited to creating a mundane human body for your character. Creating a mundane human body is simple and straightforward.

1) Size

Humans are either small or normal-sized. In general, ten year old or younger children will be small, while older children and adults will be of normal size.

POWER	FINESSE	VIGOR	BEAUTY
8	8	8	8
FEAR	TOUGHNESS	LIFESPAN	HEALING
8	0	120	1
MOVE	VISION	HEARING	SMELL
20 (L)/0 (S,F)	6	6	3

2) Attributes

Maximum physical attributes for mundane humans are as per the above table:

3)Traits

Mundane human bodies can only possess mundane Traits (see Traits&Flaws)

Keep these limits in mind and follow the normal body creation steps outlined below.

1) Size

There are six different size classes; *minuscule, tiny, small, normal, large* and *monstrous*. Each will have properties, attribute maximums and game effects proper to it, as follow;

Max Power / Finesse /Health

A maximum value for a particular body size; No Trait, special ability or other attribute may raise the Power, Finesse or Health of a body of this particular size above this maximum value.

Spot/hit modifier

The modifier to attack a body of a particular size, using a ranged attack, or to spot it.

Base Reach

Base reach of a body of a particular size, without any weapons.

Cost modifier (Angelion/other)

The size of a body will affect its cost in a manner that depends on whether the character that will acquire it is an Angelion or not. The Guild fees for a tiny or minuscule body can be quite discouraging.

The cost modifier will be applied to the final cost of a body, depending on its size and the nature of the character that wishes to acquire it (either an Angelion character or some other character type).

Minimum Cost (Angelion)

No matter what the final cost of the body, the player of an Angelion character will still need to pay the minimum cost in Power Points to acquire it. This minimum cost represents the basic cost of having a body grown and attuned, which varies inversely with the size of the body.

Examples of Body Types

Minuscule bodies

Ever wanted to be a fly on the wall...?

Large insects, spiders and butterflies are examples of minuscule bodies. The smallest bodies that can be attuned for Angelions are around the size of a moth, a large bee, wasp or butterfly. Their advantages are many, but their cost (for Angelion characters) can overshadow their benefits. A minuscule body is harder to hit but has much less resistance to injury. Their natural attacks do token amounts of damage.

Maximum Power	N/A
Maximum Finesse	8
Maximum Health	4
Max Inherent Toughness	5
Hard to hit/see	Ranged attacks and vision tasks suffer a -5 modifier against minuscule bodies
Minuscule reach	Base reach is 0
Cost Modifier (Angelion/other)	+45/-20
Minimum Cost (Angelion)	50

Tiny bodies

About the size of large frogs, rats, squirrels and small birds.

Maximum Power	0
Maximum Finesse	8
Maximum Health	15
Max Inherent Toughness	7
Hard to hit/see	Ranged attacks and vision tasks suffer a -3 modifier against tiny bodies
Tiny reach	Base reach is 1
Cost Modifier (Angelion/other)	0/-10
Minimum Cost (Angelion)	30

Small bodies

Small bodies range in size from large birds such as hawks, eagles, and owls to nine year old children.

Maximum Power	6
Maximum Finesse	8
Maximum Health	30
Hard to hit/see	Ranged attacks and vision tasks suffer a -1 modifier against small bodies
Small reach	Base reach is 3
Cost Modifier (Angelion/other)	-30/-5
Minimum Cost (Angelion)	10

Normal bodies

A Normal body starts about the size of a ten year old and goes up to lions, small to medium bears, and animals up to 500-600 pounds in weight.

Maximum Power	10
Maximum Finesse	8
Maximum Health	60
Normal reach	Base reach is 5
Cost Modifier (Angelion/other)	-30/0
Minimum Cost (Angelion)	10

Large bodies

Examples would include large bears, elephants, tyrannosaurs and anything under ten tons in weight. Large bodies are easier to hit with weapons but have much higher resistance to injuries.

Maximum Power	20
Maximum Finesse	6
Maximum Health	150
Easy to hit/see	Ranged attacks and vision tasks suffer a +1 modifier against large bodies
Large reach	Base reach is 8
Cost Modifier (Angelion/other)	-40/-10
Minimum Cost (Angelion)	10

Monstrous bodies

Monstrous bodies are just that: monstrous! They start around the size of a small whale and can go up to things bigger still, such as large dinosaurs, large whales and massive entities the size of a palace or more! A monstrous body is notoriously easy to hit and spot but is a lot tougher to kill.

Maximum Power	None
Maximum Finesse	4
Maximum Health	None
Easy to hit/see	Ranged attacks and vision tasks suffer a +4 modifier against monstrous bodies
Monstrous reach	Base reach is 12
Cost Modifier (Angelion/other)	-50/-20
Minimum Cost (Angelion)	10

Example: Jocelyne's human-looking body is normal-sized. She writes it on her body sheet. She takes

note of the Cost modifier (Angelion), which is -30 Power Points. Its minimum cost is 10pts. For now, however, the cost of this body stands at -30pts. Jocelyne then moves on to step 2, choosing its attributes.

2) Body Attributes

Power, Finesse, Vigor, Beauty and *Fear* are the five primary physical attributes.

The costs for a specific attribute value are summed up in the following table;

Attribute value	Power	Finesse	Vigor	Beauty	Fear
N/A	-10 (M)	-10	*	-10	-2
0	0 (T)	0	*	0	0
1	2	2	2	2	2
2	4	4	4	4	4
3	6	6	6	6	6
4	8	8(Mo)	8	8	8
5	10	10	10	10	10
6	12 (S)	15(L)	15	15	12
7	15	20	20	20	15
8	20	30	30	30	20
9	25	40**	40**	50	30
10	30(N)	50**	50**	75	50
11	35	-	-	-	-
12	40	-	-	-	-
13	45	-	-	-	-
14	50	-	-	-	-
15	55	-	-	-	-
16	60	-	-	-	-
17	70	-	-	-	-
18	80	-	-	-	-
19	90	-	-	-	-
20	100(L)	-	-	-	-
per + 5	+50	-	-	-	-

Table explanation

(M): maximum for minuscule bodies.

(T): maximum for tiny bodies.

(S): maximum for small bodies.

(N): maximum for normal bodies.

(L): maximum for large bodies.

(Mo): maximum for monstrous bodies

(*): minimum Vigor for any body is 1.

(**): only mechanical bodies can have a 9 or 10 in Finesse or Vigor

The Power attribute has no upper limit; all other attributes in the game can only go up to 10.

Example: Jocelyne wants her character's body to have the following attributes: Power(5), Finesse(7), Vigor(8), Beauty(4) and Fear(6). The attributes cost 10+20+30+8+12=80 points. Initially the body was at -30pts, so now it goes up to 50pts.

Power

Sheer muscle power, pure and simple.

With a Power of...	A body example might be...	You may be able to...
N/A	an insect, a plant or tree	move a pencil on a table, after much effort. Some bodies may be able to do nothing at all (such as the plant/tree)
0	a rat or bird	Push open a door with your nose. Pick up and carry a dagger
2	dog, child	Lift and carry 40 pounds(GN4)
4	slightly frail person	Lift 100lbs from the ground for a short while (GN6)
6	a strong person	Lift and carry 250lbs for a short while (GN9)
8	maximum human	Lift and carry 400lbs for a short while (GN11)
10	a bear or a designer species of lizardmen, eight feet tall	Lift a big motorcycle from the ground (GN15)
12	African white rhino	topple a small car onto its side (GN20)
14	a Tyrannosaur	Lift a car completely off the ground (GN23)
25	A Vidian Destroyer	Unearth large trees from the ground barehanded, throw elephants for sport (GN36)
30	the monstrous Fell Worms	Derail a speeding freight train (GN40) and send the locomotive flying a hundred feet in the air
40	Something really, really huge, mean and best left alone...	Topple skyscrapers with a casual push (GN60)

Finesse

Precision movements, quickness of motion, nimbleness, dexterity and hand-eye coordination

With a Finesse of...	A body example might be...	You may be able to...
2	a toddler that just learned how to walk, always bumping into things	Barely pick up a pen without hurting yourself
4-5	an average person	Walk on a high wire (GN4 per five feet of rope)
8	absolute maximum human ability, an Olympic gymnast, a cat, a quick little bird or insect	Jump rapidly from tree branch to tree branch without falling (GN6 per branch)
9-10	some machines, such as golems	Run in onrushing traffic, dodging cars and jumping over them as need be (GN15)

Vigor

Physical stamina, resistance to disease and injury

With a Vigor of...	A body example might be...	**You may be able to...**
2	a weak, frail old man or woman on medication	Survive a severe case of the flu (GN4)
4-5	an average person	Run at max MOVE rate for a few rounds (GN6), if your life depended on it
8	Maximum human ability, a marathon athlete	Run at max MOVE rate for five minutes(GN9), resist illnesses very well
10	mechanical endurance, many Golems designed for war or industry	Run for an hour at max MOVE rate (GN15)

Beauty rating

Physical, sexual appeal

Your body's Beauty rating only comes into play when you interact with a target that may be attracted to this body. In some circles or adventures, the beauty rating may prove to be useless, whereas in others, beauty may be a body's most needed attribute. Only human-looking bodies can have a Beauty rating, all others have a rating of N/A.

With a Beauty of...	A body example might be...	You may be able to...
2	a slightly deformed person	avoid being stared at and mocked, out of pity
4-5	an average person	blend into a crowd and really, really not stick out
8	a supermodel	Live on your looks alone
10	An engineered beauty	Make normal people gasp, stutter and bump into things

Fear rating

The Fear rating shows just how much a body is capable of causing dread in others. At high levels, normal folk will run away without thinking, stand frozen with fear or soil themselves. If used properly, the Fear rating can be used to persuade, interrogate or otherwise use others just like the Beauty rating, albeit in much different ways.

Any fear, intimidate, interrogate or persuade task roll can be done using Presence/Fear instead of Presence/Beauty or Presence. Targets resist with their Temperance attribute.

With a Fear of...	A body example might be...	You may be able to...
2	a loveable little mouse	scare away a fly (a small fly)
5	an average person	scare away children or the weak-minded by screaming and acting strangely
8	a giant, poisonous snake. A dark, red eyed stranger	send shivers down the backs of normal people, just by being what you are
10	a Vidian Destroyer	send people into shock, whole communities screaming and fleeing

Secondary/ derived attributes

Now that the primary physical attributes have been determined, the player must derive or choose the body's secondary/derived attributes.

Body Size	Health
minuscule	VIGOR x1/4
tiny	VIGOR x1/2
small	VIGOR x2
normal	VIGOR x4
large	VIGOR x10
monstrous	VIGOR x50

Health rating

Health is a measure of your body's resistance to injuries, wounds and death. Health is a derived value from your body's Vigor and Size, and can be found in the above table.

The above table relates the base amount of Health points your body has. However, you can increase your body's Health to represent greater resistance to injuries by picking the increased health Trait later on.

Weight

The weight of a body can be determined by the GM or found using the following formula:

Weight (kg): Health points^3/(100). Any weight between 1/2 this value and 2x this value should be acceptable.

Inherent Toughness

Inherent toughness measures your body's natural ability at deflecting, reducing or otherwise ignoring damage. The higher the Inherent Toughness the better; however take note that as Inherent Toughness goes up, its indiscrete nature is generally compromised. Above 4, a body's Inherent Toughness usually takes the form of thick scales or layers of fat; above 8, it resembles an organic tank! Mechanical bodies however can have any Toughness rating and still be discrete. A golem with an Inherent Toughness of 20 can still appear human if it wears an artificial skin over its chassis.

Inherent toughness	Cost	Rogue Golem cost
0	0	-
1	5	-
2	10	-
3	15	-
4	20	-
5	30	-
6	40	5
7	50	10
8	60	15
9	80	30
10	100	50
every+1	+20	+20
Fire resistant	+5	0

Rogue Golem characters are notoriously rugged. They start with an Inherent Toughness of 5 (fire resistant), and their players must pay the Rogue Golem cost to raise their Inherent Toughness further.

Example 1: Jocelyne gives this body an Inherent Toughness of 2 to simulate its tough skin and hardened bone structure. Her body cost jumps from 50 to 60 Power Points.

Healing rate

The Healing rate represents the number of Health points a body can heal in a day.The maximum number of Health points an organic body can heal during a day is 3.

Healing rate	COST
0	-100
1	0
2	10
3	30

Example: Jocelyne is starting to see that this body is exceeding her cost expectations. She goes for the base healing rate of 1 at no cost. Her body cost remains at

60 Power Points.

Move rating

The Move rating represents the number of meters the body can move during one round of play. It represents either the body's land bound (L), sea (S) or flight (F) movement rating.

Organic life forms normally have a maximum land bound or sea movement of 100, while some rare life forms have been designed with airspeeds above 200.

Move (L, S or F)	COST
0	-10
1-5	1
6-10	2
11-20	MOVE/4
21-80	MOVE/2
81+	MOVE
Per additional move method	+20

Over this limit, for Move ratings that represent jet or rocket speeds for example, a Move rating becomes an extraordinary Trait (see Traits&Flaws section.) For example, an organic entity that can move at MACH1 under organic power (whatever the principle) would classify that as an extraordinary Trait, possibly costing between 100-300 points depending on the body, and therefore only available to the Archfiend character type. To get multiple Move methods, you must buy each one separately and add 20 points per additional move method after the first. Hence to have a land bound Move(L) of 20 and a flight rating of Move(F)50 would cost a total of 5+25+20=50 Power Points.

Some bodies, such as humans and most animals, may be able to swim at a Move(S) of 5 at no cost, with GM approval. Birds can usually bounce awkwardly on the ground at a Move(L) score of 4-5 at no cost.

Long distance movement

For long trips, a body is assumed capable of moving at an average rate of (Move x Vigor)/20 kilometers an hour. Less in hard, rough terrain, less under difficult conditions (scorching heat, stormy weather, etc) and much less if wounded.

Example: Jocelyne's body moves around like a human, no slower but no faster. Its MOVE score is 16, which costs 4 Power Points. Her body is now up to 64 Power Points.

Perception ratings

(Vision, Hearing and Smell)

Your body is the vessel through which your mind interacts and perceives its environment. Humans have five ways of getting feedback from the world: vision, hearing, smell, taste and touch.

The three sensory attributes that make up the perception ratings in the game are vision, hearing and smelling. Both touch and taste are not dealt with in game terms, nor are other animal senses, which may be brought into play as Traits.

An average human will have the following perception ratings:

VISION	HEARING	SMELL
5	5	1

A dog, on the other hand, might have the following values:

VISION	HEARING	SMELL
4	7	10

A perception rating is used just like an attribute value. To smell its prey, a dog can roll 10D6 or 5D10. An average human may roll only 1D6.

Hearing Rating

Hearing rating	Power Point cost
N/A	-10
0	-5
1	0
2	1
3	2
4	3
5	5
6	7
7	10
8	15
9	20
10	25

Vision Rating

Vision rating	Power Point cost
N/A	-20
0	-10
1	0
2	1
3	2
4	3
5	5
6	7
7	10
8	15
9	20
10	25

Smell Rating

Smell rating	Power Point cost
N/A	-10
0	-5
1	0
2	1
3	2
4	3
5	5
6	7
7	10
8	15
9	20
10	25

Example: Joelyne's body has the average human perception ratings of 5 (vision), 5(hearing) and 1(smell) that cost 10pts. Her body is now up to 74 Power Points.

Natural Attack

Every body with a Power attribute of 0 or more has some sort of natural attack (be it through trampling, smothering, kicking or ramming) having a base DL equal to its Power attribute -5. For Monstrous bodies having a Power attribute of 20 or more, their natural attack DL is equal to their Power attribute. Some may have additional attacks, but all bodies will have at least their natural attack.

Power attribute	Natural DL
N/A	*
0-19	Power-5
20+	Power

Minuscule attacks

Minuscule bodies (and other bodies having a Power attribute rated at N/A) do not have a natural attack that can deal out damage. In order to have one, they must purchase one or more *additional attacks* (see below for additional attacks);

- for 5 Power Points, they acquire an additional attack rated at DL-5.
- for 10 Power Points, they acquire an additional attack rated at DL-4.
- for 15 Power Points, they acquire an additional attack rated at DL-3.

What more, the damage delivered by a body having a Power attribute of N/A cannot spill, no matter what the final DL of the attack after added effects. Players can add the venomous Trait to make them more deadly (see below). Minuscule and tiny bodies with hands can wield proportionately-sized weapons (such as knives, sword and axes). The damage they inflict while using these weapons will benefit from the weapon's normal bonus but this damage cannot spill either. Hence if attacking with a tiny sword (+3DL), a tiny character with a Power of 0 (and natural damage rated at DL-5) will have a base DL of -2.

Additional attack

The damage values above represent the body's use of fists, kicks or smothering attacks. They use the body's brute strength to damage targets.

Players may give their bodies more effective weaponry, such as the bite of a lion, the horn of a rhino, the claws of a bear or the sting of a scorpion. These are called *additional attacks*, and cost a minimum of 5pts, possibly more depending on the nature and lethality of this additional attack;

- For 5 Power Points, this additional attack is rated at the body's natural DL+1 for

bodies having a Power attribute of 0-19, or DL+5 for bodies having a Power attribute of 20+

- For 10 Power Points, this additional attack is rated at the body's natural DL+2 for bodies having a Power attributes of 0-19, or DL+10 for bodies having a Power attribute of 20+. This attack form will be obvious as enlarged teeth, large claws, horns, etc.
- For 15 Power Points, this additional attack is rated at the body's natural DL+3 for bodies having a Power attributes of 0-19, or DL+15 for bodies having a Power attribute of 20+. This attack form is even more obvious, such as an enormous horn, humongous claws, a large spiked tail, etc.

Hence, a large dog (Power attribute of 4 and natural attack DL of -1) can attack with its bite rated at DL0 because its 5pts trait, *additional attack: bite* allows it to bite as though its natural damage DL was 1 point higher.

Take note however that this increase in damage is only for this specific attack type. If the dog had its jaw taped shut and it could only use its body to attack, it would have a base DL of -1 per attack by using its paws, ramming, smothering smaller foes, etc.

Example 1: Jocelyne's body has no additional attacks. With a Power attribute of 5, her natural attack is rated at DL0. Her body cost stays at 74 Power Points.

Example 2: a player wants to build a great white shark body for use in and around his marine Kingdom. The shark has a Power of 12, and its natural attack deals out DL7 damage. The player designs a bite attack by spending 15 points (a massive, horrible bite!) so that it deals out DL10 damage.

Additional attack options...

Attack is ranged (15pts)

You can design bodies that use parts of their bodies to propel damaging substances, spines, poison darts or bits of sharp bone at their targets. Such ranged attacks can only reach out to a few meters, at most, from the body. Consider an effective range of one meter, +5 Power Points every time you add a meter to this effective range. Damage for such attacks is a normal attack at the body's natural DL. At player discretion, it can carry the venomous Trait as well with some Additional Power Points.

Attack has an added Trait/Flaw

- Add 10 points for continuing damage
- Add 25 points for armor piercing damage (for attacks having a base DL of 1 or more)
- Add around 10 points for an area effect weapon that can attack up to 3 or four close by targets (gas, breath or thrown/projected spines, etc...)

The GM will determine the cost and limitations depending on the body and the player's description. Refer yourself to the special attack Trait as well in the Traits & Flaws section.

Venomous (5pts)

If desired, a lethal, hallucinogenic, soporific or other venom type can be added to the attack. To inject a dose of venom in the target's bloodstream, a venomous attack must remove at least one point of Health from the target (the attack must beat the target's toughness) or succeed at a Nick&Bleed.

Examples follow.

Lethal venom

Base GN to resist the venom is 6. Base damage is DL1. See *Poison* in the *When All Hell Breaks Loose* chapter for details on poisons and their effects.

- Add 2 Power Points per +1DL. Add 10 Power Points per +5DL above 20.
- Add 5 Power Points per +2 added to the GN to resist effects
- Add 5 Power Points if the venom is quick acting (5 rounds between every Health reduction).
- Add 20 Power Points if the venom is super-quick acting (2 rounds between every Health reduction).

If successfully resisted, target takes no damage from the poison.

Soporific/ Hallucinogenic venom

Same as lethal venom, but inflicts no damage. Base effect is that target suffers a -1 task modifier to all actions. Negative modifiers (which represent grogginess, sleep, or hallucinations) last for (12-Vigor) hours. For every additional 5pts, a player can add a further -1 task modifier, which takes effect 10 rounds after the first -1 (5 rounds if it is quick acting, 2 rounds if it is super quick). When the total amount of task penalties overwhelms the target's Vigor, he falls asleep or is totally incapacitated by his delirium, and cannot take any worthwhile action. If a target suffers task penalties equal to or greater than his Finesse, he cannot walk and is immobile.

Other types of venom

- Aphrodisiacs lower Temperance by one point as a base effect, but for each additional 5pts, they lower it by a further -1 (up to -5) for purposes of resisting seductions or lovemaking invites.
- Disease carriers infect victims with illnesses.
- Egg-layers inject microscopic eggs in the victims that hatch or breed inside them.
- Tracer venom (10pts) covers the target in spores that can be followed by another animal.
- etc.

Example: a player wants his Fell Prince Mainform to be able to expel poison gas with her breath, on command. This is a ranged attack with an effective range of a meter. It is a soporific venom. Since it is gaseous, it is able to affect many targets at once. GN8 to resist, it inflicts a total of -4 task modifiers to victims and is quick acting (5 rounds in between each -1 modifier). Base cost 5pts for venomous attack, +15pts for 3 additional task modifiers above the base -1 modifier, +15 for range, +5 for GN8 to resist and +5 for quick acting. The area effect (a few close by targets) is a +10 point trait. This comes up to 55 points, way over the player's intention. To reduce cost, the player adds the partial usage flaw to it (see the Traits&Flaws section), dividing the cost in half but allowing the body to use its breath weapon only once every day. Hence, final cost is 28 points.

Caution!

Only natural attacks are dealt with these rules. Unnatural or exotic attack forms or explosives are not treated as additional attacks, but can be acquired with the special attack Trait.

Lifespan

Bodies in the game have a lifespan. The lifespan measures the amount of years the body will probably last before natural death (old age), however unlikely that might be. Small insects usually have a notoriously short lifespan (though they can be engineered to last longer), while bigger mammals and amphibians usually last as long as or longer than humans. Bio-engineered bodies can have an impressively long lifespan, though true immortality is still out of reach of the Genomancers. They do design and sell bodies having 2000 year lifespans, though since their Guild has been in existence for less than two centuries, their claims cannot be verified or countered as of yet...

Choose your body's lifespan by paying the following costs.

Lifespan	Cost
per 10 year	1pt
one adventure maximum*	-50pts

(*): bodies designed to die off within the span of one year or less are called fiends by the Genomancers. Their genetic structure is weak, being prone to severe mutations that usually kill them off within a year of their maturation period. Many of the beasts Lord Ravencross unleashed during the War were of this sort, and of those that survived the conflict, the vast majority died off on their own shortly thereafter. Some of those that did not became or led to the birth of today's Archfiends.

Example: Jocelyne's description states that her body has a lifespan of 300 years. This adds 30pts to its cost, and raises it to 104pts.

3) Body Traits

Bodies are immensely variable in shape and capabilities. Attributes and size alone cannot handle all the specifics of bodies that can range from flatworms and cephalopods to camouflaged chameleons and fire-breathing dragons. Refer yourself to the Traits&Flaws section (p194) to see how you can build your body's Traits, or pick one or

more from the examples we give. While creating a character's body, only Traits that are written on the body sheet can be picked out.

Example: Jocelyne has busted her Power Point "budget". Before Traits, it has a cost of 104 Power Points. By looking at the Traits&Flaws section, she sees that the CAMOUFLAGE Trait, to represent her body's ability at changing colors, will cost 15 Power Points and give her body a -3 modifier to be spotted. Immunity to disease and poisons costs a further 30 Power Points.

Adding these 45pts to its previous cost, the body now costs 149pts. Jocelyne decides to lower its cost a little by adding a few Flaws to it.

First, she decides that this body needs enormous quantities of water to survive; else its skin cannot change colors and can become cracked, in effect slowly killing her. She needs to drink at least a liter of water every three hours, more if she is under hot and dry weather. If she does not have a constant supply of water, she loses her camouflage ability, and loses 1D6 Health points per hour. The GM rules that this is a -20pts Flaw, lowering the body's total cost to 129pts.

Seeing that her character is a Fell Prince, she needs to lower its cost to 120 Power Points, maximum. She looks at her lifespan of 300 years and wonders if perhaps it is overkill, considering her GM is notorious for having adventures of decidedly high attrition rates in terms of bodies. Jocelyne doubts she will get to see this body die of old age. She lowers its lifespan to 200 years, and gets back 10 points. The body cost is now 119 Power Points, and she keeps the remaining point as a leftover point. Contrary to most other Angelion characters from her group, Jocelyne's character only has one body at the start of the game.

Body templates...

Following are examples of bodies and their Power Point costs. They can serve as great starting points from which players can build customized bodies for their characters. They can, as well, serve the GM as NPCs.

The bodies are listed following a common format, which is explained below.

Attributes

The body's primary and secondary attributes are listed here. Those that are not listed can be derived from those listed. For humans, animals and most bioengineered bodies, this represents what the average member of this species might possess in terms of attributes. Under this section is the cost, in Power Points, of the body's attribute scores.

Traits

Here the body's Traits are listed, as well as the individual cost of each trait. Under this section you will see the total cost of the body's Traits.

Size

Here we list the size of this body. In general, it represents the size of an adult specimen.

Cost modifier (Angelion/other)

Listed here will be the cost modifier for the body based on its size and on the character type that is to acquire it.

Base cost (Angelion)

The *base cost (Angelion)* is the amount of Power Points a player will need to spend to have this body if his character is an Angelion. If the base cost is below the minimum cost for an Angelion body of this size, the listing will show both costs (minimum and actual). If an Angelion player wants to modify this template, start with the body's actual cost but if after all modifications are factored in the cost is still below the minimum, the player will need to pay the minimum cost.

Base cost (other)

The *base cost (other)* is the amount of Power Points a player will need to spend if his character is not an Angelion. There are no minimum costs for bodies bought by other character types.

Modifying a body template

When you pick out a body template from the examples listed below, you can modify it at your leisure (under GM supervision). You will need to spend Power Points to:

- Raise one or more attribute values
- Add beneficial Traits (Traits that have positive Power Point costs)

❖ Remove Flaws (Traits that have negative Power Point costs)

On the other hand, you will receive Power Points back when you:

- ❖ Lower one or more attribute values
- ❖ Remove beneficial Traits (Traits that have positive Power Point costs)
- ❖ Add Flaws (Traits that have negative Power Point costs)

Example: a player is in the process of modifying the Large bear template for her Fell Prince. The Large Bear starts with the following attributes:

Power (11), Finesse (4), Vigor (6), Fear (8). Its Size is Large.

The player wants the bear to have the following attributes:

Power (14), Finesse (6), Vigor (6) and Fear (5). Its size will remain the same.

These modifications will cost:

POWER (11) to POWER (14): 50-35 = 15 points

FINESSE (4) to FINESSE (6): 15-8 = 7 points

VIGOR (6) to VIGOR (6): no change

FEAR (8) to FEAR (5): 10-20 = -10 points

Total cost for attribute modifications: 12 points to add to the Large Bear's cost.

Next the player wants to be able to talk with humans using the voice box of his bear as well as being able to use weapons and equipment with human-like hands. The body, therefore, needs to lose the No manipulators trait as well as the Cannot talk trait. The No manipulators Trait is a (-20) point Trait, so removing it costs 20 points. Likewise, removing the Cannot talk Trait costs another 10 points. Total cost to remove these two Traits is 30 points.

Total cost for this body would then be: the base cost (Angelion) + 12pts (attribute modifications) + 30pts (Flaw removals)

Human and Fellkin bodies...

Humans form the basis of most Angelion Mainforms; they also leant their gene pool to countless Fellkin species that wander about the Fell Kingdoms.

Average Human Male 20 years old

POWER	FINESSE	VIGOR	BEAUTY
5	5	5	5
FEAR	**TOUGHNESS**	**LIFESPAN**	**HEALING**
5	0	100	1
MOVE	**VISION**	**HEARING**	**SMELL**
16 (L)	5	5	1

Attribute cost:	74pts
Traits:	none
Trait cost:	0pts
Size:	normal
Health:	20
Cost modifier (Angelion/other):	-30/0
Base cost (Angelion):	44pts
Base Cost (other):	74pts

This template can form the basis of most human bodies, from the mild to the splendidly exotic...

POWER	FINESSE	VIGOR	BEAUTY
4	5	4	7
FEAR	TOUGHNESS	LIFESPAN	HEALING
3	0	100	1
MOVE	VISION	HEARING	SMELL
16 (L)	5	5	1

Beautiful woman, 20 years old

Attribute cost: 76pts
Body Traits: none
Trait cost: 0pts
Size: normal
Health: 16
Cost modifier (Angelion/other): -30/0
Base Cost (Angelion): 46pts
Base Cost (other): 76pts

A sweet little woman, pretty as can be. At 7 in *beauty*, this body is one point shy of the maximum in un-engineered human beauty.

POWER	FINESSE	VIGOR	BEAUTY
5*	5	5*	5
FEAR	TOUGHNESS	LIFESPAN	HEALING
5*	0	110	1
MOVE	VISION	HEARING	SMELL
16 (L)*	5	5	1

Young Boy

Attribute cost: 75pts
BodyTraits(*): Immature
-3 Power
-2 Vigor
-2 Fear
-6 Move
temporary 10 years x1/4) (-4pts)
Trait cost: -4pts
Size: normal
Health: 12*
Cost modifier (Angelion/other): -30/0
Base cost (Angelion): 41pts
Final Cost (other): 71pts

A ten-year-old boy; old enough to be of normal size. He will keep his immature status until he is about 16 years old, gradually gaining Move and Power over time. His mature attributes are those listed.

POWER	FINESSE	VIGOR	BEAUTY
3	2	2	1
FEAR	TOUGHNESS	LIFESPAN	HEALING
2	0	30	1
MOVE	VISION	HEARING	SMELL
10 (L)	3	2	3

Old Drunk

Attribute cost: 30pts

Body Traits: Old age (Loses one point randomly from either Power, Vigor, Beauty, Hearing or 5 points from Move per interim chapter, until Vigor reaches 0 or lifespan is reached, at which point death may occur at any moment (-20pts)

Trait cost: -20pts

Size: normal

Health: 8

Cost modifier (Angelion/other): -30/0

Base Cost (Angelion): 10pts (minimum; -20 actual)

Base Cost (other): 10pts

Too much booze, too much life already... This one is near the end and his hearing isn't what it used to be. This can also represent a body from an Angelion that is low on funds and can't afford a new one.

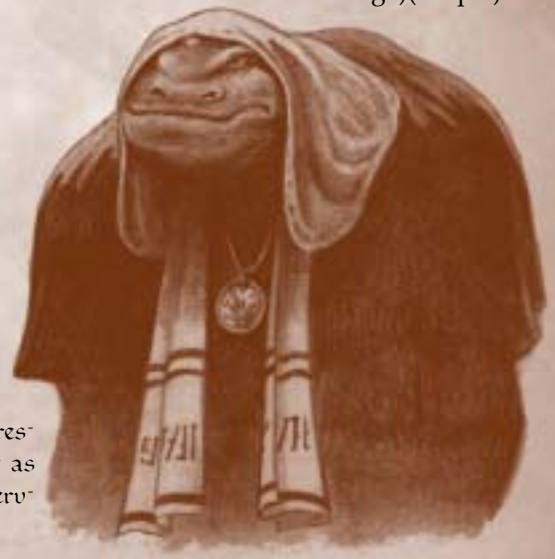
POWER	FINESSE	VIGOR	BEAUTY
10	5	6	N/A
FEAR	TOUGHNESS	LIFESPAN	HEALING
7	2	70	1
MOVE	VISION	HEARING	SMELL
22 (L)	4	4	7

Eidech

Attribute cost: 104pts

Body Traits: Additional attack (bite DL6 damage)(5pts)

2x Additional attack (claws DL6 damage)(2x5pts)



Trait cost: 15pts

Size: large

Health: 60

Cost modifier (Angelion/other): -40/-10

Base cost (Angelion): 79pts

Final Cost (other): 109pts

Eidechs are rarely less than nine feet in height and could wrestle a polar bear to the ground. They are as cunning as humans and as predatory as saltwater crocodiles, serving as thralls in countless some Kingdoms

Dream Folk

POWER	FINESSE	VIGOR	BEAUTY
7	8	7	8
FEAR	**TOUGHNESS**	**LIFESPAN**	**HEALING**
6	0	1000	1
MOVE	**VISION**	**HEARING**	**SMELL**
40 (F) 16 (L)	7	7	3

Attribute cost: 273pts

Body Traits Immunity to dis ease (30pts)

Night vision (5pts)

Trait cost: 35pts

Size: normal

Health: 28

Cost modifier (Angelion/other): -30/0

Base Cost (Angelion): 278pts

Base Cost (other): 308pts

Dreamfolk are butterfly-winged Fellkin having an extremely long lifespan and impressive physical potential. Birthlings are born wingless, growing their wings during the metamorphosis stage of their lives. At the onset of this stage, a young Dreamfolk will form a cocoon on fertile soil and enter a dormant state lasting anywhere from a year to a decade. Fields of cocooned Dreamfolk litter the Dream Kingdom. After the metamorphosis is complete, the Dreamfolk adult comes out of his long sleep with wings that vary in color and shape according to the dreams he had during his sleep.

The features of a typical Dreamfolk adult are stunning, while their muscle mass and general athletic abilities are beyond human standards. They fly in the clouds with a silent grace but could crush a man's skull with their hands. Both males and females stand around seven feet in height, with hair, eyes and wings that range from silver to jet-black, red to purple.

Though not immortal, Dreamfolk have been designed to live over a thousand years. In Valruin they rule masses of lesser species and abroad serve as the messengers and emissaries of Ravencross.

Scoprion-men of the Purple Island

POWER	FINESSE	VIGOR	BEAUTY
7	5	6	0
FEAR	TOUGHNESS	LIFESPAN	HEALING
7	2	30	1
MOVE	VISION	HEARING	SMELL
16 (L)	5	5	1

Attribute cost: 72pts

Body Traits: 2x additional attack (pincers: DL3 damage) (2x5pts)

Additional attack (poison stinger: DL4 damage, ven omous: Lethal poi-son, DL3, GN8 to resist) (24pts)

Night vision (5pts)

Trait cost: 39pts

Size: normal

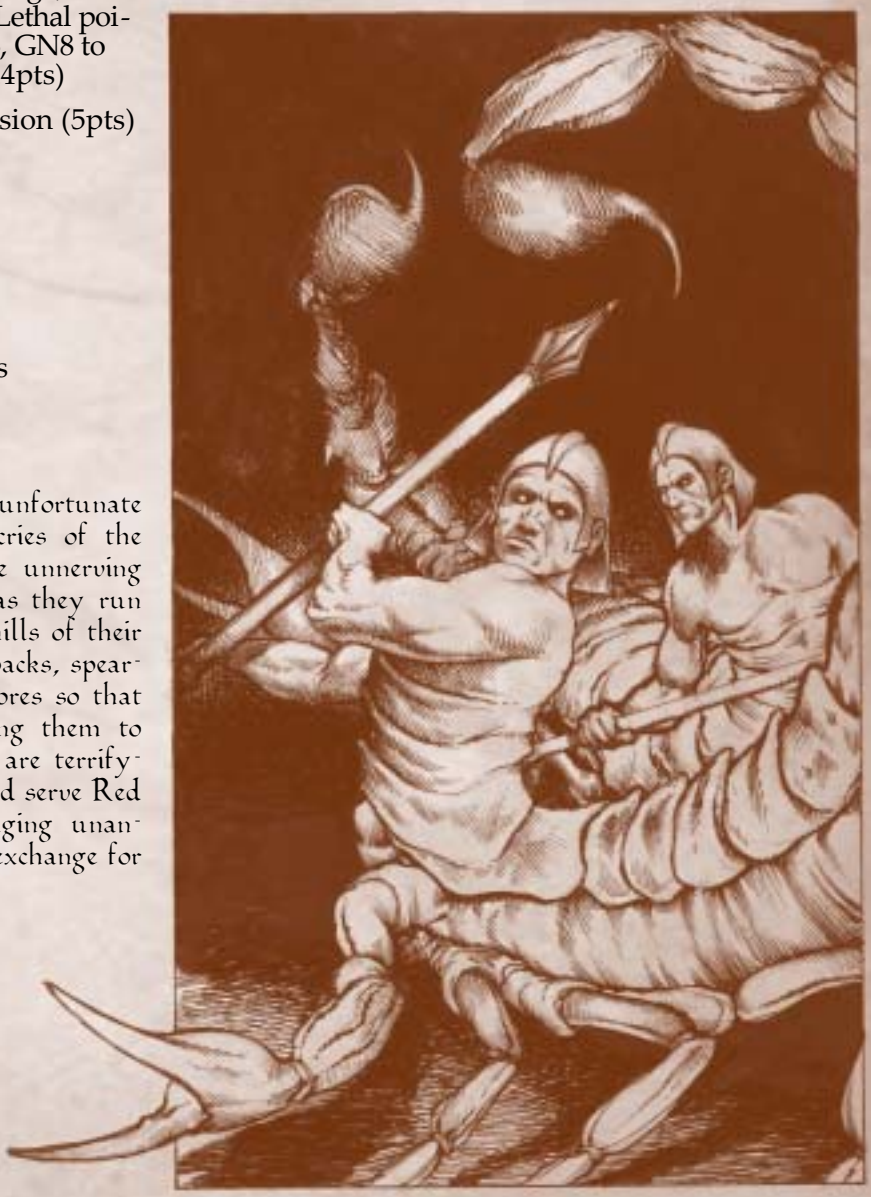
Health: 24

Cost modifier (Angelion/other): -30/0

Base Cost (Angelion): 81pts

Base Cost (other): 111pts

On the Purple Island an unfortunate traveler will hear the war cries of the Scorpion-men, as well as the unnerving sounds of their clawed feet as they run after prey on the rocky foothills of their island. They hunt in large packs, spear-ing the hides of giant herbivores so that they may approach and sting them to death before feasting. They are terrify-ingly fond of human flesh, and serve Red Lotus with blind zeal, bringing unan-nounced guests before her in exchange for generous rewards of meat.



POWER	FINESSE	VIGOR	BEAUTY
12	7	6	N/A*
FEAR	TOUGHNESS	LIFESPAN	HEALING
9	8	*	O*
MOVE	VISION	HEARING	SMELL
20 (L)	9	7	N/A

(*): see Mechanical body Trait

Nyathka (The redeyes)

Attribute cost: 145pts

Body Traits: Mechanical body(200pts)

Additional attack (spikes DL9)(10pts)
Increased Health (+35 Health) (35pts)

Night vison (5pts)

Trait cost: 250pts

Size: normal

Health: 59

Cost modifier (Angelion/other): n/a/0

Base cost (Angelion): n/a

Base Cost (other): 395pts

During the Second Genesis the Kingsways unleashed hundreds of Nyathkas against human survivors, and for many atrocious decades these lethal machines scoured the world for signs of human life, easing themselves down caverns and grottoes into subterranean survivor settlements where their macabre deeds are best left undescribed.

Their grim duties over, the Nyathka horde stood dormant in the dungeons of the Tower of Anekron until the war. They were destroyed while still in their torpor by Ambrose, who incinerated them along with the nine obelisks of knowledge and the immortality machine. Blackened Nyathka hulks were also found in the Tower of Emerald and Bronze after Lyra's disappearance, hinting that she may have used Nyathkas in her artificial intelligence experiments. The legend of the redeyes -beasts having a single glowing red eye haunting the forests of the southern Birthland- may suggest that one or more Nyathkas may have escaped Lyra's Tower before its destruction.

Animal Bodies

The three men met as expected at midnight, under the great oak of Meadowlake. Silent and watching, the moon and I stood above them. They whispered and gestured, nervous. The tall one had arms long and thin, and he handed a bronze box to the dark-skinned man I had first followed. The third man, hunched and quite old, was none other than Cleric Hader. I growled gutturally. I had been a fool.

Then a crack in the distance, after a careless step. The men stopped talking and looked around suspiciously.

I settled my talons deeper into the soft bark of the tree...

I froze, one furry paw just inches off the ground, another standing on a splintered branch...

I eased an arrow on a bow string... After mere seconds of poor scrutiny, and with a shrug, the tall one barked at them to return to their business. They should have drawn weapons. Funny how men often overlook the signs of imminent danger. Countless are those that die moments after a casual shrug...

Though my beak -as well as my jaws- forbade it, I am sure I smiled three times instead of just once. Now was the moment!

"Hooo!" I said, from the tree.

"Arfff!!" I answered back, from the forest, slightly eastward of their position. Always have been playful, I guess. Even as a mortal.

"HOOO!!!!" I said once more, swooping up and down over their heads, batting my wings furiously in the air. The dark-skinned one picked up a stone and threw it hard, but missed, and before he could pick up another, he was come upon by a two hundred pound mass of fur, muscle and teeth. With a growl I aimed to rip his throat out, though I surmise I hit slightly higher for I spat out his lower jaw. Still, he fell, and my second bite did indeed rip out his throat. The tall, hawkish one was downed by an arrow that struck him right in the chest. He fell silently, dead before his head hit the earth, his heart wrapped around my arrow. Cleric Hader, dagger in hand, fell backward. I growled at him, and as I made my way towards him from the forest, he recognized my human form, and let out a small whimper.

"Indeed", I said, as I landed on my shoulder

	Bear- large grizzly	Bee/wasp	Bird-hawk	Butterfly	Cat (house cat)	Dog (50-60 pounds)
POWER (natural DL)	11 (DL6)	N/A (none)	1 (DL-4)	N/A (none)	1 (DL-4)	3 (DL-2)
FINESSE	4	4	7	4	8	4
VIGOR (Health)	6 (60)	2 (1)	4 (8)	4 (1)	4 (8)	5 (10)
FEAR	8	2	4	0	3	5
TOUGHNESS	2	0	0	0	0	0
LIFESPAN	30	1 adventure	25	4	20	20
HEALING	1	1	1	1	1	1
MOVE	22(L)	20(F)	46(F)	10(F)	25(L)	25(L)
VISION	3	2	9	4	7	5
HEARING	5	2	6	N/A	7	7
SMELL	7	8	1	8	6	10
Attribute cost	119	-22	91	17	88	89
TRAITS	Animal form	Animal form	Animal form	Animal form	Animal form	Animal form
	Night vision	Sting (DL-5)	Beak (DL-3)		Night vision	Night vision
	Bite(DL7)		2xtalons (DL-3)		Bite (DL-3)	Bite (DL-1)
	2xclaws (DL7)				2xclaws-DL3 damage	
Traits cost	-20	-35	-25	-40	-20	-30
Size	Large	Minuscule	Small	Minuscule	Small	Small
Cost modifier (Angelion/Other)	-40/-10	+45/-20	-30/-5	+45/-20	-30/-5	-30/-5
Base cost (Angelion)	59	50 (actual -12)	36	50 (actual 22)	38	39
Base cost (Other)	89	-77	61	-43	63	64

	Dog (big wolf/german shepherd, 140+ pounds)	Elephant	Lion/Tiger	Rat/mouse	Scorpion	Shark (great white)	Snake (cobra)	Whale (blue)
POWER (natural damage)	5 (DL0)	14 (DL9)	9 (DL4)	0 (DL-5)	N/A (none)	12 (DL7)	1 (DL-4)	16 (DL11)
FINESSE	4	2	6	4	3	4	5	1
VIGOR (Health)	5 (20)	7 (118)	7 (43)	5 (5)	4 (2)	6 (60)	3 (6)	6 (300)
FEAR	6	6	7	3	5	8	6	4
TOUGHNESS	1	2	1	0	0	1	0	3
LIFESPAN	20	100	20	10	5	30	20	100
HEALING	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
MOVE	25(L)	22(L)	26(L)	12(L)	4(L)	30(S)	15(L)	15(S)
VISION	5	4	5	3	1	5	5	5
HEARING	7	6	7	7	3	6	N/A	5
SMELL	10	7	8	9	N/A	9	7	N/A
Attribute cost	100	137	125	60	8	138	41	114
TRAITS	Animal form	Animal form	Animal form	Animal form	Animal form	Animal form	Animal form	Animal form
	Night vision	Defenses (DL11)	Night vision	Night vision	venomous attack (at natural damage)	Night vision	Night vision	Night vision
	Bite (DL1)	Increased Health (+48)	Bite (DL6)		poison sting GN6 to resist, DL1	Bite (DL10)	venomous attack (DL-3)	Marine lifeform
			2xClaws (DL5)				poison bite GN8 to resist, DL3	
			Increased Health(+15)					
Traits cost	-30	-10	0	-35	-35	-20	-16	-15
Size	Normal	Large	Normal	Tiny	Minuscule	Large	Small	Monstrous
Cost modifier (Angelion/ Other)	-30/0	-40/-10	-30/0	0/-10	+45/-20	-40/-10	-30/-5	-50/-20
Base cost (Angelion)	40	97	95	25	50 (actual 18)	78	10(actual -5)	49
Base cost (Other)	70	127	125	15	-47	108	20	79

Examples of Bio-engeneered Animal Bodies...

POWER	FINESSE	VIGOR	BEAUTY
N/A	5	8	N/A*
FEAR	TOUGHNESS	LIFESPAN	HEALING
4	0	30 years	1
MOVE	VISION	HEARING	SMELL
30 (F)	5	1	8

Corpse Wasp

Attribute cost: 76pts

Body Traits: Additional attack: poison sting, lethal, GN8, DL4) (21pts)

Animal form (-40pts)

Trait cost: -19pts

Size: minuscule

Health: 2

Cost modifier (Angelion/other): +45/-20

Base cost (Angelion): 102pts

Final Cost (other): 37pts

A Genomancer-bred wasp, with increased lifespan, enormous range and lethal sting. The perfect assassin...

POWER	FINESSE	VIGOR	BEAUTY
N/A	4	3	N/A*
FEAR	TOUGHNESS	LIFESPAN	HEALING
0	0	100	1
MOVE	VISION	HEARING	SMELL
18 (F)	5	3	8

Psychotrope Moth

Attribute cost: 41pts

Body Traits: Additional attack (induce slumber: anytime the Angelion that controls this butterfly wishes it so, he can make the creature emit a cloud of spores that act as a soporific poison against any human or human-based creature within a few feet of the moth). GN6 Vigor task to resist or target suffers 5 task penalties. Quick acting: only five rounds pass between every successive task penalty. Area effect, up to 3-4 targets. The slumber will usually be quite emotional, with colorful, vivid dreams.) (40pts)

Exclusive (30pts)

Animal form (-40pts)

Trait cost: 30pts

Size: minuscule

Health: 1

Cost modifier (Angelion/other): +45/-20

Base cost (Angelion): 116pts

Base Cost (other): 51pts

These elegant and engineered butterflies have the peculiar ability to put humans or human-based creatures into deep, dream-filled slumber.

POWER	FINESSE	VIGOR	BEAUTY
N/A	5	3	N/A*
FEAR	TOUGHNESS	LIFESPAN	HEALING
1	1	10 years	1
MOVE	VISION	HEARING	SMELL
25 (F)	7	N/A	N/A

Deathsong Cricket

Attribute cost: 17pts

Body Traits: Special attack: deathsong (every round deathsong is active, treat Deathsong crick et location as the detonation point of a DL5 explosive with a blast scale of 2m.
As an added Trait to this spe cial attack, the damage received by targets is not reduced because of tough ness, which multiplies the cost of this special attack by 2.(base cost 30pts, +5pts for DL5 damage, +100pts for blast scale, x2 cost because of added Trait) (270pts)
Animal form (-40pts)

Trait cost: 230pts

Size: minuscule

Health: 1

Cost modifier (Angelion/other): +45/-20

Base Cost (Angelion): 292pts

Base Cost (other): 227pts

Deathsong crickets were malicious creations of Lord Ravencross unleashed into his sister Lyra's Realm, there to wreak havoc amongst its people and animals. Though they were only to breed uncontrollably during the war and die off on their own afterwards, many survive to this day. They can produce an intense sonic attack that can lead to a gruesome death.

POWER	FINESSE	VIGOR	BEAUTY
N/A	4	3	N/A*
FEAR	TOUGHNESS	LIFESPAN	HEALING
1	0	50 years	1
MOVE	VISION	HEARING	SMELL
15 (F)	2	2	N/A

Small Bug

Attribute cost: 7pts

Body Traits: Animal form (-40pts)

Trait cost: -40pts

Size: minuscule

Health: 1

Cost modifier (Angelion/other): +45/-20

Base Cost (Angelion): 50pts(minimum; 12pts actual)

Base Cost (other): -53pts

A small beetle that has been engineered for longer life. Good basis for most small insect bodies.

POWER	FINESSE	VIGOR	BEAUTY
0	7	6	N/A
FEAR	TOUGHNESS	LIFESPAN	HEALING
3	1	50 years	1
MOVE	VISION	HEARING	SMELL
16 (L)	5	7	5

Fell Rat

Attribute cost: 65pts
Body Traits: none
Trait cost: 0pts
Size: tiny
Health: 3
Cost modifier (Angelion/other): 0/-10
Base Cost (Angelion): 65pts
Base Cost (other): 55pts

Fell rats of Ravencross have made their way deep into the Unconquered Lands, where Fell Princes that control them use their tiny size and keen senses to spy on local happenings. Their small front paws are in fact miniature human hands, and their throats allow for a raucous yet intelligible speech. Sudden fell rat presence in a city often precedes incursions by Fell Princes in other forms or other more terrifying beasts.

POWER	FINESSE	VIGOR	BEAUTY
9	4	5	N/A*
FEAR	TOUGHNESS	LIFESPAN	HEALING
7	3	200 years	1
MOVE	VISION	HEARING	SMELL
20 (L)	5	5	5

Thoth's Black Scales

Attribute cost: 113pts
Body Traits: Additional attack(bite-DL6 damage+venom: lethal, GN8, DL15) (48pts)
Additional attack (crushing coils-DL7 damage-can only be used after a successful grapple (x1/4 cost) (4pts)
animal form (-40pts)
Trait cost: 12pts
Size: large
Health: 50
Cost modifier (Angelion/other): -40/-10
Base Cost (Angelion): 85pts
Base Cost (other): 115pts

What more can be said of a sixty foot, two thousand pound venomous snake? These beasts can be seen slithering in and around Lord Thoth's throne, and in the great desert they lay in ambush nightward to the Kingdom's villages.

POWER	FINESSE	VIGOR	BEAUTY
14	5	7	N/A*
FEAR	TOUGHNESS	LIFESPAN	HEALING
8	3	70 years	1
MOVE	VISION	HEARING	SMELL
22 (L)	4	4	7

Tyrannosaur

Attribute cost: 149pts
Body Traits: Additional attack (bite DL12 damage)(15pts)
Animal form (-40pts)
Trait cost: -25pts
Size: large
Health: 70
Cost modifier (Angelion/other): -40/-10
Base Cost (Angelion): 84pts
Base Cost (other): 114pts

The king of dinosaurs ready to terrorize the people of Yellow Mountain Kingdom. Dozens of these thundering monsters stalk its jungles, among other reawakened prehistoric species.

POWER	FINESSE	VIGOR	BEAUTY
1	7	4	N/A*
FEAR	TOUGHNESS	LIFESPAN	HEALING
4	0	20 years	1
MOVE	VISION	HEARING	SMELL
24 (L)	7	7	6

Vampire Cats

Attribute cost: 79pts
Body Traits: Additional attack (poi son bite: DL3 damage+ venom: lethal-GN6- DL1 damage)(10pts)
Animal form (-40pts)
Night vision (5pts)
Trait cost: -25pts
Size: small
Health: 8
Cost modifier (Angelion/other): -30/-5
Base cost (Angelion): 24pts
Base Cost (other): 49pts

Sleek little house cats of savage dispositions, the smallest puncture from their venomous, hollow fangs is enough to end the life of a child or sicken an adult horribly. Packs of vampire cats are the bane of children and hunters in the lower Birthland.

Moonhound

POWER	FINESSE	VIGOR	BEAUTY
5	4	6	N/A*
FEAR	TOUGHNESS	LIFESPAN	HEALING
6	1	30 years	1
MOVE	VISION	HEARING	SMELL
22 (L)	4	7	10

Attribute cost: 102pts
Traits: Additional attack (bite DL1 damage)(5pts)
Animal form (-40pts)
Night vision (5pts)
Trait cost: -30pts
Size: normal
Health: 24
Cost modifier (Angelion/other): -30/0
Base Cost (Angelion): 42pts
Base Cost (other): 72pts

Big and vicious dogs weighing on average 175 lbs adult. Moonhounds have spread worldwide, and some now roam freely as wild packs across Eastern Ebuleon.

Rainbow Whistler

POWER	FINESSE	VIGOR	BEAUTY
N/A	8	6	N/A*
FEAR	TOUGHNESS	LIFESPAN	HEALING
4	0	60 years	1
MOVE	VISION	HEARING	SMELL
60 (F)	5	5	10

Attribute cost: 114pts
Body Traits: Track (see text) (50pts)
Animal form (-40pts)
Night vision (5pts)
Trait cost: 15pts
Size: Tiny
Health: 3
Cost modifier (Angelion/other): 0/-10
Base cost (Angelion): 129pts
Base Cost (other): 119pts

The rainbow whistler is a biological tracker. It normally feeds on nuts, berries and flower bulbs, but if fed even the tiniest amount of animal/human flesh, its behavior changes completely. It starts to track the sample of the flesh to its source, following its DNA trail until it is found.

POWER	FINESSE	VIGOR	BEAUTY
30	2	8	N/A*
FEAR	TOUGHNESS	LIFESPAN	HEALING
10	10	100 years	1
MOVE	VISION	HEARING	SMELL
1(L)	1	5	5

Fell Worm

Attribute cost: 405pts

Body Traits: Additional attack (massive bite DL45) (15pts)

Increased Health (+300 health) (25pts)

Animal form (-40pts)

Trait cost: 0pts

Size: monstrous

Health: 700

Cost modifier (Angelion/other): -50/-20

Base cost (Angelion): 355pts

Base Cost (other): 385pts

Fell worms, the terrifying giants of the war, are now found on the Purple island, crashing lumberingly through its forests or basking on its beaches for months at a time. Naturally quite passive, they eat trees, plants and the occasional animal straggler unable to escape their lumbering advance.

POWER	FINESSE	VIGOR	BEAUTY
20	4	5	N/A*
FEAR	TOUGHNESS	LIFESPAN	HEALING
8	5	1000 years	1
MOVE	VISION	HEARING	SMELL
16(L) 40(F)	5	3	3

Fairybook Dragon (forty Footer)

Attribute cost: 320pts

Body Traits: Additional attack(bite-DL30) (10pts)

2x additional attack (claws-DL25) (2x5pts)

Special attack (fiery breath; 30pts base, +18pts for DL9 damage, +10pts for continuing damage, +25pts for effective range of 5 meters, +50pts for 1m blast scale)(123pts)

Animal form(-40pts)

Trait cost: 103pts

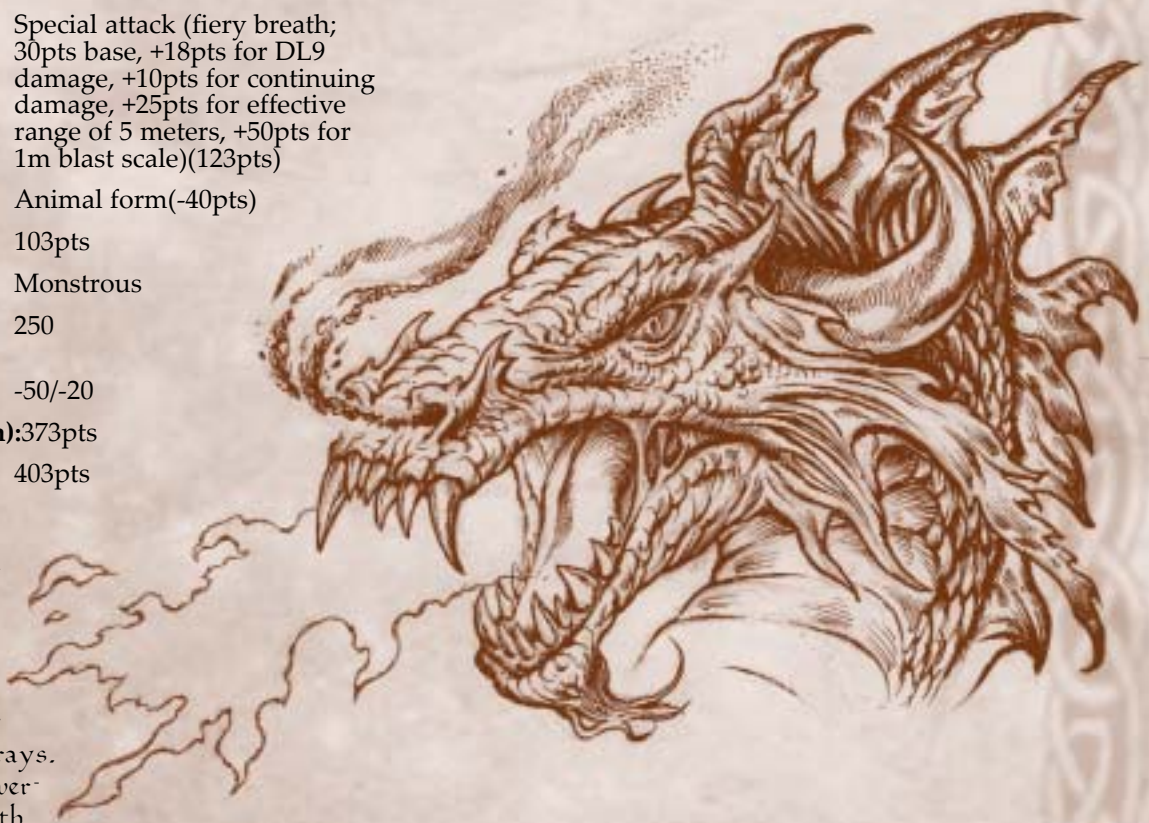
Size: Monstrous

Health: 250

Cost modifier (Angelion/other): -50/-20

Base cost (Angelion): 373pts

Base Cost (other): 403pts



In the Fairybook Realm an explorer will see many kinds of dragons fly in the sky, their scales glinting under the sun's rays. Some resemble over-sized snakes with legs, while others have muscular bodies and leathery wings. Some are scarcely larger than a horse, others can reach sixty feet in length. Statistics given represent a forty foot-er, able to breathe fiery flame.

7) Wealth & possessions

Characters start off with varying amounts of material possessions depending on their character type. They can spend their allowed *Wealth&possessions* Power Points on the following:

- *Cash on hand*
- *Artifacts*
- *Income*
- *Realm*
- *Sanctum*

The Mint

The mint is the standard mortal currency, produced in the Nan Tower of Avonmyth and distributed to cities and villages. Mints are valued according to the amount of gold they contain. The heavier, larger pieces having values of one thousand mints and the smallest, lightest ones having a value of 1 mint.

Although gold is valued by mortals for its aesthetic appeal and rarity, the Guild cherishes it out of necessity. Many of the machines the Genomancers need to produce organisms employ copious amounts of this rare element. A second, less immediate need for gold is in the making of essences, which have the precious metal (along with silver and platinum) in great quantities in their outer layers.

Cash on hand

Cash on hand represents what your character has managed to squirrel away before his adventures began.

Cash on hand cannot be used to buy artifacts or otherwise spend before gaming begins. It carries its name well: it is the money your character will have on hand when the first adventure begins.

Artifacts

In the *Items of Power* chapter, there are many objects, potions, weapons and facilities that can be bought by players with Power Points. Cash on hand cannot be used to buy artifacts before gaming starts. It can only be used to buy mundane items (and possibly some common artifacts) while gaming.

As a player, go through the *Items of Power* chapter and choose the artifacts you desire by paying their cost in Power Points.

Income

Income represents the amount of mints to add to a character every interim chapter. Refer yourself to the different character types to know what the most likely source of the character's income is and how to determine it. A character's Realm (see below) may add to this income as well.

Realm

A Realm is a territory that the character considers his own or as being under his protection. It can take the form of a mortal village, a town, a small city or even a bare patch of land. Some characters like the Phantoma start off with no Realm while others such as the Syba and Dagonheir must choose one.

The Realm of a character provides additional income and the opportunity to describe where the character lives and what he does to earn mints. Players should name the village/town/city under their rule/protection, and possibly give some details as to their relationship to this place. Dagonheir characters may claim a village or town as their Realm, but may be no more than lowly peasants within it, or even survivalists living on its fringes, protecting their mortal flock discretely. Sybas can be the mayors, clerics or the tyrant kings of their Realms, living off their mortal subjects rather than for them. Fell princes can be gods...

The size, nature and income of a character's Realm may be adjusted later on with experience. By devoting time and effort to expanding his Realm, a character can spread his influence over a larger territory and a greater number of people. See the *Behind the Veil* chapter for details under Spending experience points.

Modifying a Realm through adventuring/Drama Trumps

Spending Available Power Points to better a character's Realm is not recommended. Without players needing to spend these precious points, Realms will fluctuate both in size and populations because of adventures, GM decision, and the use of Black or White Drama trumps. These tools are used by the GM, and can either better a character's Realm or hinder it.

Example: during an interim chapter, the GM says that because of the last adventure in

which the Syba killed the mayor of a neighboring city and poisoned its water supply, his town has benefited from an influx of new settlers. Over a thousand refugees have become permanent residents of his town during the interim chapter, and so the player can now consider his town to have become a small city.

Note!

Special care needs to be taken in designing and describing the Realm of a Fell Prince. Contrary to the Realms of most other characters, which take the form of a town or village populated by faithful human mortals, the Realms of Fell Princes are within a greater Fell Kingdom, under the rule of a Fell Lord. Perhaps all Fell Princes in a game group work for the same Lord or, depending on GM and player desire, serve different ones.

Fell Kingdoms can float in the air or on the seas. Fell Princes can be plain rulers or Gods to their subjects. Under supervision of the GM, players should describe the general aspect of the Fell Kingdom as a whole and their status within their particular Realm.

Is the Fell Kingdom's population made up of humans or a species of giant lizardmen? Do people fly in the clouds with wings on their backs or do they swim under the waves fearing the surface for unknown reasons? Are the characters parts of a divine pantheon, or are they instead seen as demons or evil First Age spirits? Define cities, and what city belongs to what player character.

Bare land (0pts)

This Realm consists of nothing more than a patch of land, though it may be of great importance to the character or his Lord. It may be where as a mortal he grew up or fell in love, or a secret place where he goes to find peace and tranquility. There are very few mortals that presently reside there, or none at all, and it provides no income.

Village (5pts)

A village starts with around 50 small buildings and 200 villagers. Villages are generally found near lakes and rivers, with houses scattered and far between. Thousands of villages dot the landscape of the Unconquered Lands. A small village provides an Income of 50k mints/interim chapter.

Town (25pts)

A town is more tightly constructed and densely populated. Two or three small villages will usually be found in its vicinity. It starts with a population of 1000 townspeople and provides an Income of 250k mints/interim chapter.

Small city (50pts)

A small city is the largest mortal community an Angelion may protect/rule over on his own at the start of gaming. Since the war most are walled. It starts with

2000 citizens and provides an Income of 500k mints/interim chapter

Sanctum

A character's Sanctum is where he dwells, and for Angelion characters where he keeps and maintains his dormant bodies. A sanctum can take many forms; a small cave, a ruin, a house, a palace, a tunnel network, etc. Most character types will require that the player define his character's Sanctum.

A Sanctum possesses two attributes; an *Aura rating* and an *Intrusion GN*.

Aura rating

A Sanctum's Aura represents its beauty, its detail and craftsmanship and overall opulence. The general rule is guests of a certain renown (RECO or NOTO) will expect to be received in a Sanctum of equal or better aura than their renown. Therefore if you expect to invite well known socialites to your Sanctum, you should invest in your Sanctum's aura rating.

Intrusion GN

A Sanctum's intrusion GN measures how difficult it is to find and infiltrate. A would-be intruder needs to succeed at a Finesse + Deceit task to intrude unnoticed. After successfully infiltrated, the Sanctum's owner can try perception tasks to become aware of the intruder as per the normal perception task rules. If the intruder fails at the Finesse+Deceit task, the Sanctum's owner is aware of the location of the intruder, possibly being able to see him as well. A failure with no added effects means the intruder knows he has been found out, while one with at least one added effect means he does not.

Servants/slaves

Your Sanctum is considered to have a number of servants equal to its aura rating divided by ten, round down. These are cooks, gardeners, security, concubines and journeymen. Their upkeep and demands are so low that they are trivial, but so is their worth given any kind of combat situation. They are there as flavor more than anything else. They serve food, pour drinks and entertain guests...

Hideout (2pts)

Hideouts can be nothing more than holes in the ground right up to elaborate, cleverly built safe houses and tunnel networks. As a player, describe in general detail what your hideout looks like. An Awakened's hideout will be different from an Archfiend's and from a Rogue Golem's. Is it an underground cavern system long thought abandoned? The buried ruins of a First Age lab? An abandoned, decrepit house? An island known by the locals as beast island (for good reasons)? A hideout provides an Aura rating of 0 and an Intrusion GN10.

Secluded Hideout (5pts)

A secluded hideout is a more thought-out hideout, built well away from curious eyes and with overlapping defenses and detection methods meant to warn its owner of intruders. For those that do not wish to be discovered or be spied upon, the secluded hideout is perfect. A secluded hideout provides an Aura rating of 0 and an Intrusion GN18.

House (5pts)

A house, no more, no less. Just a house. It can hold a family of up to six people in comfort. Most Dagonheir living in the communities they protect prefer this kind of dwelling for the anonymity it gives them. A house provides an Aura rating of 20 and an Intrusion GN10

Opulent dwelling (15pts)

The Opulent dwelling is typical for Sybas that like to live comfortably but wish to maintain some semblance of anonymity. It can take many forms, from large houses to manors. An Opulent dwelling provides an Aura rating of 50 and an Intrusion GN12

Lavish Palace (base 25pts)

The lavish palace allows a character to entertain the most demanding of guests with luxurious accommodations for up to twenty people and various other amenities. A Lavish palace provides an Aura rating of 100, an intrusion GN of 15 and 20 guest accommodations. The Lavish palace is the only dwelling that can be upgraded. For 5pts more -or 50 000 mints- you can add;

- a large, excessively landscaped domain (+50 to Aura rating)
- add an additional 5 rooms (+5 aura rating)
- add a Guest house (+4 guest accommodations, +10 Aura rating)
- outer wall, with guard houses and sentries (+10 Aura rating, +2 intrusion GN)
- +1 to the intrusion GN, up to a maximum of 25
- +10 to its aura rating by adding opulence with pools, lakes, exotic animals/ antiques/ construction materials etc.

Storing your essence...

Although Angelions can store their essence in their Sanctum, it is not recommended unless the Sanctum is heavily guarded, well hidden and near impregnable. Angelions of meager wealth generally hide their essence somewhere remote and far from mortal activity: After all, there is no safer Goldroom than a simple hole in the ground! Angelions of more ample wealth usually build Goldrooms (some will build many as decoys), which are highly defended, well hidden (rarely, in their own Sanctums), and usually bristling with traps and pitfalls. At the start of gaming, Angelion characters are assumed to have hidden their essences somewhere safe, tranquil and secret. Characters that have the Lost essence Trait or that are Fell Princes no longer have their essence in their possession and do not have to worry about where to store their souls. Others can pay the Genomancer Goldroom fee (10 000 mints) every interim chapter to have their essence stored in one of the many Genomancer vaults. It is worthwhile to note that the Genomancers offer near impervious Goldrooms, well hidden and guarded by countless failsafes, but many immortals do not trust them nor their motives for safeguarding their essences.

Only with Black Drama trumps may the GM rule that a character's essence has been found by someone else, unless a player character foolishly gives away its location in an adventure. Otherwise, the Domination Master ability *God's whispers* can help characters pinpoint the general area of a chosen Angelion's essence, but not its exact location.

Still players can design Goldrooms for their essence using the same rules and point costs as for building Sanctums. They can thus hide their essences in hideouts, houses, opulent dwellings or lavish palaces. The

point/mint costs are the same, but the intrusion GNs have an automatic +5 added. Otherwise, follow the same rules. A lavish palace is not in actuality a palace at all, but rather a safe house or mausoleum-type structure to be described and built by the player. The maximum intrusion GN of a Goldroom is 35 instead of 25. If a Black Drama Trump is put into play whereby an intruder has located a player character's essence, a well defended Goldroom may possibly warn the character of danger in advance, allowing him to confront the intruder before it is too late. Angelions having many bodies should keep at least one dormant body in the vicinity of their essence, ready to confront would-be thieves when they set off silent alarms.

8) Starting Traits

Character types will have at least one starting Trait. Some are unique to certain character types, while others are shared by many. These Traits are usually written on the mind sheet, though some character types have body Traits as starting Traits.

The player writes these Traits down automatically on his character sheet (either mind or body).

9) Additional points

With additional points, a player may customize his character to his heart's content. All Power Points not spent after this step will go in the character's *Available Power Points* box.

A player can use some or all his additional points towards the following;

Buy Mind Traits

With additional points, players can purchase mind Traits such as allies, enemies, Drama Trumps and many others which are written on the Mind sheet. Player characters with no or too few additional points can acquire flaws (such as Black Drama trumps) to get additional points back. Players should consult the following Traits&Flaws section to learn how to build Traits or choose already made ones for their characters.

In some cases, the GM might decide to disallow a starting Trait, or rule that all characters start with one or more Traits to reflect their initial conditions. In these cases, players will consider these beginning Traits to be part of their additional points package.

Buy special Traits

In most cases character types will list one or more special Traits that players can acquire with their additional points. Contrary to Starting Traits, these Traits are not automatically written on the character sheet, they must be acquired by the player with Power Points (for beneficial traits) or to get points back (in the case of Flaws).

Keep as Available Power Points

Any unspent Additional points will be written on the Mind sheet, in the Available Power Points box.

Traits & flaws

There are special aspects or situations relative to characters that attributes, weaknesses and Masteries alone cannot put into game terms. Traits are there to fill in these gaps. They allow the GM and players to create characters that may have some wild abilities or complicated backgrounds.

In this chapter, we will show you how to build Traits for your characters and will give you some examples of common Traits.

What are Traits?

A trait can be night vision, an influential friend or a weird special ability. It can be anything

the GM allows.

By building a mind and body(ies), choosing weaknesses, cardinal natures and Masteries, players will have defined for the most part what their characters are capable of. In essence a large part of the creation process is done and all that remains now are the last finishing touches.

What are Flaws?

Flaws are Traits that hinder a character, and hence they don't cost Power Points to purchase, but rather they give points back. For simplicity, flaws are written as having a negative Power Point cost. A -5 point Trait is therefore a 5 point Flaw. Both notations are correct.

Building Traits

Players will build their character's Traits or pick them from the following examples that we give for convenience. In building a specific Trait, the player will need to figure out what he wants the Trait to do, how it impacts his character, and must discuss the specifics with the GM who must assign the Trait a point cost (or point return in the case of a flaw) and determine what its game effects are...

As the GM, after hearing the player's description, answer the following questions.

Can the player's description be put into game terms by modifying a primary/secondary attribute, or as a Master ability?

Most player descriptions as you will see can be put in game terms as simple additions/subtractions to attributes. Others are better translated into Master abilities.

A body that has a beefed up immune system can translate that into a Vigor bonus applicable only to diseases or poisons (not for figuring out Health or for running long distances). A human body that has genetically modified vision can consider such enhancements as increases to its Vision rating. A set of sharp claws or fangs means an additional attack. Adding a set of wings to a human body means the body can now have a Move (Flight) rating.

A weird special ability that lets a character enthrall others by simply staring at them is better defined as a *Passions* Mastery ability, though in some cases the GM might allow it as an extraordinary Trait.

As you see, a player's description can often be translated into game terms by simply modifying attributes or by creating Master abilities.

If it can fit into game terms by modifying an attribute or acquiring a Master ability...

It might not be a Trait per se. If simply modifying the attribute and paying the appropriate cost handles the player's description, then it is not a Trait. If there are other factors to consider, such as limitations, partial usage or conditions for this modification, then it is indeed a Trait and you should follow the guidelines below. In the case where the description fits the profile of a Master ability, then either purchase one with Masteries points or choose a different Trait.

If it cannot fit into game terms by modifying an attribute or acquiring a Master ability...

Descriptions that cannot be put into game terms by adjusting attributes and/or acquiring a Master ability means the GM and player must create a Trait. They must discuss the game effects and agree on a point cost/return. Depending on the influence and power of the Trait the cost will vary from +/-5 for Traits that have only a slight effect on the character to +/-500pts or more for Traits that define him.

Follow the procedure outlined below.

1st step-decide what the Trait does.

Discuss each potential Trait with the GM.

An important thing to know: Is the Trait inherent to the body of a character or to his mind? Traits can be written either on the Mind sheet or on one of the Body sheets.

2nd step-determine what kind of Trait it is.

There are three types of Traits in the game; some types of Traits may not be available to certain character types.

Mundane Trait

A mundane Trait is anything a human might have. An ally is a good example. Being a fast learner is another. Being amphibious or invisible is not. Mundane Traits are available to all character types.

Exotic Trait

An exotic trait can represent an animal's abilities or certain genetically engineered talents. Examples might include having night vision or multiple manipulators (such as for a four-armed creature) or being immune to pain. These can be explained rationally, some are common in the animal realm, but all are out of reach for a mundane human. Exotic Traits are available to all character types except the Mortal character type. In some cases, the GM might disallow some Exotic Traits to Fellkin characters because of their morphology and nature.

Extraordinary Trait

An extraordinary Trait is an ability that seems unnatural or mind-boggling. Only the Archfiend character type can possess extraordinary Traits. Examples include being able to slowly transform one's body from a large wolf into a man, being invisible, a hive-lord, or any other supernatural ability not easily explained. Such abilities are beyond anything so far encountered on Earth by man or animal. Downright impossible abilities, or those that might imbalance the game (and all those refused by the GM) are not allowed. Magic does not exist in this game. In all cases, the GM has final say. The examples given later in the Extraordinary Traits table represent the most unexplained and borderline acceptable Traits Archfiend characters should be allowed to have.

3rd step-decide on a point cost

Based on the following point guidelines and examples given later on, the GM must determine just how much the Trait will cost, and then the player must decide if he still wants it. If so, he writes it down and describes it on the character sheet.

Minor Trait

(around 5-15 points)

A minor Trait will come into play rarely, under specific conditions or is of little use.

Major Trait

(around 20-50 points)

A major Trait will have substantial effects on game play. Such a Trait is very important to a character.

Master Trait

(50-500+ points)

A master Trait will be central to the character and may very well define what the character is all about. Most extraordinary Traits will cost between 50 and 500 Power Points, though some may cost even more.

Some modifiers to costs

There are many modifiers that can affect a Trait's cost. If you find the point cost of your Trait too high, add a flaw to it! You can add flaws to Traits to make them less expensive. A Trait might only function some of the time, while another might have a set duration. Below are some guidelines to modify the cost of Traits.

Added perk/flaw (+/- modifier or up to x2 or 3x cost multiplier or divider)

Give your Trait a flaw to lower its cost. Or, conversely, give your Trait some added perk(s) if cost is of no concern.

Example 1: a player wants her genetically modified human body to have some retractable claws under her apparently normal looking fingernails. The body has a Power of 5, and its natural damage is DL0. She decides that the claws are razor sharp and are capable of inflicting DL2 damage. An additional attack of this sort would normally cost 10pts and be obvious to anyone that sees her. Her Trait is not the additional attack per se, but is in fact that this additional attack is concealable. The GM rules that the concealable Trait on her additional attack costs 10pts. Final cost of the claws is 10pts (additional attack) + 10pts (concealable Trait) for a total of 20pts.

Example 2: a character wants a Move (Flight) score of 100 for his character. This would normally cost 100 Power Points and not be a Trait at all, but 100 points is too expensive, way beyond what the player can spend. He adds a flaw to this movement method. He says to the GM that whenever his character takes to the air, the wings produce an intense buzzing sound that can be heard a hundred meters away. In addition, the wings are extremely light and prone to damage. He cannot fly when his body is seriously injured. Combined together, these two flaws allow the GM to cut the cost of this

Flight Move in half, to 50 points.

Partial usagexl/4, xl/2 or x3/4 of point cost (more or less)

A player may wish to have a partial usage flaw attached to any Trait. This means the Trait is only effective some of the time. For example, a Trait that raises the Power attribute may only work while lifting (as if the character had powerful oversized legs and back muscles) but does not help in dealing powerful blows. Perhaps because of its nature, a Trait is only useful under some circumstances.

Apply this point multiplication at the very end of all other modifiers.

If this Trait affects an attribute, do not modify the attribute value on the character sheet, but instead put an asterisk besides it that reminds you to use the adjusted attribute value when the proper circumstance presents itself.

Example: a powerful immune system gives a Vigor boost (from Vigor 5 to Vigor 9) to a character. Raising Vigor from 5 to 9 would normally cost 30 Power Points. However, the immune system only helps ward off disease, poisons and other toxins from the character's body, and is used neither for figuring out Health nor for running/fighting longer. The GM says this Trait has the partial usage flaw rated at xl/2, so the boosted immune system costs 15pts instead of 30.

Temporary xl/4, xl/2 or x3/4 of point cost (more or less)

Traits that are temporary can last for a few months, years or decades, but at least for an adventure or two.

Example: a disease that reduces a body's Vigor from 6 to 2 would normally give back 4 Power Points. However, this disease only requires the proper time to discover and produce the cure, and within a decade or so of research (GM decision), the cure should be found. Since this means at most a few adventures will pass before the cure is found and the body's Vigor is brought back up to 6, the GM cuts the Trait's point return in half, to 6 points.

Some Trait examples according to categories

The following tables give examples of point cost/return for Traits that will come up regularly in the game. The last table lists examples of Extraordinary Traits. The lists, as said earlier, are far from complete, only scratching the surface, but will help the GM

Mundane Traits

Trait	Power Point cost	character sheet
Alertness	10	Mind
Ally/enemy	+50 to -50	Mind
Amnesia/implanted memories	-10 or more	Mind
Calculator/memorizer	10	Mind
cannot talk	-10	Body
Disease/physical addiction	-5 to -50	Mind or body
Drama Trump (white/black)	20/-20	Mind
Faithful	15	Mind
Fast learner	5	Mind
Increased health	5+	Body
Motionless	-100	Body
No manipulators	-20	Body
One-armed/lame	-5	Body
Stigma	-5 to -30	Body

Exotic Traits

Trait	Power Point cost	character sheet
Amphibian	20	Body
Animal form	-40	Body
Booby-trapped	15 per pick	Body
Camouflage	5 per pick	Body
Exclusive	15+	Body
Glitch	-30	Body /mind
Immune to disease	30	Body
Immune to pain	10	Mind or body
Marine life form	-20	Mind or body
Mechanical body	200	body+mind
Multiple manipulators	15 per set	Body
Night vision	5	Body
Plant form	-140	Body
Special attack	50+	Body
Chrysalis	variable	Body

with the more common Traits picked out by players.

For convenience, each Trait explains on which character sheet (mind or body) it should be written.

Trait	Power Point cost	character sheet
Damage Regeneration	75	Body
Hivelord	150+	Mind
Invisible	400	Body
Metamorphosis	150-250+ see text	Body

Trait explanations

Alertness

You are naturally aware of your surroundings, ever vigilant and cautious. Some might even say you have a sixth sense warning you of danger. In the opening round of any combat, you receive an automatic +2 to your initiative rank.

Ally/enemy

Allies will use their power and influence to get you out of trouble. Enemies will use theirs to ultimately bring your demise. Allies are steadfast supporters, loyal beyond doubt. Enemies can be counted on to hinder your progress at every turn of the road.

Enemies are no mere rivals. Everyone has a ton of those and they don't give points back. An enemy is the quintessential enemy; the one that plots your downfall with every trickle of current coursing through his mind. You figure prominently in his dreams, and he wakes up every day disappointed that his dagger in your heart was mere dream stuff.

A simple way of calculating the point cost/return of allies/enemies is to take their Total Power and divide it by 40. Hence, an arch nemesis of a Total Power of 400 points will give 10 points. An old and powerful Angelion of a Total Power of 1600 points will cost 40 points to have as an ally.

A word of caution: players might be tempted to take a lot of enemy Traits because they tend to give a lot of points. Keep in mind however that taking an enemy of great power for 20 points will severely challenge a beginning character and others that may be working alongside him. For beginning characters, a limit on enemy power should be set at no more than 500-600pts (young immortals with some experience) and hence, enemy traits of no more than 15 point returns. GMs might rule that a specific Ally/enemy Trait suffers from the partial usage flaw because of the ally/enemy's incapacity to act upon his desires to either help or hinder the character.

Amnesia/implanted memories

Your memories are either gone or altered. If you are an Angelion, then it is possible that your essence was tampered with either during your essencing or the war. If you are a mortal you may be suffering from a disease, an injury or hypnosis. The GM must craft your real history and may reveal it to you as the adventures pile on with Drama Trumps.

Slight memory implantations may warrant a -5 point return; your mortal sister, brother, son or daughter were erased from your electronic memory during essencing. An entirely false past that might put you in harm's way may be worthy of 20 points. In all cases, the player must inform the GM of the number of Power Points he wishes to receive (from 5 to 20 points) and the GM will take care of figuring out the real background of his character.

Amphibian

This body can swim and breathe underwater just as well as on solid ground.

Animal form

Combines the *No manipulators* and *cannot talk* Traits and a *beauty* rating of N/A. This trait is common to most animals, whose voice boxes cannot reproduce intelligible human speech and whose appendages cannot hold or use objects as human hands can. Animals such as monkeys, apes and talking birds may not have this trait.

Booby-trapped

Angelions have been known to steal other Angelion bodies and attune them for their own personal use. To prevent such treachery, the Guild can booby-trap the bodies they attune, so that any attempt to remove the controllers or detune them will result in the body's death or worse, an explosion! To remove/attune the controller of this body requires a GN20 Intelligence+Wisdom task. Multiple picks of this Trait raise the GN of the task by 3 per additional pick. Failure at the removal task will result in a catastrophic explosion (or whatever else the player decides).

Calculator/memorizer

You can do lightning quick calculations in your head and rarely forget anything. Anytime precise calculations or measurements need be done, you automatically succeed, and if you forget anything during an adventure, the GM must refresh your memory. You remember small details well.

Camouflage

Trying to spot you (visually) incurs a -1 modifier per pick of this Trait. At 15pts, it means you have some form of color change ability, like squid or chameleons. If you wear clothes, this power is greatly reduced in effectiveness. Maximum three picks; after that, it becomes an Extraordinary Trait (see invisibility).

Cannot talk

Either through injury, morphology or design, you cannot vocalize human speech using this body.

Chrysalis

Chrysalis is an extreme case of the immature trait. You will experience a great change some day, perhaps like a caterpillar that changes into a butterfly, or a seed that blossoms into a flower. Or, perhaps, you may change into something horrible... You are unaware of this, and when your transformation takes place is up to the GM. You can spend up to 200pts for this Trait, or get back 100pts. Every one (1) point you spend or receive will be the equivalent of two (2) Power Points that your body will receive or lose later on in life to reflect the effects of your transformation. This can lead to radically powerful or utterly incapacitating physiological changes. The GM will spend these points as best she decides to advance the story. The trigger for your transformation may be time, a specific condition, death (apparent death, that is), the encounter of another Archfiend "symbiont" that fuses itself with you, a Drama Trump or any other condition thought up by the GM.

Damage regeneration

Healing is one thing, regrowing a severed limb is quite another, and you can do just that with this Trait. Any large limb (leg or arm) can regrow within 20-Vigor days. Small limbs such as hands or feet can re-grow within a few days while fingers and toes can grow within (20-Vigor) hours. You heal damage at a rate of 10 health points per day. You need food while this is going on though!

Disease/physical addiction

Define your disease, the greater it's effects, the greater the point return. Diseases include illnesses and addictions. Here, an addiction is necessarily physiological, for mental addictions are created using weaknesses. Illnesses though can be of the mind or body, and in an age of Genomancy, can be quite nasty.

Drama Trump (White/Black)

Every character in the game starts with one White and one Black

Drama Trump. However, as you can notice on the character sheet, characters can have a total of two (2) Drama Trumps of each color at any given time. Players can choose to get 20 Power Points back by acquiring a Black Drama Trump or pay 20 points to get a White Drama Trump. A character cannot possess more than two of either kind at any one time. Drama Trumps and their effects on the game are explained fully in the *Behind the Veil* chapter.

Exclusive

This body is exclusive, having an exotic and costly appearance. The costlier the Trait, the more exclusive the body.

Having an exclusive body allows the "wearer" to be invited to more prestigious soirees, attract more attention and appear perhaps "better" than he really is. The GM should put these effects into play whenever possible.

Faithful

You believe in the All-Seeing, and believe that he loves you. This faith helps you live in an age of peril, and helps keep your less-than-divine desires and instincts in check; partially through fear of sin, but also by embracing divine love.

The faithful Trait allows you to remove 2 anguish points during every interim chapter. However, if you go against the will of The All-Seeing as dictated in the Holy Word, you do not remove these 2 anguish points. When asked to betray the will of God, Fell Princes with the faithful Trait that serve a cruel or tyrannical Lord will generally gain 2 anguish points every interim chapter instead of removing 2 points. With GM supervision, players may have characters with the Faithful Trait that worship Gods, Demons or other divine entities other than 'The All-Seeing' of the Holy Word. Their moral requirements and the deeds they must accomplish to shed anguish points are determined by the GM.

Fast learner

You learn faster than normal, and you can gather more insight from your adventures and your mistakes. You receive one additional point of experience during every interim chapter.

Glitch

A glitch is the mechanical equivalent of a disease in organic bodies. Glitches can only affect mechanical bodies. Whenever a golem body is repaired but the repair task was a success with no added effect, the golem acquires a glitch. A glitch should be something annoying and potentially dangerous but not incapacitating, at least not immediately. When a rogue golem acquires a glitch, the GM designs it and the player himself does not know anything about its nature until the glitch manifests.

Examples of glitches might be:

- the body emits puffs of smoke, loud noises and spills lubricants when the golem runs or is locked in hand to hand combat for more than three consecutive rounds
- the golem forgets everything about the last day when it looks up at the full moon
- if the golem smells the odor of burned flesh it goes into a killing frenzy
- the golem's chassis has been compromised, and were it ever to become submerged it would suffer catastrophic loss of power, catch on fire or act erratically.
- the golem's electronic brain is prey to crashes or eternal loops triggered by various situations. It might repeat the same movement over and over gain if it sees a brown dog with white spots, or run in circles if it hears the song of a cicada.

Hivelord

From your body you spawn, either asexually or through mating with another creature, many smaller creatures that can be considered your brood; you have a special mental link with them. You are assumed to produce brood that are at maximum two size classes smaller than your body. Hence, the Hivelord trait can only be taken by Archfiends of size small or larger. A large Archfiend can therefore produce minuscule, tiny or small brood. If you have multiple brood, they all have the same size and have the same attributes and Traits. At the base cost of this ability, you have one brood at any given moment. It's attributes are as seen on the following page, according to its size.

You must define what your brood looks like. It is non-human looking unless you modify its Traits (see below). The brood can go about gathering information or stand watch around your main body.

Your communication with your offspring is assumed to be through some form of electromagnetic communication; you can see what they see, hear what they hear and smell what they smell. They can be given suggestions in real time if you happen to be concentrating on them at the moment, though the GM is in control of your brood. Since you do not have a Celerity pool, if you spend time "hitchhiking" on the mind of your brood, this necessarily means that your own body is either dormant or very still. Having brood raises the intrusion GN of your Sanctum by +3. Your brood lives off your body, deriving nourishment from it. As options, you can choose any of the following:

POWER	FINESSE	VIGOR	BEAUTY
N/A	5	4	N/A
FEAR	TOUGHNESS	LIFESPAN	HEALING
1	1	1 years	1
MOVE	VISION	HEARING	SMELL
5(L)	7	4	4

Minuscule Brood

Traits: Animal Form
Spawn Time 1 day

POWER	FINESSE	VIGOR	BEAUTY
0	5	4	N/A
FEAR	TOUGHNESS	LIFESPAN	HEALING
2	1	5 years	1
MOVE	VISION	HEARING	SMELL
8(L)	7	4	4

Tiny Brood

Traits: Animal Form
Spawn Time 1 week

POWER	FINESSE	VIGOR	BEAUTY
2	5	4	N/A
FEAR	TOUGHNESS	LIFESPAN	HEALING
5	2	10 years	1
MOVE	VISION	HEARING	SMELL
12(L)	7	4	4

Small Brood

Traits: Animal Form
Spawn Time 1 month

POWER	FINESSE	VIGOR	BEAUTY
5	5	4	N/A
FEAR	TOUGHNESS	LIFESPAN	HEALING
7	2	30 years	1
MOVE	VISION	HEARING	SMELL
16(L)	7	4	4

Normal Brood

Traits: Animal Form
Spawn Time 1 year

❖ (20pts per pick) you can double the maximum number of brood you have at any moment. For 20pts you have 2, for 40pts you have 4, etc. You can have a brood swarm of up to 128 brood at any given time for a cost of 140pts. This is the maximum number of brood you can have.

❖ intelligent (+25pts). Your brood are intelligent. They have an Intelligence score of 3. They can pass themselves off as human if they look the part, though they are odd in their manner of speech and manners in general. They can be given sets of more complex directives than non-intelligent brood, such as try to convince the shopkeeper to buy this artifact, or make a boat to cross the river.

❖ you can customize your brood to your heart's content by modifying their attributes and giving them Traits. You can give them multiple manipulators, additional attacks, venomous attacks, MOVE (flight), different perception values, etc. These Traits must be approved by the GM and will affect the cost of the Hivelord Trait as though you were picking Traits for your own body (an Archfiend character type). However, the Traits/attributes of customized brood cannot lower the cost of the Hivelord Trait below 150.

❖ Fast spawn time (20pts): your brood can be spawned in half the normal time

As for all Traits, you can lower the cost of the Hivelord Trait by adding flaws. Suggestions include:

❖ communication with brood is severed when certain conditions present themselves

❖ brood must feed on something other than your body for nourishment, such as human flesh or a rare substance

❖ communication with your brood can only be used three times per day, for up to a minute each time. The rest of the time, your brood are pretty much by themselves and may get you into trouble...

Immature

A player can decide that his character's body is immature, still growing into its adult form when gameplay begins, and can do so for many reasons. Adults in many communities often ignore children, and having an immature human body can be a convenient way to pass unnoticed or to attract little attention. They can even be fashionable in certain circles. Depending on the age and species, an immature body can be considered smaller in size than an adult member of its species, and have the accompanying Traits that small bodies have (including cost effects), and have varying degrees of attribute deficiencies compared to its mature body. Power will be lower, as well as MOVE. Some species gain Toughness with age, as their carapace/scales harden or they gain fat layers. Essentially, the player and GM will make the body's mature form and lower its attributes temporarily through the immature Trait until it becomes fully matured. This Trait automatically carries the partial usage flaw, because as the body ages, Power, Move and possibly other attributes will increase as well. Treat this Trait as an illness that will last for a set number of years. Determine the physical attributes that are affected; add up their point returns, and then divide by the appropriate partial usage. For immature bodies that age rapidly (reaching adulthood in about 10 years), partial usage should be around 1/4. For immature bodies that keep their immature status for 100 years or more, partial usage might be 3/4.

Immune to disease

Your body is immune to disease, poison, drugs or illness. You ignore their effects.

Immune to pain

You negate the first -1 modifier due to injuries. Angelions already possess this Trait, for they can shut down pain stimuli from their bodies at will (unless their essence has been tampered with, or is in the wrong

hands...)

Increased Health

The base amount of health points a body has (which is a factor of its size and Vigor) can be modified by taking this Trait. It represents greater resistance to injuries.

For every 5 Power Points spent on this Trait, you will add a certain amount to your body's Health depending on its size. Consult the following table to determine this amount.

Your body's maximum Health depends on its size.

Example: with a Vigor of 8 and a size of normal, Mark's body has a base Health of 32. This is not enough for Mark. He wants to give this body legendary ruggedness. He spends 15 Power Points on the Increased Health Trait to raise his Health by 15 points, to 47.

Body Size	Health bonus per 5 Power Points spent
minuscule	1
tiny	2
small	3
normal	5
large	12
monstrous	60

Invisible

You can become invisible at will, and when you do you cannot be seen by conventional means. In the best of circumstances, a shimmer is the only thing that may announce your presence to others. You still make noise however, and can be smelled, touched or bumped into, for you are not ethereal. Light waves bend around your body, though anything you wear or carry will be visible. Spot (vision) tasks against you (naked) automatically fail. You no more show up on IR scanners than on Pebble eyes.

Marine lifeform

You live and breathe under-

water. You cannot breathe air though!

Mechanical body

The body is entirely mechanical, as is the intelligence that controls it. Only the rogue golem character can have this Trait during character creation. This package contains several Traits in and of itself.

Do not age (200pts): mechanical bodies have an unlimited lifespan.

Celerity pool (25pts): because of the inherent processing speed advantage of an artificial intelligence over organic minds, rogue golems start the game with a celerity pool of 0, and can upgrade it through experience normally up to a maximum of +4.

Beauty of N/A (-10pts): the Beauty rating of a mechanical body is limited to N/A. They must wear artificial skins grown by the Genomancers to pass themselves off as human.

Cannot heal, extremely costly to repair (-150pts): mechanical bodies do not heal by themselves, they must be repaired and such repairs are often difficult to perform and excruciatingly expensive. Refer yourself to the *When all Hell breaks loose* chapter for specifics. Golem bodies repaired after having suffered damage or that go for many years without maintenance can suffer from glitches. See the *Glitch* Trait for further details.

Maximum Power, Finesse and Vigor (10pts): mechanical bodies can have Power, Finesse and Vigor attributes 2 points higher than what their body size would normally allow. Hence, maximum Finesse and Vigor can go up to 10 for normal or smaller mechanical bodies.

Extremely rugged (70pts): mechanical bodies are inherently more rugged than soft organic ones, and only the most intense of fires will harm them. Their Inherent Toughness is 5 (*fire resistant*) and they pay much less for higher levels of Inherent Toughness.

Immune to disease (30pts): mechanical bodies are not subject to poisons, illness or plagues. Some gases (corrosive or insidious), acids, liquids and radiation can affect them, however.

GM decision.

Metamorphosis

You can change form, to a small or great extent. The metamorphosis is relatively fast at the base cost of this Trait, taking about three rounds to be completed.

Some cost benchmarks

- (150pts) this body can change its surface features: the face, the color of its eyes or hair, growing an instant beard or changing the color of its fur. Essentially, your Fear attribute can go from 0 to 10 at will, while your beauty attribute varies from 0 to 8 (supposing you are human-looking). However your species, sex and size class cannot be modified with this Trait. If you resemble a human female, then you will always be female looking. If you resemble a dog, then you will resemble a dog in all your forms.
- (200pts) this body can change its gender and gross physiology, bulging up to appear fat or bigger (but no size class changes), condensing itself to appear thinner or even appearing taller or shorter by a slight amount. It can change its features as well, as per the 150pts Trait.
- (300pts) this body can have a secondary form of a size class equal to or lower by one level than its primary form. Thus, as in the example discussed earlier, a normal-sized man can transform into a small-sized cat. You need to create the secondary body with points however, and add its cost to this Trait. The character can change the features of his primary or secondary forms, as per the 150pt version of this Trait.

As for all Traits, you can lower the cost of the metamorphosis Trait by adding flaws. Suggestions include:

- Conditions necessary for metamorphosis. You may need a certain substance or kill and assimilate a "model" body before you can look like it. Cost divider would reflect the difficulty of getting the conditions proper for metamorphosis.
- Can only transform once per certain time period. Perhaps (x1/2) cost if you can only transform once per week.
- Perhaps the change takes longer, like an hour, to take effect? (x3/4 cost)

Example: a player wants his archfiend character to be able to change form from his normal-sized body into a cat (and back). This is a 300pts metamorphosis Trait and the player must pay for the cat body as well, which costs 63 Power Points. Adding 300 points gives an Extraordinary Trait that costs 363 points. Ouch!!! says the player. He decides to add a flaw. First he determines that the transformation is relatively slow, taking around six hours. This cuts the cost in half, to 182pts. As well, to return to his human form after transforming into the cat, the character must have a reservoir of human or otherwise mammalian flesh to draw matter from. He needs to rest on the mass of flesh and fuse himself with it for about six hours, gradually gaining mass as he does so and adopting his primary form. This is gross, requires a corpse of some human or mammal and leaves him totally defenseless while the process is going on. As well, when he transforms from the man to the cat, he leaves behind him a big pile of flesh and bone, and the cat's body is covered with this filth whenever he transforms. The GM judges that this is a minor flaw, worthy of x3/4 cost. This brings cost down to 135 Power Points. The Trait carries two flaws and is now complete.

Motionless

This body cannot move, react, defend or undertake physical activity of any kind. The body has no natural attack and is considered to have a rating of N/A in Power and Finesse.

Multiple manipulators

This body has an extra set of manipulators giving it a total of four hands with which to grapple, hold objects and weapons, or climb cliff sides. This gives it a bonus to grapples (see grappling in the When all hell breaks loose chapter), a +2 modifier to climbing/scaling tasks, and allows the body to use more than two weapons at a time. This Trait can be picked more than once, but effects only add towards grapples and using more weapons, not for climbing.

Night vision

You negate the first -3 modifiers due to darkness.

No manipulators

You can't manipulate objects, either because of injury (hands/arms chopped off) or

morphology. You must rely on harnesses or mindcast-operated artifacts. Mouse, rat or raccoon hands still count as having no manipulators because of their lack of dexterity, and cannot be used to perform delicate maneuvers. They can pick up small objects though, just clumsily...

Old Age

Old age is treated much like the immature trait. It is an illness that will gradually weaken a body and subtract points from its attributes. The partial usage attribute will depend on how long the body has until death or substantial attribute deficiencies. When MOVE reaches 0, for example, it can mean the body can no longer move and needs artificial means of locomotion such as a wheelchair, or is simply bedridden for the rest of its life. The GM should determine point return accordingly. Bodies that lose a point of Power, Beauty and Vigor while losing 2 points of MOVE per interim chapter can warrant 20-30 points. Such attribute loss per hundred years would perhaps give back 5 points.

In game terms, Old age usually starts attacking a body after it has lived more than two thirds of its expected lifespan, though the GM is free to bring in old age as she seems fit, possibly through Black Drama Trumps.

One-armed/lame

This body is missing either an arm or a leg. In the former case, it suffers a -2 modifier in close combat, cannot climb anything nor swim and can only carry one weapon at the ready. In the latter case (a missing leg), it fights at a -4 modifier in close combat, it cannot swim and cuts down its MOVE(land) score to 1/4 of its normal value by using crutches.

Plant form

Combines motionless, no manipulator, cannot talk and a Beauty rating of N/A. Engineered plants can have any of the perception ratings attributed to people and animals. They can even be given move scores by getting rid of the motionless attribute.

Special attack

This body has an attack form that goes beyond mundane claw rakes, bites, spore clouds or flying spines. It might be a sonic attack that can shatter glass or burst internal organs up to a hundred meters away, or a fiery breath that can incinerate a house.

Some cost benchmarks:

base cost: 30pts

Base Damage of attack*:

- DL0: 0pt
- DL1-5: +1pt per point of DL
- DL6-10:+2pts per point of DL
- DL11-19: +3pts per point of DL
- DL20: 70pts
- per +5: +50pts
- continuing damage: +10pts

(*): maximum damage according to body size:

Minuscule: DL5

Tiny: DL10

Small: DL15

Normal: DL30

Large: DL50

Monstrous: none

Ranged (5pts per meter of effective range)

The body can attack foes from a distance using this special attack form.

Rate of fire (20pts for Rapid fire, 40 pts for full auto, 60 for streamfire)

The special attack, which must be ranged, is capable of high rates of fire.

Blast scale (cost modifier of 50pts per meter of Blast scale)

This special attack has a Blast scale, like an explosive. Unless the attack is ranged, the center point of the attack as the body itself, which is considered immune against its own damage. If this attack is also ranged, use the throwing explosive devices rules much like for throwing explosive orbs and such.

Example: an archfiend player is designing the body of his character; a cross-between a dragon and a man. It is normal-sized.

This archfiend has an utterly explosive reproduction method, in that if its unfertilized eggs are shattered and come into contact with air, their vile contents explode furiously. Since the beast can throw them, this attack is ranged (effective range 5 meters) and the eggs carry a blast scale of 1 meter. The player originally wanted each bursting egg to inflict DL50 damage. However, since his archfiend is normal-sized, the maximum damage this attack can deliver is DL30. He opts for that.

Cost would be as follows: base cost 30pts, damage +170pts, 5 meter effective range: 25pts, Blast scale: 50pts. Total cost is therefore 275pts. The player cringes, and lowers damage to DL10. This lowers cost by 150pts to 125pts. By adding a flaw that states that the Archfiend only produces one egg per day that becomes useless after 24 hours, the GM agrees to cut the cost in half, for a final cost of 63 Power Points. So this thing can basically attack once per day using its eggs as potent ranged and explosive weapons.

Stigma

You are despised/feared by mortals, immortals or both. The point return of this Trait depends by how much you are despised/feared, and how many people have this feeling towards you. Being shunned by the people from your village might be worth 5pts, while if you are a ghastly monster feared by any mortal that lays eyes on you might be a 30pt Flaw. In general, this Trait does not mean your life is in danger, but rather that people wish to have nothing to do with you. By doubling this Flaw's point return, it means you may very well be hunted and killed by those that shun you. Some character types already have their own versions of this Trait (such as the *surrounded by enemies* Trait of the Syba or the *unholy creation* Trait of the Archfiend).

10) Description & final details

As the last step of character creation, players will fill out the remaining aspects of the character sheet and describe in greater detail the background, situation, and objectives of their characters.

Character description

It is crucial for great stories that the characters be well defined. Simply playing according to your character's weaknesses and attributes is not enough. Player characters are the heroes of this game. They need to be strong but human. They need a background story that tells where they come from and who they love, or once loved.

Filling out the character sheet

Name(s)

Many characters and all Angelions will have more than one name. Angelions have a mortal name, which was the name given to them by their mortal parents and which they used during their mortal lives. They have a Spirit name as well, which became their secret name within Angelion circles after their essencing but prior to the war. Still today most Angelions are known by their Spirit name, though many that now are to be counted among the servants of Ravencross have taken on a third name, their true name, which in their minds best represents their nature. Some Phantomas and Sybas have chosen to take on a third name as well or decided to return to their mortal name, while most Dagonheir chose to keep their Spirit name as their one true name.

Age

A character's body(ies) and mind have an age, which players must write on the Mind Sheet and every Body sheet of their character. While the actual age of a character's body(ies) may be any number from 0 on up, an Angelion character's mind must be at least three hundred but less than five hundrd years old. Rogue Golems must be more than three hundred years old with no maximum age, while Archfiends can be between one and three hundred years old.

Legendary Abilities

For now, leave these empty, as they shall be described only in the upcoming supplement.

Drama trumps

Characters start with one White and one Black Drama Trump. Fill out a circle on each row of the character sheet.

Total Power (optional)

A character's Total Power is a measure of his net worth in the game and the potential threat he poses to his enemies. Total Power has no real game effect other than tracking a character's progression through the campaign; some GMs may wish to keep diligent track of their player characters' Total Power, while others may decide to ignore it completely. It does require a bit more bookkeeping.

At the start of gaming, Total Power is equal to the character's specific character type's Power. Hence all Angelion characters start the game with a Total Power of 500, while all Rogue Golems start with a Total Power of 400. As the character goes through adventures, Total Power is likely to fluctuate, generally by going up, but sometimes by going down. Gaining experience points, acquiring wealth and artifacts, expanding one's Realm and attuning more powerful bodies will add to a character's Total Power, but having bodies killed, Realms destroyed or having artifacts and wealth stolen will diminish a character's Total Power.

Total Power is the sum of a character's mind, bodies, possessions and Available Power Points. For Angelion characters, the first +2 rating in War and Wisdom, as well as the *Kingdoms of Life* master ability, are considered included in the 200-point Angelion Trait.

Mind

Add up the costs of a character's mental attributes, Mastery ratings, Master abilities, mind Traits and White Drama trump costs and deduct weaknesses, mind Flaws and Black Drama trump point returns.

This is the mind's contribution to the character's Total Power.

Body(ies)

Add up each of a character's body costs to his Total Power. In cases where the actual and minimum costs of a body are different, use the actual cost.

Possessions

Possessions include wealth, artifacts, Realm, Sanctum and income. Each has a Power Point value.

Wealth

A character's wealth is worth 1 Power Point per 10k mints. Take note that by spending wealth, a character's Total Power is reduced accordingly. Purchasing attuned bodies from the Genomancers with wealth will generally lower a characters's Total Power. Buying rumors or spending wealth during adventures will lower a character's Total Power, but may help him succeed (or even survive!)

Artifacts

Artifacts have a Power Point cost and a monetary cost. Add an acquired artifact's Power Point cost to a character's Total Power. Hence a 453pt character that acquires and attunes a 900 point artifact will be a character of 1353 Total Power for as long as he has this ring attuned to his essence.

Realm

The Realm of a character is tabulated into his Total Power; a Fell Lord that presides over a large and highly engineered Fell Kingdom has more power than a young Syba that presides over a small village, all other things being equal. A character that has his 5pt village totally destroyed will see his Total Power reduced by 5 points.

Sanctum

A character's Sanctum is worth a certain amount of points as well. A character with multiple sanctums may add them up together to arrive at a final point value. For example, a Syba that has three villages and in each of them, an Opulent dwelling as his Sanctum will add 45 to his Total Power.

Income

A character's income (inherent to his character, not to his Realm) is tabulated into the Total Power as well. Every 5k mints of Realm-independant income is worth 1 point of Total Power.

Available Power Points

Any and all Power Points remaining after the ninth step of character creation gets converted into *Available Power Points.* Experience points are converted into Available Power Points as well. If they are not spent during an interim chapter, they still contribute to a character's Total Power.

CHAPTER FIVE
ITEMS OF POWER

The stranger's stance changed somewhat, though faintly. The crowd felt it, and heaved backwards a little.
His voice boomed, and his cloak suddenly took to life.
"So be it then!" said the man, grabbing his walking stick firmly with both hands.
"You have chosen the path of peril. Let me be your guide!"
His staff became white hot at both ends, and he slowly rose into the air, amidst the cries of fear of those near to him. His cloak became furiously animated, as though eldritch winds came forth from under it.
I heard a woman cry, and saw the mother holding her newborn. Some were kneeling, others frozen in place. I was of the latter, and awaited my doom.

Some years before the First Age consumed itself by fire, eight enormous crystals were transported beneath the surface into an obscure bunker. When the cleansing flame had erased all life, what remained of man's greatest scientific achievements, all his inventions, his blueprints, his machine designs and theories, all that man had learned over the course of his evolution was contained inside those eight crystals. During the following centuries, the Kingsways would add a ninth.

Using these obelisks of knowledge, the Kingsways built artifacts of terrifying power first to destroy remnants of the First Age then to seed the shattered world with life; thus could they be likened to gods, recreating the animals and plants of Earth, moving mountains, carving riverbeds and finally resurrecting mankind itself.

Though this power is much diminished -almost extinguished- now that the nine obelisks are no more, their world crafting and the artifacts they employed -though carefully hidden from mortal eyes- stand as testaments to their once almost limitless power. The seemingly natural animals of the Second Age often bear mysterious genetic traits, while apparently mundane objects such as rings, pendants, tools and weapons may in reality be artifacts of mind-boggling power. One need only mention Ambrose's own ring -Golden Locus- that could summon energies on a scale wholly inappropriate for its diminutive scale. The breadth of its power allowed it to shatter mountains, command storms and incinerate cities while being no heavier or cumbersome than any other ring of mortal manufacture.

Such was the technological power of the Kingsways and their Library of Knowledge, the nine obelisks.

A word of caution...

GMs and players alike should understand that although technology has shaped the Second Age, it is not the focus of *Lesser Shades of Evil*™. Technology in the game is a tool to add drama. It is not encouraged for players to burden their characters with every possible gadget they can get their hands on. Artifacts are there to give characters the power to make mountains levitate into the air, to whip up storms and to bring down crackling bolts of lightning simply because it is cool to see mountains lift up into the air, to create storms and call forth lightning bolts. However, those levitating mountains and crackling bolts of artificial lightning are mere props, meant only to flesh out the characters themselves, to make them shine and feel good. No matter how powerful, artifacts must fade into the background when characters expose their weaknesses and hidden passions and when players roleplay particularly poignant and dramatic scenes. If the gathering of artifacts becomes the focus of players, the GM would do good in reminding them that this game rewards drama, good roleplaying and ideas above all else.

Total Power and the artifact hoard rule

Artifacts count towards a character's Total Power. A word of caution is however necessary; multiple similar or identical artifacts contribute to a character's Total Power only if he can directly use them all at any given time. Hence a small iron bomb might be worth ten Power Points to a beginning Awakened character and add to his Total Power, but if he discovers a cache of a thousand small iron bombs during an adventure his Total Power would not jump by 10 000 points; instead the GM would attribute a hoard value to the stash, and this would be the amount added to the character's Total Power for as long as he had the stash of iron bombs. In this example, the stash might be worth 150 Power Points and be written as 1000 iron bomb hoard (150pts) since the

character could possibly equip a small army of followers with these deadly weapons and use them to rule an entire town or city through terror.

The same goes with suits of armor, weapons, animals, boats, houses and any other item or artifact acquired by a character except essences; these never fall under the hoard rule and always add their full individual value to a character's Total Power, no matter how many he has. First Age curios and artifacts, if collected in great numbers, answer to this rule as well and would be attributed a hoard value by the GM.

The Age of Little Wonders...

He looked at my ring, and thought it mundane.

"Perhaps you would wish it to glow?" I said to him mockingly. He looked at me unimpressed.

"Your trinket is worthless, no more valuable than a bag of fruit or a decent meal. I will take it off your hands for 20 mints, no more." He looked away at another customer, and bartered over a half-rotten saddle. I focused on my ring, linking my mind with it. My eyes grew unfocused, as I trembled with anticipation. Myriad processes were cued, countless devices whirring to life inside it. Generators throbbed to life, calling to themselves the power of the primeval flame. The ring hummed, a rising note hinting to the wise that this was no bag of fruit, no mere bauble. It became the locus of power, summoning to itself the energies that spawned the universe itself, bending its laws to amass cyclopean energy. Once, an age away, the power this ring now generated would have fed the world entire.

It is during the years 600-700SA that much progress was made by Lyra Kingsway in the fields of microscopic power generation techniques and field-effect machinery. Most notably it is during this time that the first of the seven Kingsway rings -Dragonwail- was created.

Unsurprisingly, since this ring was the first, it was also the weakest; thus was it given to her despised sister Delphina. Still, flawed as it was, Dragonwail sparked the beginning of a new era in terms of artifacts and technological power, for Lyra had managed to imbue the small ring with unfathomable levels of energy; Dragonwail would have been sufficient to supply all the nations of the late First Age with their power requirements. The Second Age from then on became the Age of Little Wonders; an age where artifacts worn around fingers or hanging from one's neck could be possessed of enough energy to lift mountains or incinerate entire armies. A single artifact wielded with skill and thought could change the tide of a battle.

The war destroyed many artifacts, and those that remain today are scattered all over the world. Some lay deep under the waves, others gather dust in the attics of mortal households, their power waiting to be unleashed once more.

Second Age artifacts fall into one of four categories; Godshards are the artifacts of power that Dagonheir accept and are willing to use in their fight against evil; the black artifacts created by Lord Ravencross and Delphina for the war generally bear his mark -a raven shadow over a tilted cross- or hers -a dolphin with a rose in its beak- and carry great energy. Usually much less powerful, Awakened artifacts often date

back to the First Age or are those crafted by the Watchful Eye, a mortal sect wizened to the ways of immortals. Finally, common artifacts are those that all characters can start with due to their relative abundance.

Godshards

Waking from his sleep, Mountain Dream opened his good eye and looked at the ceiling. The wooden boards were the first things he saw every morning, and he knew every knot and fiber of their wood. He let his eye course over patterns he knew by heart, while the sounds of the forest entered through the window sill. Chirps and song filtered through, along with the rustling of the creek.

Something, however, was different this morning.

A different light shone on the boards, a peculiar reflection that changed the mood of the wood. Mountain Dream felt panic well up inside him. The night before, every object in the room lay as it was supposed to, as they had lain countless nights before. Nothing should be producing this light!

His second eye opened, though for a moment it only blurred his vision. When it finally settled, he turned his head slightly so that he might see around him. The pot, the chair and the chest were there; the cloak, the knife and the drawing as well; the mirror was still, the fruits and boots the same.

The fruits...

Something had caught his gaze.

A flicker of sun that bounced on something that was not there the night before, on the little table next to the bowl of fruit.

It was a ring. A band of gold, and it spoke.

"Mountain Dream" The thing said, though no sound came from it.

He closed his eyes, thinking it was dreamstuff.

"Mountain Dream" he heard once more, louder, and the mark of Ambrose glowed fiercely but for a moment on its side, thereafter its glow fading slowly into nothingness.

After their ascension Angelions endured horrible heartache; their duties were selfless, demanded immeasurable sacrifice and discipline and some two dozen Angelions had their essences cast into the firepit due to diseases of the mind or heart.

Seeing his immortal guardians fall into madness, Ambrose crafted the first of the GodShards. Their effects were manifold; for Angelions prey to heartache, the Godshards provided warmth and solace. To others, the hope of acquiring a Godshard became a great motivator. Angelions treasured them, and their spirits were soothed by even the simplest.

Godshards bore the mark of Ambrose -the seven-pointed Ambrosian Cross- which was visible only to its attuned user. Though many were little more than small trinkets that glowed, sparkled or hummed softly, others were possessed of more than token amounts of power. They could allow their owner to levitate into the air, to shrug off the most punishing blows or allow them to incinerate vile mortals without the need to draw their blade. Just prior to the war, the usefulness of Godshards in preventing madness was so great that more than half of all Angelions possessed more than one of these artifacts, and scarcely any were without at least one. The great majority of Godshards were crafted before the war but a few were born near its end just prior to the destruction of the Tower of Emerald and Bronze. During this period, Lyra Kingsway used her small army of golems to engineer various devices with which she and her followers could wage war against her brother's minions.

Godshards were given to Angelions in a

multitude of ways. Most were delivered conveniently close to their intended owner by a Kingsway using an animal form -the hand of God. Less frequently, Angelions were visited by a Kingsway in human form and given the Godshard personally. Even less commonly, groups of Angelions were given their Godshards together, either near their usual haunts or after being led to a specific location where their precious artifacts could be received. On mountain tops or in silent meadows, they received -or found- their Godshards. Prior to the death of their mortal form, Angelions hid their precious Godshards in secret locations and reacquired them after being reborn, though some Godhsrads and pureblades, lost in combat, remain lost to this day.

Black artifacts

In the months immediately preceding the war followers of Ravencross were given a multitude of artifacts with which to wreak havoc among the forces of Ambrose and the defenses of his mighty Tower. It is unknown in what year Corvus began crafting the first of the black artifacts nor if all of them bore his peculiar signature; most would agree that the day he began crafting Prolegomenon -the terrible staff- is the day Corvus died and Ravencross was born.

During the war Delphina revealed a number of potent artifacts of her own, with which she thwarted her brother's attacks. Most notorious among them were her demon eggs and the plague pearl Calamity, an artifact that may or may not contain an organism capable of ravaging the world entire.

Dagonheir consider a black artifact to be one crafted by either Corvus or Delphina. Very few of these powerful artifacts remain, which Dagonheir fear and mistrust. Those that carry, sell or trade them suffer the same fate as well.

Awakened artifacts

Engaged in a protracted battle against its immortal foe, the Watchful Eye has learned how to craft artifacts of its own. Though possessed of limited energy, these artifacts allow the awakened to wage war on a better footing against their enemy. Nan-Calan powder and spectacles of awakening are just two artifacts that have become invaluable to their struggle.

Along with these, First Age artifacts are dug up by operatives and brought to secret locations, there to be scrutinized and ravenously disassembled by the Tinkerlords. Mortals call them Taint Relics, monuments of the cursed age. Buried deep under the surface, waiting in catacombs and antechambers, vaults and rubbish heaps, taint relics take many forms; from small artifacts of incomprehensible purpose to great machines, dark automatons and crystal towers of blinding beauty.

A PRIMER ON SECOND AGE ARTIFACTS!

Mindcasters

Embedded within essences, mindcasters are grayish spheres about an inch in diameter. They allow Angelions to communicate and control the bodies of animals, machines and men as well as most artifacts of power. The term *mindcaster* comes from this usage; it allows an immortal to cast his mind out into the world.

In and of themselves mindcasters can do nothing at all, much like radio broadcasters without receivers. They require organic bodies, machines or artifacts attuned to their unique signature - their *pattern*- to communicate. Mindcasters translate the received data from attuned bodies into photon and electrical signals an essence can process and understand; they allow an Angelion to see, hear, smell, taste and touch what his attuned bodies see, hear, smell, taste and touch! Conversely, mindcasters receive their essence's commands and communicate them in a form their attuned bodies or artifacts understand. Thus can an Angelion control an attuned body's arms and legs by throwing punches, using swordplay and running away from a fell beast and command an artifact of power to summon a terrible storm.

Using conventional transmissions (such as laser, radio or microwave broadcasts) would be troublesome; the information transferred from a body per given unit of time is phenomenal, and the data needed to control it intimately is likewise greater than what conventional signals would allow. What more, mindcasters do not require line of sight, can transmit through limitless amounts of solid rock and exchange information at incalculably high speeds. All attuned bodies and most artifacts of power are engineered to be *mindcast-operated*.

The method used by mindcasters to communicate relies neither on photon nor on particle transmissions. The notes of Blind Virtue concerning his study of the Seven-Stone Necklace suggest that mindcasters exchange information using a process that *confounds* transmission and reception; mindcasters, he mused, change shape, density and color when communicating with their attuned bodies and artifacts. A strange observation indeed! His notes also hint that the time between transmission and reception may be incalculably small, to the point of being *almost nonexistent*, even if the mindcaster and its attuned body or artifact are greatly distant.

Game terms:

Transmission range and speed

No practical range limit has been observed for mindcaster transmissions. They transfer data at a speed that is *many orders above* light speed. An essence and its attuned body on opposite sides of the planet will communicate just as clearly and rapidly as if they were next to one another. Mindcaster communication in no way suffers from line of sight limitations, aberrant weather conditions or

other such factors (however see *darkstone*, below).

Information volume

Mindcasters transfer phenomenally high levels of data per given unit of time. They can receive or send memories, images, tactile sensations, words, sounds and smells. Mindcasters could theoretically receive the total body sensations of around a thousand attuned bodies at once in real time. Transferring total memories (visual, auditory, olfactory, taste and tactile) is consequently done at a rate of 1:1000. Transferring one month's worth of total memories would take around forty five minutes; visual memories only would be transferred at a rate of 1:2000. Thus, downloading the total visual memories of a hundred year old man from the time of his birth to the last image he saw on his death bed would take around eighteen days, and would include images of his dreams as well.

Privacy

Mindcaster transmissions offer no possibility for the information being traced or decoded by a source other than the mindcaster and its attuned receivers. The information exchanged between a mindcaster and one of its attuned bodies or artifacts *exists* only for them.

Darkstone

Darkstone is a synthetic material that resembles obsidian. Unreasonably dense and strong it has a tendency to shimmer and vibrate softly even in dead air. Darkstone has many interesting properties, notably its *liquid frequency* which turns a slab of darkstone liquid and its *solid frequency* which turns a pool of darkstone solid. Its main attribute however is that it blocks mindcaster transmissions. A mindcaster contained inside a sealed darkstone enclosure cannot communicate at all. An essence separated from one of its attuned bodies by a darkstone wall will lose contact with it. Darkstone trapboxes have been used to imprison essences and artifacts, shutting them off from the world. Bodies cut off from their essence in such ways will fall dormant.

Mindcast-operated artifacts

Most Godshards and black artifacts are *mindcast-operated*; they have no buttons, switches or levers and consequently a mortal would be incapable of using them. A mindcast-operated artifact must be attuned to an essence before the artifact can be used.

Attuned artifacts function exactly like attuned bodies; they answer the wishes of the Angelion they are attuned to. The link between an Angelion and his attuned artifact can be lost if the artifact (or the Angelion's essence) is locked inside a darkstone trapbox or if the artifact is detuned using an aspect crystal (see *aspect crystal* in the artifacts section).

Since they have little in the way of physical controls, mindcast-operated artifacts can appear as nothing more than mundane objects of mortal manufacture. Only by recognizing the physical aspect of an artifact -its peculiar shape or engraved symbols- or hearing the faint humming of its eterdyne (see *eterdyne* below) can a character suspect that this is a mindcast-operated artifact. Positive identification and attuning requires an aspect crystal or a trip to the Genomancers.

I. Using mindcast-operated artifacts

Since only Angelions have mindcasters embedded in

their essences, only they may control mindcast-operated artifacts, and only after attuning them to their essence.

2. Identifying mindcast-operated artifacts

To determine if an apparently mundane object is in fact a mindcast-operated artifact in disguise requires a GN15 Intelligence + Wisdom task, SL2 facilities and an hour of work unless visual identification alone is sufficient (GM decision). Alternatively, a GN9 hearing task can reveal the faint humming sound common to all eterdyne-powered artifacts, most of which are mindcast-operated.

3. Attuning mindcast-operated artifacts

Attuning a mindcast-operated artifact to an essence requires an aspect crystal and a few hours (see the *aspect crystal* artifact). Characters that do not possess an aspect crystal will undertake a trip to the Genomancers and pay 100 000 mints instead.

4. Modifying mindcast-operated artifacts to be physically operated

Modifying an Angelion artifact so that a mortal can use it requires a GN22-35 Intelligence + Wisdom task (depending on GM decision and the nature of the artifact), SL4 facilities, 1 million mints and ten years of laborious work. This involves adding buttons or triggers so that its user may use the artifact with hands/manipulators. Some artifacts -such as those that manipulate gravitational energy and /or electromagnetic energy- cannot be controlled other than through mindcasts.

5. Modifying artifacts and golems to be mindcast-operated

Golems found in the Second Age are not mindcast-operated, though they can be modified to be. Likewise, not all artifacts are mindcast-operated. To modify a golem or artifact so that it becomes mindcast-operated is a GN30 Intelligence + Wisdom task requiring SL4 facilities, 2 million mints in material and ten years of work. Take note that the artifact or golem must be able to respond to the mindcaster commands (modifying a kitchen knife or horseshoe to be mindcast-operated affords no benefit!). Only artifacts possessed of electronic controls and functions can be so modified.

When modifying a golem, a failure results in the destruction of the golem's artificial intelligence and fails to attune it; a marginal success or a success with one added effect results in the golem being attuned but its own intelligence destroyed; a success with two or more added effects allows the golem to be attuned to an essence while conserving its own artificial intelligence. In such a case, the Angelion can override the artificial intelligence whenever he desires and when he logs off, the golem's own artificial intelligence takes over.

6. Modifying an animal or human to be mindcast-operated

Modifying an animal or human to become mindcast-operated is an invasive procedure which removes small but critical sections of

the brain's higher reasoning centers in favor of thousands of nanofeelers. To modify an organic body so that it becomes mindcast-operated is a GN30 Intelligence + Wisdom task requiring OL4 and SL3 facilities and one year of work. Costs are variable; refer yourself to the *Behind the Veil* chapter under *bodysnatching* and cut costs by four if the procedure is done by a player character instead of the Genomancers or any other character or organization. Only the brain's motor and reflexive centers remain unmolested and if the procedure is a success, these centers are now ready to be attuned to a specific Angelion's essence. A mindcast-operated human or animal no longer has a soul to speak of; from now on, its soul will be parasitic in nature, its previous owner considered dead. Before attunement (or when not under an Angelion's control) a mindcast-operated body is in a vegetative state called *dormancy*, and will die of thirst or hunger if left dormant for long periods of time. Its breathing, heart rate and other vital functions are maintained by the cybernetic controllers.

7. Losing (and how to find) an attuned artifact

Some attuned artifacts have the means necessary to locate themselves or see their entourage, but most do not. Hence you can lose an attuned artifact and still be able to command it without being able to locate it. A misplaced Named War ring may be lost, but its power would still be at the command of its master; it could incinerate its surroundings just as if its master wore it around his finger. Finding the ring would be difficult however, even if one can locate the area of charred desolation that surrounds it. Artifacts that can levitate gravitationally cannot be summoned to one's self if their exact location is not known. Artifacts caught in darkstone trapboxes cannot be controlled at all, as are those that become detuned with aspect crystals or that have their controllers removed.

Finding mindcasters

Mindcasters are embedded inside essences; removing one would be a GN35 Intelligence + Wisdom task requiring SL4 facilities, 10 million mints and fifty years worth of laborious work. A failure will likely result in the destruction of both the essence and the mindcaster. No mindcaster has so far been found outside an essence, and the knowledge to build more was lost the day the nine obelisks were destroyed; what remains today is the knowledge to create artifacts and modify bodies so that they may be *mindcast-operated* (see above). In theory it is possible to implant a mindcaster inside a human brain or within the artificial intelligence of a golem so that they could command attuned bodies and artifacts of their own. The Tinkerlords of the Watchful Eye would wish for nothing more than to get their hands on a functional, non-embedded mindcaster. The fact that so far none have been extracted successfully from essences, and that none seem to exist in their non-embedded forms, makes it unlikely that any human or golem might control any other body than its own any time soon. Still, the possibility does exist

Eterdynes

Dating back to the late First Age, the *eterdyne* is an advanced form of energy generator that breaks down matter to create energy; it is

found in most mindcast-operated artifacts and in all essences. Eterdynes can be microscopic in size.

The matter of functioning of an eterdyne is simple; it draws matter into itself (generally ambient air) and converts it into energy by colliding it with anti-matter particles synthesized and stored internally. An eterdyne is self-sufficient for as long as it can drag in ambient air/gaseous/liquid particles. Because of its vacuuming effect, an eterdyne produces a faint humming sound bordering on a whistling note barely perceptible to the human ear in total silence.

An eterdyne cannot produce energy in total vacuum and its energy output is diminished in low pressure environments or where ambient particles are lacking.

Game terms

Eterdynes are found embedded within many artifacts. The knowledge to create more eterdynes is now lost, and so to create an artifact powered by an eterdyne a character must first take an eterdyne out of another artifact. Doing so is a GN25 Intelligence + Wisdom task, SL3 facilities, requires 20k mints and one week. Eterdynes are assumed able to power the mightiest of artifacts. The older and much bigger eterdynes dating back to the First Age may have power limitations and may not be able to energize the artifacts of the Second Age. In vacuum, eterdyne-powered artifacts gradually weaken unless they have a reservoir of particles on hand.

Data shards

Data shards are information storage crystals. Empty a shard is nothing but a block of photo-sensistive atoms arranged in a plain cubic lattice structure but when a section of it is bombarded with light under very specific conditions its structure changes, creating a localized pocket of information. The greater the information volume, the greater the size of the affected region. Once all the information is *downloaded* into the data shard, the light beam can be turned off and the shard can be heated to its transition temperature so that it becomes *stable*; it will contain the information that was fed into it forever (or until it is shattered) and cannot be fed with more data. An *unstable* data shard can contain information but this information can be erased if it is bombarded by light to generate new data. The size of a data shard can range from microscopic data grains to data beads (the size of small pearls) and life shards (about the size of large pearls) to data obelisks, nine of which comprised the great Library of Knowledge. Once stable, data shards can be cut into specific forms by chiseling out the outer parts of the crystals that do not contain information. Mounted on jewelry, only a trained eye might recognize a data shard from any other precious stone.

Data Shards can be either mundane or *mindcast*-operated. Mundane data shards can have their data extracted (visualized as the case may be) only through a shard viewer (see *shard viewer* artifact). Mindcast-operated data shards reveal their data only to an attuned user. *Doom shards* (see below) are booby-trapped, mindcast-operated data shards.

Game terms

Data shards are now lost tech. Angelions use more mundane instruments (such as paper and ink!) to gather their thoughts or keep a record of their discoveries.

Data shards can either be mundane or *mindcast-operated*. Angelions that discover mundane

data shards must use a shard viewer to access their information. Mundane shards can contain images, sounds, text and words but not emotions, smells or tactile information. Mindcast-operated shards must be attuned (like any other mindcast-operated artifact) in order for a user to access their data. Mindcast-operated data shards, in contrast with mundane shards, can contain any type of data and emotion.

Shards can be open or locked. Locked mundane data shards require that the user press a sequence of buttons on the shard viewer, else the shard will not activate nor reveal its information. Locked mindcast-operated shards may require a specific thought, word or image to activate.

It can take many months (even years!) to scan through a filled data shard no bigger than a pea, while other data shards may contain a single image or memory of great importance. Only Angelions can access the information contained in mindcast-operated data shards, and only by attuning them.

Disabling a locked shard's password requirements to allow viewing requires a GN20-35 intelligence + Wisdom task, SL3 facilities and a time requirement left to the GM's decision. Failure with two or more added effects, or a fumble, destroys the shard.

Failure to send out the proper codeword /image when accessing a doom shard triggers its defense mechanism, which can have varying consequences. Some will flood the intruder's essence with a constant and excruciating wave of dark emotion or pain. Others "latch on" to the user's essence and corrupt it, possibly ruining it. Some are silent, and transmit the wrong information or send out a distress call to their maker.

Data beads

About the size of a pea, a data bead is a common type of data shard found in many First Age ruins. Most were used to store practically limitless amounts of video feeds and other low volume data. First Age people took to the habit of producing intricate jewelry out of data beads; hundreds of necklaces, signet rings and lineage brooches can be found buried in ruins holding a lineage's entire video history. Some may contain information or memories that characters can find quite interesting or valuable. Data beads were mostly mundane shards.

Life Shards

Each the size of a half-inch diameter gem, life shards were created as the brain of a mortal undergoing essencing was converted into an essence, and contained the mortal life memories of the newborn Angelion. The Kingsways allowed Angelions to carry their life shard so that they could review their mortal life and learn to better confront their fears and weaknesses. Though many Angelions lost or had their life shards destroyed during the war, some still carry them today, cherishing them for the memories they contain. Life shards are mindcast-operated shards.

Data Obelisks

"Before the rain of fire from the skies, set against the last sunset of the cursed age, a small boy from a far away land saw eight brilliant stones carried on the backs of men of metal that hummed and drummed; they disappeared beneath great doors,

and when these doors closed, when these eight brilliant stones were no more to be seen by the mortal child, the end of the world had come.

When The Kingsways hid in their bunker prior to the Second Genesis, golems carried eight large data obelisks underground. These eight obelisks contained the amassed knowledge of humanity, to which the Kingsways added a ninth obelisk during the Second Genesis. Together, the nine obelisks made up what is known as the Library of Knowledge, which Ambrose destroyed during the war. So far as is known, the nine data obelisks were the largest data shards known, and were mindcast-operated.

Electromagnetic Control artifacts

In the last years of the First Age, the great powers of the world could harness light in astounding ways. Using machines they could produce miniature suns. The very skies danced and rolled with colors and shapes to entertain the people of their lands. As this age consumed itself through hate, great cannons unleashed destructive orbs of light against far away cities, leaving golems of metal to slay survivors using blinding rays of death.

During the Second Genesis the Kingsways improved upon this electromagnetic technology to produce artifacts of incomprehensible power. They miniaturized the instruments necessary to produce light beams and energetic barriers to the point where their artifacts could be no bigger than a small gem and still be able to generate dreadful amounts of power. Thus can an apparently mundane ring or necklace produce the same effects as the massive war cannons of the late First Age, disgorging lances of blinding energy able to incinerate the greatest cities of men.

Gravitational Control artifacts

People of the late First Age levitated into the sky with gravity belts and cars, while their palaces and cities floated above the clouds. Manipulation of graviton waves allowed them to cancel, accentuate or otherwise control the effects of gravity on matter. In the more violent latter days of their time, gravity guns used massive short-lived gravity waves to hurl super heavy chunks of matter while gravity bombs wreaked havoc on fortified structures by vaporizing them down to the molecular level.

During the Second Genesis the Kingsways improved this technology so that today a small gravity ring of their manufacture can levitate a horde of charging elephants into the air or lift the waters of a lake and hurl it upon the face of a mountain!

THE STATUE OF ANAN

Godshards and Black Artifacts

Kabal Ink

Value: 1 Power Point per liter
Category: minor Godshard
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

Kabal ink is invisible to mortals; a gallon of it applied generously to the side of a wooden wall would leave only a "temporary" wet impression. To Angelions having bodies lacking the engineered fault of mortal eyes, the wall would be covered with a great big blotch of black paint!

Kabal ink was given to Angelions so that they could communicate with each other secretly without mortals becoming aware of their actions. They could guide each other towards secret meeting places or towards dens of evil where their blades could be put to use. They could correspond and reflect upon the world through letters and parchments.

Kabal ink is invisible to Angelions who bodysnatch human or animal bodies, but is otherwise visible to those purchasing Genomancer bodies or that have bodysnatched bodies modified (at a cost of 50k mints) to be able to see Kabal ink.

Thorn-Of-God +5 darts

Value: 3 Power Points
Category: minor Godshard
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

Thorns-of-God are miniature dart throwers loaded with poisonous darts. Once fired into their victims, the darts would dissolve rapidly and be off with the first breeze as a whiff of grayish smoke. Their darts are either coated with black resin, jade pearl or some soporific poison. See *Weapons table* for game statistics.

Pouch of Triplars

Value: 10 Power Points for 10 Triplars
Category: minor Godshard
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

Triplars are triangular, greenish pills that help a body fight disease and injuries. They resemble miniature pyramids no more than two millimeters per side made of a flaky substance which smells of pine cones. During the years of the Red Plague, they were given to the sick by clerics, and were given to Angelions expecting battle. Put under the tongue and allowed to dissolve, a user is considered under their effects for a complete day. Under the effects of a triplar, a character gains a +3 modifier to any Vigor task to resist poisons, illnesses or other toxins (including chemicals, hallucinogens and drugs) or to remain conscious after injury. It also means a character triples his healing rate for that day. Only one triplar can affect a character at any given time.

Backannan rubies

Value: 10 Power Points for a small pouch of 20 Backannan rubies
Category: minor black artifact
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

Seeing his mortal wife grow old, Corvus synthesized myriad concoctions to thwart her looming death; amber capsules, violet distil, lifebrew and rose extract are but a few of the products that came to be. His ruby-colored capsules, the crowning achievement of all his dabbles into life extension, managed to greatly extend mortal life. By swallowing one Backannan ruby per year, Helenoire lived for more than two hundred years, and her children enjoyed even greater longevity (before being slaughtered, that is!). Corvus produced thousands of Backannan rubies and even now synthesizes more with which his agents and Fell Princes bribe mortals to do their bidding, offering long life in exchange for fell deeds...

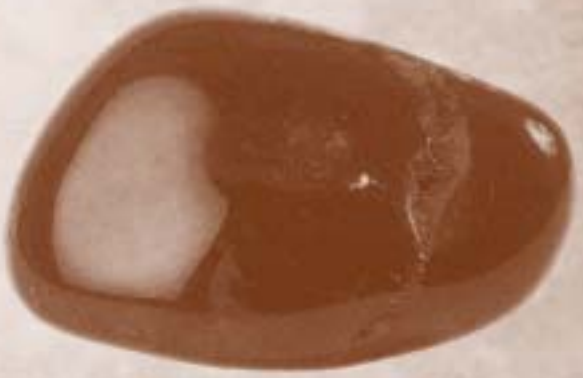
A character that consumes one Backannan ruby per year will age half as rapidly as normal during that year. Hence, by consuming ten Backannan rubies over a ten year period, a mortal (any organic body for that matter!) ages only five years.

Cryptobiosis vial

Value: 15 Power Points for five doses
Category: minor Godshard
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

Prior to the war Angelions carried small greenish vials of cryptobiosis liquid. A mortal drinking or injected with this brew would fall into a coma, his body becoming as hard as stone and perfectly preserved in a state of artificial mummification. It could remain as such for days, weeks or months without suffering from decomposition, lack of food or water. Given to a recently deceased mortal, cryptobiosis liquid served the same purpose; candidates for ascension could be presented to the Kingsways after their bodies had endured weeks or months of travel to reach the Tower of Anekron for *judgment*. Their brains were in perfect condition for essencing.

In game terms, cryptobiosis liquid halts any form of organic decomposition, while living animals or humans drinking/injected with it must succeed at a GN10 Vigor task. Success means they suffer a -2 penalty to all tasks for one day; failure means they suffer a cumulative -1 modifier every 1D6 rounds until the modifiers exceed their Vigor, at which point they fall into a coma for 1D4 months, during which they require neither food nor water.



Pebble eye

Value: 15 Power Points
Category: minor Godshard
Mindcast-operated? Yes
Unique? No

Pebble eyes are miniature cameras that relay the images and sounds of their surroundings. They are camouflaged as conventional rocks and pebbles and are always found by accident; it seems the Kingsways used thousands of them to monitor specific areas of the world, silent little watchers that spied upon the people and lands of the earth. By attuning a pebble eye, an Angelion can receive its information in real-time or record it for later review.

Aspect crystal

Value: 15 Power Points
Category: minor Godshard
Mindcast-operated? Yes
Unique? No

Aspect crystals are essential to the attunement of artifacts and bodies, and players should seriously consider acquiring at least one for their group. A large number of these artifacts exist, though many are now in the hands of the Genomancers or Lord Ravencross.

An aspect crystal resembles a perfect shimmering sphere of crystal ten centimeters in diameter. Found by chance, an aspect crystal may be of any color. Though mortals find them exceptionally beautiful and precious, aspect crystals are infinitely more valuable to Angelions.

An aspect crystal's *color* is a reflection of its *pattern*, which changes as its two halves are rotated relative to one another. When its pattern matches the pattern of an Angelion's mindcaster, the Angelion will (depending on the specific crystal) either see an image, hear a sound or otherwise *feel* for a short moment that the aspect crystal is now in sync with his essence; it is now considered attuned to him for as long as its two halves are not rotated. The color taken by an aspect crystal attuned to an Angelion's essence is said to be this Angelion's aspect color; no two are exactly the same. Ambrose's aspect color is of a dark purple, while Corvus' is a rather eerie orange. Players can decide which color represents their character's aspect color. Genomancers keep records of most if not all the aspect colors of Angelions, and thus may know to whom an aspect crystal is attuned to simply by verifying its exact color in their facilities.

Characters possessing an aspect crystal most likely stole it from either the Genomancers or Lord Ravencross. The crystal is assumed to be set to their aspect color and thus attuned to their essence. Rotating the two halves either willingly or by accident will instantly detune the aspect crystal and render it useless until the character rotates it back to his color or that of his comrades as the case may be.

An aspect crystal attuned to a character can itself attune artifacts and bodies to the character. Without an aspect crystal, an Angelion needs to visit the Genomancers to attune each and every artifact he discovers, which is time consuming, costly and possibly dangerous. To attune a body or artifact for its Angelion, the aspect crystal must be activated through mindcast, put within thirty centimeters of a mindcast-operated body or artifact and remain close to it for 4D6 hours. Once this period is over, the artifact/body will be attuned to the Angelion and he can shut the crystal off via mindcast. If the newly attuned artifact or body was previously attuned to another Angelion, the latter will instantly lose contact with it with no forewarning and have either been robbed of an artifact or bodysnatched out of a body! An aspect crystal can only attune one artifact or body at a time and has a *toughness* of 4 and a *Health* of 4.

Hell wand

Value: 15 Power Points
Category: minor black artifact
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

The hell wand is a gruesome weapon; Eidech guards from the Fell Kingdoms poke disobedient slaves with their tip, rupturing the fragile end piece and unleashing a torrent of superheated plasma upon their bodies. Skin melts off bone as the primeval fire gnaws at their organs and courses through their veins. After each successful attack a hell wand requires two actions to recharge itself and form another containment *bubble* on its tip. Hell wands are seen in many Fell Kingdoms. See *Weapons table* for game statistics.

Orb of chaos

Value: 15 Power Points
Category: minor Godshard
Mindcast-operated? Yes
Unique? No

Eerily sparkling under the sun, emitting a faint glow under moonlight and changing color during twilight hours, these tangerine-sized orbs resemble spherical opals about the size of a small bird egg. Orbs of chaos were given to Angelions to exact judgment on a larger scale; they contained enough explosive force to flatten a small house of corruption! During the war both sides used orbs of chaos without reserve, and a sizeable cache was stolen during the mayhem. Doubtlessly mortal, the thief appears to have sold the orbs to his kin for they are now found most frequently as part of family treasure or as jewels worn by the wealthy.

To use an attuned orb of chaos its owner must send a mindcast commanding it to arm itself; once the command is sent, the orb emits a fierce reddish glow and becomes warm to the touch. Thrown against any hard surface or commanded to detonate it will explode with a blast of terrible power and produce a whirlwind of flame that will melt stone.

Once an orb of chaos begins to warm, there is no turning back. If it is not thrown within three rounds or does not receive a mindcast to detonate, it will become too hot to touch, its surface cracking and melting under its internal energies. On the following round, it will detonate on its own. See Weapons table for game statistics.

Breath stone

Value: 15 Power Points for three breath stones
Category: minor Godshard
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

Thrown into water, this mundane-looking stone will produce a dense, creepy, tendril-like fog that lingers and oozes forth for many hours. The fog can cover an entire village, tends to be carried slowly by the wind and incurs a -4 modifier to vision tasks and ranged attacks. After 2D6 hours, the fog dissipates harmlessly. All that remains of the breath stone afterwards is an acrid-smelling dust residue that floats on the water's surface.

Angelion cloaks gave rise to mortal legend; their paintings and stories often portray ghostly spirits walking or floating though city streets at night, bringing judgment upon the tainted. Invariably, the spirits are dressed in black cloaks under which can be seen the tips of black blades.

Angelion cloaks were common godshards; almost all Angelions had them. They were useful both for discretion and defense since they could ward off arrows, knife thrusts and sword slashes just as well as the scorching heat of a burning city. A complete Angelion cloak is no heavier than a regular cloak, affords a -1 to Vision tasks to spot its wearer during the night and is stylish to boot! See *Armor table* for game statistics.

Angelion cloak

Value: 15 Power Points
Category: minor Godshard
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

During their century-long training on the Forbidden Land, Angelions were taught the secret properties of over a hundred different plant extracts. Later they would heal mortals with itchleaf brew, bless their crops with powdered Golden Cup or sentence them to an agonizing death by coating their Thorn-of-God darts with black resin. Angelions can still brew these potions and powders by finding the proper plant or animal they are extracted from during gaming or interim chapters (at 2 Power Points per dose to represent the time necessary to gather and process the ingredients). By spending some Power Points right away, a character is assumed to start the game with a supply of mixtures.

Supply of Divine Mixtures

Value:	1 Power Point per dose
Category:	minor Godshard
Mindcast-operated?	No
Unique?	No

Itchleaf brew (1 dose): quickens healing (+1 to Healing rate for three days after consumption) and cleanses the body of infection, parasites and most illnesses.

Berthing berries (3 berries): a mortal woman injesting just one of these rare purplish berries, either ripe and fresh or dried and powdered, will see her fertility increase a hundredfold during the following month.

Blackroot milk (1 dose): will render a man or woman unable to produce offspring.

Crimson Brew (1 dose): given orally or administered through the bloodstream, a dose of Crimson Brew will produce boils, scars and discolorations of the face and skin. In some cases it can cause blindness, loss of limbs, partial paralysis, loss of hair or uncontrolled hair growth, rotting skin, etc. GN10 to resist. Effects manifest a day after exposure and may worsen and diversify for many years.

Powdered Golden Cup (1 dose): sprinkled on even the most improper of soils, a dose of powdered Golden Cup will make the crops of an average farmer grow furiously for seven years.

Powdered hornweed (1 dose): destroys crops and renders the earth poisonous

Ichorous brew, white (1 dose): mixed with water and left in open air, a dose of white Ichorous brew will attract deer for a week.

Ichorous brew, yellow (1 dose): mixed with water and left in open air, a dose of yellow Ichorous brew will become a magnet for flies and locusts, attracting swarms of the pests for a week.

Ichorous brew, red (1 dose): mixed with water and left in open air, a dose of red Ichorous brew will attract hordes of rats for a week, after which it loses its potency. The rats, however, may very well remain...

Jade Pearl (1 jade pearl): jade pearls resemble green beads no more than half a centimeter across. Diluted in a drink or coated on a blade, just one jade pearl becomes a swift, painless poison: GN10 to resist, DL12, quick acting.

Black Resin (1 dose): an excruciatingly painful poison, GN9 to resist, DL5, 1 hour between each DL attack. Victim at -7 to all tasks after the first damage is received and until the third and final poison attack is received.

Black leather armor

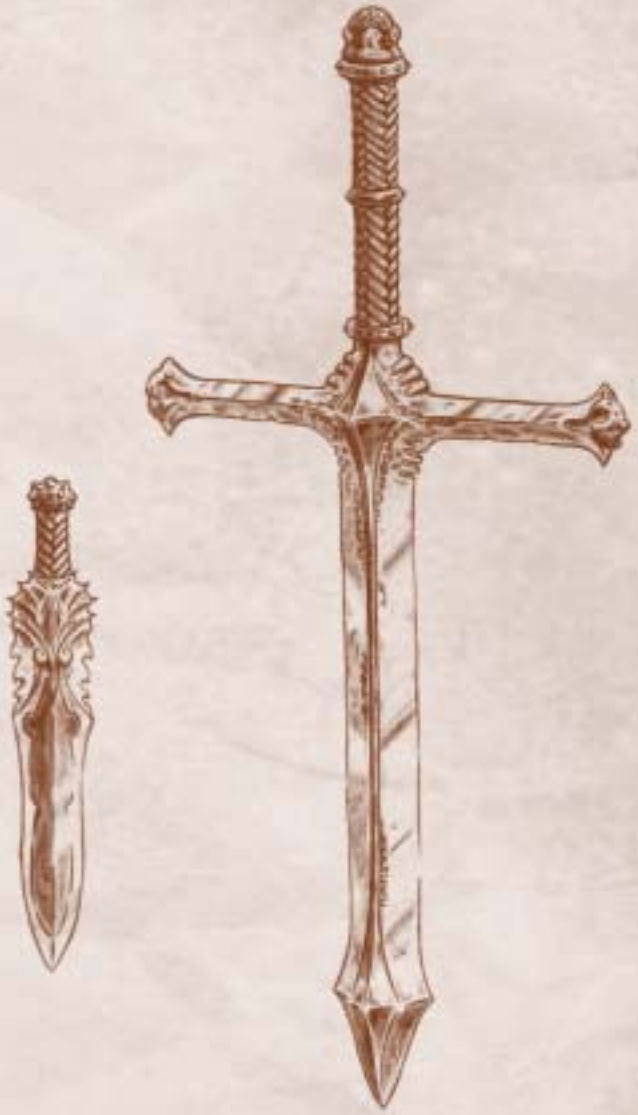
Value: 20 Power Points
Category: minor Godshard
Mindcast-operated? See text
Unique? No

Black leather armor resembles common hardened leather suits worn by watchmen and hunters, complete with artificial nicks and scratches. There the resemblance ends; black leather armor is a thousand times as resistant and much lighter than mundane leather. See *Armor table* for game statistics.

Blood whip

Value: 20 Power Points
Category: minor black artifact
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

A blood whip is composed of a handle and a retractable strand of invisible wire between five and seven feet in length to which is attached an end weight. By depressing a button on the handle, the blood whip deploys its length of wire and the user can whip it in sweeping motions around himself, cutting a deadly swath through his foes. A blood whip can slice through bone and skull like a hot knife through butter. A user that fails his attack with a fumble or 2 or more added effects will deal an attack on himself. See *Weapons table* for game statistics.



Pureblades -also called divine steel- were given to all Angelions prior to them being cast out into the mortal lands. Pureblades looked mundane and unassuming; still today some can be found wielded by mortals that know nothing of their origins. Only to be used during the night, no pureblade ever saw the sun in the hands of a true Angelion!

The first pureblade, a perfectly-crafted little poignard given by Ori Kingsway to his father, had an unfortunate destiny to fulfill; it would become the blade with which Ambrose would slay the first sinner of the Second Age, the rapist Firmath.

During the war many pureblades were either lost or destroyed; followers of Ravencross threw theirs into the ocean from the main deck of Venomhead.

Pureknife/Puresword

Value: 15/20 Power Points
Category: minor Godshard
Mindcast-operated? See text
Unique? No

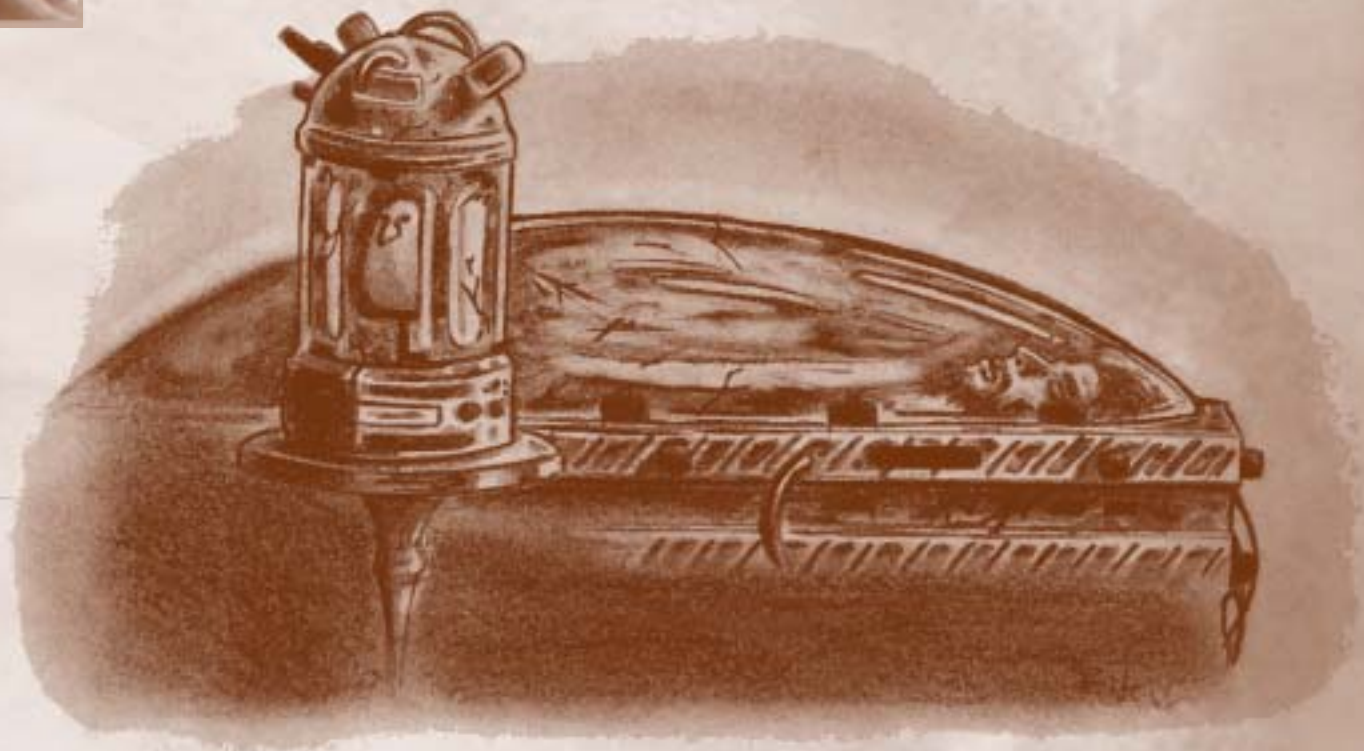
Artificial skins may serve various purposes and characters; Angelions use them (on rare occasion) to mimic mortals of importance, while golems use them to appear human. Artificial skins can fit over human or mechanical bodies. They attach themselves on the body through various points, either by gluing themselves through excreted enzymes or by form fitting after the user "zips up". They are organic and feed on the underlying body's heat, the air's moisture and nutrients found in earth and water. Prolonged exposure to fire, cold and some diseases or poisons may destroy an artificial skin. Otherwise they are assumed to regenerate damage normally.

The cost of an artificial skin depends on its attributes; they have a Beauty, Fear and Toughness rating that adds to a character's own toughness (following the armor layering rules).

The value of an artificial skin will be twice the final cost of its three attributes (refer yourself to the A Legend is Born chapter), with a minimum cost of 25pts. Maximum toughness is 3. Traits may be added at double their normal costs. Artificial skins have all the functionalities of a normal skin such as sweat, hair growth, rashes and pigmentation.

Artificial skin

Value:	see text
Category:	minor black artifact
Mindcast-operated?	No
Unique?	No



Green berth

Value:	25 Power Points
Category:	minor Godshard
Mindcast-operated?	No
Unique?	No

Green berths allow bodies to remain dormant for centuries -perhaps millennia- without requiring food or water. Different versions cater to different body sizes; from the diminutive, easily carried green globes that can hold minuscule bodies to gigantic green berths that can hold monstrous-sized bodies in suspended animation. The more common green berth resembles a large coffin with a transparent lid, inside which can lay dormant a human-sized body.

Green berths were found in all Kingsway towers. Without a green berth, a dormant body is considered to be sleeping; it still needs food and water and ages normally. Within a green berth, it ages ten times slower than normal, heals twice as fast and neither needs water nor food. Green births are quite resistant to damage, and their glass is heavily armored; they have a *toughness* of 6, minuscule ones have a *health* of 3, tiny ones a *health* of 8, small ones a *health* of 16, normal ones a *health* of 40, large ones a *health* of 100 and monstrous green births generally have a *health* of 500.

Azure crescents were made in pairs and many were embedded into wristbands or necklaces; by attuning their essence to either half, two Angelions could speak to one another directly without having to vocalize words through the mouths of their attuned bodies; they had a direct essence-essence link allowing the sharing of thoughts, memories, emotions and sensory data. As long as neither azure crescent is destroyed or detuned, the two essences can speak to one another freely. Using an azure crescent Delphina Kingsway lured the Dagonheir Little Fingers to her tower by letting him experience her lovemaking through her attuned bodies and those of her lovers; Little Fingers felt her every caress and whisper. By showing her the blighted lands around her tower through the eyes of his raven and letting her smell the death of her people, Lord Ravencross convinced Lyra to abandon her defenses, thus ending the war.

Azure crescents

Value:	30 Power Points for a pair, 15 for one
Category:	minor Godshard
Mindcast-operated?	Yes
Unique?	No

Azure crystals can be found individually or in pairs. When found alone, the missing half is usually already attuned to an essence, and thus by attuning the found half to his own essence a character will be able to speak and share thoughts with an unknown Angelion. A player buying this artifact during character creation can choose to possess both halves and give one to another character. With player and GM approval, he can choose another player character or a non player character. Azure crystals allow characters to speak to one another intimately without the need to have their attuned bodies close to one another. The GM should allow such players to speak secretly and privately at any moment during the game. They can benefit from memory sharing and most *hitchhiking* possibilities, as discussed under *essences* later. Angelions having an attuned azure crescent can shut off communication for as long as they desire.

Darkstone Trapbox

Value: 35 Power Points (average)
Category: minor Godshard
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

Darkstone trapboxes are hollow receptacles made of darkstone. Essences locked inside are effectively shut off from the world. Likewise, artifacts and attuned bodies imprisoned in trapboxes cannot be controlled by Angelions.

Trapboxes exist in many shapes and sizes, from the diminutive -scarcely an inch per side- darkstone cubes meant to hold power rings and other small artifacts to gigantic trapboxes that can hold monstrous attuned animals or afford privacy from immortal eyes.

An essence put inside a darkstone trapbox will be incapable of controlling its attuned bodies and artifacts nor of communicating with the outside world in any way or form; the imprisoned Angelion is considered dead for as long as his essence remains inside the trapbox. If forced to remain conscious, the prisoner must endure the silent wail (see *Essences*). Attuned bodies or artifacts locked inside a trapbox cannot be controlled by their master; bodies fall into dormancy (and may die of starvation, thirst or suffocation) and artifacts fall back to passive states.

Death Stone

Value: 35 Power Points for two death stones
Category: minor Godshard
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

A death stone behaves like a breath Stone, but the fog is poisonous. Those caught within its area of effect must succeed one GN10 Vigor task per round or suffer DL15 poison attack and be wracked with severe spasms (1/4 move, -5 modifier to all tasks). Effects last for 1000 rounds as the fog spreads at a rate of 2m/round from where the Death Stone was cast into water.value.

Volobelts were among the most cherished of Godshards; they allowed an Angelion to lift into the sky and fly at his leisure, dodging clouds and hunting the rays of the sun! Volobelts may resemble any kind of belt, while their eterdyne and components are so minuscule they could be made to fit in any piece of jewelry or belt buckle.

Using these belts in combat is tricky, but masters of 3D combat have a definite edge; they can be blindingly fast opponents that dart in and out of combat to attack their foes. Although the volobelt is the most common form, any artifact can incorporate the same gravitational power as the volobelt.

An attuned volobelt generates the equivalent of a *control* gravitational power able to lift one person within one meter of the belt itself. A volobelt gives a character a Move(F) rating of 50. See the *When all hell breaks loose* chapter for details on using volobelts in combat. Volobelts with greater lift power are known to exist, and would have a correspondingly higher value.

Volobelt

Value: 35 Power Points
Category: minor Godshard
Mindcast-operated? Yes
Unique? No

Storm Wand

Value: 50 Power Points
Category: minor black artifact
Mindcast-operated? Yes
Unique? No

A wand used by many "sorcerers" of the Fell Kingdoms to inspire fear. On command, the wand glows with a fiery light and from its tip a lightning bolt will leap out to strike a chosen foe. See *Weapons table* for game statistics.

Shard viewer

Value: 40 Power Points
Category: minor Godshard
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

A shard viewer enables a character to extract and view the data contained in mundane data shards by using physical controls. They can take any form but they must contain a small receptacle where a data shard can be inserted. By placing one inside this receptacle, the shard viewer will produce the data -either holographic images, texts, sounds or combinations of data- and allow a user to go back to previously viewed data or scan forward by using small levers and buttons. The shard viewer represented by this artifact is around the size of a soccer ball, and weighs around fifty pounds. It allows retrieval of data from shards as small as data beads to shards the size of a fist.

Ring of Protection

Value: 50 Power Points
Category: minor Godshard/black artifact
Mindcast-operated? Yes
Unique? No

Rings of Protection were given to exceptional servants of the All-Seeing or Angelions off to battle superior mortal forces. A lone Angelion could therefore prevail against a hundred thugs and brigands! Each ring can generate an invisible field of protective force around a large-sized (or smaller) user. When used in conjunction with other forms of protection, the normal layering armor rules apply. Note that a user may benefit from only one protection field at any given time and hence cannot use both a ring of protection and an Eye of Thundering for example. See Armor table for game statistics

Before Anabad went on his crusade during the War of Crosses, he faced a horrible decision; off to war, he would leave his wife and children -his entire village- to face a winter with more than half the farmers and hunters gone. He resolved to stay until a wandering spirit gave him apple tree seeds of very special nature; Anabad planted one in the middle of his village and an apple tree had grown before the week ended! Its fruits could support the entire village, and it would grow even in frozen soil.

Anabad's Apple Tree Seeds

Value: 60 Power Points for six seeds
Category: minor Godshard
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

In every village from which he recruited men for his crusade, Anabad planted a seed so that the women and children might survive the winter. The Anabad trees produced fruit even in the dead of winter!

This artifact means the character has six Anabad apple tree seeds, each of which capable of producing a single tree from which a small village can gain nourishment. Anabad trees are incapable of producing seeds of their own. Mortals that see a character planting such seeds would surely consider him divine. He would benefit from the best treatment, be privy to the latest information, be given whatever he desires and be at a permanent +2 modifier to any Presence task.

The incineration ring was the first mass-produced weapon built for the war, and used liberally. Its manner of function is simple: via minddcast, its stone decoy produces a beam of coherent light so intense and focused that it can pierce through virtually any form of protection. An incineration ring will produce a brilliant white lance of light and crackling explosions all the way to its target point, where the beam will vaporize armor and bubble away organs. See *Weapons table* for game statistics.

Incineration ring

Value: 70 Power Points
Category: minor Godshard/black artifact
Mindcast-operated? Yes
Unique? No

"What of our forces to the west?" the lord asked, feigning ignorance. The lieutenant swallowed and fought to remain conscious.

"When our hordes were disgorged from the Harks, they inflicted terrible losses upon the enemy. They slayed and slayed, until they neared the tower. There a single man with golden skin stood before them, near its foot. From his sword a brilliant white lick of death reached out into their ranks, and whomever the lick touched would die a flaming death. When the golden man's body finally fell, over two thousand of our soldiers had died. The air stank of death and the ground was a spongy black mass, and wherever I set foot upon it I would leave a pink, fuming footprint that stank of innards and cooked meat.

Incineration wand/sword

Value: 80 Power Points
Category: minor Godshard/black artifact
Mindcast-operated? Yes
Unique? No

Bigger, less discrete but more powerful versions of the incineration ring were used during the war. Most took the form of a wand or a similar-sized object such as a large sword, two-handed axe or scepter and could shoot out a near continuous stream of scorching death... See *Weapons table* for game statistics.

The greater Angelion cloak was given to the most virtuous (and usually oldest) servants of the Angelion. They allowed their wearer to disappear from sight, leaving only a shimmering ghost-like image under the best of conditions. Under cover of night, the wearer was all but invisible. When inactive, the jet-black cloak resembled any other mundane cloak born of mortal hands.

Greater Angelion Cloak

Value: 80 Power Points
Category: minor Godshard
Mindcast-operated? Yes
Unique? No

Characters trying to locate a user wearing a greater Angelion cloak have a -4 modifier to their vision task, and a -2 modifier to attack him even if successfully identified. See *Armor table* for game statistics.

Eye of Thundering

Value: 100 Power Points
Category: minor Godshard/black artifact
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

Resembling a silver brooch with inset obsidian, an Eye of Thundering is in reality a potent personal field generator. If brought close to the ear, one will hear the central stone emit a soft, pleasant hum. When activated the artifact will surround the wearer with a shimmering, thundering field of rolling energy from which he can see clearly out but those outside cannot see in. This crackling field of force vaporizes or deflects incoming blows or energies. An *Eye of Thundering* is activated in the user's action, and while active any stealth, hiding or infiltration task performed by the user will suffer a -5 modifier because of the field's loud noises and sparkling aura. An Eye of Thundering can produce a field large enough to surround a *large-sized body*. See *Armor table* for game statistics.

Darkstone wavegun

Value: 150 Power Points
Category: major black artifact
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

The Darkstone wavegun resembles a large handgun of the late First Age, with a cone-like opening at its end. It can produce one of two sonic waves, each of precisely the right frequency and intensity to change the state of darkstone from liquid to solid or from solid to liquid. Each action it is fired, it can affect a liter of darkstone, either liquefying it or solidifying it. Effective range is 2 meters.

Essences

Value:	point value equal to the mind's Power Point value/2
Category:	major Godshard
Mindcast-operated?	See text
Unique?	No

An *essence* is the body of an Angelion, the originator of his thoughts and the receptacle of his memories. It is his soul and body in their raw state! Only by destroying this essence can the Angelion be killed. Thus in terms of artifacts, essences are great finds; by getting hold of one, the captor becomes the master of the captive, with power of life and death over him for as long as the essence is in his possession; by hoarding hundreds, Lord Ravencross has become the most powerful immortal of the world.

Resembling small orbs of gold and silver, essences weigh ten pounds and produce the faint humming sound common to all eterdyne-powered artifacts. Their only possible function is thinking; only through their embedded mindcaster (see *Mindcasters* in the Primer section) can essences interact with their environment by controlling mechanical, animal or human bodies remotely.

Angelions that have their essences stolen by another are called minions, for their captor holds the power of life or death over them. Minions may be forced to do the bidding of their master or risk pain and anguish beyond mortal measure. For as long as an Angelion character holds another's essence, the following effects may be brought to bear on the minion

As the possessor of another Angelion's essence...

You can damage or destroy your minion's essence

The way to permanently dispose of an Angelion is to destroy his essence; an essence has a *Health* of 5 and a *Toughness* of 4. Any loss of health resulting from an essence being dropped or attacked might cause long term problems for its Angelion. If it is destroyed, the Angelion is destroyed as well.

You can power down your minion's essence

An essence can be powered down manually; doing so requires a GN9 Intelligence/ Finesse + Wisdom task, a thin needle-like instrument and three rounds to locate the essence's rather inconspicuous power switch opening. Once shut down, the Angelion falls into the *dreamless sleep* (see below). You can reactivate a powered down essence by following the same procedure and pressing the power switch once more. an Angelion cannot willfully power himself down; only an outside source (or one of his attuned bodies!) can do it manually.

You can force your minion into the dreamless sleep

Our foe has one weakness
He must sleep and dream!

Angelions need four hours of sleep per day, during which all their bodies must be resting or dormant. Essences will induce slumber in a natural way by reducing conscious control and provoking mental fatigue. During normal sleep, dreams are manifestations of residual electrical and light currents that course and snake their way through the essence's pathways. Thus immortal dreams are no different than mortal dreams; they are manifestations of the subconscious, a vital part of the human mind perfectly emulated by an essence.

Angelions *sleeping* while their bodies are not themselves dormant means they may be awoken if their bodies are roughed up or otherwise disturbed, much like any mortal sleeping. On the other hand, an Angelion sleeping with all his bodies dormant cannot be awoken by having his dormant bodies disturbed.

An essence deprived of power by being powered down manually (see above) or by being thrust into hard vacuum (such as outer space or a vacuum chamber) will fall into the *dreamless sleep*. The Angelion will lose contact with the world and be in a state of complete unconsciousness; he cannot think or reason and his attuned bodies fall into dormancy. Time flows around him, while his mind is frozen in nothingness and he does not dream. His memories will be preserved and he will regain consciousness if power is returned, be it an hour, a day or a thousand centuries later.

You can inflict the silent wail upon your minion

You can induce the *silent wail* in your prisoner in either of two ways: Destroy all his attuned bodies or imprison his essence inside a darkstone trapbox. To prevent your minion from willfully falling into the dreamless sleep, roll a GN25 Intelligence + Wisdom task, requiring SL3 facilities and 1M mints.

In game terms, an essence that loses all contact with the outside world or has all of its bodies destroyed is said to be in a state of silent wail. Every 1D6 days, the Angelion must succeed a GN6 Temperance task.

Repeat this task every ID6 days of silent wail and once the Angelion has accumulated three failures, he gains a *lurking madness*. By being left to suffer the silent wail for long periods of time, one can gain multiple *lurking madness* weaknesses of progressively incapacitating natures.

You can attune new bodies for your minion

You can have new bodies attuned to your minion by cracking his essence's *pattern*. Doing so requires a GN25 Intelligence+Wisdom task and one week of work. If successful, you can forever afterwards attune bodies for this Angelion, even if is no longer your minion (though in the latter case he may simply ignore the bodies you attune for him). By either destroying his other bodies or forcing his mind inside the bodies you attune for him (see below) you can be certain he uses only the forms you wish him to have. You can force your captive to awaken in strange places inside even stranger bodies.

You can trap your minion's mind inside a specific body

Angelions can normally *log off* and log in their attuned bodies at will. However you may trap your minion inside a particular body for an indeterminate amount of time. To do so you must succeed at a GN25 Intelligence + Wisdom task requiring SL3 facilities and one day of work. Failure may result in damage to the essence. Success means your minion cannot log off the chosen body(ies) and all other attuned bodies fall dormant. You can thus force an Angelion's mind inside misshapen forms and torture him to your heart's content (if you are so inclined, that is!). Lord Ravencross trapped the soul of his father inside the body of a cripple, and gave the bodies of snakes or dogs to those that refused to do his bidding willfully after the war.

You can reacquaint your minion with pain

Angelions are immune to pain. Their essences contain buffers that limit the intensity of physical hurt they receive from their attuned bodies. an Angelion can have an arm and a leg chopped off and feel scarcely no pain at all, save for a dull malaise indicating serious injury. He can take a red-hot iron and plant it squarely in his belly without flinching.

Disabling the pain buffers of a captured essence requires a GN25 Intelligence + Wisdom task, SL3 facilities and one day of work. Failure may result in damage to the essence. A successful procedure means the unfortunate prisoner can now experience physical pain like any mortal being. He can be given attuned bodies wracked with diseases that flood his essence with unending agony and his bodies tortured until his mind shatters. Such an Angelion will suffer the normal effects of injuries and be at a -3 modifier to all tasks when using a seriously wounded body. What more, the pain he senses from one body affects all his tasks, even those accomplished through other bodies. The Angelion suffers a -2 modifier to all tasks for as long as at least one of his bodies is seriously wounded or prey to physical torture. The modifier is instead -3 when the Angelion uses the seriously wounded body itself. Seriously injured but dormant bodies do not incur a -2 modifier to the Angelion's tasks.

You can hitchhike on your minion's thoughts and wreak havoc upon his senses

You may be able to *hitchhike* on your minion's thoughts and/or inflict on him any number of possibly maddening effects; The Kingsways hitchhiked frequently on the minds of their Angelions, and Corvus used this process to seduce some of his followers. The procedure requires a GN25 Intelligence + Wisdom task, requires SL3 facilities and a week of work. Failure with one or more added effects may result in injury or destruction of the target essence. If successful, you can hitchhike on your captive's thoughts, control his bodies, implant memories, produce illusions and trigger emotions!

Hitchhiking allows you to:

Read thoughts/feel emotions: the surface thoughts and emotions of your minion are heard as voices in your head or felt as emotions of your own. His hidden secrets, when (if) they surface are yours to contemplate as well! You cannot force them to the surface. Aware of your presence, your minion may hide his secrets under mental clutter, much like Ambrose has managed to do since his son took hold of his essence.

Observe and control: you can receive feedback of your minion's attuned and active bodies as though they were your own. You can control one or more of his attuned bodies and artifacts as well if you succeed at an opposed Intelligence + Wisdom task. Apply a -1 modifier per additional body/artifact you wish to control. Success means you control these bodies/artifacts completely for one round. You need to devote celerity to control bodies/artifacts, as per the normal rules. Success with two or more added effects means you can control these bodies/artifacts without needing to roll an opposed task each round; as long as you devote the necessary celerity, they are under your control. Once you break contact, your minion regains control. Your minion has no power whatsoever over the actions of the bodies/artifacts you control in such manner. In some cases, he may be forced to observe -perhaps atrociously- what you do with his bodies or where you may lead them...

Produce illusions: you can think of illusory people, objects, artifacts or events and make it so that your minion sees them as genuine. This requires an opposed Intelligence + Wisdom task (possibly with modifiers, depending on how difficult the illusion is to produce and GM decision) every round the illusion is active. If you succeed, the illusion seems genuine to your minion and he must react accordingly. If not, he sees the illusion as the lie that it is, but still sees it. It might be blurry or undefined enough for him to understand that what he is seeing is mere phantasm. Producing an illusory knife on a table is of normal difficulty and incurs no modifier. Producing a walking, talking man incurs a -2 modifier to your task. Producing the illusion of an exploding sun, a monstrous tidal wave, an advancing army or an approaching storm might incur a -4 to -6 modifier.

Trigger emotions: you can make your minion feel sorrow, anger, love or happiness if you succeedd at a GN12 Intelligence + Passions task.

In her hands, the ghostly woman carried a small slab of rock upon which something yellow was etched. She approached the black door and knocked three times hard. After a moment, it opened and a big man loomed over her, barking something at her which I could not hear. It is then that it happened; casually, she showed him her rock, and he fell peacefully upon the steps of the porch as though struck dead by the All-Seeing. The woman leaped over his sprawled body and disappeared from my sight into the house.

The Saffron symbol

Value: 250 Power Points
Category: major Godhard
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

The saffron symbol is an intricate pattern of lines and hues. It is always etched in stone, and Elizabeth is said to have made the pattern from which all others were copied. Second Age humans that look upon a rock bearing the saffron symbol -even for a moment- will fall into a dream-filled sleep for 2D6 hours. The symbol has no effect upon Angelions, golems or archfiends. It affects Awakened and mortals but not those having the *pureblood* Trait.

Traveling over the clouds in the great barge named Venomhead, the followers of Ravencross assembled upon its front deck, in what could be called the beak of the great vessel. There each in turn cast their puresowords out into the wind and into the sea below. As each of his lieutenants did so, their Lord gave them a Shardsword bearing the crystal which held their mortal life memories. It would be the last time the followers would stand together as they had stood countless times before. When the battle would end, more than a few shardswords would stand as the only monuments to lives once spent and dreams once dreamed.

Shardsword

Value: 300 Power Points
Category: major black artifact
Mindcast-operated? Yes
Unique? No

Shardswords contain within their hilts the life shard of a top lieutenant of Ravencross. They were powerful more because of the message they conveyed than the sharpness of their blade; they represented freedom, awakening and an end to the lies. Still, Lord Ravencross did imbue them with ample killing power. Heavy and eternally sharp, their blade could become shrouded in white flame. Shardswords carried their wielders into the air and upon command could produce a glowing field of protective energy. Those found today by chance are doubtlessly orphaned blades, their owner dead and the only reminder of his life locked inside the hilt of the weapon.

See *Weapons table* for game statistics. Shardswords have all the properties of a *volobelt* and an *Eye of Thundering* and contain a *lifeshard*.

Fellworm newt

Value: 350 Power Points
Category: major black artifact
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

Fellworms are even fouler than Vidian destroyers. In essence they are gigantic digestive systems with a nasty predisposition towards wanton destruction.

To find a fellworm newt, one must travel to the purple island, the Fell Kingdom of Lord Red Lotus; there within her personal chamber, one may find one or two fellworm newts nibbling away at the petals of her orchids. Resembling small orange caterpillars newts will live but three years after which they start growing fiercely, reaching hundreds of meters in length after only a decade of growth. Only Red Lotus and her master know the secrets to creating these obscenities, and so only by acquiring live newts can characters hope to grow -and possibly attune- fellworms. They require two interim chapters to reach adulthood, during which time they are subterranean and feed on the roots of trees and vegetation. The regions above their nesting spot will see their vegetation wither away, only to reveal the monster once its maturation is over.

See *A Legend is born* for the game statistics of fell worms.

POWER	FINESSE	VIGOR	BEAUTY
18	3	6	N/A
FEAR	TOUGHNESS	LIFESPAN	HEALING
9	8	*	0*
MOVE	VISION	HEARING	SMELL
24(L)	5	5	N/A

(: see Mechanical body Trait)

...next the mighty tower and its defenders would come under attack by a horrendous enemy; those closest to the forest heard a series of drum beats, at first regular and slow, then increasingly rapid, arrhythmic and louder with every atrocious second. Along with the drumming was an unnatural mechanical wheezing that grew louder as the drumming moved closer.

Many things were approaching in the woods. The Harks of Ravencross had reached the defenders. Though some had perished along the way, over a hundred remained.

The first Hark, its glowing eyes focused

intently on the tower, its legs whinning under gears and motors, came out of the forest. It stopped, scanned its surroundings, and opened its maw wide as it belched out a flame of orange death over the onrushing defenders. Those caught by its blast fell screaming and writhing, their bodies charred and blasted. A second, then a third Hark erupted from the forest, and there their bellies opened unleashing a torrent of warriors upon the tower.

Harks are best described as twenty-foot tall, forty-foot long hogs of metal and poorly made organic skin covering. Each could carry twenty warriors into combat, and had devastating effects on the morale of faithful defenders. Harks have a rudimentary artificial intelligence, allowing them to follow orders in the Angelion tongue and the One Language.

The Harks

Value:	350 Power Points
Category:	major black artifact
Mindcast-operated?	Yes
Unique?	No
Attribute cost:	148pts
Body Traits	**Mechanical body** (200pts) Special attack: flame thrower (30pts base, +45pts for DL15 damage, +10pts for continu ing damage, +40pts for 8m effective range, +50pts for area effect with a 1m blast scale (175pts) Damaged (includes three glitches and -2D20 health points) (-100pts) Night vison (5pts)
Trait cost:	280pts
Size:	monstrous
Health:	300 (-2D20)
Cost modifier (Angelion/other):	-50/-20
Base cost (Angelion):	378pts
Base Cost (other):	408pts

"Had we more time, I would build a thousand of these! I fear they are too few to matter" Lyra looked at the silent blacknesses, each in the form of a ball as tall as a man. Next to her, Dark Blue was almost as still and silent as they were, holding her small hand in his.

Then there was a shudder and dust fell from the ceiling. The enemy had finally breached the entrance.

"Unleash them " Lyra said, casually, from the mouth of her child form.

"Unleash them all" she added, squeezing his hand tight.

Baneful blacknesses were crafted in the laboratory of the Tower of Emerald and Bronze. Each resembled a ten ton miasma of black metallic sludge, able to take any form desired by its master. Spheres, cubes, columns, animal or human shapes are possible forms of a baneful blackness. The sole limitation -reducing the effectiveness of these

POWER	FINESSE	VIGOR	BEAUTY
15	6	10	N/A
FEAR	TOUGHNESS	LIFESPAN	HEALING
9	5	*	0*
MOVE	VISION	HEARING	SMELL
6(L)	5	5	N/A

(: see Mechanical body Trait)

terrifying combatants was their laboriously slow speed; they could only move very slowly. At least forty were created during the war, and together they managed to slay over ten thousand fell soldiers and an unknown number of attuned immortal bodies. A few may yet be found near and about the ruins of Lyra's tower, in various states of damage.

A baneful blackness is comprised of billions of mindcast-controlled nanoforms. When not attuned or dormant, baneful blacknesses take a spherical shape and stand immobile. Under the control of an Angelion, they can change shapes to better squeeze themselves into small openings or to produce spikes, blades and clubs with which to attack their foes. They are controlled like any other attuned body. Baneful blackness statistics are as follows:

Baneful Blackness

Value:	400pts
Category:	major Black artifacts
Mindcast-operated?	Yes
Unique?	No
Attribute cost:	152pts
Body Traits	**Mechanical body (200pts)** **Shape change (150pt metamorphosis Trait that only allows gross shape change, no facial changes or color changes, added perk: allows the creation of limitless numbers of great spikes/horns that serve as additional attacks worthy of DL12 damage (+20pts)) (170pts)** **Multiple manipulators x3 (up to eight manipulators) (45pts)** **Damaged (includes three glitches and -2D20 health points) (-100pts)** **Night vison (5pts)**
Trait cost:	280pts
Size:	monstrous
Health:	500 (-2D20)
Cost modifier (Angelion/other):	-50/-20
Base cost (Angelion):	382pts
Base Cost (other):	412pts

His fell soldiers grew tired quicker this time, for the land was now spongy and hostile to their advance. Snow had been replaced by trees and plants that exuded a putrescent exhalation, a warm wind that smelled of rotting meat. Everything that flied or crawled either stung or bit, and animals of misshapen form looked at the passing army with sickened stares. Trees of black wood and foul odor blocked their way, their branches bearing poisonous fruit. A dozen soldiers hacked one tree to make firewood only to find their blows had exposed pink wood bearing a close resemblance to uncooked meat. The soldiers, hardened as they were, began to look to the frozen wastes with envy. The further in they went, the more Delphina's devilry attacked their resolve.

Delphina's Demon Eggs

Value: 400 Power Points
Category: major black artifact
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

Come morning, all would have perished, their bodies prey to atrocious illnesses. Lord Ravencross' own body fell the next day to a rotting disease that ate at its skin.

The attack was over.

Hellish offshoots of Elizabeth's White Flower bulbs, Delphina's demon eggs are black artifacts of terrible power. By planting just one in the ground, she was able to turn the region surrounding her tower into a bubbling realm of mutagenic horror. Knowing his sister had created upwards of a hundred of these demon eggs and uncertain as to the contents of her plague pearl, Lord Ravencross ceased his attacks on her tower and allowed her to remain free to this day. It is unknown if all demon eggs have the same pestilential effects, since only one was ever allowed to hatch. Some may be vastly more potent than those described here.

The typical demon egg resembles a black egg about five inches across having a glassy shell. Though normally hard, its shell becomes soft and permeable when left more than a few hours in a humid environment, allowing its vile contents to seep slowly into surrounding matter. A single demon egg can unleash a torrent of mutagenic destruction over tens of thousands of square kilometers, for it contains a more aggressive -though shorter-lived- version of the biomatrixes found in the White Flower bulbs. The latter are programmed to replicate plant and animal life giving birth to stable and natural organisms, whereas Delphina's

demon eggs produce highly unstable organisms, growing, snaking and bubbling their way forth from their unholy mother. When it encounters other organisms such as plants or animals, this wave of foulness will overwhelm and change them, rendering them as foul as it is or worse and allowing the fiendish matter to spread even faster through the flight of birds or the swimming of fish.

A demon egg planted into moist ground will unleash its contents within 2D6 hours or as soon as it is broken. Once this happens, the region of infection will grow by 100 meters per hour for 1D6x10 days. On a roll of 5 or 6, the egg's rate of infection does not stop and remains constant for another 1D6x10 days. As long as a 5 or 6 is rolled, the infection period remains active and the affected region grows further. Any organic being that wanders into an area being infected by a demon egg must succeed a GN10 Vigor task every day or become infected. If so, it will lose one health point per hour as its limbs, organs and skin rot and melt away and its genes mutate and transform it into a monster. When health points fall to 0, it means the creature has either died or mutated into something utterly alien; it is for all intents and purposes lost. Once the infection period ends, the mutagenic power of the egg is gone, leaving only its after effects; the region will be overgrown with alien plants and trees, misshapen animals and will bask in a fetid odor. Though most animals and plants created in the torrent of organic miasma will perish in the years that follow, a minority will survive and may spread to far away lands. To this day, the region surrounding Delphina's tower remains infected and misshappen, and mortals fear it as no other.

Lesser Power Artifacts

Value:	480 Power Points, +10 points per point of energy rating
Category:	major Godshard/black artifact
Mindcast-operated?	Yes
Unique?	No

An unknown number of lesser power artifacts were built shortly before and during the war. As their name implies they are the least powerful of the artifacts that bear any electromagnetic or gravitational energy rating. That being said, every single one of them served some purpose during the war, and today are among the most sought after artifacts known; they can turn a Syba into a king or become the greatest ally a Dagonheir has in the fight to protect the people of his realm.

Lesser power artifacts have either a *gravitational* OR *electromagnetic* energy rating of 8+1D6 and a maximum range of 100m. Lesser power artifacts cannot have both a *gravitational* and *electromagnetic* energy rating.

"Leave this village now and no harm will be done to you" The big cleric said to the sitting man with more emphasis this time, for he now had the backing of the Town Watch. But the hooded man barely raised his head. His dark cloak, wet from the rain, hid his face completely. I am unsure if he saw the thugs behind the cleric, nets and clubs at the ready.

"Friend, you leave me no ch" But the cleric's sentence ended there.

About the time his hand was to reach for the sitting man's shoulder, cleric Janell yelped in pain and fell to his knees. He then wailed like no man I have ever heard before; a strident, piercing cry as he clawed his face before dropping to the floor with a thud. He kicked around in the air against imagined assailants moments before his face and hair became enflamed and his clothes burst into fire. Opening his mouth to scream, liquid flame came forth, and then he lay still. It was as though his very blood and saliva had become like burning oil; though I had now retreated back, before turning towards the back door I caught a glimpse of the hooded man's medallion, a golden star that bore a peculiar black stone. Amidst the smoke that now filled the room, amidst the cries of panic and the stampede of people, I know that it sparkled eerily, glowing with evil power.

Sun of darkness medallions (also known as the thirteen Suns of Darkness) are potent weapons disguised as golden suns bearing a single dark stone. Suns of Darkness are able to make people and objects burst into fire according to the whims of their masters. Thirteen Suns of Darkness were given to the highest lieutenants of Ravencross. One was destroyed during the war, nine are still worn by Fell Lords and the remaining three are lost.

Suns of Darkness are able to create a *Heat or burn/set on fire* electromagnetic power of energy 16 or less and maximum range of 100m. Follow all the normal rules for using powers.

Sun of darkness medallion

Value:	500 Power Points
Category:	major black artifact
Mindcast-operated?	Yes
Unique?	No

Vidian destroyers are gigantic centipedes over three hundred meters long which Lord Ravencross bred to become his and his servants' warforms. Hellish beyond measure, they could shatter rock and bone with their bellows and their great maw could swallow elephants whole. Heavily armored and near unstoppable, three Vidian destroyers reached the Tower of Anekron, wrapping their segmented, many-legged bodies around it before reaching its summit. Ravencross bred dozens of these monsters; some eggs might still be found in jars and vats within the Fell Kingdoms. Some might still be lying dormant under the surface in the Unconquered Lands, waiting to be awakened (much like an unexploded bomb!).

Larva of Vidian Destroyer

Value:	500 Power Points
Category:	major black artifact
Mindcast-operated?	No
Unique?	No
Attribute cost:	366pts
Body Traits	**Additional attack (massive chomp, DL40 damage) (15pts)** **Special attack (shattering bellow, a massive sonic attack; 30pts base, +70pts for DL20 damage, +100pts for 20m effective range, +100pts for area effect with 2m blast scale, can only be used three times per day with a ROF of 1/10 (x1/2 cost) (150pts)** **Increased Health (+120 Health) (10pts)** **Animal form (-40pts)** **Night vision (5pts)**
Trait cost:	140pts
Size:	monstrous
Health:	520
Cost modifier (Angelion/other):	-50/-20
Base cost (Angelion):	456pts
Base Cost (other):	486pts

A character will most likely find the larva of a Vidian destroyer soaking in a jar that prevents it from maturing. He can either keep it sealed or *seed* it by planting it into the ground. Before burying it however, the wise character will let a few drops of his blood drip unto the larva; when the monster is mature it will treat the character as its master and obey his commands (provided of course the character still retains the same body!). Every interim chapter after seeding, the Vidian destroyer grows from its initial, minuscule one inch length by twenty-five meters, up to a maximum length of 300 + 5D20 meters. an Angelion can attune a Vidian destroyer once the beast reaches thirty meters in length, though these creatures are considered to be *archfiends*. The cost to have one attuned is double what it should normally be (see *Behind the Veil* chapter). Once attuned, its slumbering body must be brought back to the location it was buried or it will stop growing. The Genomancers would be unable to grow more of

POWER	FINESSE	VIGOR	BEAUTY
25	3	8	N/A
FEAR	TOUGHNESS	LIFESPAN	HEALING
10	10	100	1
MOVE	VISION	HEARING	SMELL
20(L)	5	5	5

these creatures; only Lord Ravencross knows how to create more larvae.

Unattuned, a Vidian destroyer of more than one hundred meters will be awoken by any disturbance near its burial spot, and lead to it rampaging away or following the character to which it has imprinted during seeding. In terms of intelligence, Vidian destroyers are comparable to dogs (though they'd much rather eat a village than play fetch!).

The Taub Deathbeam

Value: 600 Power Points
Category: legendary Godshard
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? Yes

From his floating tower Ori Kingsway devised a deathbeam comprised of a series of powerful lenses that magnified and redirected the sun's rays to incinerate targets on the ground. Though a true incineration weapon would have doubtlessly produced more devastating results, Ori appreciated his weapon's simple approach to cleansing. Using any of his bodies as forward observers, he could hit targets a hundred kilometers distant, more if he used the series of mindcast-operated remote lenses that could be deployed beyond the walls of his tower and circumvent line of sight limitations. Once triggered, the deathbeam could focus its energy over

an area as small as a man -vaporizing him instantly as a puff of blue flame- to one as large as an entire village. In the latter case, the deathbeam would raise ambient temperature by one degree per round until buildings and people were set ablaze. This was the fate of Taub city, incinerated by the weapon that would later carry its name. Very few of its citizens managed to escape an agonizing death. Countless men and women of tainted nature suffered the blue flame death before the deathbeam was destroyed along with the Lion's tower. A similar weapon might be devised using the means available to certain characters, notably those having access to hard science labs and large production facilities.

Bulb of the White Flower

Value: 900 Power Points
Category: legendary Godshard
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

During the Second Genesis, the Kingsways used the data obelisks to rebuild the world's wildlife, and with great success; in less than a thousand years they transformed a dead world into a paradise singing with birds and swimming with fish, its once poisonous lands turned green and welcoming. The secret of their success was a biomatrix of such potency that it contained the information and processes necessary for the creation of whole ecosystems. The White Flower was a product of this technology.

The bulbs of the White Flower contain in their fleshy core the quintessential biomatrix; planted into the ground at dusk, a bulb will sprout a single White Flower come dawn; if the flower is uprooted, the process will end there, though the plant is exceedingly resilient; its stem and petals removed, the bulb will regrow a new sprout the next day if buried at dusk. If on the other hand the White Flower is left to grow, within a week its burial spot is overgrown with weeds, plants and flowers; within a year a forest of tall trees brimming with colorful insects, small inquisitive rodents and slithering invertebrates will smother it; within a century, and for hundreds of kilometers around it, the lands will be covered in green, the skies will reverberate with the squawkings of birds and the rivers and seas will be alive with the song of whales and the glistening scales of fish.

A bulb of the White Flower is the incarnate power of creation. It is the magnum opus of Elizabeth and Delphina, and possibly the greatest of the Kingsway legacies.

Though essentially harmless, these bulbs were meant to be planted in an area sur-

rounded by barren land or - serving a different purpose- to become a source of food for long journeys. When planted and left to grow, their power can cause more destruction than good. Unearthed near a city -or within one- for example, a bulb of the White Flower will condemn it to a slow, unrelenting doom. Trees will unearth buildings, fields will be overrun by new organisms, plagues and mutations. Overnight, houses will be infested with flies and insects. The seemingly random and unexplainable hardships can last up to a century, whereby the bulb loses its potency. A one day old White Flower can be unearthed and its stem and petals eaten, providing a full day's meal to a traveler. The bulb, replanted at dusk, will produce the White Flower yet again come morning, thus allowing someone to travel without need for food or water indefinitely. If the White Flower bulb is not unearthed within a day, it cannot be unearthed and replanted the next day; its bulb has unleashed its contents into the soil, and the above-mentioned processes will invariably occur.

The Forty-Seven Named War Rings

Value: 900 Power Points
Category: legendary Godshards
Mindcast-operated? Yes
Unique? No

The boredom had become tangible, something I could feel coursing through my body and eating away at my mind. I could take no more of it, so I looked wide-eyed across the room for the quickest escape route. I managed to get halfway through the crowd, dodging small talk, well wishers and cocktail bearing servants before a large, green-dressed woman blocked my way. Her old age was obvious under layers of powders, skin colorants and a rather towering wig sprinkled with golden sparkles, and though I wished to speak to her not in the slightest bit, her aide seemed to think that I should, and managed to cleverly sidestep and thwart my escape from his flabby mistress. I would need to watch that one...

As he presented her, she laid out her mottled gray-brown hand in my direction, so that I may clasp her pudgy fingers in my hand and lay my lips upon it. What an utterly repulsive prospect. Still, it brought to my attention something I thought I would never see again. On her middle finger, I saw a rather large ring of gold that bore a single stone of fiery redness. My eyes did not betray me. This was a great war ring, one of

forty seven built by Lyra Kingsway to battle her brother's forces during the war. It sparkled and hummed at my approach, after what must have been a century of sleep. This ring casually worn as a mundane ornament by such a boorish hag could very well alight this whole building and the village in which it stood. I kissed it with my lips, and remarked how beautiful it was to its owner, whom I courted for a large part of the evening before she and I excused ourselves to the garden. Needless to say neither I, the ring, nor my mistress' ring finger were ever seen thereafter.

Forty-seven Named War rings (also known as the great war rings) were crafted by Lyra during the war. Named war rings appear either as silver rings topped off with an onyx stone (Gravitational power rings) or as gold rings with an inset fire opal (Electromagnetic power rings). All have a unique inscription -a name- etched on the inside of the band. Many were destroyed during the war, a few recovered by Lord Ravencross and given to his underlings, and the rest either lost or taken by surviving Angelions.

The forty-seven named war rings have either a *gravitational* OR *electromagnetic* energy rating of 20 + ID6 and a maximum range of 2km. None have both a *gravitational* and *electromagnetic* energy rating.

Prolegomenon -The Terrible Staff

Value: 1200 Power Points
Category: legendary black artifact
Mindcast-operated? Yes
Unique? Yes

Prolegomenon was the first of the black artifacts to be crafted by Lord Ravencross, and doubtlessly one of his mightiest. Its form is that of a wooden staff, gnarled and crooked, with the marking of a raven upon a cross. In fact very little, except an odd and inappropriate heaviness, would betray this dreadful artifact's great power and complex internal workings. Corvus lost Prolegomenon during the war while fighting Eridan in the forest of Calan, and to this day the terrible staff remains missing.

Prolegomenon carries an *electromagnetic energy rating* of 25 and a *gravitational energy rating* of 25 and a maximum range of 5 kilometers.

Terraformatrons- The World Makers

Value: 1250 Power Points on average
Category: legendary black artifact
Mindcast-operated? See text
Unique? No

Terraformatrons made the Second Age what it is now; they vaporized remnant ruin from the accursed age, terraformed the world by levitating mountains and moving refuse into the seas and finally seeded the world with life. A terraformatron was a machine of cyclopean size; over a hundred meters long, roughly cylindrical in shape, and able to levitate at will. Though automated and serviced by a golem workforce carried internally, they could accept a human crew if needed.

When their life-creating chores were over, the terraformatrons were buried deep under the Tower of Anekron, there to remain silent and almost forgotten. Though Ambrose tried to destroy them along with the nine obelisks and the immortality machine, most of the world makers did not perish, and over one hundred are in the possession of Lord Ravencross.

Terraformatrons are at the heart of any Fell Kingdom's energy. They all have at least one world maker at their very heart, usually buried under the earth or making up a palace's foundations. Terraformatrons have varying energy ratings, averaging with an *electromagnetic energy rating* of 50, *Gravitational energy rating* of 50 and an enormous *maximum range* of 100km (some a great deal more). Their value is lowered in comparison with most other artifacts to reflect their great size; their raw energy is unfathomable. A terraformatron has a *toughness* of 10 and a *Health* of 2000.

I wish for my father to abandon his fight. I wish for the dreams to cease and allow me some rest. I wish for the world to know me under another name.

But above all, I wish to find the Silver Pendant

Lord Ravencross

The Silver Pendant

Value: 1300 Power Points
Category: legendary black artifact
Mindcast-operated? See Data shards
Unique? Yes

After essencing Helenoire, Corvus embedded her lifeshard in a small amulet of silver. This amulet was lost mere moments later, and ever since Corvus has scoured the world looking for it using many of his forms.

In and of itself powerless, the silver amulet gives the character that holds it leverage over the most powerful immortal of the world. It holds the entire life memories of Helenoire, the only known love of Corvus, and the mortal woman that may have led to the birth of Ravencross. Once attuned, a user may observe the birth of Helenoire and her upbringing, her adolescence, the courtship of Corvus, their marriage and the birth of their children. He will witness her life up to her essencing. This lifeshard may reveal interesting and highly useful facts about the Second Age, as revealed by Corvus in some very casual moments.

The Three-Tear Pendant

Value: 1650 Power Points
Category: legendary Godshard
Mindcast-operated? See Data shards
Unique? Yes

The Three-Tear pendant is an artifact comprised of a golden arch supporting three tear-shaped datashards and a spherical field generator. The field generator can produce a protection field of near absolute power, affording a +40 toughness bonus to its wearer or any region surrounding it no larger than 1km in diameter.

The three datashards contain the Second Genesis -the visual memories of the Kingsways relating the birth of the Second Age. The first shard relates the fiery end of the First Age, as seen through the Kingsways' cloned or robotic bodies. The second contains images dating back to the unleashing of the machines and terraformatrons right up to the building of the Tower of Anekron and Avonmyth. The last shard holds the first thousand years of the Second Age proper; from the birth of the Hundred up to the end of the war of Crosses.

The Three-Tear pendant was worn by Elizabeth but disappeared during the war; some say she hid it to avoid its capture, hinting that it may be near and about the Tower of Anekron itself.

The Three-Tear pendant is second only to the Seven-Stone necklace in terms of the wealth of information it contains. A character that can study its contents will gain an extra 4D6 experience points every interim chapter towards either Wisdom mastery rating or Wisdom master abilities. As well, countless secrets are doubtlessly contained within this powerful artifact.

Ravenblade -the Storm Sword of Ravencross

Value:	2500 Power Points
Category:	legendary black artifact
Mindcast-operated?	Yes, though the blade can be wielded for combat normally
Unique?	Yes

The fury of my son is encased in this blade. The death of our world is its only purpose and how I do curse the day Corvus began to craft it.

Elizabeth Kingsway

Ravenblade was the sword carried by the dark human form of Lord Ravencross during the attack on the Tower of Anekron. It is imbued with bewildering power, an artifact that Dagonheir now dread.

Ravenblade can shroud itself in a fiery halo of energy while being able to summon storms. It is a devastating weapon, expertly crafted and infinitely valuable. Ravenblade has an *electromagnetic energy rating* of 18, *Gravitational energy rating* of 18 and a *maximum range* of 10km.

Venomhead

Value:	2800 Power Points
Category:	legendary black artifact
Mindcast-operated?	Yes
Unique?	Yes

Venomhead was the monstrous airborne vessel which descended upon the Tower of Anekron during the war, unleashing thousands of flying warriors and beasts from its belly.

It is said Lord Ravencross retrofitted Venomhead from a Terraformatron, imbuing it with great speed, a cargo bay and thick armor. Where it flew, storm clouds always surrounded it and though it crashed in the opening moments of the attack, Venomhead was instrumental in transporting to battle at least six different bodies of Ravencross, several of his lieutenants and over ten thousand fell warriors and creatures.

Venomhead rests now as it has since crashing; its front beak buried deep in the soil perhaps

half a dozen kilometers south of the Tower of Anekron at the end of the massive and petrified ditch it created when it was cast out of the sky.

Game terms: Venomhead's statistics are as follow : *Move:* 200(F), *Health :* 3 000. *Toughness:* 16. *Mechanical body, main weapon: flame caster: damage:* DL100, *continuing damage. Ranged (effective range 5km), area effect:* blast scale 5m. *Secondary weapons* (x5): *orb launchers. Damage (can launch explosives, incendiary substances or chemicals/biological substances, damage varies). Ranged (effective range 1km). Venomhead has an electromagnetic energy rating of* 50, *Gravitational energy rating of* 50 *and a maximum range of* 100km *for its energy manipulation. Venomhead can contain more than ten thousand human-sized characters as well as* 1000 *large-sized creatures.*

The Anekron Pipe Organ

Value:	3000 Power Points
Category:	legendary Godshard
Mindcast-operated?	Yes
Unique?	Yes

The Anekron pipe organ was a massive, splendidly crafted machine built of darkstone. Assembled within the Tower of Anekron's highest chamber, the purple alcove, it spanned three stories in height and its base covered half of the purple alcove's floor. Each of its darkstone pipes contained a crystal attuned to an Angelion's essence, and by pressing a key a Kingsway could open a specific pipe's gate and speak to a chosen immortal, no matter his location or distance. By pressing the master key, all pipes would open, and thus the Kingsway could speak to all the Angelions of the world. Ambrose used the organ to send his virtuous guardians to locations that required their aid or blade. When the Tower of Emerald and Bronze was destroyed, Lyra used the body of a sparrow to infiltrate the purple alcove and use the organ's master key to send her message to all her kin. Her mission accomplished, she destroyed the Anekron Pipe organ and most of -perhaps all- the crystals it contained.

Calamity, Delphina's plague pearl

Value: 3000 Power Points
Category: legendary black artifact
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? Yes

Come brother; let me become the harbinger of death! Let me end it once and for all!"

Delphina Kingsway

When forces of Ravencross, including the Lord himself, finally made it through her land of organic horror (see *Delphina's demon eggs*) and broke through her tower's defenses, Delphina threatened to bite down on Calamity, thus turning her body into a cauldron of pestilence such as the world would never see again. She professed that Calamity was infused with an organism so lethal to known life that its liberation would spell doom to the world entire. To this day Ravencross does not know what -if anything- Calamity contains, but her threat was enough to give him pause and retreat from her tower. Calamity is still in Delphina's possession to this day, and has been the reason behind her near immunity from the minions of Ravencross.

The seven Kingsway Rings

Lyra Kingsway built the seven Kingsway rings over the span of three hundred years. Each is unique in appearance and craftsmanship. Lord Ravencross acquired three during the war.

Ambrose's Ring -Golden Locus

Value: 4000 Power Points
Category: legendary Godshard
Mindcast-operated? Yes
Unique? Yes

Golden Locus is a gold ring with a large ruby solitaire in which can be seen a bird rising from flames. It is the blinding beam of Golden Locus that sent Venomhead crashing to the ground as a fiery hulk mere moments after the attack on the tower began. Golden Locus is the most powerful artifact built by Lyra, and is now in the hands of Lord Ravencross.

Golden Locus has an *electromagnetic energy rating* of 35, *Gravitational energy rating* of 35, a *maximum range* of 100km and undoubtedly other properties as well

Elizabeth's ring -Light of Night

Value: 3000 Power Points
Category: legendary Godshard
Mindcast-operated? Yes
Unique? Yes

Light of Night is a gold ring inscribed with the song Light of night that Elizabeth wrote and sang to her children during the last murderous years of the First Age. It is a powerful electromagnetic ring that allowed Elizabeth to summon great illusions and frighten the Hundred into blind belief during the first days of the mortal Second Age. Lord Ravencross now possesses Light of Night.

Light of Night has an *electromagnetic energy rating* of 35, a *maximum range* of 20km and undoubtedly other properties as well.

Corvus' ring -Moonflare

Value: 2500 Power Points
Category: legendary Godshard
Mindcast-operated? Yes
Unique? Yes

A silver ring topped with a moonstone of remarkable properties. When lunar light strikes it, the moonstone shows images of the First Age, mostly of the Kingsway farm. Moonflare was used during the war to cover the Tower of Anekron with a terrible darkness. Lord Ravencross wears Moonflare next to his wedding ring, around his left little finger.

Moonflare has an *electromagnetic energy rating* of 25, a *gravitational energy rating* of 19, a *maximum range* of 10km and undoubtedly other properties as well.

Delphina's ring -Dragonwail

Value: 1700 Power Points
Category: legendary Godshard
Mindcast-operated? Yes
Unique? Yes

Delphina's ring is formed by the body of a salamander arching up on itself to eat its own tail, with a large black pearl gripped securely in its front paws. It is said to be a ring born of bitterness, for there was no love lost between the Kingsway sisters, and though the ring was indeed precious and possessed of great power, Delphina lost it while walking through a mortal city.

Dragonwail has an *electromagnetic energy rating* of 20, a *gravitational energy rating* of 14, a *maximum range* of 3km and undoubtedly other properties as well.

Eridan's ring -Windgod

Value: 2000 Power Points
Category: legendary Godshard
Mindcast-operated? Yes
Unique? Yes

A flat disk of green jade on which can be seen the constellation of Eridani tops off a splendid silver band. A curious property of Windgod is that it has the power to show images of alien landscapes, possibly from other planets, though fleetingly. Eridan used Windgod to levitate the obsidian tower of Corvus into the air and send it crashing into the sea near the Land of Fire, where it now lies buried under the waves. Eridan has disappeared since the war, and doubtlessly carried Windgod with him.

Windgod has a *gravitational energy rating* of 30, a *maximum range* of 5km and undoubtedly other properties as well

Lyra's ring -Sumeternal

Value: 3000 Power Points
Category: legendary Godshard
Mindcast-operated? Yes
Unique? Yes

Lyra's own ring is of silver, a small band topped off with a white pearl of splendid perfection. Sumeternal, in addition to being the most potent of the children rings, contained droves of data downloaded from the nine obelisks. It is a ring Lord Ravencross would very much like to find. Sumeternal disappeared along with its maker at war's end.

Sumeternal has an *electromagnetic energy rating* of 20, a *gravitational energy rating* of 20, a *maximum range* of 10km and undoubtedly other properties as well.

Ori's ring -Lion's Roar

Value: 2000 Power Points
Category: legendary Godshard
Mindcast-operated? Yes
Unique? Yes

Ori's ring was of gold, topped off with a large star sapphire. On the gold band was written a verse from the scriptures, *Your heart shall remain free.* Ori used Lion's Roar effectively during the war, notably to summon a momentous orb of light which he cast into the ranks of the fell warrior army, enflaming over a thousand and destroying countless followers of Ravencross as well. Lion's Roar was lost during the war.

Lion's Roar has an *electromagnetic energy rating* of 24, a *maximum range* of 10km and undoubtedly other properties as well.

The Seven-Stone necklace

Value:	5000 Power Points
Category:	legendary Godshard
Mindcast-operated?	Yes
Unique?	Yes

"Fear me, for I am wearing the sum of creation! I hold the deception of an age entire! Every word spoken, every caress and song is born of this trumpery! "

Delphina danced, her hands brushing against the necklace around her neck and its seven crystals. She took to the air, her gown animated by movements beyond reason, beyond understanding, but mesmerizing as very few are.

"I must have it, be it for an hour, no more!" I blurted out, over her singing.

Then a deep rumble, from well below, and I knew she was awakening.

"A moment, nothing more!" I added clumsily.

Both her hands were over her jewel now, hiding it, as she awakened more. The stare she cast at me froze the blood in my veins.

"You shall not have it!" She screamed.

And with that, the beast was now well awake. Off in the distance, the first bellow of the Dancer, a guttural, powerful roar, reached the tower.

The Seven-Stone necklace is a magnificent string of gold around which are attached the first Seven Kingsway lifeshards. Each lifeshard holds the mortal memories -from birth to essencing- of a Kingsway. Combined, they contain an enormous amount of information about the First Age; particularly, the one holding the memories of Ambrose would prove immensely useful in witnessing -firsthand- the events that led to the birth of the Second Age. It would also serve Lord Ravencross dearly; given a century or more of studying his father's mortal memories, Lord Ravencross might be able to build a second immortality machine.

During the war Ambrose tried in vain to destroy the Seven-Stone necklace. Unlocking its vault, he found it missing. The Seven-Stone necklace was later found to be in the possession of fell lord Blind Virtue, who unlocked an unknown number of its secrets before Delphina flew off with the precious artifact in her beak. It remains in her possession to this day.

After his voyage around the world during the year of the Raven and the Cripple, Lord Ravencross imprisoned his father in a devious Trapbox -Thorn Rose- he had built during the years prior to the war. Thorn Rose is not like other trapboxes in that it does not deprive its captive of sensory information and it can accept two essences; a host and a visitor.

Thorn Rose -the Torment Trapbox

Value:	400 Power Points + the value of the essence(s) it contains. With Ambrose locked in it, because of his worth to Lord Ravencross and the knowledge he possesses about the immortality machine, Thorn Rose is a 10 000+ Power Point artifact
Category:	legendary black artifact
Mindcast-operated?	No
Unique?	Yes

Thorn Rose is an artificial intelligence that creates an artificial world for its host essence. With time Thorn Rose learns of its host's fears and produces a progressively more unpleasant environment. Ambrose has been its host since the war, and now endures a reality that summons his worst fears on a daily basis.

Another Angelion can enter Thorn Rose as a visitor and thus speak with Ambrose and experience the reality Thorn Rose is creating for the eldest of Kingsways. The nature of the world it is now producing is a secret known only to Ambrose -who must brave it- and Corvus, who visits with his father every year.

Awakened Artifacts

The Watchful Eye has amassed a wealth of First Age artifacts since the war devastated its once vigilant immortal enemy. Now with more freedom of action, Tinkerlords either produce these artifacts or repair taint relics recovered by operatives. They are then distributed among the more active and deserving Awakened; a good measure of an Awakened's worth is the number of artifacts he is given, but the wise Awakened only unveils them when absolutely necessary.

Hammers

Value: 1 Power Point
Category: minor Awakened artifact
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

Hammers are pieces of metal molded to fit over the knuckles. A curled up metal hook fits in behind the fingers. Two Awakened operatives will use hammers to knock out and carry a dazed victim to an area they deem safe for interrogation or disposal. Hammers are given to Awakened operatives moving into newly discovered Angelion-controlled cities and villages. See *Weapons table* for game statistics.

Longview

Value: 2 Power Points
Category: minor Awakened artifact
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

A simple telescopic lens that allows the Awakened to see farther. With a deployed longview, which is between one-and-a-half and two meters in length, an Awakened can spy on human-sized targets at distances of up to two kilometers.

Nan-Calan Powder

Value: 2 Power Points per 100 grams
Category: minor Awakened artifact
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

Nan-Calan powder is a high-explosive synthesized by the Tinkerlords from various secret compounds. It is said its making comes at the price of many lives, for its synthesis is fraught with danger; the slightest error can lead to disaster. Putting a spark or any flame to 100 grams of Nan-Calan powder is enough to detonate it for a DL10, Blast scale 1m explosion. Add one meter to the Blast scale and raise DL by 20 each time the amount of Nan-Calan powder used is multiplied by ten. Thus a 10kg Nan-Calan barrel would explode with a DL50, Blast scale 3m explosion while a 100kg powder keg would explode with a DL70, Blast scale 4m blast.

Boomstick

Value: 5 Power Points
Category: minor Awakened artifact
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

A boomstick is made up of three pieces of wood each about two feet in length and separated by a thin metal chain; unassembled, a boomstick can fit neatly under a normal cloak. When bloodshed is imminent, an Awakened will quickly assemble the three parts one into another and lock them, producing the six-foot long boomstick that has become notorious to many Angelions. Both of its ends contain a small amount of Nan-Calan powder linked to a spark maker and a sharp point. When the point is thrust into something or someone, the spark maker will detonate the powder and drive the point deep into whatever it has contacted. A loud bang and a flash are byproducts of a successful hit, which may have the added benefit of driving mortals away. Both ends can be used, after which the boomstick is thrown away. Used improperly, a boomstick can injure its wielder. See Weapons table for game statistics.

Vial of Caustic brew

Value: 8 Power Points
Category: minor Awakened artifact
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

Caustic brew is a powerful acid used by the awakened to open locked doors and pierce through metal vaults. A single drop will eat through a meter of hardened steel. A small vial of caustic brew can eat away through ten door locks or dropped unto artifacts destroy up to five artifacts. A vial broken on a character will inflict DL20 damage.

Small iron bombs are crude yet effective explosive devices packing a lethal punch. Each contains 1000 grams of Nan-Calan powder, a chiseled outer metallic shell and a timed detonator device. Because of their heaviness, iron bombs can be thrown with an effective range equal to the thrower's Power. Throwing an iron bomb once armed will cause it to explode after a timed delay. This delay can be set in 5 second increments up to a maximum of ten minutes. See *Weapons table* for game statistics.

Iron bomb, small

Value: 10 Power Points
Category: minor Awakened artifact
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

Tinkerlords have managed to produce crude versions of the much sought after thunderclaps found by Onix Annan. Although of questionable accuracy under the best of conditions, crude thunderclaps are doubtlessly the first of many more Awakened dabbles into firearms. They do compensate these drawbacks by firing an oversized boomshell capable of devastating damage.

Crude thunderclap

Value: 12 Power Points
Category: minor Awakened artifact
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

Crude thunderclaps are easily hidden inside cloaks or disguised as jewelry. To use one, the Awakened will take its barrel in one hand and with his other hand pull back on the spring-loaded moving piece, letting it go when its end is reached. The moving piece's tapered end will strike the boomshell, detonate it and the weapon will need recharging. Only one boomshell can be loaded into the barrel at a time. See *Weapons table* for game statistics.

Awakened spectacles allow mortals to see Kabal ink. Operatives use them to decipher the writings and symbols Angelions etch on the walls, rocks and trees of their realms to warn or otherwise communicate with their kin. They are expensive and rare, and only the most fortunate of Awakened have a pair. Awakened have used these spectacles to understand the language of their immortal foe, and thus these artifacts may be counted among the most crucial the Watchful Eye has manufactured.

Awakened Spectacles

Value: 25 Power Points
Category: minor Awakened artifact
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

Darkstone trapboxes (see *minor Godshard* of same name) are surprisingly common in the hands of the Awakened. The Watchful Eye has become aware of the properties of darkstone and manages to find and distribute trapboxes to its operatives. The secret mother den of the Watchful Eye may have walls made entirely out of this strange matter.

Darkstone Trapbox

Value: 35 Power Points (average)
Category: minor Awakened artifact
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

Shaan had the thunderclap aimed directly at his head, his arms shaking in anticipation and fear. Though he remembered the ways of using it, the breathing and the slow release of the trigger, his arm shook, so he eased his second hand over the first, securing his grip.

The ruffian, trying to decide on the thunderclap's relevance in this fight, must have figured wrong, for he

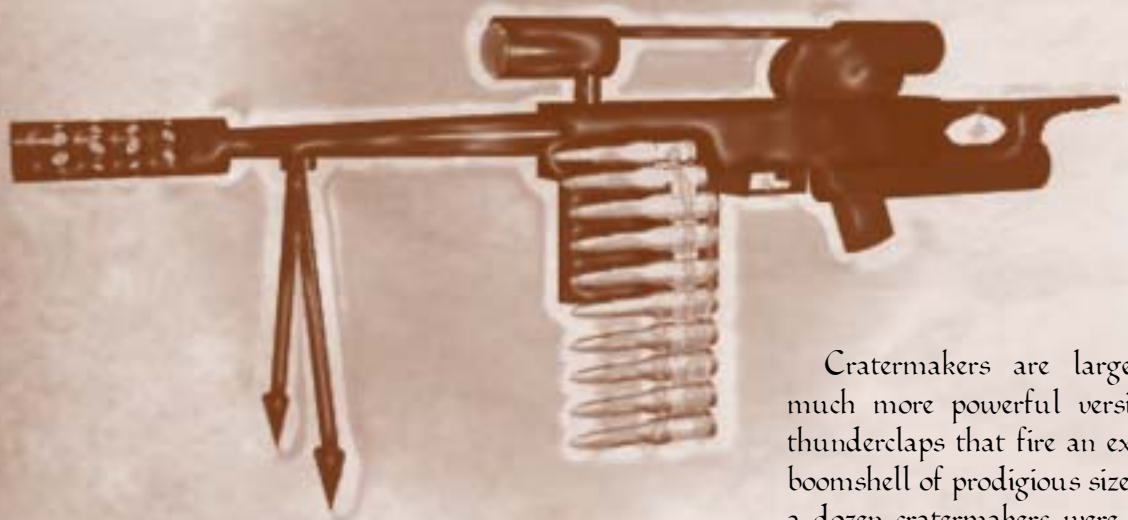
Thunderclap ,original and functional, with 30 boomshells

Value: 40 Power Points
Category: minor Awakened artifact
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

advanced with his sword raised, a rotten grin on his face.

Shaan pulled the trigger hard -too hard- and the weapon jerked in his hands. The boomshell landed in the ruffian's collarbone, shattering it and sending a splatter of blood over his face. The sword -as the man- dropped to the ground, both silent after a brief lament from the latter.

Some three hundred years before the spirit war, a group of Awakened led an expedition into a First Age ruin long known to exist, buried deep under Meadowlake valley. Commanded by Onix Annan, the expedition confronted and defeated the Meadowlake Angelion before discovering a vast underground store of Taint relics buried next to Meadowlake itself. In it were over a hundred thunderclaps, a dozen cratermakers and nine blackbeams. Tinkerlords immediately set about producing more boomshells for the thunderclaps and cratermakers, while studying to produce more such artifacts themselves. Thunderclaps are given to Awakened of courage and ingenuity, the two best weapons the awakened have against their much more powerful foe.



Cratermaker w/20 heavy boomshells

Value: 50 Power Points
Category: minor Awakened artifact
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

Cratermakers are larger and much more powerful versions of thunderclaps that fire an explosive boomshell of prodigious size. Only a dozen cratermakers were discovered by Onix Annan; two of them are kept by the Tinkerlords for analysis, ten are owned by Awakened Legends. Any Awakened within earshot of a cratermaker firing receives a temporary +1 modifier to any Temperance task related to fear, and an Awakened carrying one gains a +1 modifier to any Presence task to motivate underlings. See *Weapons table* for game statistics.

Blackbeam

Value: 150 Power Points
Category: major Awakened artifact
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

Blackbeams are eterdyne-powered weapons of great destructive power. Nine were found by Onix Annan, and today all nine are kept in the mother den for its defense should it come under attack. Everything a blackbeam's white-hot lance of energy touches will likely be cut in half or melt away. A blackbeam in capable hands could slay flying birds more than a thousand meters distant; in clever hands, it could slay ten thousand men. See Weapons table for game statistics.

Iron bomb of Antielle

Value: 100 Power Points
Category: legendary Awakened artifact
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? See text

According to mortal history, the village of Antielle was destroyed by the All-Seeing, whose wrath destroyed the village in a spectacular, thunderous burst of destruction. The Watchful Eye sect knows better; the iron bomb that destroyed Antielle was not of divine manufacture, but was nonetheless highly destructive. It was a terrible device, a grossly oversized version of the more common iron bombs used by Awakened operatives as assault and mayhem weaponry. The Antielle bomb was filled with one hundred tons of Nan-Calan powder and built in a mountain retreat. Its makers used a series of levers and counterweights to push it down a slope so that it tumbled down into the city of Antielle, crashing through its streets and exploding in its heart. Not a single man, woman or child survived; the makers of the dreadful thing died in the ensuing firestorm, while a few awakened lying low in Antielle's outlying forest survived and captured the essences of half a dozen Sybas. A sister bomb was built along with the iron bomb of Antielle but did not explode upon Antielle; its whereabouts are today secret. An explosive the size of the Iron Bomb of Antielle would have a damage value of DL130 and a blast scale of 7m.

"We also discovered these, and we will lament our enemies when the Tinkerlords unravel their means of function"

"What are they?" I asked, looking at the row of great metal men strewn about on the floor.

"They are suits of armor of such power that they could give a First Age man the ability to defeat a hundred thousand of his kin. They are our secret weapon, the weapon we will one day unleash upon our foe!"

He fell silent then, his eyes lost to dreams and his lips to silent whispers I could not make out. I wondered if these might be the key to our success. Perhaps I had been wrong all along. Witnessing the silent might of these terror weapons of the past, I mused momentarily of an armed victory against our immortal foe.

The Onix Annan expedition unveiled more than weapons; along with other curios and tools it included over two dozen suits of armor mistakenly identified by his men as dormant golems. Later revealed to be powered suits of armor by the Tinkerlords, the battleshells have remained inoperable to this day, following countless decades of jurry-rigging and trials. Even in this dormant state however, the behemoths - each eight feet in height - are to be counted among the Watchful Eye's most prized possessions. See *Armor table* for game statistics of an operational battleshell.

Battleshell

Value:	125 Power Points when functional
Category:	legendary Awakened artifact
Mindcast-operated?	No
Unique?	No

In the pocket of my cloak, the ghost-shiver vibrated furiously. Somewhere near here, the enemy was approaching and I was utterly alone. With ridiculous automatism I squeezed the hammers in my hands and prepared for a fist fight I would certainly lose.

Ghost-shivers

Value:	200 Power Points
Category:	legendary awakened artifact
Mindcast-operated?	No
Unique?	No

Ghost-shivers are Awakened artifacts of immense value. A ghost-shiver is around the size of an apple, spherical in shape with a mirror-like surface. At their core is a parcel of matter possessed of mysterious properties; it vibrates in the presence of mindcasters and/or their attuned controllers. Ghost-shivers help Awakened operatives hunt for goldrooms, zero in on Angelion bodies and identify those carrying attuned artifacts. A Ghost-Shiver will vibrate when it comes to within five meters of any attuned body or artifact and within twenty meters of an essence. Less than a dozen ghost-shivers exist; they are given only to the most competent operatives and only in the most critical of situations.

Golden Rose

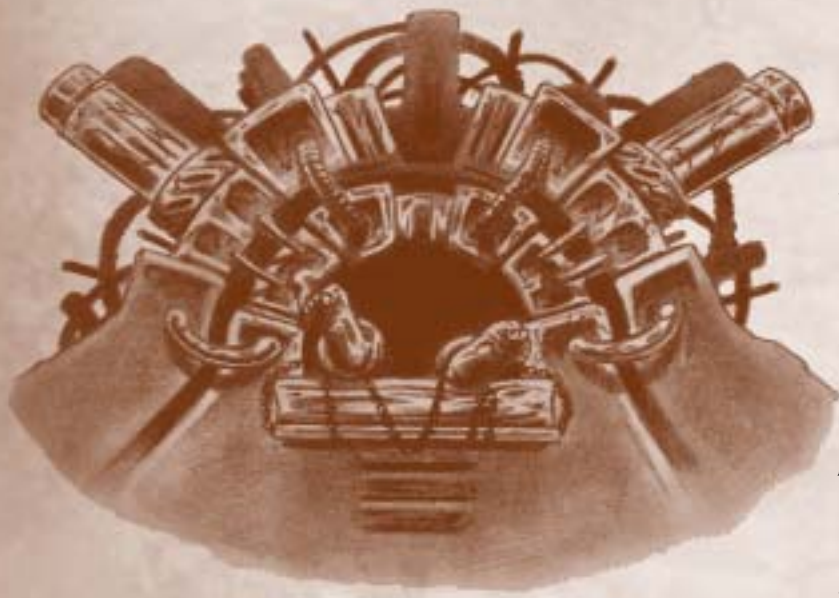
Value:	200 Power Points
Category:	legendary Awakened artifact
Mindcast-operated?	No
Unique?	No

A man came to us long ago; a wise man, but weak of body. He gave to Theol a rose of gold and left with a smile and a laugh. Theol held the rose and jumped when it spoke to him. Within its golden petals lay the essence of an immortal, one that knew many secrets and she became known as the Golden Rose. Though she despised Theol she spoke often for if she did not, she could be killed and faced agonizing silence; for if she did not, we would weaken, and she would face the threat of discovery by her kin, who despise her; and when she spoke, we learned; caustic brew, awakened spectacles and many of our precious artifacts were born of her words. She does this bidding only bitterly. Still, no greater gift has come our way save for the war itself!

Golden Rose is arguably the second most valuable artifact in the possession of the Awakened. It contains the essence of Golden Rose, one of the first followers of Ravencross and one of his most murderous lieutenants. Golden Rose learned many things through the teachings of her master, and became quite wise in the ways of science and forbidden crafts.

During the war, she took assault to the Tower of Emerald and Bronze with blind fury, and the dreadful Harks were her own creations. After the war she was given a Realm which she fashioned into a hellish nightmare, and was seen drinking and bathing in the blood of children. She came to be known as the essence of death itself, and few were those that cared to visit or speak with her. Finally tired of her monstrous character, Lord Ravencross imprisoned her essence in a trapbox and later cast it into the ocean, where Golden Rose endured twelve years of atrocious silent wailing. She later reappeared imprisoned within an artifact resembling a golden flower, which was given to the head of the Watchful Eye sect's leader Theol. Her golden rose prison allowed her to speak through a voice box and hear through microphones but otherwise have no contact with the outside world. It is said that to attempt to remove Golden Rose from her prison would destroy her.

Since she was given to the Aawakened, Golden Rose has reluctantly given them access to some of her knowledge; she craves company, and fears death if her captors are discovered, hence she is doubly keen on discussion though she reveals her secrets only sparingly. Her personality is terrifying; she is a monster that must never walk the earth again. Freed from her golden prison, her vengeance on mortals would be unspeakable.



"Debrain him!"

The operatives approached the traitor Junh and sought his arms and legs ungracefully. He gave only token resistance, knowing an energy-sapping beating would be his reward if he put up any kind of worthy struggle. The Legend, towering over his men, spoke softly now, savoring every word of the phrase he had uttered many times before.

"I shall wear your memories around my neck"

The Archivist Godmaker

Value:	1600 Power Points
Category:	legendary Awakened artifact
Mindcast-operated?	No
Unique?	No

The archivist Godmaker is a taint relic discovered by the Blackdoor Society in the 1300s. Fearing its power would be lost when their sect was discovered, the Archivist Godmaker was dismantled and its main components hidden in nine separate caches; six centuries later Tinkerlords from the Watchful Eye reassembled it and used it to preserve the knowledge

of its Elder Legends; Before death, they must travel to the secret location where the Archivist is kept, and be debrained.

The Archivist Godmaker can debrain a small or normal-sized organism, its brain sliced into thousands of thin layers and its memories collected. The archivist produces lifeshards just as those the immortality machine produced. It cannot produce essences however; hence, the procedure is fatal to the debrained creatures.

A second functionality of the Archivist Godmaker is the cybernetic implant of minuscule data shards into human brains. So doing can give an otherwise ordinary mortal access to vast amounts of experiences and abilities. However, since the Archivist Godmaker is a taint relic of advanced nature and consequently poorly understood by the Tinkerlords, the procedure is risky; one out of six who enter the great artifact in search of power above and beyond their mortal given leave as corpses. Only the most prepared and worthy, the most courageous and deserving are allowed to profit from the godmaker's immense power and risk their lives in this manner.

In game terms, the Archivist Godmaker can create lifeshards, a procedure which is fatal to the patient. By subsequently using a shard viewer to consult the memories of the deceased, the Watchful Eye can preserve and learn from the memories of its most valued Legends. It has been used, on occasion, to create lifeshards of spies or traitors, to see the extent of the damage they may have caused.

When an Awakened is introduced into the Archivist Godmaker while it is set on shard implantation, the GM should roll 1D6. A result of 1 means the awakened has died within the archivist. Only by expending a White Drama trump could this tragedy be somehow remedied (and only once!) Any other result means the character survives and receives 2D20 special experience points. These points are noted on a separate piece of paper; they do not count towards a character's Total Power until they are spent, and can only be spent on a chosen mastery rating or its relevant master abilities. Immediately after the procedure, the player must decide which mastery these experience points will go towards.

Only the highest members of the Watchful Eye have been implanted with data shards; over forty have one or two shards, less than twenty have three or four and only the nine Keepers have five or more. Over a dozen Legends have died during unsuccessful implantation procedures.

Common Artifacts

Common artifacts can be chosen by any character at the start of gaming. In some cases, mint costs are given next to their Power Point costs, and in other cases Power Point costs might be absent altogether. In the latter case the player simply writes the item on his character sheet and that's that, without the need to spend anything at all even if the artifact carries a mint cost.

The game assumes characters have enough money for food, clothes and lodging during interim chapters. It is assumed as well that all characters start the game with a knife and some clothes, cloak or other such trivialities without the need to spend money or Power Points.

Any of the mundane items found in the following table can be counted as *minor common artifacts;* some have Power Point costs, others do not and are considered free (do not keep

track of mint costs during character creation). Though items may have both Power Point costs and mint costs, they still cannot be bought before gaming starts with cash on hand; only with Power Points. Multiple mundane items may fall under the *artifact hoard* rule explained at the very beginning of this chapter.

Items not found in the table can be created by the GM based on the cost values

Mundane item	Cost (Power Points)	Cost (Mints)
Clothing		
Poor/farmer	-	10
Quality	-	30
Socialite	-	60
Flamboyant, exotic, exclusive clothing fit for the most fell of soirees…	1+	500+
Food		
Meal	-	1-20, depending on quality
Glass of ale/wine	-	1-5, depending on quality
Sumptuous feast	-	30-100
Weapons&Armor		
See common weapons and com mon armor in the weapon and armor tables		
Services		
Courier from village to village	-	3-5 mints/kilometer traveled, depending on the courier's renown
Courtesan services	-	50-1000 mints per night, depending on courtesan's Beauty rating and *abilities*
Housing		
Rundown little house	1	10 000
Well-kept house	5	50 000
Large, well furnished house	10	100 000
Manor	15	150 000
Palace	25+	250 000+
Transportation		
Horse	1	500
Carriage	1	
Ox	1	250
Small river boat	1	1000
Large river fishing boat	1	10 000
Small sea vessel (5 man crew)	10	100 000
Medium sea vessel (10 man crew)	15	150 000
Large sea vessel (30 man crew)	30	300 000

of the ones shown here.

Vial of poison

Value: 5 Power Points
Category: minor common artifact
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

Poisons are very rare in the Second Age. People know very little of them since the Body Canon forbids their usage in hunting. Thus the poisons used by the assassins of the Second Age, few though they may be, are primitive animal derivatives milked out of snakes, spiders as well as certain frog and fish species. A vial of poison contains three doses; a single dose can either: coat a blade or arrow for one attack; be injected into the bloodstream through a needle or knife thrust; become a deadly food additive for one person. The GN to resist the poison is 8 and its DL3, following the normal Poison rules (see *When All Hell Breaks Loose* chapter).

Taint relic (curio)

Value: 2 Power Points
Category: minor common artifact
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

Curios dating back to the First Age are impractical but may be interesting in terms of roleplaying. Examples include: sneakers; glow sticks; CDs; damaged data shards; fairy tales and children's books; drawings; pictures; clothing; needles; damaged machines or tools. Characters can use them to either impress or frighten mortals and to bluff or barter their way out of certain situations.

Vial of Violet Claw Milk

Value: 5 Power Points
Category: minor common artifact
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

Violet claw milk was first synthesized by the Gaat idolaters. It produces mild hallucinations and induces an euphoric state where the slightest touch is pure ecstasy, a simple caress bordering on intolerable bliss. GN to resist: 10. Ten minutes after failing the Vigor task, victims suffer a -3 modifier to all tasks and a -5 modifier to resist any intimate invitation. Effects last for 1D6 hours.

Taint relic (practical)

Value: 5 Power Points
Category: minor common artifact
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

Practical taint relics serve a function, and may influence the game through GM decision. Examples include: flares; gasoline; sticks of dynamite; acid; musical instruments; radioactive material; eterdyne-powered items; bicycles; philosophical, religious, medical and scientific books; machines; tools; data shards containing useful bits of data; scientific apparatus of any kind. The GM can weave them into her campaign and players can suggest possible ways books, tools, shards or other such items can come into play.

Clerical stone

Value: 15 Power Points
Category: minor common artifact
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

Clerical stones were given to the clerics of most mortal communities before the war. About the size of a large orange with a bronze surface, the stones were vital instruments that could -in times of great need- summon the aid of a spirit. Their manner of function was simple; normally dormant, a clerical stone activated itself when touched by human hands, transmitting the visual feed of its surroundings and the sounds it recorded (usually the laments of the cleric the stone had been given to). A projector located in the heart of one of the Kingsway towers would receive the stone's broadcast and an Angelion would be sent to the cleric's community to resolve the issue or its resident Angelion briefed. Clerics used the stones only in the direst of circumstances; when brigands pillaged their communities, when disease or famine threatened their people or otherwise when impending doom loomed on the horizon.

Still found to be in the possession of clerics, today many clerical stones are useless; only those still linked to the projector of the Tower of Anekron or the Tower of White and Silver can be used to send images and messages to either Ravencross or Delphina. Clerical stones cannot receive messages or images. At the point cost given, a character possesses a clerical stone that may or may not communicate with any of the two remaining towers. If it does, the GM can decide which.

Taint weapon

Value: per artifact (see table below)
Category: major common artifact
Mindcast-operated? No
Unique? No

Taint weapons are the unwanted children of the First Age. They are monuments to the destructive power wielded by men of that blasted age. Inadvertently re-energized into the Second Age, they can allow a character to become the

tyrant lord of an entire mortal city.

Take note that at the start of gameplay none of these taint weapons are available to any character; they are merely fortunate finds characters may stumble upon by digging and exploring the nether regions of the world through adventures. Any of them might be found in the Watchful Eye hoard, in various states of (dis)function. Costs given include five complete ammunition refills.

Name	Cost(Power Points/Mints)	DL	Effective Range(m)	ROF	Weight(kg)	Notes
Revolver (.22)	35/	2	30	RR	1	Ammo: 6
Pistol (9mm)	45/	3	30	RR	1	Ammo: 15
Revolver (.44)	45/	4	30	SS	1.5	Ammo: 6
Hunting rifle (.308)	50/	4	50	SS	6	Ammo: 5
M-16 Assault rifle (.556)	60/	3	50	FA	4	Ammo: 30
Shotgun	50/	5	30	SS	6	Ammo: 5
Early cannon	25/	12	30	1/5	100	Ammo: 1
Frag grenade	10/	15	Powerx3	Thrown	0.5	Blast scale 1m
40mm cannon	60/	12	150	FA	600	Ammo: drum of 80 shells
Flamethrower	50/	5	10	SF	10	Ammo: 400, continuing damage
Rocket launcher	60/	25	50	1/3	10	Ammo: 1, Blast scale(1m)
120mm tank gun	60/	25	500	1/5	1500	Ammo: 1 Blast scale(0.5m) Armor piercing
Laser pistol	70/	5	40	BF	1	Limitless ammo Armor piercing
Laser rifle	80/	8	80	SF	4	Limitless ammo Armor piercing
Hyperkinetic pistol	70/	6	30	BF	1	Ammo: 200, Armor-piercing
Hyperkinetic rifle	80/	10	80	FA	6	Ammo: 200, Armor-piercing

Production facilities comprise a series of design and manufacturing stations complemented by tool and fabricator assemblies that any major project requires. The higher the quality of the production facility the larger it is and the larger the products it can create. PF1 facilities require 2000m^3 of space. PF2 facilities require 50000m^3 of space. PF3 facilities require 1000 000 m^3 of space. PF4 facilities require more than a million cubic meters of space, depending on the project.

Any project intended to produce or handle size 6 or larger (see Using Powers section in the *When All Hell breaks Loose* chapter for size classes) artifacts/vats/creatures requires a production facility. Refer yourself to the Game mechanics section for specifics under *building/repairing things.*

Characters can build a production facility or better the quality of an existing one during an interim chapter. The cost either in mints or Power Points is equal to the desired quality's value, and only one quality level can be gained during a single interim chapter. Thus a character cannot pass

Production facility

Quality	Value (Power Points)	Value (Mints)	GN	Category
PF1	20	200k	8	Minor common artifact
PF2	50	300k	12	Minor common artifact
PF3	150	1M	15	Major common artifact
PF4	300	1.5M	18	Major common artifact

Mindcast-operated? No

Unique? No

from a PF1 to a PF3 or from nothing to a PF2 during an interim chapter. Once the cost is paid, the character must succeed at an Intelligence + Wisdom task at the desired quality's GN. Success means the facility is upgraded to this quality; failure means the money/Power Points are wasted and the facility does not improve. A player can use heroic actions and White Drama trumps to be allowed a reroll or to get an automatic success with GM decision.

Boiling, bubbling potions; vats of fuming liquids; synthesizers that produce matter of unnatural properties. In a mixtures lab, one should be very careful what one touches. In fact, better not touch anything at all! The basement of any opulent dwelling or palace -or any hideout- can contain a mixtures lab irrelevant of its quality level.

It is in a mixtures laboratory that all manner of chemicals are experimented upon, studied and produced. A mixtures lab is necessary to produce new materials, potions, liquids, solids and gases. It allows a character to analyze unknown substances and get their molecular composition. For large productions, a mixtures lab should be accompanied by an appropriate *production facility*.

Laboratory- Mixtures

Quality	Value (Power Points)	Value (Mints)	GN	Category
ML1	30	300k	15	Minor common artifact
ML2	70	400k	20	Minor common artifact
ML3	400	3.3M	25	Major common artifact
ML4	1000	6M	30	Legendary common artifact

Mindcast-operated? No

Unique? No

Characters can increase the quality of their mixtures lab in exactly the same way as for production facilities (see above). However to increase a mixtures lab quality from ML3 to ML4 requires more than just money and a lucky task roll. The character must expend a White Drama trump before even rolling. No matter if he succeeds or not, the White Drama trump is lost. Second, the player must explain to the GM how his character will use this lab to increase the drama of the campaign. Finally, the character must succeed at the GN30 task roll and spend 6 million mints.

Vats of partly formed creatures; bioseeds growing and pulsating under artificial light; rows of cages or jars in which the latest creations plot escape. An organics lab can create all manner of organisms, from the microscopic to the gargantuan. The basement of any opulent dwelling or palace -or any hideout- can contain an organics lab irrelevant of its quality level.

An organics lab requires a controlled temperature environment, stable humidity and lighting. Outside organisms are kept at bay by efficient filtration systems and airlocks. An organics lab can not only build organisms, but can determine the origin of a foreign creature by seeing "designer signatures" imprinted on its genes,

Laboratory-Organics

Quality	Value (Power Points)	Value (Mints)	GN	Category
OL1	30	300k	15	Minor common artifact
OL2	100	700k	20	Minor common artifact
OL3	500	4M	25	Major common artifact
OL4	1500	10M	30*	Legendary common artifact

Mindcast-operated? No

Unique? No

can quarantine dangerous or infectious animals and can help heal sick or wounded characters. For the growing of size 6 or larger organisms, a proper *production facility* is required.

Characters can increase the quality of their organics lab in exactly the same way as for production facilities (see above). However to increase an organics lab quality from OL3 to OL4 requires more than just money and a lucky task roll. First, when the player announces that his character tries to transform his lab into an OL4 facility, his character must expend a White Drama trump before even rolling. No matter if he succeeds or not, the White Drama trump is lost. Second, the player must explain to the GM how his character will use this lab to increase the drama of the campaign. Third, the character must have possessed at one time or another either one of Delphina's demon eggs, a bulb of the White Flower or the essence of a Kingsway (for an entire interim chapter). Last but not least, the character must succeed at the GN30 task roll and spend ten million mints.

Laboratory- Science

Quality	Value (Power Points)	Value (Mints)	GN	Category
SL1	50	500k	15	Minor common artifact
SL2	150	1M	20	Major common artifact
SL3	1000	8.5M	35*	Legendary common artifact
SL4	5000	40M	38*	Legendary common artifact

Mindcast-operated? No

Unique? No

Beeping machines that puff oily smoke; oscilloscopes that monitor eldritch energy flows and exotic particles; weird contraptions that hum with power and serve unknown purposes. The science lab is a collection of advanced machines and monitors that help the master of wisdom learn of the universe and build artifacts of great power. The basement of any opulent dwelling or palace -or any hideout- can contain a science lab irrelevant of its quality level. New artifacts, machines, vehicles, weapons and buildings are covered by the science lab, with projects of size 6 or larger requiring a *production facility* of varying quality as well.

The last SL4 was destroyed when the Tower of Emerald and Bronze was abandoned by Lyra; she set it aflame before disappearing. The only functional SL3s known to exist in

the Second Age are located in the Tower of White and Silver and the Tower of Anekron.

Characters can increase the quality of their science lab in exactly the same way as for production facilities (see above). However to increase a science lab quality from SL2 to SL3 or SL3 to SL4 requires more than just money and a lucky task roll. First, when the player announces that his character tries to transform his lab into a SL3 or SL4 facility, his character must expend a White Drama trump before even rolling. No matter if he succeeds or not, the White Drama trump is lost. Second, the player must explain to the GM how his character will use this lab to increase the drama of the campaign and how he might succeed where others of much greater wisdom have failed ever since the end of the war. Third, the character must have possessed at one time or another either the Seven-Stone necklace, the Three-Tear pendant, the essence of a Kingsway (for an entire interim chapter) or been able to spend time with Ambrose locked in Thorn Rose. Last but not least, the character must succeed at the GN(35/38) task roll and spend 8.5/40 million mints.

Succeeding at creating a SL3-4 facility should be kept hush-hush, else all eyes are likely to turn towards the character very quickly.

WEAPONS TABLE

Close combat weapons	Cost(Power Points/Mints)	DL	Reach	Two-handed?	Weight (Kg)	Notes
Common weapons						
Dagger/knife	-/5	+2	+1	N	0.25	
Walking stick/light club	-/-	+1	+3	N	2	
War club/heavy mace	-/40	+3	+3	Y	12	
Woodman's axe	-/40	+3	+2	Y	8	
Farmer's pitchfork	-/25	+2	+4	Y	8	
Spear	-/45	+2	+4	Y	5	
Sword	-/75	+3	+3	N	5	
Awakened weapons						
Hammers	1/-	+1	0	N	0.3	
Boomstick	5/-	12	+4	y	1	Setup time of one action before use. Used twice then discarded
Angelion weapons						
Hell wand	15/-	15	+4	Y	7	Recharge time of two actions
Blood whip	20/-	10	+3	N	2	Armor piercing
Pure knife	15/-	+3	+1	N	0.4	
Pure sword	20/-	+4	+3	Y	8	See text
Shardsword	100/-	+6	+3	Y	12	

WEAPONS TABLE

Ranged weapons	Cost(Power Points/Mints)	DL	Range	ROF	Weight (Kg)	Notes
Common weapons						
Thrown rock	-/-	+1	Power	SS	0.5	
Thrown dagger	-/5	+1	Power	SS	0.25	
Thrown spear	-/40	+2	Power	SS	5	
Bow	-/75				3	
-regular arrow		3	20	1/2		
-squirmish arrow		2	10	SS		
Awakened weapons						
Iron bomb, small	10/-	30	Power	Thrown	1	Blast scale 2m
Thunderclap, crude	12/-	4	10	1/3	0.5	
Thunderclap, original	40/-	3	30	SS	1	
Cratermaker	50/-	25	60	SS	18	Blast scale 1m
Blackbeam	150/-	20	100	SR	10	Armor-piercing
Angelion weapons						
Thorn-of-God	3/-	Dart	10	SS	0.3	(see description). AMMO: 5.
Orb of chaos	15/-	30	Powerx3	Thrown	0.4	Continuing damage, Blast scale 3m
Storm wand	50/-	12	10	SS	7	Limitless ammo
Incineration ring	70/-	12	40	SS	0.01	Limitless ammo
Incineration wand/sword	80/-	12	40	FA	5-8	Limitless ammo

ARMOR TABLE

Armor	Cost(Power Points/Mints)	Toughness bonus	Finesse mod	Weight (Kg)	Notes
Common armor					
Heavy fur	1/50	+1	-1	5	
Heavy leather/padded clothing	2/75	+1	-1	5	
Town Watch mail armor	5/500	+2	-1	15	
Steel (plated) armor	5/700	+2	-1	25	
Crossbearer plated armor+mail	10/2000	+3	-2	38	
Shield	1/40	0	-	5	+1 modifier when defending against close combat or ranged attacks
Awakened armor					
Battleshell		+16	-2	300	Fire resistant, +5 to Power (Max 12) for purposes of lifting/close combat damage
Angelion armor					
Black leather armor	20/-	+3	-	5	
Angelion cloak	35/-	+5	-	4	
Ring of protection	50/-	+8	-	0.01	Field generator
Greater Angelion cloak	80/-	+5	-	4	
Eye of thundering	100/-	+10	-	0.03	Field generator

"Three thousand years ago, my father led to the birth of the Second Age. Since then, I have had my throat slashed, my body burned at the stake, I have been holed thoroughly by sword and heat gun blasts, and been proclaimed dead far too many times than I care to remember.

Yet there have been times when I flew above the clouds to escape the rain; times when I laughed at the wit of mortal maidens and closed my eyes to better appreciate a rare wine trickling down my throat. I have walked on two legs, on four or six or more, and slithered my way into dank, dark places. I swam in the sea and let the sun glint off my scales.

Now, as I try to bring about the end of this Age, as the shadow of my great Raven form looms over the cities of men, carrying in its talons the golden cage and the crippled boy, I can tell you this: the world my father built is a lie. We cannot impose our values on others. My father wished to create a world of quintessential good, based on religious beliefs he thought genuine. But he was a fool; his God exists only in his mind, and people's actions cannot be judged as good or evil. Be they mortal or immortal, they follow their own hearts, and there is no right or wrong way for the heart to beat...."

Corvus Kingsway

CHAPTER SIX
BEHIND THE VEIL

Lesser Shades of Evil ™ is a roleplaying game, and thus requires a lot of preparation and skill to play. While players must bring drama and excitement to the game by being proactive, mysterious, funny, scary or tragic, the brunt of the work falls on you, the GM. Your knowledge of the rules and of the world must be complete, your storytelling flawless. Your acting talents will be challenged over and over again as you play out hundreds of different characters, changing personality left and right. In this chapter, we give you hints on how to make your Lesser Shades of Evil ™ experience more enjoyable.

Your job as GM...

As the GM, you have many responsibilities. In fact, every session will tax your storytelling abilities enormously. In this chapter you will learn how to:

- Run interesting games
- Introduce players to the world of Lesser Shades of Evil ™
- Allow the characters in your campaign to evolve

Running interesting games

The Second Age is wondrous and terrifying simply because nothing is impossible. Mystery is rampant and danger lurks around every corner as immortals walk amongst mortals and islands take to the skies. The players are now part of this world, and it is your job as GM to make it live through your words.

What is expected of players

Players need to bring their characters to life, not only by reacting to your stories, but by being proactive, being dramatic and unpredictable. They must treat every game as though it were a performance on which their lives depended. It is important for players to sink their teeth into their role and *become* their character (figuratively, of course, for when the game ends, real life awaits!)

Take for example a character that loses more than half his health points during a round of combat. He will have negative modifiers to simulate his injury, but those are simply the number crunching aspects of the game. What is infinitely more important is that the player roleplay his character's wound, describing how he desperately tries to stay conscious, grabbing his blood-splattered arm and dragging himself towards the exit door, or turning to face his enemy only to utter a final, gut-wrenching threat before exiting. Players must act as though they were in a comic book, dispensing with formalities and the *logical thing* to do in favor of style and drama. As the GM, allowing players to bend the rules in favor of drama is one of your most important responsibilities.

As well, players must

act according to their characters' weaknesses and attributes. The purpose of the Ascent system is to regulate actions and allow for some degree of randomness, so that you as GM are not constantly required to make judgment calls. However sometimes you will be required to make decisions that some players may not agree with, and in these cases you may encounter one or more *difficult* players. Some players need to be reminded that this is only a game, and that its purpose is to entertain. Players that go overboard or constantly argue your decisions, bicker or are simply prone to counter-productive play, may benefit from reading the following paragraph.

Stop arguing and read this, you loveable little hot head!!!

As a player, you are expected to cooperate with the GM. The GM is on your side, there to help you unravel your character's destiny, not to kill your character or bend the rules so that she may "win". The GM only wins if everyone is having fun, and arguments are not fun. If you constantly argue with the GM, you are arguing with your character's biographer. She tells a story in which your character encounters overwhelming obstacles and powerful foes, and tries to make everything your character does work out to his advantage. Yes, it's true: she will often fudge dice rolls so that your character survives without you knowing it. For this reason, don't rip the GM's head off at the first perceived attempt to unfairly kill your character. It simply is not possible (unless she is mad!)

Hence, when the GM tells you that your character just fell into a trap and a charging horde of two-headed lions rush out at him, don't kill the messenger, just take care of those charging lions...

What is expected of you, the GM

As you can see from the preceding paragraph, running a game will involve a lot of judgment calls, *fudging* and good will on your part. You are leading players into a mysterious and dangerous Age, and it is your responsibility to make them enjoy the journey. Your job is selfless; you must keep none of the glory and rain all of it on them.

One of your most important duties as GM will be to act out scenes with as much realism and drama as possible, and this will not be easy. Where players have only one character to control, you will have hundreds. When you play the part of a welcoming little old lady, players must feel her little wrinkled stare, her pursed lips, her baggy arms and her old lady smell. When they inspect an abandoned church, they must see, through your words, the thick layer of dust covering the floor and the broken windows. With the death of a major villain, they must feel his agony and hear his last dying gurgle.

There is no such thing as too much description. The more you speak and describe the scene, the more it takes shape in your players' minds. Go for the cinematic description; put ambiance in everything. This is D-R-A-M-A, so make your stories and descriptions D-R-A-M-A-T-I-C!!! Put emphasis on excitement and your stories will be remembered.

Don't get hung up on rules. If the action bogs down because of a rule, or you can't find a specific rule in the book, ignore it and make up your own, you have our blessing. Tell the players you changed the rule and explain why, and go on. Players can recommend this as well, and if you agree, go ahead.

As a last little thing, remember this: whenever you think about saying something or making a decision, ask yourself this question: if this was a novel, and the player characters were its protagonists, what would I write? Answer this question and proceed from there...

When to roll

You need to roll dice (or ask that players roll them) only when an outcome is uncertain. You need not roll for trivial things that matter little to the quest or campaign. Use your judgment, your knowledge of the campaign details and your sense of drama. In the end, it comes down to this: roll when you feel like it, to stress out players, to force players to act in character or to resolve major combat scenes. For everything else, you can use your imagination and the players' help in determining what happens. Just roll in your head...

Drama Trumps

Drama trumps both the white and black kind- are Traits/Flaws that players can choose for their characters. They can be powerful dramatic tools that you can use in your campaigns to advance the story or throw in some unexpected twists. If used properly and stylishly, they can be immensely enjoyable.

Only you can bring Drama trumps into play. To do so, you must tell a player to erase one of his character's Drama trumps from his character sheet so that you may bring in a story element that directly affects him. This effect will either be beneficial or detrimental to the character's well being, depending on the nature of the Drama

trump you have brought into play. A Drama trump cannot be sold back or exchanged through experience points. Once written on the character sheet, it can only be removed when you, the GM, bring it into play.

White Drama trumps

White Drama trumps are useful to characters. When you bring one into play - sometimes after player suggestion - the character will be much better off than before. A player can suggest to you possibilities for the nature of a White Drama trump brought into play, but in the end you will decide what its effects are.

Examples of White Drama trumps include

An Awakened character, caught asking too many questions in the Realm of an exceptionally vicious Syba, is knocked unconscious by a bunch of thugs. Much to his chagrin, he regains consciousness chained to a chair ominously encrusted with layers of dried up blood and to the tune of a gleeful torturer setting up his knives, pincers and hooks. The player suggests to the GM the use of a White Drama Trump to help him out. Agreeing, she tells the player that to his character's surprise, he recognizes the torturer as an operative Legend, deep under cover in this Realm for the better part of a decade. As he slices bits of flesh and encourages the character to wail as though pain had any meaning, he speaks to him in the secret sign tongue, telling him the location of his master's goldroom, of a hidden cache of iron bombs and thunderclaps and of an Awakened cell awaiting his signal. When the night is over, the character's bloodied, flayed body is thrown in a river, but no mortal damage was inflicted; some days from now, when his strength has returned, the Legend has given him authority to lead the Awakened cell against the Syba's goldroom. Should he succeed, he would be that much closer to becoming a Legend himself!

As Princes visiting another Lord's Kingdom, the characters encounter Twilight Moon, a Fell Lord of exceptional power and charm. Jason, a clever little player, asks the GM (secretly, by taking her aside) if she can put into play one of his White Drama trumps so that Twilight Moon might become enamored with him. The GM agrees, and so the player removes one of his White Drama trumps. Other players are baffled as Twilight Moon seems to take a disproportionate interest in Jason's character, even though his Passions Mastery rating is not all that great...

The GM asks Steve to remove a White Drama trump from his Syba character sheet during an interim chapter. After erasing it, the GM informs him that a mother and daughter from his Realm, out picking berries in the woods, have stumbled upon an underground ruin. They grew scared because of mysterious lights emanating from its depths and informed the cleric, who in turn informed Steve's character. The GM knows the ruin is in fact a First Age cache in which dozens of artifacts are stored, including one of dreadful powe which may provide some critical information as to the true history of the Second Age...

Black Drama trumps

Black Drama trumps are detrimental to characters. When you bring one

into play the character will be worse off than before.

Examples of black Drama trump uses include

For the better part of a decade the characters -mortal slaves from a Fell Kingdom- have planned a clever means of escape. After Steve's character seduces their Fell Lord and tricks her into dissipating the storm ring beyond her Kingdom, the characters escape from her clutches by way of the sea. After a journey of many months, braving the Furious Seas, battling foul creatures and surmounting unbelievable odds, they finally reach the shores of the Unconquered Lands, near death but alive and free. As the players thank their good fortune and recount their ordeal before heading home, the GM singles out Steve, whose character has a black Drama trump and asks him to remove it. Shuddering, Steve asks what gives, to which the devious GM answers (secretly, while the other players are occupied) that his character has fallen in love with his former Lord, and during the next few adventures will try to see her again, using any means possible...

A Syba character, in the middle of an adventure in a far away Realm, has a Black Drama trump removed by the GM. Upon completing this adventure, the GM says that his city has been burned to the ground, his people either scattered in outlying woodlands or laying charred in its streets. Perhaps a Dagonheir has taken notice of him, and may still be around looking for his goldroom.

By removing a Black Drama trump from a Dagonheir character, the GM secretly asks of its player that he roleplay his character's loss of faith and find an appropriate reason behind it. Over the course of the next few adventures, his faithlessness may or may not become apparent to other characters as well (to the discretion of both the GM and player), but the player will need to remove the Faithful Trait from his character sheet.

The assistant GM

You manage a group of players whose characters form a notorious Syba posse, ruling a string of Realms in the mountains of western Ebuleon. All hell breaks loose when you send a half dozen Dagonheir their way taking torches to their cities, levitating buildings and setting people ablaze. You feel your head about to crack open trying to keep up with everyone's actions! Before it does crack open, try getting some help in the form of one or more assistant GMs.

The assistant GM can be a dedicated assistant that knows most of the storyline, someone that knows the rules and the Ascent system or even, in some cases, a player! The assistant GM will alleviate your job when there are too many things happening at one time.

Dedicated assistant GMs

Dedicated assistants usually know much of the story. They handle the combat side of things so that you can place all of your concentration on those that are not involved in combat. However, when groups split up or when they send their active bodies all over the place, the dedicated assistant GM should know enough of the story to run non combat scenes on his own as well. During combats, whenever something consequential happens, the assistant GM should inform you, and vice-versa. Communication is key, and after most important scenes or combats in which consequential things occur, the assistant should discuss what happened with you and bring you up to date on events.

Players as assistant GMs

If combat is declared between one or more player characters and NPCs while you are busy with another group of characters, have one of the other players, not actively involved and not too busy at the moment, run the combat. Give him the stats of the NPCs and trust his good judgment to run things as you would. Of course he may fudge some dice to let characters live, but then again so would you! Just make sure he understands that a little fudging is ok, but that he should try to run combat in the same style and deadliness that you usually do. Players as assistant GMs should only come in to handle combats, and should be given the necessary stats of the NPCs they will be running and nothing more, else the plot of the story might be jeopardized. In general, only small time NPCs should be handled by players that become assistant GMs, not major ones and definitely not arch enemies. If there are any disagreements, you have final say.

The overall scope

And in the last days of this Age, you will see your brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, sons and

daughters burn under a smoldering sky, their backs burned by a white lance of flame, their hands and feet blackened by a cracked and dead world. In the last days of this Age you will hear a great wail, that of a thousand million souls dying. No more will your brethren be; no more shall the wind carry laughter over the oceans; only a last, final tempest will bear the cherished beyond the void.

As you may already suspect - and will see confirmed with the publication of the first supplement- **Lesser Shades of Evil™** proposes a different style of play than most other games. Early on in the game, characters will become quite powerful; the *Legendary abilities* soon to be revealed in the first supplement may allow them to rule the world or destroy it.

While many players will find this interesting and different (hopefully!) there may be those that question the merit of thrusting so much power in the hands of players in so little time. Let us address these last players' concerns.

The purpose of the game is to produce epic stories; nothing more, nothing less. Battling thugs and minions, managing small villages and smuggling First Age curios is fine and well for a couple of adventures, but is not conducive to epic stories. What more, it will not keep players interested for very long; Our goal is to let players know that their actions can change the world in significant ways, and that their sacrifices, battles and hardships will not be dwarfed or trivialized by the tribulations of greater characters. Power is a vessel; through non player characters, it yields nothing but backdrop; in the hands of player characters, it can lead to unforgettably epic stories. The game is set in a time when the Second Age is ending; a once massive world order is crumbling, and who better to replace it than the characters from your group?

Introducing players to Lesser Shades of Evil™

Before players start creating their characters, it is important for you to know how you wish to introduce them to the world setting. Will the characters start out as mortals living in the peaceful pre-war Second Age? Or will they instead build characters living in the turbulent post-war period? If so, will they play mortals living in Fell Kingdoms, Awakened operatives seeking to overthrow their invisible enemy or Angelions protecting the Unconquered Lands?

This is a personal decision, though we do recommend that players be introduced to the game by way of *The Lesser Shades of Evil Saga* detailed below. Think about the proper way you wish to let them unravel the mysteries of the Second Age. As well, consider that creating Angelion characters outright can be somewhat confusing to players that know nothing of the world...

Following are a few possible introductory campaigns that may ease your players into the world of **Lesser Shades of Evil™**

I) The Lesser Shades of Evil saga

As mentioned in the *A Legend is born* chapter, this introductory campaign is recommended for beginning players and GMs. Its player characters are followed from their humble beginnings as innocent mortals living in the pre-war Second Age, during the period known as the Golden Thousand. They know of corn and wine and deer meat but not much else, and are thus prime candidates for budgeoning heroes. It gives more substance to the rest of their immortal lives, and offers the most rewarding stories. We strongly recommend that players be introduced to the Second Age by means of this saga.

The Lesser Shades of Evil Saga is composed of three main chapters.

First chapter-Noble beginnings

Game information;

- Start by describing the world setting loosely as seen through the eyes of innocent and faithful pre-War mortals. The world back then was different than it is now; cities were quiet and pleasant, without walls or armed watchmen patrolling streets at night. Travel between cities was safe and people knew nothing of demons, fell beasts, evil spirits or the dreaded Fell God. There existed only the All-Seeing, his Holy Word and a world of endless flower patches.

- Once your description is over, players choose the *Mortal (Heroic)* character type and build their character. In all likelihood they will be strong believers, carrying the Holy Word wherever they go. Unless they are travelers, seamen or merchants, they know very little of the world except for their immediate surroundings. Refer yourself to the *Mortal (Heroic)* character type for the proper steps. At step 9, Additional Points, players must choose the *faithful* Trait. This character type is possessed of great potential, but starts inherently weak, and most likely characters will be peasants, shopkeepers, seamen or farmers. Some may decide to play children. For roleplaying purposes, it can be enjoyable for two or more characters to be related. Allow players to choose any cardinal nature for their character. In the span of their mortal lives, even those of less than virtuous natures will be capable of hiding the weaknesses of their heart from the eyes of the Kingsways, especially if they fear the wrath of the All-Seeing. Their nature will become more important in their immortal lives.
- After their mortal characters are created, run a series of short adventures to familiarize them and yourself with the Ascent system. Strictly for roleplaying purposes and to allow them more exposure to the Kingsways, you may allow their characters to become renowned in their region; peasants may become mayors or clerics, shopkeepers and merchants may become wealthy and known for their selfless generosity. As the adventures follow each other, the characters uncover an imminent evil that Angelions either missed or are otherwise incapable of defeating. It can take many forms; a follower of Ravencross, a group of Awakened, a criminal ring, a heretic group that smears the name of the All-Seeing, etc.
- The last adventure will culminate in an epic battle pitting the player characters against this evil. It should end horribly. Most if not all of the characters will be mortally wounded, lost or otherwise knocked unconscious. As the GM, do not hesitate to have them impaled on the blades of their enemies, be thrown down a cliff or be left for dead on an immense battlefield surrounded by heretics and other evils. What is important -and unknown to them- is that their valiant efforts have attracted the attention of the Angelions; perhaps one of their life long friends is in fact an immortal and because of the heroism and faith they demonstrated in combating evil, they are chosen for Ascension.

Second chapter- The Angelions

Once your mortal characters are slayed, you will play out the *Ascension scene* individually with each player separately (see below). This scene requires no dice; it only requires the telling of a -slightly- interactive story. Where the First chapter helped ease you and the players into the Second Age and the Ascent system, this chapter will help you hone your ad-libbing skills, crucial to any kind of story-telling.

In rare cases, you can allow a complete group of characters to play out the Ascension scene together, though this will require some tweaking on your part.

After running this scene for each player, the characters may find each other again as immortals. Through *The gathering of the storm* narration, they can get an idea of what their characters did during the years preceding the War as servants of the Kingsways.

Game information;

- First step is playing out the Ascension scene individually with each player. See below.
- After all players have had their ascension scene, you run The gathering of the storm narration, a small game session in which you give them flashbacks of what their characters did in the years immediately preceding the War. Players can propose actions and events as well, and if you agree, let them.

The Ascension scene... (Narration with slight interaction, no dice)

After his gruesome *death*, every mortal character will wake up in a youthful body. Where exactly is up to you; in a flower patch, in a meadow, on a small island, on top of a mountain, in a desert or some-

where else (with no one around). He may be naked or have a loincloth. For a day or two, he wanders, alone, not meeting a single soul; let him fight against a wild animal, suffering rain and cold nights, confused and scared. Let him climb down from his mountain or reach its summit, walk out of the desert or reach the shore of his island. The character believes he is dead, and so if this is not Heaven, then where is he...? Could this be Hell? Most likely he will recite verses from the Holy Word and pray. What happens next depends on you, the player and his character. Ascension is different for every character.

Some notes on how to run the rest of the Ascension scene follow:

- When the character *died*, his body was transported to the Tower of Anekron where his brain was transformed into an essence, which the Kingsways now possess. In effect, they are now *hitchhiking* on the back of his mind, seeing what he sees and hearing his very thoughts. Any of the Kingsways may be hitchhiking on his mind at any given time during the Ascension scene, recording his thoughts. By controlling the currents and processes of his essence, they will make him see illusions, take control of his body, make him feel pain, bliss or desire.
- In essencing him, the Kingsways produced a Life Shard, which contains all of his mortal memories. They have reviewed parts of it, and know the important events in his life. They can produce illusions of loved ones, of places, etc.
- The Kingsways wish to test the character by challenging his willpower and faith. Many essenced mortals failed this test, their minds crumbling under terror and pain. This will not be the case for the player character, however.
- The character will be urged to reach the Tower of Anekron, located on the Forbidden Land. The Kingsways make reaching this Tower the principal desire of the character by feeding him visions of it, making him dream of it. After a long and arduous journey he will reach it, there to suffer the one hundred years of testing under the tutelage of the Kingsways. During this time he may meet others like him hiding in the deep regions of the Forbidden Land, scared as he is, suffering the tests of the Kingsways. He may even meet those alongside of whom he died his mortal death. At the end of his training, he will receive his spirit name, his Pureblades and Life Shard and be sent back into the lands of mortal men to guide and protect them.

An example of an Ascension scene follows. This is one example out of a limitless number of possibilities, and was tailor-made to a specific character.

The character, Falon Walt, had a wife named Ilea, a daughter named Sarahan and was a hunter in his mortal life. His family had domesticated a large white wolf and named it Snow. Because of a Black Drama trump, Falon returned from a hunt one day to discover both Ilea and Sarahan dead in his house, butchered by an unknown assailant. After burying his family, Falon wandered the world, searching for the killer, reciting verses of the Holy Word as he travelled from village to village. Though he had many adventures, he never discovered the murderer, and died fighting off a band of thieves alongside Guiver Anan, a man of great character that joined Falon in his journeys. Bleeding to death, he died while Snow lay next to him and Guiver held his hand.

Yet Guiver was no more than one of the myriad mortal forms of Eridan Kingsway, the immortal that had discovered the killer of Falon's family and had dispatched him before Falon set out to discover his identity. Eridan had followed him in his journeys for many years using the form of Guiver, and seeing in this mortal a devotion and strength of spirit of exceptional rarity, proposed his essencing to Ambrose, who accepted. Falon woke up in a flowery meadow, surrounded by a great forest. Around his waist is a loincloth, inside of which is tucked a small bone knife.

- Soon after waking up, Falon is startled by a pack of large wolves that come out of the forest. One of them, white of fur, resembles Snow. They circle him and grow nearer, growling. In a circle about him, the wolves remain silent and unmoving as the great white wolf comes to within striking distance of Falon. They battle for some rounds, at the end of which Falon manages a lethal blow against

the beast, sending the rest of the pack fleeing back into the forest. As they flee and the white wolf takes his last breath at his feet, Falon falls to his knees prey to severe hallucinations. He sees a great black tower piercing an orange sky. Instinctively he knows the tower is located in the heart of the Forbidden Land, and he is drawn to it, for reasons he knows not. He wakes up from these hallucinations to see the white wolf gone, no trace of blood on the ground. *The wolves were phantasms conjured by Ambrose.*

- After a long journey Falon comes out of his forest and ventures into an unknown city. Walking its streets, he is given bread and fruit by locals, and offered shelter by a welcoming old man. The mysterious old man shelters him for some days as Falon tries to understand what is happening, and as he travels the city he sees a ship docked in its port that bears the name of his dead wife Ilea. It is bound for Orcanager, there to deliver spice and gold, and will pass near to the Forbidden Land. Offering his help to the captain in exchange for him boarding the Ilea, Falon endures a long voyage that ends with him on a small survival raft in the waters of the Azure Ocean, trusting to the All-Seeing for guidance. *Although the vessel and captain are real, its name, its crew and the wind in its sails are phantasms inserted into Falon's mind. Only one person accompanies Falon, and it is Ambrose Kingsway in the body of the captain; the vessel does not bear the name Ilea but rather Phoenix, and it travels the seas not by wind but by the power of Ambrose's ring Golden Locus. It is the vessel used by Ambrose to transport those bound for the Forbidden Land.*
- Great storms leave him struggling to remain afloat. His body is raked by freezing and fiery winds. In the distance, he sees an island, and he manages to reach it. *The storms are summoned by Ambrose's power ring, who now follows Falon in the sky in an eagle body.*
- The storms disperse, and the character explores the small island. It is an island of black ashes and white bones, with one gnarled, dead tree in its center. A sickly smell fills Falon's nose and when he nears the tree, he again suffers hallucinations. He sees images of the First Age, of machines and weapons and wars and great cities of metal. He feels nauseous, throws up and feels a pain more intense than he ever felt before. He sees fat, decadent people laughing, bodies mated with machines, people killing others for their organs. The pain the character feels becomes intolerable. He sees people burning under the fiery wrath of the All-Seeing. He sees endless fields of dead, their bodies turning into black ashes. He smells the acrid odor of their remains, the same smell that lingers upon this island. Then the pain is relieved, replaced by a soothing calm. The sudden removal of this pain is the greatest feeling Falon has ever had. Resting against the bark of the gnarled tree, he realizes the island is made up of the ashes of the dead from the First Age. He sees images of the Second Genesis, the first buds of spring, sees them grow into trees and flowers as the decades turn into centuries. He sees a hundred people in a field, guided by Seven, one of which resembles the captain of the Ilea. In the distance he sees Avonmyth, the Holy First City, still uninhabited. Suddenly his mind is thrust back to the present, and incommprehensibly Falon picks up a sharp bone from the ashes and slits his skin so that beads of blood fall upon the ashes of the island. *The Kingsways are again manipulating his essence, making his body do things that Falon has no control over.* A great wind then picks up and ashes get into Falon's mouth, nose and ears. The ashes in his throat and eyes burn and he feels sick. He passes out...
- Falon has a dream-filled slumber, where he sees flashbacks from his life, some of which are through eyes that are not his own. He sees himself burying his wife and daughter, but from the eyes of an unknown stranger. He sees the last moments of his mortal life, bleeding on the ground with Snow panting and wailing next to him, from the eyes of Eridan. Falon's player then

realizes that his *friend* Guiver was more than he appeared to be, perhaps a guardian spirit…

- He has the distinct impression that his slumber lasts for a very long time…
- He wakes up on his small boat, in the middle of the sea, under blue skies. After some more drifting, he paddles his way to a great island, following the flight of a raven. *Corvus, using his raven form, led him to the Forbidden Land. It could have been any of the Kingsways, but the GM wanted to introduce Corvus early on to Falon, so that later in the game he might visit him and tempt him to become a Fell Prince.* Frantically following the raven, Falon notices how his small boat seems to drift on its own, and finally he arrives on the shores of the Forbidden Land.
- Falon follows the Raven towards the Tower, while Corvus toys with his mind *(by this time, Ravencross is well rooted in Corvus' psyche, and he often tempts candidates with more exotic, or extreme, visions).* He inserts images of his wife into his mind, of her butchered body, and conjures nightmare scenes of Snow feasting on her carcass. He tries to break his mind apart with apparitions of his daughter Sarahan, white in death, her throat slit by the blade of the murderer. Corvus leads him to a clearing, from which, in the distance, he can see the Tower of Anekron. The raven flies away, with a final mindcast… *Know the dream from the truth Falon… Remember your true name, or I shall visit you one day and remind you of it!*
- After days of walking, Falon finally enters through the massive gate of the Black Tower. Shaken and weak, he is lifted by a gentle force so that his feet or hands never touch the tower itself. Through this ghostly wind he travels through dark corridors and chambers, each inscribed with strange symbols. Finally he comes to a great chamber where he sees sitting upon a silver throne an old man, to his side a young woman bearing on her shoulder a great raven. The ghost wind carries him to their feet.
- Falon bursts into tears, falling to the ground from exhaustion. The raven squawks loudly and the old man whispers in a foreign language, while the woman enters his mind. *You have been Ascended Falon, forbidden from joining with the All-Seeing in death because of the potency of your spirit and the valor you showed during your mortal life. You shall endure a hundred years of pain and learning on this island and should you survive, you would become of the Angelions that walk as men in the world of men, forever being reborn in mortal forms until that time when our duties are over. You shall enforce the All-Seeing's will and become his eyes. Go now and remain upon this Forbidden Land and learn of its many dangers, for it is here that you shall pass the next one hundred years. Here that you shall be bitten and stung by insects and snakes, that your body shall be battered by storms and hail and your spirit flayed by visions of your sins and your fears.*
- Falon is whisked away by the ghost wind once more, brought outside where a fierce storm batters the tower.
- The GM tells Falon's player that during the following years he endures a lonely existence in caves and burroughs, feeding on roots and mosses, foul berries and the flesh of rodents; many times will he fight for his life against strange beasts or others like him in training, using battle techniques of lethal but incomprehensible nature; through the voices in his head Falon is taught the secret language of the Angelions, how to recognize plants and becomes familiar with the Scriptures.

  Decades pass… Long, painful decades…

  Falon's once youthful body is now old, white of beard; he knows the island by heart, knows of the others that hide in it as does he and knows their strengths, weaknesses and preferred battle styles; though his own body is now weak, the younger ones fear him because of his experience and cunning. He masters the secret language and knows the Holy Word by heart, every single word of it is etched in his mind.

  When he can take no more, his body crippled, he endures death once more, alone in his cave, and once more he

wakes in a youthful form, kneeling before the Seven. Receiving his pure-blades, recognized as an Angelion, he is sent to the world of men to fulfill his immortal duties.

Falon's Ascension scene ends...

Playing out the Ascension scene, from beginning to end, should take no more than one sitting of a few hours.

The gathering of the Storm (narration, slight amount of player input if desired)

- *The gathering of the storm* is much quicker than the *Ascension* scene. It is played out in a group or separately, and should take about a half hour.
- You can start by skipping through many years of the characters' Angelion lives using a series of flashbacks. Perhaps some of the Angelion characters in your group get to know each other during this time. If they knew each other in their mortal lives, which is likely if they played out the saga together from its beginning, perhaps they meet again by chance in their immortal lives. The flashbacks you choose should be of important moments. You can describe how the characters discovered a ring of murderous thieves and slayed them all one by one. You can describe how they saved a village from famine by teaching its villagers how to grow food in times of drought, or how they healed the sick by using rare medicinal herbs. Prior to playing out this scene, write down a list of events you want each character to have seen or contributed to.
- After you determine that enough flashbacks have occurred and players have a good idea of what their characters did as Angelions under the guidance of the Scriptures, describe the suddenness of the war. Characters are not active participants in this conflict, and can only observe its effects; they see beasts unleashed in their lands, witness refugees by the thousands flee their lands before waves of foul creatures and hear word that the Kingsways are battling one another...
- The scene ends with each player character receiving *Lyra's Message*, which you must now let players read silently and individually.
- It is then assumed that players are visited by one of Lyra's white hawks, delivering in its talons the golden orbs Lyra calls their essence. The characters then go into hiding. One hundred and ninety years pass, until the year 2100SA... It is now the present, and the characters may have changed somewhat...

Third chapter- The post-War era

The third chapter begins with players creating their Angelion characters. Close to two hundred years have passed since they received Lyra's message, and they may have matured in quite different ways from one another. Their choice of character type is limited to the *Dagonheir*, *Syba*, *Phantoma* or, with GM permission and general player consensus, the *Fell Prince*. Contrary to the other chapters, this last one has no set end time. No one knows (not even you!) what lies at the end of the road.

- After choosing their character types, players must justify to you, either individually, in small groups (if they got separated during the war, which is likely) or as one group (if they remained together), what their characters did during the one hundred and ninety years since the war and how they became the character types they now portray. For those that no longer wish to play their original character, they can make up stories as to what happened to them. They may have died (by having their essences destroyed), have disappeared, turned to Ravencross, etc. But keep their character sheets as reference; perhaps you may one day decide to bring them back into play...
- Once this preparation phase is over, players can build their post-war characters. Players that continue playing with their original characters (their Heroic Mortals) will either be Dagonheir, Syba, Phantoma or Fell Prince character types. They then skip the second and third steps of character creation (Mental attributes and Cardinal Nature, for they remain unchanging from their mortal character), and proceed

directly to Weaknesses and the rest of character creation as explained in their respective character types. Erase all Traits/ Mastery ratings/ Drama Trumps/ Equipment from their mortal character sheet.

- Those that choose an *Awakened, Rogue Golem, Fellkin, Archfiend* or *Mortal* character type build their character from scratch following the normal rules.

2) Post-War Mortal campaign

Another possible introductory campaign, to get you and players familiarized with the rules and the world, is for players to create characters that are mortals living in the post-war era. Though they can come from the Unconquered Lands, the most exciting campaigns of this sort are those following the hardships of mortal characters from a Fell Kingdom. You start this campaign off by describing the Fell Kingdom in which they live and its rulers, and then allow players to build mortal of Fellkin characters from this Kingdom. This campaign can work a dual purpose; you can use it as the very first adventure you run simply to familiarize players with the Ascent system and to let them sink their teeth into the world setting. As a second reason for being, this campaign type offers you an opportunity to whip up adventures on the fly and possibly create different characters for every game or series of mini-campaigns; the characters are not expected to rise in power and are simply meant to entertain and afford possibility of play in the Second Age when the main campaign -in which the main characters are participating- is not ready yet or all players cannot meet on a given evening.

3) Post-War Angelion campaign

This campaign is the end result of the Lesser Shades of Evil Saga. In some cases it can be played outright without the players needing to go through the first two steps of the LSoE saga. Players create Angelion characters right after reading Lyra's Message and are ready for play within one to two hours.

Adventure seeds...

To those in need of some adventure hooks, we list some here, according to the character types in your group.

Dagonheir

- One of the characters learns that he may have mortal descendants he knew nothing of prior to his mortal death... Although this is unheard of (parents of living children were never ascended) there is strong evidence that suggests that the character's bloodline still exists. Perhaps he had an illegitimate son/daughter? There might be a sense of urgency to find these descendants if the city in which they now live has fallen under the control of a particularly ruthless Syba, or is threatened by the approach of a fellkin horde...
- It starts with reports of giant wolves that ran straight into a character's city, killing four town watchmen and abducting a lowly peasant for no apparent reason. Then it gets even stranger, with word of a mysterious man, cloaked in black, resting in a clearing on the town's outskirts. Could the three giant wolves and the man be none other than Wolfpack, a fifteen hundred year old immortal said to be of the first Angelions? What might such a peculiar -and dangerous- individual want in the character's neck of the woods?
- In one of the towns under their guardianship, etched in pig's blood on the town walls is written "Your life is a lie! Learn to watch the watchers!" Evidently, someone is trying to stir up the people against the characters, and they need to discover who and for what reason. Could the Watchful Eye have one or more Awakened operatives in their city? Could a new Awakened cell be recruiting people right under their noses?
- The characters' cities are attacked by a vastly superior force of Fell Princes sent specifically to this Realm by a Fell Lord. During the bloody battle, the characters have their bodies destroyed and their Goldrooms sacked. Unfortunately, their torment is only beginning; they wake up in strange new bodies, inhuman in appearance, and must brave the dangers and perils

of a Terror Kingdom belonging to a sadistic Fell Lord. Who this Lord is and his intentions remain a mystery; for now the Lord seems content in hunting them down and killing them repeatedly in a sickly game of cat and mouse. This looks to be personal...

- The characters learn the location of a cache of First Age weapons of dreadful power. It is hidden deep in the frozen steppes of Northern Ebuleon, but before the characters can reach it, they find out a band of Fell Princes is already there carrying off most of the artifacts to their Fell Kingdom. In trying to stop them, a fierce battle ensues, but the Fell Princes succeed in carrying away the artifacts. The characters can either curse their ill fortune or go after them, braving a long voyage by boat to an unknown Fell Kingdom...
- The characters learn that a hostile Syba posse is on its way to their Realm. If the rumor is correct, they may have a bearing on their Goldroom, and possibly one or more of the invaders may already be deep inside the Realm, preparing the way for the main force.

Sybas

- A group of Dagonheir has decided to cleanse the characters' town of their unholy taint. If the information is correct, the attack will come during morning hours. Preparations need to be made, since Windwalker, a Dagonheir of great power, is said to be leading the attack.
- The characters' fortunes are suffering; there have been some quite unfortunate -and mysterious- events; for one, the great warehouses where the reserves of food were kept have been infected with an especially virulent organism; second, mortals under their rule have taken to the nasty habit of smoking an herb that renders them joyful but quite unproductive; third, it seems that many citizens are packing up their things and leaving for another city a few hundred miles away where the pay is better. It all points to a rival Syba...
- The characters get wind of a city hidden deep in the mountains. If the rumors are correct this city might hold the descendants of a Backannan child that escaped Ori's blade... If these Backannans were to be taken alive, they might be worth trading to Lord Ravencross in exchange for some artifacts or gold. However, who is to say that Lord Ravencross is not aware of their existence? The characters might have quite a rough fight in front of them, and quite a few surprises if Lord Ravencross makes a cameo using one of his many powerful forms... Were he to lose this fight, he might take a personal interest in seeing the characters suffer...

Fell Princes

- The characters learn that their Lord is losing face in the higher echelons of the Fell Kingdoms. Rumours would have it that he is starting to believe in the All-Seeing again... What horror! Should the characters try to help him or profit from the situation and try to advance their own schemes?
- Half a dozen Dagonheir using twice as many bodies invade their Sky-Kingdom, and seem bent on setting fire to everything in sight. The characters must battle this threat, but something isnt right... This seems to be a diversion... Could the Kingdom's Terraformatron be the real target?
- Their Lord has discovered the location of a large goldroom in which several Sybas have hidden their essences. Providing them with new war forms, he demands that they travel to the Unconquered Lands, lead assault to the goldroom and bring back its essences intact.
- As the Demigods they are, the characters take offense when bootleg copies of the Holy Word start appearing in the homes of many of their worshippers. Their Lord demands they find who is distributing these books, and make sure that the spread of this disease stops promptly.

Phantomas (plus Rogue Golems and Archfiends that might be accompanying them)

- The characters have ventured deepl into the territory of a rather hostile Syba posse. They need to get out, and fast!!
- Hired by a Syba to spy on a rival, the characters stumble

upon a group of Angelions caught with their essences in hand, fleeing for their lives. If they play their cards right, the characters could be set for life by capturing the essences and delivering them to their employer (or Lord Ravencross, for that matter). However, one might wonder why these Angelions chose that exact moment to leave with their essences, and what caused them to flee...

- Deep in the Ghost Lands and pursued by Awakened operatives, the characters hole up in a Ghost town, ready to make their stand against these mortals. But something else has hidden there, perhaps an Archfiend and its unholy brood. It cares little for the company of people, be they immortal or not...
- From Orcanager, the characters board a vessel bound for Dawnhedge, intent on exploring the ruins of the Tower of emerald and Bronze. But on their way, as the ship sails past the Furious Seas, something alarming happens; a shadow descends upon it, engulfing it in a storm of rolling clouds. When the storm departs, the boat is stranded in the middle of a great forest. As seamen panic and fall to their knees praying, the characters must bring order and discover which Fell Kingdom this might be. Could their presence on this ship have anything to do with this most surprising turn of events?

Awakened (plus Rogue Golems and Archfiends that might be accompanying them)

- The group of Awakened characters is bent on plundering a First Age ruin buried under a neighboring city. They must travel to this city without attracting attention to themselves, verify the find, secure or empty it, and return to their home town. But as they reach it, they find that it is many times more vast than they imagined. Could this be one of the dark sky cities that fell to the Earth in the last days of the First Age? Could it still hold survivors? Perhaps stasis pods holding the grotesque machine-men of the First Age in suspended animation...? What if these horrors were somehow set loose in the Second Age by a group of Awakened operatives in search of glory and understanding?
- A Legend comes to the characters, replacing the local Cell Boss for a mission of utmost importance: They shall lead an assault against a goldroom, and one or more characters are to be used as diversions. In all likelihood, they are to die during the assault. Normally this would be well taken and unquestioned, but certain aspects of the Legend and his mission seem odd... Though he does bear the mark of the Nine-Moon cell, the characters have reason to suspect he may not be acting for the greater good of the Watchful Eye. But what can they do, since to refuse a Legend's order is to merit a swift death?

Heroic mortals (plus Rogue Golems and Archfiends that might be accompanying them)

- Slaves from a Fell Kingdom (possibly one of those described in this book), the characters try to escape! This means they will face the dangers and pitfalls engineered by their Lord to prevent escape and intrusion, and possibly come to the very edge of their sky kingdom and look down into endless sky! By whatever means they manage to escape, the most likely place they would reach is another Fell Kingdom!
- Having knelt down to their Fell Kingdom gods since they can remember, the characters are surprised to find the body of a dead god in their field come morning. Apparently, the *god* was struck by lightning for his body is charred and barely recognizable. So gods can die? If so, what kind of gods are the characters kneeling to anyway? In reality, it was not lighting that killed their god; Angelions of their Kingdom are busily fighting off an assault by Phantomas bent on relieving the Lord of his artifacts, and the body found was a mere casualty. Through careful investigation, the characters might find out more about this

strange occurrence, and possibly use this time to try and escape.

- Having undertaken a pilgrimage to Avonmyth, the characters encounter a pilgrim that joins them in their long journey. As they travel along one of the pilgrim trails, they are attacked by a pack of fell beasts but manage to survive. However, a disturbing observation is made; one of the beasts, prior to succumbing, raked off a chunk of the stranger's flesh, revealing a metallic structure underneath. Who or what is this stranger, and why does he seem so eager to reach Avonmyth, where the Crossbearers are likely to leave him to rust within a hanging cage simply for being who he is? What stories might this golem have of the First Age, or of his discussions with Lyra Kingsway, who made him what he is?
- In their peaceful village, nestled in the quiet valleys of the Birthland, the characters' lives take an unexpected twist when the local cleric dies of an expeditious illness. After the burial, the characters plan a pilgrimage to Avonmyth to demand another cleric be assigned before winter, but before they can leave a young cleric arrives in the village, fresh out of clerical training.

  As the month of Moonmoss nears and villagers gather firewood and reserves for the coming winter, the characters begin to suspect the cleric is not all he seems to be; for one, he has been known to speak in an unknown language when intoxicated. Second, animals and children fear him, and his stare is sometimes chillingly dark. Villagers fear the coming snows, which will isolate the village and make the roads impassable. They fear a cleric that seems to be waiting for the snows for just that reason. Could he be an evil spirit in human form? Could it be his hand that led to the death of the previous cleric? Or the disappearance of the young Gillian boy? or the mutilated corpse found on the village's outskirts? Could such a horror have found the characters and their peaceful community...? The characters must act quickly, for a monster is lurking in their midst...

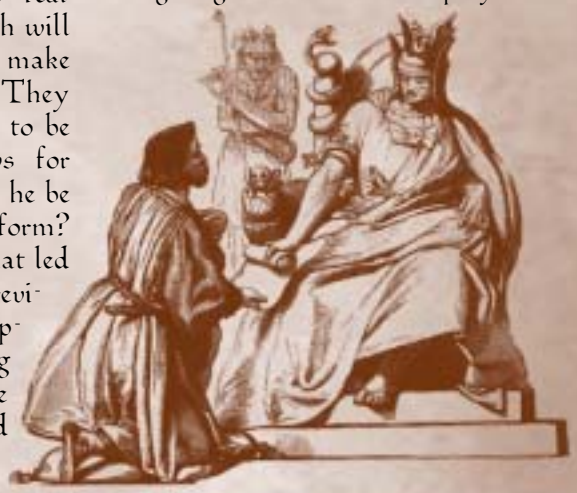
Running Campaigns when...

Things are going according to plan...

When things are going good for your characters, when their Realms are growing fast, their cities are multiplying and they seem well on their way to fame and power, what happens then?

Well, there are still plenty of ways for you to challenge your players when all seems peachy. Remember, Black Drama trumps are there for exactly that! As in any great fantasy book, it is usually when the heroes are on top of the world that tragedy usually strikes...

Try to challenge players with progressively more difficult moral dilemmas. It's one thing to get better at swordplay



or romance, quite another to confront one's weaknesses. As the years pass, the choices they make as well as the enemies they face will become more difficult. Those with a penchant for power might be torn between gaining prestige and influence and doing the *right thing*. They may have to turn on their comrades to gain prestige. Others might wage a holy war in defense of Ambrose and his dream only to falter near the end by falling in love with a mortal and thus becoming of the fallen...

This is the essence of LSoE. What do humans become when given an eternal life and near limitless power? Can Angelions rise above their human weakness or are they prey even after hundreds or thousands of years to the most primitive of their desires? As their power rises,

what will they fight for?

The big boys...

He drank from the cup with his little finger up into the air, and I wanted then and there to puncture his body in a thousand places. The classless oaf... This evening would teach him a lesson.

Cassi, my aide, winked in my direction, and turned her head in expectation. If what River Child told me were correct, the poison would produce spectacular effects. He must not have lied in saying it tasted like honey; Crimson Mist drank it all and asked for more.

I counted in my head; 1... 2... 3... (Some slight hiccup)... 4... 5...(his eyes are unfocused, he clutches his throat...it begins!)... 6... By the time I made it to seven -or about- his body jerked violently, and as a stone he fell to the ground. There, quite ungracefully, it convulsed on the marble tiles, spewing thick white foam from its mouth, eyes rolling over in its head. Its hands scratched and clawed at its face and throat, drawing blood in many places. A low, guttural sound came forth from its mouth, bubbling through the foam that now dribbled down his cheeks and chin. Then, it lay still, but not before a little death hiccup.

I roared with laughter, for that little belch in the end was simply sublime! Many from the crowd joined me in my celebration, as I gathered that I was not the only one irritated by this buffoon. The only thing that quieted the uproar was Crimson Mist's equally loud, and infinitely more tragic, outburst. Using his other body, of equally repulsive aspect, he burst through the crowd seconds later and knelt before his now utterly still other form. From the look of desperation on his face, I concluded his defunct body must have been on the rather expensive side...

"To immortality!!!" I threw, raising my glass. Many followed suite, and I looked down into the eyes of Crimson Mist, red with tears.

"May we dance on into the centuries, poisoning ourselves to our heart's content! Happy birthday, Crimson... This is my gift to you..." I added, winking at him.

As player characters rise in influence and their Realms become known abroad, allow them to be visited by older Angelions, some of whom they may know by name. Faces become more enthralling, bodies more voluptuous and rare wines more frequent as they are invited to mysterious gatherings and soirees.

Remind your players that if they don't play their political and social cards right, punishment can be severe. The world of very old Angelions is one of temptation, betrayal and hidden daggers. The most ancient Angelions fear death as few mortals can, maneuvering and scheming their way into the Third Age with little moral restraint, and woe to the one that stands in their way. It is your job as GM to have the characters learn the hard way that interaction with these mighty forces is a dangerous affair; they shall deceive and take advantage of your characters, offering the world but delivering the sharp sting of betrayal. They shall offer riches only to bring about ruin.

It is good for the development of characters to become hardened through their interactions with the Big Boys; characters will need to be hard as steel to confront the horrors that shall soon manifest in the waning years of the Second Age...

Things dont go according to plan...

So the player characters from

your campaign have fallen from the path somewhat... Their palaces have burned down, their Sacred Circles have scattered and their bodies are old and crippled. What now? Do they give up or do they hang on?

Of course we strongly suggest they hang on and

try to regain their former glory; that they hunt those that wronged them and seek retribution, and subsequently set out to conquer the world!! What better drama than to reappear after a few decades and carefully spread word of your return, hearing the cries of despair from your foes that thought you had long ago slipped into madness or the dreamless sleep? Oh no, say you! You are far from dead, far from beaten, and far from content...

The other way, in which you let your players simply make up new characters and start over from scratch, can be acceptable as well. If your players feel really down on their luck or wish to start over for the sheer fun of doing so, then by all means!

However there are many ways for you to get a down on his luck character back on his feet. Remember that you are not only a storyteller, but a storymaker and you have creative control of the world around the characters in your group. You can make it so that opportunities present themselves that allow a wounded or weak character back on track. It should not be easy, but it should at the very least be possible. Here are some ideas on how to do so;

New lease on life...

The Guild of Genomancers may give a down on his luck Angelion character a new lease on life -literally- by producing for him a new body once his last becomes too sickly or infirm (or dead!) to continue. After some time spent in the dreamless sleep, let him reawaken in a new and unknown body, in a mysterious place, for reasons only the cryptical guild may know...

The enemy of my enemy...

It is when you have lost everything, betrayed by those you love, that reality, loyalty and many other beliefs take the old heave-ho. It is then that perhaps people you once thought despised you, and that you despised as well, turn a caring hand in your direction. As the GM you have many options. A powerful enemy may invite player characters into his Realm and offer to give them a shot at revenge, all for a price...

Way of the corruptor

Masters of Deceit or Domination and characters of the moon or dusk cardinal have it easier when it comes to getting back on their feet. Their lack of morals allows them to use every trick in the book to their advantage. Masters of Deceit or Domination have contacts, information rings and secrets at their disposal. When they are down in the gutters, these characters are generally quite capable of rising to power once more.

Death...

As in any movie, the death of a major character is central. This is no extra or secondary character dying; it's a PLAYER character. Such a death requires boatloads of drama, of grieving, and possibly even a shift in campaign focus. Other player characters might gain weaknesses, such as overwhelming hatreds against those responsible for the tragedy or past torments because of the sorrow they now feel. The surviving characters may very well discover new things about the deceased. You should use a death and its aftermath as an adventure focus.

When Angelions die, their essences crushed upon stones, the fuss should be even more pronounced. The point is, use player character death to advance the campaign!!

For the player of the dead character, several possibilities exist. He can play a totally different character or one of his deceased character's offspring, brothers, friends or even servants. A thorough discussion with you would be required to iron out the details but essentially, a new character is made and his history wound into the current campaign.

Sample non-player characters...

The following characters can be inserted into your campaign, as you desire. Some may live near the characters, while others may be encountered on their journeys.

Twice-Risen (396 year old Dagonheir)

Masteries

(Major) Wisdom	●●●●●●
(1st Minor)Passions	●●●●
(2nd Minor) War	●●
(3rd Minor) Domination	●●
(Achilles Heel)Deceit	●●
Intelligence	**6**
Temperance	**6**
Presence	**8**
Celerity pool	**+2**

Cardinal nature: *Sun*

Weaknesses

Haunting Fear: Twice-Risen fears strangers, merchants and pilgrims that wander into Brighthill. In them she sees the mark of evil in the most benign of features, and she has dispatched more than one for trivial things such as crossed eyes or odd manners of speech. She wishes she could make Brighthill and its people become invisible to the rest of the Earth, reasoning that flower patches, a river and the surrounding forest is all her people need, really. Even Dagonheir are not welcome in Brighthill, and Twice-Risen will not reveal to them its location. She has started diverting merchant caravans away from Brighthill , instead encouraging her people to trade amongst themselves. Townspeople are feeling these effects, as their economy is starting to suffer.

Information

The town of Brighthill can be placed either on the Birthland or the Land of Ebuleon, and Twice-Risen can make a nice addition to the characters' entourage. She is a Dagonheir about to fall into heresy, struggling to remain true to the Scriptures while the love of her people is slowly eating at her heart. Soon her actions will serve to isolate Brighthill completely, and she will start stealing from neighboring towns to provide for her people, thus becoming a Syba. She currently has two bodies; one of a butterfly, the other of a woman that appears to be in her late twenties. In her town, she works as a serving lady at the local inn, where she keeps a careful eye on those that pass through and listens in on her conversations. Using her butterfly form she tags along caravans and flies over Brighthill's surroundings, seeing to the region's peacefulness.

Mayor Hebra Habitt (Silver Hand, 500 year old Syba)

Masteries

(Major) Deceit	●●●●●●●
(1st Minor)Domination	●●●●
(2nd Minor) Wisdom	●●●●
(3rd Minor) War	●●●
(Achilles Heel)Passions	●●
Intelligence	7
Temperance	5
Presence	5
Celerity pool	+3

Cardinal nature: *Moon*

Weaknesses

Lurking madness: Silver Hand is a sexual predator. He feeds on the fear of children, and derives sexual gratification from their terror and screams.

Haunting fear: he fears the possibility that the All-Seeing may exist. As all those that live with such fears in the Second Age, Hebra is afraid of the sun, and prefers the night.

Information

To the citizens of Haramathia, Hebra Habitt is a just and worthy mayor. Raising a charming little girl by himself after his wife's tragic accident, he has administered their great city for the last thirty years, and for these three decades it has known an unsurpassed boom in its economy. To neighboring towns, Haramathia sells the distilled juice of Horned Leaf sap, which produces waking dreams in those that drink of it. The Haramathia riverboats use nets fabricated by the mayor himself, that attract a most surprising amount of fish; come Orday the market is filled with tourists and mechants haggling with fish vendors.

Yet the trust of the Haramathians is misguided, for a monster lives among them; their mayor is an immortal that has become ill of the mind. Possessed of a vampiric lust for young boys, he has lured many to his home using the body of his *daughter*, there to partake in nameless things; many are to be found buried in the backyard of his home or the forest around Haramathia. None of his people know of his unethical mercantile dealings abroad or of the forbidden chemicals he applies to his nets to lure fish; of his rivals and those that have suspected him of evil, very few still live today, for during a night past their window sill was visited by his crow form, leaving them dead come morning.

Information

Many Dagonheir believe Stormbearer perished during the war, and perhaps he did. It destroyed his soul and what remains of him today is more beastly than human. Using the body of an unkempt, bearded old man, he travels the Birthland reciting verses and slaying seemingly at random. Men, women and stray children have all had their flesh in his pipe at one time or another. He may have other bodies.

Weaknesses

Lurking madness: Stormbearer has a nasty habit. Since the All-Seeing left him, he has grown accustomed to smoking the flesh of those he kills in order to speak with their spirits. Underneath his rags he carries the skin samples of those he has slain, which he mixes with tobacco to smoke.

Haunting Fear: Stormbearer fears the sun for he believes it to be the eye of the All-Seeing. He only moves about when it is overcast, rainy, or during the night. On sunny days he may be found indoors, basking in the shade of trees or cowering under his rags on any street corner.

Stormbearer (881 year old Phantoma)

Masteries

(Major) War	●●●●●●●●●
(1st Minor)Deceit	●●●●●●
(2nd Minor) Wisdom	●●●●
(3rd Minor) Domination	●●●
(Achilles Heel)Passions	●●
Intelligence	9
Temperance	5
Presence	3
Celerity pool	+3

Cardinal nature: *Dusk*

Shallow Sea (1275 year old Fell Lord)

Masteries

(Major) Deceit	●●●●●●●●●
(1st Minor)Wisdom	●●●●●●●●
(2nd Minor) Domination	●●●●●
(3rd Minor) War	●●●●
(Achilles Heel)Passions	●●
Intelligence	**7**
Temperance	**6**
Presence	**7**
Celerity pool	**+4**

Cardinal nature: *Moon*

Weaknesses

Lurking madness: Shallow Sea believes the stars in the sky form patterns that may yield prophecies concerning the Third Age. At night, one of her forms will be found looking through great lenses aimed at the sky, scribbling inked numbers and shapes on pieces of paper. Depending on her prior night's calculations, her decisions and moods of the day may be quite unpredictable.

Burning love: Shallow Sea is currently crippled by a mortal love, a man she allows to sit next to her on the sapphire throne. A boy and a girl were born of their union, children whom Shallow Sea despises because of the attention they receive from their father.

Information

Shallow Sea once commanded a Fell Worm against the Tower of Emerald and Bronze, and succeeded in breaching its gates moments before it exploded. She was crucial in the attack against Eridan's Tower of Stone and managed to bring back the essences of four Angelions from the Unconquered Lands shortly after the war. Given dominion over a small island to the north of the Dream Kingdom, she remains there to this day along with three Fell Princes and close to six thousand mortals who call her Empress. One of her bodies is known to resemble that of a large black cat and another of a marine worm of enormous size. Her mainform is that of a woman possessed of myriad special abilities.

Weaknesses

Lurking madness: Anchor believes children are divine, and that by having his soul carried by their bodies his sins are forgiven. He dare not harm a child, or an immortal carried by a child's body.

Information

Townspeople of Suncreek Harbor believe they have been under the tyrannical rule of evil spirits for some eighty years now; using the forms of three small boys -possibly brothers- they walk the streets of Suncreek surrounded by a retinue of thugs and cutthroats, relieving merchants of their gold and shooting dead those that would escape. A guard of Crossbearers on passage through the town is known to have been slain to the last man by these spirits, who wield sorcerous energy and can incinerate their foes with a wave of their hands.

Yet in reality the townspeople of Suncreek are terrorized by just one entity; an Angelion once known as Anchor sees through the eyes of the three sorcerer-children. An immortal beast as few there are on the face of the world, little is known of him nor of his community. You can place Suncreek Harbor anywhere on the map, and should give each of anchor's children forms different attributes and powers. At least one will be carrying an incineration ring.

The Sorcerer-children of Suncreek harbor (Anchor, 451 year old Syba)

Masteries

(Major) War	●●●
(1st Minor) Passions	●●●●●
(2nd Minor) Domination	●●
(3rd Minor) Wisdom	●●●●
(Achilles Heel)Deceit	●●
Intelligence	**6**
Temperance	**6**
Presence	**8**
Celerity pool	**+3**

Cardinal nature: *Dusk*

Character evolution

Seeing characters evolve during the course of many adventures is an interesting aspect of roleplaying. As characters age, their desires and motivations will change, as will their friends and enemies. This section will explain the notion of *interim chapter*, deal with character experience and anguish as well as many other game aspects related to aging characters.

When an adventure is finished...

Interim chapter

When an adventure is finished but before another one begins, characters are said to be in an *interim chapter*, a period of time averaging 5 years.

During an interim chapter, you and your players must see that:

1) players age their characters appropriately and equally.
2) Characters gain experience based on what they did and how they played in the last adventure.
3) Characters either receive or shed Anguish points.
4) Deserving characters get Renown points (either Recognition, Notoriety or both) depending on their actions in the last adventure and during the interim chapter.
5) Characters receive their income and either spend it or hoard it.

Note!

It is possible for you to finish an adventure and instead of going straight to an interim chapter go straight to a follow-up adventure. There might even be a small string of semi-related adventures before the next interim chapter.

In such a case, simply proceed from one adventure to the next without awarding experience points, Renown or income. When you judge that the string of adventures is truly over, proceed to the interim chapter and award experience, Renown and income as though the strings of adventures were but one larger, single adventure.

D) Aging...

Aging characters make for fun campaigns. For mortals, life is short, perhaps one hundred years of adventuring or so. 20-25 adventures maximum may pass between the time of mortal character creation and natural death, however unlikely that may sound.

For Angelions, time takes on a different meaning. They can see the long term effects of their actions and see the world heave from one Age to the next. Keeping track of dates, events, character age and bodies is important, for it will allow you to record every significant event of a campaign. This might be important for future reference, or at the very least entertaining as leisure reading.

The default time span of an interim chapter is 5 years. If all player characters are mortals, and players want to play these characters for a longer time, it might be more interesting to maintain the length of an interim chapter at 4 years instead. If the campaign is a secondary campaign, with little importance to the overall world setting then the length of an interim chapter is much less important. Perhaps not keeping track of time altogether would be better, aging the characters once in a while or not at all.

Actual age VS apparent age for human bodies... (Optional)

As bodies age, they look older! However simple that sounds, it gets complicated when a character purchases a Guild body that looks to be twenty years old but has an expected lifespan of a thousand years... Twenty years from the date of its purchase, will it look to be forty? The answer is no, which brings in two values in the game that measure a body's absolute age and how old it looks. These values are *actual age* and *apparent age*. They need be taken into consideration only for human-looking bodies that have vastly different lifespans than normal humans (who in the Second Age have lifespans of 120 years).

A body's actual age represents the number of years since the body's creation (the date it left the biotank it was grown in). Apparent age is how old the body appears to be. The two values are often different for Angelion-attuned bodies, since bio-engineered bodies are generally designed with exceedingly long lifespans and can still look very young hundreds of years after purchase.

If a body was born/grown in 2106 SA, in 2133 SA its actual age is 27 years. For unengineered humans, actual age is the same as apparent

age. Bodies age at a rate that is inversely proportional to their lifespan. Taking a normal, unengineered human body as reference, a bioengineered human body with a lifespan of a thousand years (roughly ten times the lifespan of the human) would seem to age ten times slower.

Example: *an Angelion purchases a bioengineered body from the Guild. It looks like a twenty year old man when it comes out of the biovat in 2100SA. The body has a lifespan of 600 years. Humans of the Second Age have a normal lifespan of 120 years. The character's body therefore has five times the lifespan of an unengineered human, and will appear to age five times slower. In 2150SA, its actual age is 50 years, but it will appear to have aged only ten years since its creation, and look like a man in his early thirties. Its apparent age is therefore 30 years (20 years at the time of its creation, plus ten years of apparent aging). After roughly twenty adventures, when the calendar marks 2250SA, the body will have an actual age of 150 years, but its apparent age will be 50.*

Mortals and children...

This is a roleplaying tool; a player whose character becomes a parent can play his character's child in a secondary campaign, possibly while maintaining the parent as the main character. When the parent character becomes too old or dies, the player can choose the child as his main character.

Gaining/losing Traits during an adventure/ Interim chapter

Some Traits can be gained or shed simply by adventuring. When this happens, inform the player and ask him that he make the proper adjustments to his character sheet.

Players can ask to buy/shed some Traits as well using Available Power Points. If you agree, then the player can pay the required amount and either add or erase the Trait.

Example 1: *Julia's character, a Syba, has had his Goldroom sacked. His essence is now in the hands of an unknown non-player character. The GM tells Julia she must add the "Lost essence" Trait on her character sheet.*

Example 2: *after losing his city to Dagonheir, Julia's character has lost everything. His income is 0, and he wanders the surrounding regions for a new village to rule. During the interim chapter Julia asks the GM to pay 25 Available Power Points to find a town. As well, she wants to spend a further 15pts to gain the "Hidden Realm" Trait, as her character has chosen to re-establish himself in a secluded town. The GM allows her to do it, but asks that they run a little adventure together to play out how she goes about infiltrating the town. After this little "interim adventure" is run, the GM will allow her to spend the 40 Available Power Points and start taking route in the secluded town.*

Changing character type

As players see their characters age and gain experience, they may also see them change in terms of their objectives and their overall situation. In some cases players may wonder if their character should change character type. Our answer, admittedly fuzzy, is that it depends on circumstances and player intention.

The character types chosen by players are what their characters did (or their situation) at the onset of gaming. They are packages of Traits and game terms that speed up character creation, they are not "classes" or "careers" that need to be followed and govern how a character may or may not evolve. A Dagonheir may lose faith and decide to live as a Fell Prince by handing over his essence to Lord Ravencross, a Syba may get banished from his city and decide to wander the world, thus becoming a Phantoma. Likewise, a Fell Prince may one day recuperate his essence, and a Phantoma may decide to settle down in a town to uphold the Scriptures as a Dagonheir after an unexpected return of faith... Some adjustments may need to be made to character Traits, income or anything else you deem as appropriate but other than that, characters that leave their original character type behind can do so with little problem. Changes to their income, Traits, weaknesses and so on are best handled during gaming and the subsequent interim chapter.

Example 1: *Alex, the player of a Syba named Sickle Stroke, has had some misfortunes with his character. The city he ruled with an iron fist, a den of corruption named Kellharp, was the target of a Dagonheir Sacred Circle and was thoroughly burned to the ground. Alex's character narrowly escaped the sacking of his goldroom by*

snatching his essence and fleeing into the mountains. During the interim chapter, Alex consults with the GM, and decides that Sickle Stroke will lay low for many years and become a more compassionate immortal by his journeys through mortal towns. This is purely for roleplaying; Sickle Stroke could as easily have decided to try his hand again as a Syba by establishing himself in the next available town (much like Julia's character from the previous examples). However, after seeing how Phantomas from his game group seem to know a lot about the world, Alex has decided that would be the way his character wishes to go from now on. In game terms, Sickle Stroke has his income reduced to 0 because he lost the city that provided it. As well, the Trait "Secret Watchers" he chose during character creation is lost, because his watchers are now charred corpses in a charred city. Alex erases this Trait from his character sheet but gets no point back. Otherwise, all his Traits remain. He still has the "Surrounded by enemies" Trait because Dagonheir still know him as a Syba. By spending a few experience points during the interim chapter, he may receive some income, but since Sickle Stroke is now a wanderer, this income comes from either stealing or small contracts he does for other immortals. Thus, he is now halfway between a Syba and a Phantoma. After a few adventures and interim chapters, the GM might allow him to spend 20 Available Power Points to buy the Cloaked Wanderer Trait from the Phantoma character type to reflect his travels through the Unconquered Lands. His Surrounded by enemies Trait might be exchanged, later on, for the Stigma Trait of the Phantoma, and Sickle Stroke could legitimately be called a Phantoma. Alex can either erase the Syba character type from his character sheet and write Phantoma instead, or leave it be since it represents what his character was originally.

***Example 2:** Martin's character is Iron Tiger, a Dagonheir that has recently lost his faith. The GM put a Black Drama trump into play after his character read some First Age literature and now his belief in the All-Seeing is nil. What more, his character has been tempted by Ravencross. He has lured him to the Dream Kingdom and convinced him to spend the rest of eternity at his side. The adventure finishes with Iron Tiger handing over his essence to Ravencross, much to the dismay of his Dagonheir fellows. During the interim chapter, Martin is told by the GM to remove his Faithful Trait and add the Fell Pact Trait. However, Lord Ravencross rewards him by giving him a new body. As well, the GM tells Martin that Iron Tiger is now a Fell Prince in a Fell Kingdom (which he will build and describe later), which gives him an income of 50k mints per interim chapter. This replaces whatever income he previously had. His Lord promises that if he is loyal and worthy, he will one day get to administer an estate from within his Kingdom. He has no Fell Powers nor Dark retinue as of yet, though as he proves his loyalty to her and makes contacts within her Kingdom, this may change later on. Martin decides to change his character type to Fell Prince, because it more accurately describes his character as he is now.*

2) Experience...

Experience can turn a green recruit into a hardened veteran and a boy prince into a king. It is what makes the Kingsways - once mortal - so much more dangerous today as three thousand year old immortals than in their mortal lives. It is why Dagonheir fear Dream and Red Lotus, and why the mortal world is ruled by immortals and not the other way around.

Experience is synonymous with roleplaying; players are generally fond of experience points both because they allow their character to become better and more powerful and also because they mark, in clear numbers, how much the character has gone through. Every game has a system set up to allow for character progression, and LSoE is no different. In fact, experience is a major part of the game, and if player characters are to confront the many dangers of the Second Age, they will need lots of it!

In game terms, at the beginning of every interim chapter characters will receive a varying number of *experience points*. Some may receive more, others less, but all will get at least one point during every interim chapter. As much as possible, characters should get similar amounts given equal quality of play.

The experience characters accumulate will depend on time and adventuring. Essentially every character in the game gains experience points every interim chap-

ter. Experience is converted into Available Power Points, the very same points that players used to build their characters. Hence, a 500-point character that is awarded 10 experience points at the end of an interim chapter will write 510 on the character sheet under Total Power. The player can add these 10 points to the Available Power points box or spend them on Mastery Ratings, Master abilities and so on, as you will see later.

Awarding experience...

You, the GM, are the one that awards experience. Every interim chapter, consult the following table to help you determine how many experience points each character receives.

Experience gained per Interim chapter	Base experience award
Base amount	Intelligence+Celerity pool
Anguish points	
1-2	-1
3-4	-3
5+	-5
Last adventure	See below

Table explanation

Base amount: during every interim chapter, a character gains this amount of experience points.

Anguish points: Anguish (see Anguish, later in this chapter) can affect the experience characters receive. Deduct a certain amount from the character's base experience award depending on the number of anguish points he possessed during the last adventure (before they are adjusted at step 3). No matter how many anguish points a character has however, the minimum amount of experience points he gains per interim chapter cannot be lower than 1.

Last adventure: an adventure can add greatly to a character's experience awards. Adventure-related experience should reward roleplaying before anything else. Killing thousands of innocent people awards nothing much (unless it advances the story and is done with style!) On the other hand, face someone more powerful than yourself without flinching and beat him using deception, a quick sword blow or a smart mouth, and experience awards should come raining down from the heavens. Likewise, playing actively, meaning that a character does more than just react to the GM's adventure, is one of the best ways to get experience points.

Adventure type	experience point award
Small adventure	1
Normal adventure	2
Bloody/ difficult adventure	4
Good, active role-playing	+1 to +8

Table explanation

Small adventure: There should be no such thing as an easy adventure, but if there were, this would be one of them! An adventure where nothing particularly deadly or troublesome appears, a series of events that challenge players and characters, but not to the point where one or more of them whisper *geez...how are we ever going to get out of this one!*

Normal adventure: this is an adventure containing many hardships, challenging the players to a high degree...

Bloody / difficult adventure: such an adventure could form the basis of a small novelette. Characters face dangerous foes and encounter mind-warping problems. This is the core of the game, and in such adventures some Angelion characters would be expected to lose a body or two.

Good roleplaying: LSoE is, after all, a Roleplaying game, capital R. The most theatrical roleplaying should be rewarded generously for without it players are simply rolling dice and making your job more difficult. Relatively passive players should get, at most, a +2 roleplaying bonus (as the GM, always give a roleplaying bonus, even a token one, to each player, unless their play was blatantly counter-productive and you wish to send a message). Those that are active and creative should receive a +5 or +6 bonus, while those that stand out, are surprising, that play in character and use their weaknesses to advance the story may receive the maximum, +8.

3) Gaining/ shedding Anguish points

Anguish points are a measure of a character's state of mind. The lesser of these little nasties a character has, the better. When they have none, everything is peachy; they feel great and look to the future with enthusiasm. When they have many, they are gloomy, lethargic and subject to depression. Once anguish attacks a character's mind, it can break him apart and leave a shattered shell.

Whether characters gain or shed Anguish points is taken into consideration every interim chapter right after experience points are awarded. When characters start the game, they have no Anguish points.

Gaining Anguish Points

Every interim chapter, you will need to check if the player characters in your campaign gain Anguish points. You should review with every player what their character has done during the course of the last adventure and figure out how many Anguish points are gained.

- If the character's actions in the last adventure went mostly against his Cardinal nature, he receives 1, 2 or at most 3 Anguish points depending on the number of times he went against his nature and how severe the transgressions were.
- If the character is trapped inside non-human bodies for the duration of the interim chapter, he gains 2 Anguish points.
- Being unable to love, to show compassion, suffering tragedy or losing something dear can make a character gain 1, 2, 3 or even more Anguish points depending on GM decision. As a rule of thumb, Dagonheir that must abide by the Scriptures will gain 3 anguish points because of their selfless duties every interim chapter.

Shedding Anguish Points

A character sheds Anguish points by answering to his nature, and by believing in a higher power so much that his humanity, his need for mortal love and compassion is replaced by his adoration of a supreme entity.

- If the character's actions in the last adventure went mostly towards indulging his Cardinal nature, he may shed 1, 2 or at most 3 Anguish points.
- A character that has the *faithful* trait eliminates 2 Anguish points every interim chapter

Faithful Trait

Faith in god(s) has allowed mortals throughout history to endure pain by relying on, and trusting to, Divine love. No matter if gods exist or not, faith in them is a real thing, quantifiable in this game by the *Faithful* Trait. The *faithful* character prays and recites verses, kneels and chants his way out of anguish and ennui, but were his faith to be shaken or destroyed, mental trouble might come quickly... When Corvus seeded doubt into the minds of Angelions after the war, admitting to them that the All-Seeing did not exist, many went utterly mad.

Keep in mind that the *faithful* Trait represents fierce belief in the all-Seeing (or some other divinity), and has nothing to do with clerical authority, religious status or responsibility. Weekend believers or casual practitioners do not have the *Faithful* Trait. A simple peasant that reads from his Holy Word may have the *Faithful* Trait while a corrupt cleric does not. The peasant may go about his life smothering anguish under layers of divine adoration while the faithless priest gains weaknesses with age.

Characters with no faith adopt a pragmatic approach to life's problems, knowing that they must rely on themselves for everything. The faithless do not benefit from the soothing, therapeutic effects of divine love. Death is the end of everything, and only mortal desires matter. Fell Princes and Sybas are generally (but not always) faithless. They can pick the *Faithful* Trait, but in their case, going against the will of God can have disastrous consequences (see the *Faithful* Trait).

Note!

A completely faithless character usually cannot buy the *Faithful* Trait through experience, unless a plausible way of gaining faith is proposed to you.

Shedding the *Faithful* Trait

The only way a character can lose his *Faithful* Trait is by no longer

believing in a divine entity. Several things can lead to a character's loss of faith, including, but not limited to, the following;

- You or a player puts a Black Drama Trump into play when the character witnesses something that might lead to his loss of faith, such as a horrible tragedy, an awakening, discovering a library of First Age books dealing with religions, receiving a message from an old mentor that is now faithless, etc. The *Faithful* Trait might be removed a few interim chapters after the Black Drama Trump has been put into play.
- The player decides, by himself, to have his character become faithless over the course of a few interim chapters...

The Effects of Anguish Points

Anguish points not only cause characters to lose experience points every interim chapter; they can lead to depression, lackluster performance, quirks and madness. Every interim chapter, after Anguish points are tabulated, you can declare that one or more of a character's Anguish points will be *converted* into something else, such as negative task modifiers or the acquiring of Weaknesses.

You are in control of when and how many of a character's Anguish points are converted. You may decide to let them hinder a character's learning (drain his gaining of experience) through many years and then convert a bunch of them on a given day into a whopping, incapacitating lurking madness. Or, you may convert a few at a time into negative task modifiers that represent a character's loss of vitality and his general gloominess.

Anguish Effects Table

Anguish points to be removed	Effect
3	The character suffers a temporary -1 modifier to all tasks for the next adventure
5	The character suffers a temporary -2 modifier to all tasks for the next adventure
15	Acquisition of a weakness, most probably a lurking madness

Depending on how many Anguish points are converted at any given time, the character will suffer from one of the effects described in the above table.

Weaknesses gained should reflect the nature of the character's anguish.

Example 1: *during an adventure, a Dagonheir from the Birthland develops strong feelings towards a mortal woman, but must destroy her and her family because of rampant corruption. After the experience award and the interim chapter is over, the character winds up with a total of 6 Anguish points. After removing 2 because of the character's Faithful Trait, he still gains 4 Anguish points. The GM decides to convert three of them right away into a -1 modifier for the next adventure, to represent his lovesickness and the terrifying images he sees played back again and again in his mind of her burning in her house, screaming and dying horribly. This means his Anguish points fall from 4 to 1. During the next interim chapter, his experience gain will be one point less than normal, because of this Anguish point.*

Many adventures later, the character has a total of 18 Anguish points. The GM then decides to convert 15 of them into a lurking madness that corresponds to his tragic love. Perhaps he develops an obsession to find some of her surviving relatives from surrounding towns, and secretly helps them gain wealth and status, or simply spies on them during the night...

Example 2: *A character's essence has fallen into the hands of a devious Fell Lord that gives him the attuned bodies of rats. He has been trapped inside rat bodies for over forty years now, and has amassed 23 Anguish points. The GM decides to remove 15 Anguish points and give him a lurking madness. He soemtimes comes to believe he is a rat...*

Indulging one's nature/going against one's nature

A character's Cardinal nature is the very fiber of his soul. It is both the invisible hand that guides him and the justification for his existence. Fighting one's nature is possible, though only in the short term. Battling against it for long periods of time is tantamount to suicide for in the end either the battle will be lost or the mind will shatter.

This being said, we encourage players to roleplay their inner battles thoroughly and dramatically. This makes for rewarding game sessions, gives experience bonuses and allows the GM to advance the story.

A Player must keep his character's Cardinal nature secret from other players. Keeping their cardinal natures a secret allows characters to grow and mature in different, often unexpected ways and keeps other players on their toes. Every player should secretly take note on a piece of paper of every action his character takes during gameplay which corresponds to indulging or going against his specific Cardinal Nature. As the GM, you should do the same for all of your players' significant acts. After the adventure is over, during the interim chapter, you will review the players' records as well as your own and decide whether their actions were more towards indulging or going against their nature. Refer yourself to the following examples to determine what, for each Cardinal nature, indulging or going against nature means.

Sun cardinal

Indulging your nature

- Gaining in power, prestige or influence, thereby being able to reach more people with your virtuous acts
- Bringing order where before there was chaos
- Any benevolent, selfless deed of great significance
- Protecting the weak from harm, at the expense of one's safety or reputation
- Seeing justice done on a large scale
- Protecting the world from harm, making it a better place by ridding it of a great evil

Going against your nature

- Losing influence and power in your Realm's hierarchy
- Letting your cities, people or realm fall into chaos
- Giving in to selfish acts (abusing food, money, possessions), wrath, corruption
- Allowing an innocent, weak or defenseless person or animal get butchered senselessly
- Leaving a great injustice unsettled
- Endangering the world through your actions or lack thereof

Dawn cardinal

Indulging your nature

- Being without master, undertaking projects/missions of your own making
- Freeing the oppressed from the clutches of tyrannical powers
- Any benevolent, selfless deed of great significance
- Seeing justice done on a large scale
- Protecting the weak and defenseless
- Protecting the world from harm

Going against your nature

- Answering to the commands of another, being an underling or hired to do something by someone else
- Abandoning an oppressed people to their fate
- Giving in to selfish acts (abusing food, money, possessions), wrath, corruption
- Allowing an innocent, weak

or defenseless person or animal to get butchered senselessly
- Leaving a great injustice unsettled
- Endangering the world through your actions or lack thereof

Moon Cardinal

Indulging your nature
- Rising in power
- Accumulating wealth, territory, underlings
- Gaining Recognition or Notoriety, being in the spotlight
- Giving in to selfish acts (abusing flesh, food, money, possessions), wrath, corruption

Going against your nature
- Being stripped of power
- Losing significant portions of your wealth, income, territory or underlings
- Fading away from the limelight
- Losing face, being ridiculed or shamed

Dusk Cardinal

Indulging your nature
- Being without master, undertaking projects/missions of your own making
- Accumulating wealth, territory and servants
- Giving in to selfish acts (abusing flesh, food, money, possessions), wrath, corruption

Going against your nature
- Answering to the commands of another, being an underling or hired to do something by someone else
- losing significant portions of your wealth, income, territory or underlings
- Refusing any alluring offer of loveplay, wealth, food or other temptation

4) Renown...

Renown points are given to characters by you based on what they did during an adventure, who knows about their actions and how significant their actions were. You are encouraged to consult the following examples that give ideas of the number of Renown points to give characters based on their actions.

A Dagonheir has thwarted an attack by a reltively obscure Fell Prince. Only the other player characters were present, but the battle did spill out into the streets. 5 RECO pts

The character traveled to a distant Realm to propose new battle strategies to its Sacred Circle, achieving a spectacular result...10 RECO pts

Having one of his bodies captured by a Fell Lord, a Phantoma managed to defeat, in single combat and using his mundane human body, a powerful Fell Prince carried by a horrible and vastly superior physical form. Though his body was subsequently vaporized by the furious Lord, the Phantoma did manage to impress his retinue of Princes... 15 RECO pts

The character has single-handedly thwarted an invasion by mindless beasts of Ravencross. Though he fought valiantly and prevailed, no one was witness to the bloody combat...No award

The character is the victim of slander during a soiree, and an influential (and somewhat gullible) Dagonheir has gotten wind of his apparently less than exemplary behavior... 5 NOTO pts

A Dagonheir has been seen by one of his comrades consorting with shady characters in a back alley, and even seen giving them a small artifact of some kind...5 NOTO pts

A Syba character has gruesomely killed a hundred citizens from his city to quell a rebellion...10 NOTO pts

A Fell Prince has left a path of destruction in the Unconquered Lands by going from town to town burning them down one by one. His last action was to sack a Dagonheir goldroom and fly away with its essence. Many Dagonheir tried to stop him but in vain, having their bodies slain by the Prince's horrible form... 25 NOTO pts

Sharing Renown points

Characters that participate in the same activities will share Renown point rewards together. Depending on the exact actions of each, and who saw them, certain char-

acters may receive more, depending on your decision.

What to do with RECO and NOTO points

For now, simply keeping track of them is enough; prior to the publication of the first supplement, there are no further effects. However you can let the characters in your group feel that they are making a name for themselves as their Renown goes up. Let their Realms be visited by ancient Angelions that come only to spy. It will keep your players on their toes and make them feel as though they are becoming part of the greater struggle. The following tables will let you know what various levels of Renown represent.

RECO/NOTO and soirees/ secret meetings

RECO/NOTO measure an Angelion's celebrity status among his own kind (either those still loyal to the Scriptures or those that ignore them).

In game terms, soirees, secret meetings and gatherings of Angelions from one side or the other will have a minimum RECO/NOTO to attend rating, an arbitrary GM tool to know the meeting's exclusivity and prestige. Characters of lower renown than this rating are usually not asked to attend.

Spending experience points...

Once received, experience points are converted into Available Power Points. These can go towards getting better at Masteries, acquiring Master abilities, purchasing Traits, improving attributes either physical (for biological bodies) or mental, getting rid of weaknesses or kept in store as Available Power Points for use at a later time.

Available Power Points

A player is free to spend all, some or none of his Available

RECO VALUE	MEANING
0	Your good deeds, if any, remain unknown
50	Angelion associate your name with the Dagonheir, as a disciple of The All-Seeing and Ambrose
100	Your reputation is growing in the regions surrounding your habitual haunts... Phantomas and corruptors alike think twice before trespassing on your land... Sybas try to keep informed as to your whereabouts...
500	Many immortals speak of your deeds, all over the world... You are known as a fierce warrior of The All-Seeing, and the mere rumor of your coming can send Syba possés packing... In the Fell Kingdoms, your name is often uttered, and agents are sent to your Realm or otherwise try to keep an eye on you...
1000+	Scarcely no immortal ignores your name. You are recognized as a top player in the ongoing battle of good versus evil, and possibly one of those that will liberate Ambrose and destroy Lord Ravencross and his Fell Kingdoms. Examples include Dark Blue, Brother-Sky and Angel-of-Fire.

NOTO VALUE	MEANING
0	Your fell deeds, if any, remain unknown
50	You are said to have disobeyed the Scriptures on more than one occasion, though your apparent transgressions still warrant little attention except in your immediate surroundings
100	Your foul reputation is well established in the lands surrounding your habitual haunts... Phantomas think twice before trespassing on your land... Dagonheir try to keep informed as to your whereabouts...
500	Immortals all over the world speak of your evil deeds... Depending on their nature, you are known as a hedonist, a profiteer, a tyrant, a sadist or a lustful, greedy monster... Powerful Dagonheir may have marked you as one of their greatest enemies...
1000+	Your name is spoken of in the highest circles. You are recognized as a top lieutenant of Evil and one that may help Lord Ravencross cover the world with his Fell Kingdoms. Examples include the infamous twins Rain and Sun, the murderous Dream, Delphina Kingsway and Lord Ravencross himself.

Power Points during an interim chapter. Points not spent remain in the Available Power Points box.

Improving mental attributes (Intelligence, Temperance and Presence)

Characters can improve their Intelligence, Presence and Temperance attributes by a maximum of one (1) point each through the use of Available Power Points. A check is marked on the character sheet when either of these mental attributes is raised this way, after which the attribute is considered to be at its maximum. Keep in mind that the maximum value of any mental attribute is 10.

- **The cost to raise a mental attribute with Available Power Points is the difference in power points from the old attribute value to the new one.**

Example: *a character has 33 Available Power Points. His Presence attribute is 6 and the player wants to raise it to 7. As can be seen in the A Legend is born chapter, a 6 in Presence costs 25pts, while a 7 costs 30pts. The difference between the two is 5 Power Points, so the player must spend 5 Available Power Points to raise this attribute. His Presence is now a 7, and the player puts a check next to it, signifying that it has been raised through experience and cannot be raised further. He now has 28 points left in the Available Power Points box.*

Purchasing White/ Black Drama Trumps

Players can purchase either of these Drama trumps during an interim chapter. A character may not have more than two of each however. A White Drama trump costs 20 Available Power Points, while a Black Drama trump will give back 20 Available Power Points.

Improving primary physical attributes (Power, Finesse, Vigor, Beauty and Fear) through training

Characters can improve the Power, Finesse, Vigor, Beauty or Fear attributes of any of their organic bodies by a maximum of one (1) point each through the use of Available Power Points. A check is marked on the body sheet when either of these physical attributes is raised this way, after which the attribute is considered to be at its maximum. Keep in mind that size limitations on certain attributes must still be respected.

Secondary attributes (perception ratings, toughness, movement scores, etc.) cannot be modified through training.

- **The cost to raise a primary physical attribute through training with Available Power Points is the difference in Power Points from the old attribute value to the new one.**

Improving Mastery Ratings and acquiring new Master abilities

Refer yourself to the *A Legend is born* chapter to determine how many Available Power Points it costs to raise Mastery ratings and acquire new Master abilities. Assume the player is making his player from scratch. Until the publication of the first supplement, players cannot purchase *Legendary abilities* for their characters.

Increasing income through experience

Players can raise the income of their character by spending Available Power Points. This means the character is making contacts and improving his skills at acquiring riches. Contrary to the income provided by a Realm, this income generally cannot be lost, even if the character's Realm is destroyed completely.

Every Available Power Point a player spends towards increasing his character's income will raise it by 5k mints per interim chapter, subject to GM approval.

Improving a Realm

Players can use their character's Available power Points to enlarge the size and income of their Realm; it represents time spent towards increasing their area of control, attracting new settlers, building contacts and taking root in or being granted control over (by one's Fell Lord) new communities.

By spending Available Power Points after gaming has begun, a player can give his character dominion over more than one mortal community. What more, the Rogue Golem and Archfiend character types can now claim Realms of their own just like Dagonheir, Sybas and Fell Princes.

A player can do one of two things:

- he can increase the size class of a community from his Realm by one size class (a *village* can become a *town*, a *town* can become a *small city*, a *small city* can become a *medium city* and

finally a *medium city* can become a *large city*). To increase the size of a community in such manner, the player must pay the entire Power Point cost of the new community. Thus to turn a *town* into a *small city* will cost 50 Available Power Points. However, the character will automatically be *rooted in* the small city and it shall immediately start producing income. The character must already be rooted in his town before he can pay the Power Points towards transforming it into a small city (see below: *Taking Root*).

- he can lay claim to another community altogether. By paying the point cost of the community to acquire, he will be considered to have discovered and started establishing himself in a new community. This new community will not afford any income before the character can take root in it. (see below: *Taking Root*).

Taking Root

Spending Available Power Points to acquire a new community (as opposed to increasing an already owned community) is a risky investment. It will take many years (possibly some decades) before a character can get some income out of it, and he may see it destroyed or claimed by another character before even that. Every community requires a certain number of interim chapters after a character spends the necessary Power Point cost before the character is considered rooted in the community and the player can write it down on his character sheet as a part of his Realm.

A village requires 1 interim chapter, a town requires 2, a small city 3, a medium city 4 and a large city 5 interim chapters before a character can rightfully claim it as part of his Realm.

Two new communities!

Two new mortal communitties are available to characters: the *Medium city* and the *Large city*. Greater cities such as Orcanager and Barakeith can only be claimed through adventuring.

Medium city (100pts)

The medium city is home to between 5000 and 10000 citizens. It will be surrounded by one or two villages.

A medium city provides an income of 1M mints/interim chapter

Large city (200pts)

The large city sports a population of more than ten thousand people. Large cities will be surrounded by half a dozen villages and two to three towns.

A large city provides an income of 2M mints/interim chapter

Gaining/losing weaknesses during gameplay

Weaknesses acquired during gameplay do not provide characters with Available Power Points but they are tabulated in the total Power of a character. Hence a character that gains a weakness will lose 50 Power Points from his Total Power Point rating. Likewise, a character that sheds a weakness will see his Total Power rise by 50pts.

5) Income...

Income is received every interim chapter just like experience. It can be hoarded, spent on projects, new mortal forms, rumors and mundane equipment. Characters with no income are assumed to survive quite modestly.

Buying "rumors"

For 50k mints, your character can *buy a rumor*; he gets wind of something happening of interest, not necessarily in his Realm, but worthy of his attention. As the GM, make it worth the while of players to buy rumors. Up to three rumors can be bought per character per interim chapter. Larger communities afford greater income which in turn allow for the purchase of more rumors. This reflects a larger community's tendency to attract greater numbers of pilgrims and merchants, the perfect vessels to carry information from far away lands.

At your discretion, players can ask to pay more mints per rumor to be privvy to correspondingly more sensitive and worthwhile information.

Example: Justin's character is a Syba ruling over a medium city from the Birthland. His large community affords him some nice income which he gathers by overtaxing his people and stealing from its treasury. However, he fears his actions may one day bring in Dagonheir attention, and so he regularly spends at least 50k mints per interim chapter to buy a rumor. He does just that in the current interim chapter.

The GM knows that in effect a

Dagonheir has gotten wind of him and is seeking to discover the location of his goldroom. Posing as a pilgrim, the Dagonheir is currently in his city, sleeping in one of its inns. He has been observed by one of the locals to hide under his cloak a vicious-looking sword unbefitting a common pilgrim. What more, patrons have remarked to the innkeeper about the stranger's peculiar companion, a white rat of some appreciable size which often lingers about his feet. The GM tells Justin all of this, and that once, many hundreds of years ago, he knew of an Angelion who was fond of white rats and carried one on his shoulder any given time of the day. His name was Born-Seventh, and three hundred years ago, when Justin's character briefly met him, he got the distinct impression Born-Seventh was already very old...

Projects/Equipment

In the section on *building/repairing things* in the *Game mechanics* chapter you will find many project examples (and their related costs). Players can decide to spend their income on new inventions, labs and other such projects at their leisure.

Keep careful track of the projects characters start and their expected completion dates!

Purchasing New Bodies

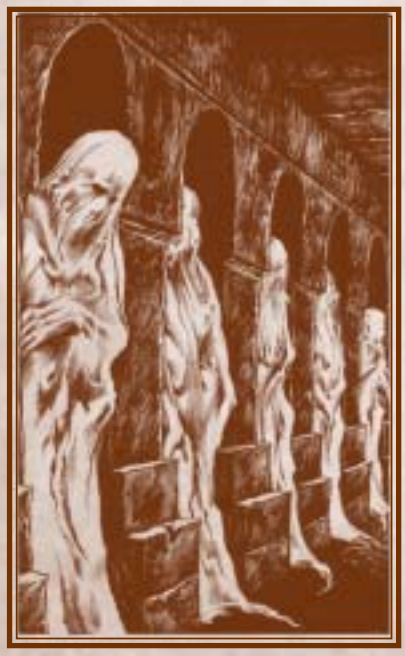
Angelions with no bodies are defenseless. They are blind and deaf, immobile and doomed to slip into the dreamless sleep.

Angelion characters should have at least one replacement body at any given time, if only to seek a Guild Temple Curator should all his other mortal forms perish. Many choose fast moving animal forms such as birds for this purpose.

Angelions can buy bodies from the Guild, steal bodies attuned to other Angelions or bodysnatch' em from mortals! It all depends on their morals - or lack thereof.

As your players will see, purchasing mundane mortal forms for their Angelion characters is costly. Purchasing exotic, high Power Point bodies can require vast amounts of mints...

Buying and Attuning Bodies



On the wall was an endless row of bodies, some matured, others still growing, but all covered in a thin layer of cellular material, veined and pulsating. The Curator pierced one such veil to show me a body he thought might interest me, and I approached its rack to get a better look. Its eyes were open but glazed, still wet from the spongy veil that had covered its face.

"A nice body, this one. Built strong and hardy. You will pick up a man and crush his skull in between your palms as would a bear and fall from great heights only to land on your feet as would a cat. His eyes are blue, but at this stage, we can make them any color you want. His skin, hair and facial features as well, should you so desire.

"How much?" I dared ask.

"One and a half million mints." did he answer back, serious as ever, his eyes sparkling with an eerie golden hue.

"Interesting..." Still, I was keen on having one slightly younger... Perhaps a small boy of seven or eight?"

His hawkish face took on an even more predatory look.

"If young bodies are what you seek, then follow me... You shall not be disappointed!"

With that, he put back the veil of organic matter over this body's face, and quickly scuttled along to another great chamber. Walking behind him, I looked back one last time at the form we had just seen, and wondered... I would need to come back to that one.

I was excited, like a mortal child that is presented with too many toys...

The cost in mints to purchase and attune a body from the Genomancers is found in the following table. Keep

in mind the minimum cost (Angelion) of bodies, which varies according to body size (50 for minuscule bodies, 30 for tiny bodies, 10 for small or larger bodies). Depending on circumstances and a character's relation with a given Guild Curator, prices might be subject to change.

Body costs to purchase and attune

Body cost in Power Points (Angelion cost)	Cost in mints to purchase/ grow and attune
10-100	500 000+5000/PP
101-150	10 000/PP
151-200	15 000/PP
201-500	20 000/PP
501+	40 000/PP

Example: *a Syba visits the mountain stronghold of Boreas, wishing to buy a human-looking body gifted with some radical Traits and attributes. Its Power Point cost is 300. The cost in mints will therefore be 300x 20 000 = 6 million mints.*

Body growth times

Characters can either purchase bodies already grown by the Genomancers or bodies grown specifically for them. In the latter case, these bodies need a certain time period to be designed and grown. This time varies from a few years for relatively small, simple bodies, to a decade or more for truly complex -or huge- organisms (GM decision).

Growing organic bodies in advance

The Guild can grow and store custom-designed bodies ahead of time, so that they are ready when the client desires them to be. Angelions must pay the Guild body fee half up front and half upon delivery of the body. Hence for a character to have the Guild grow him a 125 point body that costs 1.25 million mints and store it until a time comes when he will take possession of it requires him to spend 675k mints up front and a further 675k upon delivery.

For short durations -less than a decade or so- the Genomancers do not charge any fee for body storage, but for storage times above ten years, they charge a flat fee of 1% of the body cost per 10 years stored. This fee is doubled for large bodies, and quadrupled for monstrous bodies. For small, tiny and minuscule bodies, the fee remains at 1% per ten years. During storage a body is kept in a green berth.

Bodysnatching

Bodysnatching may be an alternative to buying bodies from the Guild. Bodysnatching implies taking an unwilling mortal's body (be it of man or beast), having the Guild implant it with cybernetic feelers and sensors, and having it attuned to one's essence. The mortal will *die* -his mind erased and his higher thought functions destroyed- but his body will live on. In terms of cost, bodysnatching is surprisingly expensive, for reasons explained in *The Genomancers* section. Refer yourself to the Bodysnatching costs table below to determine how much the Guild will charge to modify and attune a bodysnatched organism.

Bodysnatching costs

Body features	Cost in mints to modify
Size	
Small or bigger	5 000 000
Tiny	2 000 000
Minuscule	1 000 000
Archfiend	x2

Stealing an Angelion's mortal form

By using aspect crystals, Angelions can detune other Angelion forms and attune them to their own essence. Thus Angelion bodies can be *stolen*.

In such cases, the body sheet of the stolen body is handed to the thieving Angelion.

Getting used to a new body

The little sparrow had flown directly into the stone wall, snapping its neck instantly.

The fool... How I recognized him in all his forms

Angelions need some time to get accustomed to new bodies. Though mundane human bodies require no more than a few days, for exotic or alien bodies it may take up to a few years, depending on how alien the body is. Attuning the body of a dragonfly does not mean an Angelion knows how to fly... He may flap its wings, but he lacks basic

knowledge of the wind's effects on flight, of aerodynamics and of lift. He needs to learn from this body as time goes by.

About Fell Princes

Fell Prince characters do not purchase bodies from the Genomancers; Lord Ravencross uses the biofactory from the Tower of Anekron to design and grow the bodies and animals his Lords and Princes need. In exchange for mints and services, Lords can therefore acquire all manner of exotic mortal forms for themselves and their retenue of Princes. In some cases, Princes can purchase bodies using their own mints. Follow the same procedure as for all other character types, but divide body snatching costs by 2. All other costs remain the same.

The adjustment period

Angelions will need to go through an adjustment period for every newly attuned body. Once this period is over, they can control the body normally.

Consult the following table to determine just how long and severe the adjustment period will be.

Body type	Adjustment period	Task modifier
Very familiar	1 week	-1
Familiar	1 month	-1
Unfamiliar	1 year	-2/-1*
Totally alien	10 years	-2/-1*

Table explanation

Body type

Very familiar: any human body, whether grown by the Guild, bodysnatched or stolen, irrespective of age

Familiar: any human body that has a slight number of exotic Traits, such as wings, four arms, more eyes, etc... You might allow dogs, cats and four legged mammals into this category as well.

Unfamiliar: fish, birds, snakes, animals in general. As well, monsters that have generally the same senses as our own, such as dragons, giant snakes...

Totally alien: some archfiends, insects, arthropods, octopi, animals having completely different senses than our own, such as bees/wasps, spiders, butterflies, plants, bats, deep water fish, jellyfish, etc...

(*): After half of the adjustment period has passed since attunement, the task modifier becomes the number after the slash

The GM should take into consideration the Angelion's previous mortal forms. An Angelion that has used butterfly bodies many times before and knows how to interpret their sensory data can consider the adjustment time for a new butterfly body to be *Familiar*, or even *very familiar*. Players should therefore take note of the bodies they use throughout their immortal life.

Adjustment period

The time necessary for an Angelion to get accustomed to a new body of this type. Before this time is up, the Angelion will suffer from the written task modifier. This adjustment period supposes a semi-regular use of the body. Having the body dormant for this period does not count towards time spent in the body.

Task modifier

The modifier towards most physical tasks as

well as most Perception tasks in cases where the body carries special sensory capabilities, possibly some other physical tasks as well, depending on the body's exact nature and GM decision.

A note on totally alien bodies and sensory information

It is entirely up to you to determine the level of accuracy you use to describe the sensory information relayed to an Angelion by one of his attuned and totally alien bodies. We suggest a mix of human information but adjusted to reflect a body's particular sensors. However keep in mind that if you wish to remain simple in your descriptions, relaying sensory information diligently and according to body type can be demanding. It is often better to relay sensory information to a player using references the human player can understand and act upon.

CHAPTER SEVEN
THE SECOND AGE

We recreated birds. We recreated blades of grass and great trees of might. We recreated man and woman once more. But all these do not make a world. It is when these birds fly and sing under the sun, when the blades of grass make fields sway and roll under the wind and when children play and laugh under the sun that the world takes form. That is beyond our control. Everything else is just a petri dish away from nothing. No, in retrospect what happened was not of our hand, but was meant to happen. We were just the instruments of its power.

-Ori Kingsway, the Lion-

Prior to the spirit war and for the better part of twenty centuries, children learned that since the beginning of time the world had been under the watchful eye of the All-Seeing. Through his great power was the world born; through his great benevolence was humanity allowed to inhabit it; and through his great vigilance had men of evil been expunged from it. The Second Age was one where humans could hope for a good and pleasurable life, where the nights and forests of the world bore promise instead of peril.

Folk of the Second Age lived simple, quiet lives; they tended their fields and cattle or worked in simple mills and shops. Hunters rode into woodlands on the backs of horses, striking down their prey with steel-tipped wooden arrows. Come night's darkness clerics and mayors could be found singing and laughing among friends and neighbors, while younglings scurried off into the woodlands under the glare of oil lamps. Men knew nothing of the ravages of war or the fangs of unnatural beasts. Forests bore men no ill will; their animals were shy and their bellies sickened by the flesh of men. Villages and towns dealt with each other openly, linked by weed-infested dirt roads traveled by couriers and merchant wagons. Strangers were welcome and well cared for. In the skies above their heads, the All-Seeing watched over them all.

More than ten generations enjoyed pleasant lives under the benevolent watch of He above.

Two hundred years ago the spirit war cast a dark shadow over the world; evil spirits of the accursed First Age were summoned by the Fell God, forcing people of many regions to leave towns overrun by foul beasts. Mayors built walls around their communities and gave weapons and armor to men so that they could patrol the streets at night. Neighbor looked to neighbor with mistrust, for rumors spoke of evil that dwelt inside the bodies of men. Locks, chain mail and demons are words now spoken.

As it stands now the world is once more a place of lurking evil, one where mankind has reason to fear the night.

The Kingsways

Born in a terrible time, the Kingsways are certainly the most important characters of the First and Second ages. For a thousand years they toiled as world builders and for two thousand more they stood as gods among men, their words measured and cryptical. The breadth of their power is apparent today in the song of birds and the beauty of children born of their hands.

Today they are twice as old as the oldest immortal and their plans are still incomprehensibly layered and far reaching. Yet in the loosest sense of the word, the Kingsways are still human; their extreme age has not diminished their weaknesses but rather fed them. As much as they can reason and plan beyond mortal comprehension, so do their desires burn with an intensity a thousand times hotter than any mortal's. Their anger has incinerated cities, their earthly desires displaced mountains. They are masters of every skill and every deception. For as long as a Kingsway is still alive, the world cannot be free of their influence.

For a time they were as one, working to rebuild the world and rekindle the flame of humanity. These times saw them well, and many wonders were born of their hands. Yet before the first mortal reached the holy city of Avonmyth, the Kingsways had grown apart; the Kingsway children grew to distrust one another so that by the time of their war their towers were as much havens as

fortresses meant to keep their siblings at bay. They pursued goals of their own, and independently led to many discoveries during the time that preceded their war.

It would be a war that would shatter their hold on mankind and lead to a million mortal deaths; two Kingsways were imprisoned, another likely dead. Two went into exile leaving only two -the eldest daughter and son- with any true power over mortals.

Of unnatural intelligence, capable of the most humane or beastly acts, the Kingsways are still the most important figures of the Second Age, even now in its death throes. What follows is a brief description of the seven Kingsways, their activities since the war and what form an encounter with any of them is likely to take. Keep in mind however that Kingsway encounters should be extremely rare and only possible once players and the GM are familiar with the world setting and the game's rules. Prior to the publication of the first supplement, no such encounters should manifest.

Ambrose Kingsway

For decades at a time our father would speak not a word to us and only confided with Elizabeth. He grew distant early into the Second Genesis, and preferred the solitude of his chambers to our company. On the few occasions I spoke with him at any length, I found him to be wise beyond any of us, yet detached from earthly concerns, the only fault of his which allowed my brother to supplant him.

Lyra Kingsway

You wish to know of the great Ambrose and what drove him? Visit a village and see children running after butterflies, their parents calmly chatting about petty little nothings. The only way to kill Ambrose is to destroy all of these things.

Elizabeth Kingsway

Since the War

Ambrose was given the body of a crippled boy and ordered by Corvus to reveal the secrets of the immortality machine. Refusing, he was paraded along under the giant raven form of Corvus in a cage of gold, witnessing the carnage and destruction his son inflicted upon the people and lands of the Second Age. Still he refused to grant his son's wish, and was later imprisoned in a devious

darkstone trapbox named Thorn Rose. Inside this alternate reality is where Ambrose has remained ever since, sometimes visited by his son. No one has spoken to Ambrose since the war except for Lord Ravencross.

Known Bodies

Ambrose was seen during the year of the raven and the cripple and for some years afterward as a little boy missing a leg. For the last one hundred and ninety-plus years however Ambrose has had his essence trapped in Thorn Rose, and consequently has no physical form. Prior to the war, Ambrose either appeared as an old man with a long gray beard or a younger man with a trimmed mustache. He traveled the world using animal forms as well.

Meeting with Ambrose

Encounters with Ambrose are impossible unless one can gain access to Thorn Rose, which is locked away and hidden in the Dream Kingdom. Assuming an encounter is possible, it will likely take place within the artificial reality of Thorn Rose, which has tormented Ambrose ever since his emprisonment. The shape and form of this reality is unknown; it is born of his fears, which no being can claim to know or understand. Prior to the publication of the first supplement, characters should not be able to reach Thorn Rose and hence encounters with Ambrose are impossible.

Elizabeth Kingsway

Mother was a silent woman, and would doubtlessly have been forgotten from most history books. This is why I have kept note of her actions throughout the Second Age and during the last days of the previous. True she was quiet and reserved, but her hand shaped many things. Is it no wonder my brother does not care to let her roam the world as she please, that he dare only give her one body of challenged capacities? He fears her, and rightly so.

Lyra Kingsway

My mother is loved by me and by all my brothers and sisters. Her love for us is unquestioned, and I hate my father for forcing me to entrap her as I must. A great tragedy of this Age is that Elizabeth should suffer in any way.

Corvus Kingsway

Since the War

Elizabeth has been imprisoned in the Kingdom of a Thousand Meadows. None except Lord Ravencross have been to visit her and her only companion has been Lylad, her Dreamfolk messenger. Lord Ravencross may have demanded of her the answers to several questions he longs to know. He does wish for the acquisition of the Three-Tear pendant as well.

Known Bodies

Elizabeth was given a near eternal body -that of a young girl with white wings- by her son in the days following the war. It is her only known form. Prior to the war Elizabeth was fond of birds, cats and dolphins as well as women of golden hair and fair features. Her two ghostly maiden forms which stood on the gates of the Tower of Anekron were possessed of unfathomable powers, and she slayed thousands of fell warriors before being dispatched herself.

Meeting with Elizabeth

Elizabeth is a prisoner of the Kingdom of a Thousand Meadows, an island floating in the skies south of the Dream Kingdom. She can only be met by characters braving this Kingdom's many dangers, for being a prison Kingdom, Lord Ravencross has protected it with countless pitfalls, alarms and guardians. This Kingdom will be described fully in the upcoming supplement.

Corvus Kingsway-Lord Ravencross

"Do not think for a moment my brother is out to destroy this world; if he had wished so, it would have been done early on in the war or soon after. Corvus loves the world his father built. We all do. Remember that what held his hand at the Tower of White and Silver was the threat of having this world destroyed. He is a great and complex man. What must be done is unfortunate, for I love him dearly"

Lyra Kingsway

"It is in Corvus that I see the same strengths and weaknesses as in my husband. He carries the same spirit, the same passion and the same devotion. Unfortunately he now burns with hate as well, for what has been done to his wife and children was terrible. We have created a monster and unleashed it into the world."

Elizabeth Kingsway

Since the War

Corvus rules the Fell Kingdoms as Lord Ravencross, gathering to himself the essences of his foes. His plans revolve around the creation of a new immortality machine and the reawakening of more terraformatrons. He seems to have no immediate intention of invading the Unconquered Lands, though he does send many of his minions to spy on the activities of Dagonheir, tempt them to his side or steal their essences. He is known to visit with his mother on the Kingdom of a Thousand Meadows and with his father in Thorn Rose. Corvus may entertain relations with Bladewielder.

Known Bodies

Lord Ravencross has appeared to both mortal and immortal using myriad forms; his preferred bodies remain those of ravens, one of which being of monstrous size. His main human form is presently that of a middle-aged man with dark hair and eyes. Lord Ravencross is known to have contacted Angelions of the Unconquered Lands using the bodies of men and women of varying fairness and girth, often accompanied by animals such as dogs, cats, rats or birds. One of his forms is that of a gigantic marine worm.

Meeting with Corvus

A meeting with Corvus is perhaps the likeliest of Kingsway encounters. He encourages Angelions to join with him and has appeared as a tempter to many Dagonheir, Sybas and Phantomas promising a place at his side in the Third Age. If played correctly, an encounter with Ravencross may add lots of excitement to a game session, but should be well planned. Unless characters bring their essences openly to him, Ravencross will be the one to set where and when, under what conditions and for how long an encounter will take place. He should appear using forms they should not suspect; old or ugly women, fat, boorish men or grotesque animals. His raven forms are rarely used to meet Angelions.

When characters encounter Lord Ravencross, know that the principle goal of the great immortal is the acquisition of their essence; play his character as charming, sympathetic and understanding; he will offer aid and counsel and ask nothing in return. He will offer answers and friendship. With time he will allow them to join with him in his Kingdom, and be offered a place among his followers as Fell Princes. He is both playful and a trickster; his mind is of such cleverness that his plans are never apparent, and he may not come alone. Characters that entertain the notion of initiating contact with Ravencross should be warned; such a meeting will likely result in their abandoning their goals to join with him. In all cases, their essence would forever after be in dire peril of being hunted and discovered by his minions. Characters that anger him will unleash a monster and unless exceptionally lucky or witty, will not survive.

Delphina Kingsway - Mentor of Madness

"If there is such a thing as greatness in madness, then Delphina is the mentor to all of mankind"

Corvus Kingsway

"Never have I doubted my sister's intelligence, for it surpasses my own. It is her heart and her passions that scared me and in the end consumed her. She died many centuries ago. What now lives is something else entirely, something I wish not to meet"

Lyra Kingsway

Since the War

Since the war Delphina has walked in mortal lands as the woman of a thousand faces. She seems to be hunting something or someone ravenously, and has sent her remaining minions to the four corners of the world. In mortal legends, her Tower of White and Silver has become known as a source of great evil, for beasts of very foul nature surround it. A thousand Crossbearers led assault to it in 2035SA, but none returned.

Known Bodies

Delphina is known as the woman of a thousand faces; her forms are too many to describe, for she is the master of biologics. In her tower she grows complex and powerful forms, and has appeared to Avonmyth's Circle of Sacred Swords as a black dog the size of an elephant and has frightened away thousands of villagers from eastern Ebuleon using the body of a gigantic flying jellyfish.

Chief among her favorite bodies are the three Gorgons; Madwraith is a body of unsurpassed unnaturality; to see its colossal form dance upon the winds, its pseudopods rolling in the air even for a moment is to go mad. Her Siren form is a woman of such beauty no man -or woman- is said to be able to resist it. Finally her Destroyer form is that of a boy with golden skin and eyes of blue of such lethality it cannot be defeated by mortal hands; its breath and blood are poison and its skin can withstand blade, arrow and fire. It may have been the body used as the Omen child that walked mortal lands in the year of cleansing 300SA.

Meeting with Delphina

Delphina lures Angelions to her Tower of White and Silver. An encounter with her is therefore possible, but undesireable. She is fond of playing with ther minions until tiring of their presence, at which time she may torture them or use them for dangerous missions. She is known to have sold some essences to her brother in exchange for slaves and artifacts.

In playing Delphina's character, remember her madness and use it to make scenes dramatic. Her madness is all-consuming yet her immortal cleverness remains undiminished. Trickery is her art, and no character stands a chance using deception against Delphina. She remains shrewd and calculating. Her only weaknesses are her mortal desires, and she may be swayed temporarily by caresses and words of romance. Be warned however that her attentions are fickle; characters will have very little time to seduce her before she tires of their presence.

Lyra Kingsway- Little Shadow

I have seen Lyra walk upon the bones of a million children. I fear I shall not rest peacefully as long as I know she is out and about crafting my demise. I fear her as no other.

Lord Ravencross

Lyra, most human of our children, remains the one I miss the most. She is still capable of laughing an innocent laugh and of taking wonder in the flight of the sparrow. Perhaps in her, immortality is not the curse I think it to be.

Elizabeth Kingsway

Since the War

Lyra disappeared shortly after destroying her tower and ruining the Anekron Pipe Organ. She escaped the minions of Ravencross only to reappear some years later to Dark Blue and three other Dagonheir under the name of Little Shadow. For the last one hundred and eighty years little is known of her activities or whereabouts.

Known Bodies

Lyra used many bodies prior to the war, and visited both mortal and immortal using animals such as squirrels, sparrows and dogs. During the war she created and used warforms of terrible nature, but all were destroyed in its final days. Upon leaving her burning Tower, it is said she had the body of a woman grown of her original cells and that of a bird of prey. Current bodies remain unknown, if any.

Meeting with Lyra

A meeting with Lyra is impossible; she has disappeared from the face of the world and may be dead.

Ori Kingsway -The Lion

"A long time ago, I looked into my son's eyes and saw only fire. It is then that I realized Ori had been consumed by his faith. Still, I love him, and whatever may happen to him, I wish he die before that flame dims."

Elizabeth Kingsway

"Oris was the flame incarnate. He bore his nickname well, for a raw passion coursed through him day and night that a lesser man might unleash perhaps a single moment of his life if he were lucky. Unfortunate that in Ori it was displaced so. When his tower fell, I hoped to have known my brother under different times, under a different father."

Corvus Kingsway

Since the War

Ori's essence was likely destroyed when his tower fell into Ushergillian Forest.

Known Bodies

Prior to the war, Ori was fond of using lion, falcon and human bodies, especially those of children.

Meeting with Ori

A meeting with Ori is impossible; he is in all likelihood dead.

Eridan Kingsway

"Eridan was born with a deformity, yet he refused to have it mended by our science, nor to have his soul carried by any human body other than his natural one or one of its many iterations. To this day you may see a man walking in mortal cities, his left arm deformed and held close to his ribs in an unnatural fashion. He will attract the pity of the kind, and be given water and food. His course however will remain unchanged. What power he possesses; he belittles me many times."

Corvus Kingsway

"I suspect my brother has fomented a great plan for the better part of the last millennium. I sometimes think much more of this war was born of him than of Corvus."

Lyra Kingsway

Since the War

Eridan has disappeared. He spoke with Dagonheir from Avonmyth on one occasion using his misshapen human form and may have had a hand to play in the Watchful Eye's acquisition of the Golden Rose.

Known Bodies

Eridan has possessed the bodies of animals such as wolves and owls and that of a giant eagle. In terms of human bodies, Eridan chose to be carried in bodies grown of his original cells, bearing his deformity. In his prime, his face is slender and handsome, with brown eyes and dark brown hair, usually kept long and flowing. He is tall and slim with thin shoulders

Meeting with Eridan

Since the war, Eridan has disappeared. Encounters with him are highly unlikely and should be played out with care, for his agenda is perhaps the most mysterious of all the Kingsways. Only introduce Eridan by chance and only for lightning quick encounters if you absolutely must. He is known to speak in poetic riddles. Prior to the publication of the first supplement, no encounter with Eridan should take place, or at most very limited and cryptical ones.

The Bulgeon Sea
The Bulgeon Land
The Sea of Fallen Stars
The Elg Kingdoms
The South Seas
The Black Ocean
The Azure Ocean

THE UNCONQUERED LANDS

The pungent cities of steel, glass and concrete of the First Age are gone. Where once rotting metropolises stood piercing the clouds now grow trees and mountains, the highways replaced by flowery fields and great rivers.

Men face darkness with the flickering light of oil lamps and travel between their villages on the backs of horses. Though they are are now weary of their kin, though they are now afraid of the woodlands, they still live in an age many times more pleasureable than the previous.

Elizabeth Kingsway

The Unconquered Lands are the regions of the world not directly under the dominion of Lord Ravencross or his Fell Lords; in effect, they are the lands not of the Fell Kingdoms. From the peaceful valleys of the Birthland to the mountains of eastern Ebuleon, they are home to good-natured folk that wish as little harm upon their neighbor as to the land itself. Yet today the Unconquered Lands are prey to an insidious illness; a fetid wave of unnatural beasts crawls forth from the Fell Kingdoms into the south-eastern portions of Ebuleon and the southern Birthland, leaving in its wake desolation and ghost towns.

But the foulness

is not limited to beasts. Even in the most isolated of valleys, in the most clerical of villages, folk can feel darkness upon them, an intangible touch of evil that renders forests unnerving and strangers unwelcome. The evil that lives in the hearts of men seems possessed of greater freedom than ever before. No longer are the wretched justly punished or the sinners rightly exposed. It seems the All-Seeing is sleeping the long sleep.

For the first time in over twelve centuries, many mortals feel they are utterly alone.

Geography and wildlife

The Unconquered Lands cover more than ninety percent of the world's landmasses, still dwarfing the growing Fell Kingdoms. Here be lands that resemble their early First Age counterparts before the folly of men smothered them in darkness; a traveler may lose his way in enchanting forests of tall trees and drink from rivers without worry of disease. Great peaks rise where once great mountains stood, and rivers dance where rivers once danced, but here and there a keen First Age geographer might notice a sun-baked stretch of land where once the shadow of a mountain should have been, or hear the delicate song of a river where once a dry valley stood silent.

Though recreated artificially, creatures of the Unconquered Lands are much as they were in times past. Ever watchful of lurking lions, gazelles jump in the Land of Fire, while off into the northern Birthland grumpy bears munch on berries and night owls swoop down upon rabbits. Birds sing the same old songs, flowers bloom with the colors we would expect and wolves still howl at the

moon. To a casual observer these animals are as natural as can be, for to see their underlying differences, the subtle but important discrepancies these animals have compared to their natural ancestors, one would need to be well versed in lores forbidden to the Second Age mortal.

Animals and plants... not quite as they once were.

The world seems more welcoming to mankind, as though it was built for man rather than man being born of it. An ecologist might notice that an amanite's lethality is diluted, the fruits of the land juicier and the flesh of animals tastier and healthier. Though there are plants and animals that carry poison much like they did in their prior iteration, Second Age varieties are somewhat milder in their effects on humans.

Predatory or belligerent animals instinctively shy away from humans and find their flesh troubling. Harmless or companion animals such as birds, dogs and cats readily flock to people. Wild birds chirp on window sills and fly down to tables or the shoulders of children for food. Dogs in particular, being somewhat more intelligent than their unengineered precursors, are considered to be the best companions a traveler can have during long trips between cities. Dogs are unofficially mind you considered sacred; villagers known to harm or abuse their dogs are mistrusted. In recent times, harming animals has become a sign of evil.

People of the Unconquered Lands

These people are no longer to segregate themselves through color of skin. Hence parents of fair skin and eyes of blue may bear children of dark skin and eyes of black. Their cities will have people of myriad colors and features, and they will learn to see that the true color of a man is to be found in his heart.

Ambrose Kingsway

The Hundred were grown from cellular samples of the Kingsway family's preserved bodies; hence people of this age are descendants of the Kingsways. But this royal blood notwithstanding, their genetic makeup has some rather significant discrepancies in relation with a First Age mortal's; Elizabeth and Delphina Kingsway toiled long and hard to craft a proper people for the world.

Men are slightly taller than women, the former reaching six feet and the latter about three inches less. Unnaturally healthy and resistant to disease, the expected lifespan for both men and

women is 120 years with little in the way of medicine. Given even slight amounts of advanced -and unallowed- non-natural medicine, this lifespan might easily be doubled to more than 200 years.

The fertility of men and women was reduced significantly; a young and healthy couple could expect many years before a pregnancy, and only rarely did women carry more than four children during their lifetime.

Interestingly, the color of a child's skin has little to do with his parents; likewise the color of his hair, the features of his face and the reach of his arms. Parents of fair skin and blue eyes could bear children of dark skin and eyes. There is no such thing in the Second Age as race, and thus no word racism.

Intriguingly, mortals can be enthralled by certain melodies or complex visual symbols. Certain words, uttered at a specific pitch, can serve to hypnotise or slay them while certain chemicals affect their hormones and metabolism in unnatural ways. There is ample reason to suspect that further secrets lay hidden in their genetic code.

Mortal timeline

-1000SA to 0 SA

(The Great Cleansing)

The All-Seeing burns the old world down, bringing an end to the machines, corruption and evil of the accursed First Age. A single family -the Kingsways- made up of Ambrose Kingsway, his wife Elizabeth and their five children Corvus, Eridan, Ori, Delphina and Lyra are saved. The hand of the All-Seeing carries them to a remote cavern, The Shrine, where they sleep for a thousand years while the world is cleansed by the divine fire and reborn of the divine breath.

0SA

The Seven Kingsways come out of The Shrine. When the first rays of sun hit their bodies, they are whisked into the sky, flying through cloud and over river and seas. For one year they see a world reborn, brimming with life, as they are brought to meadows of sweet water and valleys of yellow flowers. On the last day, the Seven awaken in a field under a stormy sky. They each lend a hair, a tear and a drop of blood from which God makes a hundred bodies, into which he infuses life by giving them shards of the Seven's spirits. The Hundred awaken, terrified and vulnerable. They gather around the Seven, who give them each one seed and a goblet of water. As they receive their seed and goblet, each is given a name as well, though they know not what it means. At dusk, the Hundred plant their seed in the earth, and come dawn, find a white flower. They eat its petals and stem, dig up its root, and follow the Seven for a day of walking.

0-2 SA

Guided by the Seven, the Hundred walk for two years facing storms, lightning and winds; during the night, they are cold and their sleep is restless, they shiver and huddle, frightened. They see visions of an ancient Age, evil and dark. They look to the Seven for comfort, and are taught to speak the One Language.

After two years of walking, the Seven lead the Hundred to the city of Avonmyth, created by the All-Seeing. They marvel at its great wall inscribed with the Holy Word in gold upon black.

2-10SA

Ambrose teaches to the two women Eliandra and Riverna and the one man Ebus how to read and write the One Language, with which they decipher more passages of the Holy Word with each passing year and teach the divine words to others. Delphina, Ori and Eridan teach the Three Crafts; the Body Canon, taught by Delphina to the three women Asbeth, Ashan and Anneth, details the sanctity of the human body and how to mend it, and that it must forever remain free and unmolested. The Metal Verses, taught by Ori to the three men Harin, Nan and Taub, relates techniques of wood and metalworking, but also that things of metal and gears must never replace the mind or body of men. The All-Seeing Land, taught by Eridan to the two men Calan and Allas and the one woman Gilian, teaches how to hunt and grow food, and how to prepare it.

(12SA) The first birth, Anan. Child of Setra and Loke, Anan is the first child born of mortal womb in the SecondAge. A few years afterwards, a small wooden statue is found in the room of Anan the first child. The statue takes the form of a man with a Flower in his hands, and is Anan's representation of the All-Seeing. The first act of idolatry, and storms batter the city for three days. The All-Seeing withholds further fury; the child is young and innocent.

13-19SA

The Years of Taint.

❖ In 13SA Firmath rapes Sata, drawing her blood in his fury. The All-Seeing curses the people of Avonmyth with the concept of death; Firmath is found dead on his bed the next night, decapitated. His spirit is doomed to wander the Earth, punishing the malicious during the night, until his sin is forgiven. This day marks the beginning of the Seven years of Ascension. To quell the wrath of The All-Seeing, Eridan sacrifices himself, drawing a small blade and impaling himself in the heart. His body falls lifeless to the ground.

(14SA) Year of the Raven. A giant raven circles above Avonmyth, its shadow ominous; Corvus, oldest son of Ambrose, speaks to the people. *Your sins have summoned the Raven; those caught in his shadow shall awaken the next day with a piercing wail and will writhe with pain until their sins are cleansed.* For one hundred days and one hundred nights, the monstrous Raven looms over the city, every few nights sentencing a sinner to atrocious, lingering pain. On the hundredth day, the Raven flies off into the distance, carrying in its talons the body of Corvus, oldest of the sons of Ambrose.

(15SA) The Eye of Terror. Peculiar clouds form over Avonmyth, taking the form of a terrifying, lidless eye. This monster looks down into the city as thunder and lightning course over it. For nine days, the great Eye forms every morning, and

every third day a sinner is killed by a fierce lightning bolt. Lyra, youngest of the daughters of Ambrose, is taken away by a whisk of wind, her body flowing into the storm and its great eye. The winds die down, the clouds depart, and the people see the sun once more.

(16SA) Year of the Blithed Land. With the first days of Wheatfield, the leaves of trees become brown and flaky, their fruits poisonous. The fields are sparse and their harvest bitter. Famine strikes the people of Avonmyth, until that day when Delphina walks into a lifeless corn field and lies in its poisonous soil. There she remains until tendrils of green creep forth from her body and overtake the foulness. Wherever these tendrils go, plants grow fiercely and flowers blossom. Her body draws in the poison and replaces it with life, so that Delphina's garden grows there to this day. Her sacrifice saves the people from certain death.

(17SA) Year of the Black Sun. For an entire week during the month of Winterhound the sun grows black, the land bathed in an eerie darkness and the people of Avonmyth freezing from an eldritch cold. A distant, low rumble is heard, and people fear leaving their homes as a tangible evil stalks the skies. When the sun finally glows brightly, Ori, youngest son of Ambrose, has disappeared.

(18SA) Year of the Golden Butterfly. As the snows melt during the month of Springberry, a small golden butterfly lands upon the shoulder of three sinners, so that by the passing of three days thereafter they have died, their skin golden-hued and cold. Elizabeth catches it in her hands and prevents further death, but is herself turned into a golden statue. Still today her golden body is kept in Avonmyth's Great Spire, her hands clutching the golden butterfly.

(19SA) Year of the Dark Messenger. During the terrible year of 19SA Ambrose, last of the Kingsways living amongst the people of Avonmyth, is transformed into a man of dark skin and eyes of white brilliance. As the dark messenger, he stalks the streets of Avonmyth at night. Using a terrible voice, he slays with word alone, killing three sinners during the last days of Leapdeer. On its last day, the dark messenger departs, and the people of Avonmyth are alone for an entire year.

20-100SA

The year following the Dark Messenger, a child not of the Hundred comes to Avonmyth from Winterhound Forest and unlocks the Great Spire's silver door which had remained locked since the city's discovery. He commands the six men and six women taught the One Language and the Three Crafts to form the Order of Custodians which he will head. Custodians will preserve and relate the events of this Age and become the interpreters of the Holy Word for mortal men. They take the Great Spire of Avonmyth. The Tome of Three Crafts, uniting under the same cover the Body Canon, The Metal Verses and The All-Seeing Land, is bound and vaulted behind the spire's silver door along

with The Purple Codex, within which the history of the Second Age is related. As time passes, many chapters shall be added to it, and its copies sent to the greatest of cities.

The mint, a currency born of Avonmyth's foundry, first appears. A gold-laden piece of currency, it bears on one side a man holding a flower and on the other, a numerical value.

Humans spread out from Avonmyth and settle many regions of the Birthland. Experiencing an unexplained boom in their fertility, populations soar incredibly fast. As they leave the city for long journeys, people transcribe the Holy Word unto sheets of paper bound by rope and resin, carrying its wisdom wherever they go. They discover a world rich with life, blessed with the fruits of creation.

101-200SA

The first small villages pockmark the lands surrounding Avonmyth. Custodians name the first Mayors and clerics that will become their voice within distant communities.

(177) After an unnaturally long life, the first High Custodian dies and seven days later a child comes forth from Winterhound forest to replace him, unlocking the silver door and thus becoming the new High Custodian. Thus will a child unlock the silver door a week after the death of every High Custodian.

201-300SA

Further exploration. First forays by Leth the Explorer by boat, down rivers south to the lowest regions of the Birthland.

After close to three hundred years without any sign of the All-Seeing, faithlessness returns to the world of men. Euphoric through the drinking of Violet Claw milk, idolators atop the Mountain of Gaat wear pendants around their necks in the form of a mountain goat. The city of Taub is reputed to be a city of sin, where strange rituals occur during the dead of night. Barbarar, the wealthiest city, is home to faithless clerics, a corrupt mayor and decadent citizenry. Many other cities and villages show signs of weakened belief. Avonmyth itself is prey to merchant activity beyond that tolerated by the Holy Word.

(300SA) The Year of Cleansing . A boy with golden skin and fair blue eyes visits the cities of Taub and Barbarar. His gaze is enough to incinerate people and melt stone, his breath a poisonous plague. He flies over the city of Taub holding in his hands the head of the self-proclaimed King of Taub, Belad Taub. He leaves so that a fiery beam of light descends upon the city, incinerating most of its buildings and killing nine out of every ten people in a fury of fire. In Barbarar his visit is preceded by fleeing citizens warned of his coming by queer blue birds squawking ominous words. When the Omen Child arrives only the city's wealthy remain, busily gathering their fortunes. When Barbarar is visited by clerics, many months later, the city streets are littered with the bones of those that lingered for too long while the homes are covered in a mysterious black substance. It is proclaimed doomed and left to rot,

empty. The Omen Child later visits the brigand troupe of the Thief Vala, the den of sin of the village of Carpa, the mountain keep of the Gaat Idolators and intercepts the Merchant-Lords of the White River.

As he approaches Avonmyth, the gold markings of the Great Wall glow brightly and the skies grow dark. He commands the city to be emptied, else the Wrath of the All-Seeing fall upon its citizens. Only the Custodians remain. Forever after, Custodians and their families are the only mortals allowed to reside in Avonmyth.

In the month of Snowtree of the year 300SA, a wave of black butterflies, numbering in the billions, flies over the cities and villages of men, emitting a disquieting humming. Whomever they touch dies a silent death. In every city, in every village, in every secluded settlement, the black butterflies are seen, here and there relieving the world of a sinner. The wretched lock themselves within their homes for fear of the deadly touch of the black butterflies.

301-400SA

Recovering from the Year of Cleansing, Custodians train and release the Crossbearers upon the world, men bearing the Cross of Ambrose upon their cloaks and carrying swords of steel with which to cleanse the world of sin. During the years 325SA to 400SA the Crossbearers visit many villages and cities, bringing judgment. The Crossbearers see intense activity up until the first half of the 400s, after which they will see very little action for nearly 400 years.

People of significant Taub ancestry, long known to be prey to taint, fail to produce a single descendant; not one person carrying the Taub name or Taub blood is said to have lived past the year 380SA.

Ebuleon, after countless failures, mounts his great seafaring expedition towards the East. During the voyage, he is poisoned by Eldri, his second-in-command, and thrown overboard without his crew noticing. Upon reaching the shores of a great and mysterious land, the crew disembark and find Ebuleon there, sitting in the sand. Ashamed and forced to admit his act, Eldri the treacherous slits his own throat, though Ebuleon had forgiven him. The expedition proceeds further inland where it observes many beautiful and wondrous things. After the natural death of Ebuleon, descendants of his crew settle in a rocky ridge near the coast and build the first city on the Land of Ebuleon: Ebuleon's Star, famous for its thousand-man height Tower of stone, atop which Ebuleon's blazing star welcomes vessels from the Birthland.

401-500SA

Elian, a distant relative of Ebuleon, leads a thousand men on horseback southward from the Land of Ebuleon towards a land proclaimed unwelcoming by those who have seen it. Four of every five within her expedition perish while crossing the Land of Fire's great desert. Near death, Elian gives the last of her water to her remaining men before retiring to the desert to die. The next day a fountain of water rises from her corpse.

Come dawn, fruit-bearing plants sprout next to the body of water. Within a week, Elian's oasis is born, and lasts to this day, allowing travelers to cross the Land of Fire's great desert.

Villagers of Baleen slay a horrible creature that killed many of their kin.

501-600SA

First of the Golden Statues. As trade and comerce between cities and continents takes wind, the first merchant kings appear, growing fat and rich beyond measure. The three kings of Salusa, Dirge and Calan city, disobeying the laws of the Holy Word by giving title to themselves and being prey to avarice, are turned into statues of gold, their hands and feet covered in blood. The Custodians have the statues transported to Avonmyth where they stand atop the Great Spire.

Though warned by the cleric not to do so, the mayor of Savastane proceeds with his plan to expel the poor from his city; as a consequence three of his daughters fall prey to illness and die within three consecutive years. When his fourth falls ill, he finally allows the poor to return.

Sea captains of Antiaadar ask their clerics to bless their vessels with rituals before each treacherous voyage to Ebuleon. During one such secret ceremony, the captains and clerics are engulfed by a wave of prodigious size, bringing to an end such forbidden practice.

Clerics are given the first of the Clerical Stones, with which they can summon the help of the All-Seeing when troubles arise in their communities.

601-700SA

(647-698SA) Years of the Red Plague A deadly plague wind courses through the Land of Ebuleon, killing many people and turning Ebuleon's Star into a corpse-laden city. The mysterious illness, which attacks vegetation, animals and men with equal lethality, soon covers over half of the Land of Ebuleon. Three thousand of its sick board seacraft to the Birthland, embarking on a great pilgrimage to Avonmyth to seek divine help. Twenty boats leave the port of Ebuleon's Star though they shall never reach the Birthland, they and their crew lost to the sea. The dread plague appears on the Birthland nonetheless, and kills there as indiscriminately as it does on the Land of Ebuleon. Pilgrims flock to the gates of Avonmyth, where Custodians and Crossbearers bar them passage. Prayer and song are of little help; one out of every five people die before the plague ends, while the land is devastated, its trees rotting and its fields dead. Outside the Great Wall of Avonmyth, a mountain of dead pilgrims rots under the sun.

The merchant captain Aamar of Crickwell secretly arms his ships with arrow launchers and plates them with steel, filling their holds with men bearing arms and suits of armor. Five ships, equally modified and with equally zealous captains and crew, follow him towards the Forbidden Land, which the Holy Word claims to be the Garden of The All-Seeing, unfit for mortal eyes. Leaving during night and traveling through

unknown sea channels, they are found a decade later by a roving band of desert pilgrims in the middle of the Land of Fire's Great Desert, petrified but otherwise intact.

The first Cults of Adoration appear, unwanted products the Year of the Red Plague. Valleyfolk of the village of Caspath are found secretly distributing an alternate understanding of the Holy Word which they call the Tome of Caspath. Promoting extreme adherence to the Holy Word and harsh punishment for the slightest transgression, they have slayed citizens for crimes as trivial as petty theft. Caspath disappears from the face of the world, burned by a divine wind, but its legacy - the Tome of Caspath - lives on, distributed to other cities by those which will one day become known as Caspathian extremists.

701-800SA

People of the Second Age rebuild their lives after the devastation left by the Red Plague.

(702) The Fall of Apanon . The migrant population from Ebuleon's eastern region reaches the city of Apanon where they are refused aid. Apanon repells and locks many food thieves. The men die at its outskirts leaving their women and children to starve. As the skies turn dark over the city, a mountain rips through the earth under the very foundations of Apanon, destroying the city in less than an hour. Apanon mountain becomes the source of a healing spring. Many villages and towns sprout up at its foothills, fed by its healing waters. Thousands of people will travel to the region to brave the Trial of Apanon, the divine test of virtue: after many days on its slopes, a mortal is either levitated into the kingdom of the All-Seeing or scarred horribly.

Clerics of many cities, fearful that the Red Plague was punishment for sins, launch a series of witch hunts, rooting out sin and dealing out harsh punishment. Crossbearers are responsible for untold atrocities in the name of the All-Seeing.

801-900SA

(862-871) The War of Crosses . Anabad, a peasant from the Evergreen plains rises against the tyranny of the Crossbearers, amassing under him an army of poorly-armed soldiers. With his men, Anabad confronts many extremist Crossbearers and clerics. In a forest, he discovers the Cross of the All-Seeing. As they march through cities and villages, their forces swell until they stand at the very gates of Avonmyth. After a prolonged siege, Anabad's army succeeds in climbing over the Great Wall and confronting the High Custodian, who is slayed by Anabad after a grueling combat. Anabad leaves for Winterhound Forest, where he will remain for seven days until the next High Custodian child comes to Avonmyth. As the new High Custodian, the child disbands the Crossbearers.

901-1100SA

Beginning of the Golden Thousand, the ten centuries of prosperity and peace that will last until the spirit war.

The philosopher school of Annanan is discovered and destroyed. Its students used instruments that functioned through the use of the forbidden

lightning strike.

As the population of the Second Age grows, family names become more common. Those that can trace back their familial line to one of the original Hundred name themselves according to this ancestry, while those that cannot or wish not name themselves according to the region in which they live. The Custodians allow such familial naming.

1101-1300SA

(1155) Twelve oases appear all over the Land of Fire, limiting the damage of its far reaching drought. These oases each originate from the body of a dead nomad of the desert. The twelve sandfolk family lines are born and the sandfolk become mostly sedentary, guarding their oasis and guiding travelers through the desert.

Miners from Elkaone start using a mixture of three minerals that when lighted produces an explosive reaction useful in mining. The Elkaone cleric allows its use but is later reprimanded by the Custodians, the powder mixture is destroyed and the miners forbidden from using it further.

Clerics discover a secret cult of worshippers that uses rediscovered instruments of the dreaded First Age. The Blackdoor society speaks with unapproved words and symbols while using artifacts and medicines forbidden by the Metal Verses and the Body Canon. Many villagers and citizens suspected of having ties to this society disappear.

1301-1500SA

Villagers of Methger-Hostersea are turned into pig-creatures.

Sandfolk discover the village of Caspath along with its villagers petrified within the Great Desert's Graveyard.

(1455) The village of Hatter-Taupe is overrun by mice.

The village of Blakwik falls under the tyrannical rule of a man later revealed to be a beast of metal. Its flesh incinerated by villagers, it flees into the surrounding woods and is never seen again.

1501-1700SA

For thirty years, women all over the world have great difficulty bearing children.

The printing press is invented in the city of Wiltoncrow. Though for some years allowed to fabricate more, the custodians forbid further use of the machines and orders the existing ones destroyed. Writing is a gift of the All-Seeing, and the One Language is meant to be written by mortal hand, not by machine.

During many nights, dozens of strange men and women are seen wandering about Meadowlake valley. Meadowlake's cleric is found dead in a clearing, his throat slashed by a murderer that shall remain nameless.

A great thunderbolt decimates the city of antielle.

1701-1900SA

During a terrible week, the sixteen members of the Backannan family of Ebuleon have their throats cut by an unknown killer.

Disturbing words are etched on the walls of many communities all over the world.

A dark stranger able to summon storms walks the

sands of the Great Desert.

A string of unexplained deaths plague several communities of the Land of Fire.

1901-2100

One out of ten cities burn as evil beasts are seen walking or slithering in the streets. During this time a flurry of strange people appear in human towns and villages all over the world, speaking strangely and wielding mystical powers.

The High Custodian of Avonmyth dies suddenly. No child comes forth with the combination to the silver door to replace him and the Custodians are without leadership.

A powerful evil Spirit called the Fell God settles in the Forbidden Land and opens the Demon rift, corrupting its earth with beasts foul and terrifying. They spread rapidly into the Land of Fire and the eastern regions of the Land of Ebuleon. People flee westward, some all the way to the Birthland.

A great tower of white and silver appears in the northern reaches of the Land of Ebuleon. The woman of a thousand faces turns the lands surrounding it into a quagmire of fell vegetation and beasts.

Mount Apanon ceases to deform the impure and ascend the worthy.

Fell beasts and evil spirits force the inhabitants of the Land of Fire's southern jungles to head north into the Great Desert or to the northern coasts. Thousands perish in the scorching sands, while survivors are welcomed into sandfolk or coastal settlements. Many foul things now slither or walk the sands of the Great Desert.

(1902) Year of the Raven and the Cripple. A giant raven is seen flying over many towns and cities, carrying under him a golden cage bearing a boy with one leg. Wherever the giant raven flies, pestilence and fire follow.

Benevolent spirits of the dead as well as evil First Age Spirits now stalking the world use human avatars to wage their battles.

(1905) the mayor and cleric of Haffergroves send a flotilla of armored ships bearing forbidden weapons and over twenty thousand men against the Fell God. None return.

Custodians reactivate the Crossbearers to battle the growing evil

People by the thousands seek refuge to the northern Birthland.

Refugees from eastern Ebuleon flee to the west, leaving behind them hundreds of ghost towns and cities. They speak of unnamable things approaching from the east.

The port city of Aldabante is destroyed in a spectacular spirit battle that leaves twenty-five hundred dead. Refugees from the east must now travel to Stonemorgan to board sea craft traveling to the west.

(1906) From this year forward, queer earthly tremors and violent weather wrack the world entire, being strongest nearer to the Forbidden Land. The coastal villages of eastern Ebuleon are engulfed by a gigantic wave.

A cloaked man walks to the gates of Avonmyth and sheds his clothes in the middle of a pilgrim gathering, revealing a gleaming body of metal.

The creature professes to be a creation of the accursed First Age intent on bringing peace between the people of the First and Second Ages. A great beam of light fells it before it can spread further blasphemy, though the beam's origins are never revealed. The beast is later said to be the one that terrorized the village of Blakwik in the 1400s.

(1955) The Ebuleon village of Twail disappears, only a crater remaining where it once stood.

(1962) A dozen enormous centipede monsters approach the city of Avonmyth, followed by a ten-thousand strong army of fell warriors. They wreak havoc for many hundreds of kilometers before being stopped at the gates of the holy city by protector spirits and the Crossbearer army of Silverfast.

(1974) The Custodians allow the formation of Town Watches.

(2010) The town of Gladephoe's people and cattle disappear, leaving behind only empty homes and shops.

(2016) The coastal city of Sennakar burns, along with all its docked merchant ships. Its port will remain inoperational to this day. Four years later, the city is rebuilt but its port again suffers tragedy, destroyed by a violent explosion. To this day, Sennakar is closed to sea vessels.

(2021) Villagers of the foothills of Boreas claim strange creatures fly around their mountain at night.

(2035) Two full contingents of Crossbearers lead an assault upon the dread Tower of White and Silver; none return, though some are found wandering its forest aimlessly many weeks later.

(2069) A great black cloud passes near the city of Orcanager and heads to the north. Soon after its passing a thundering explosion is heard from the northwest Birthland. This region becomes known as the Deadnorth, its land covered with an eerie black residue.

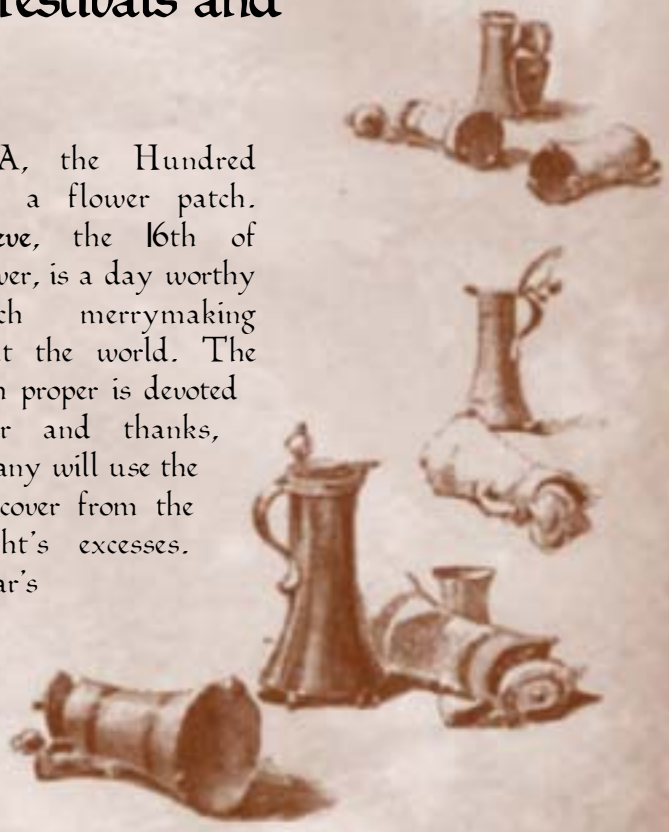
(2091) The Birthland villages of Naasa and Lucre disappear, much like Twail did in 1955SA

(2100) The present.

The Calendar, festivals and holidays

The Second Age calendar revolves around the twelve months of the year. Weeks are divided into seven days named after the seven Kingsways; Amday, Elday, Corday, Delday, Erday, Lyday and Orday. Amday, the equivalent of our Monday, signals the start of a new week and Orday its end, a day commonly reserved for rest and leisure. On the evening of Lyday villages are alive with song and dance, while most people use the last light of Orday to rest or play music and enjoy some storytelling amongst friends. Month names reflect mortal existence in and around Avonmyth during the first centuries of the Second Age and life in the northern hemisphere, which is home to the great majority of Second Age folk. Some months -such as Leapdeer- owe their name to beasts or plants of great importance to the Hundred or their descendants.

The month of **Whiteflower,** corresponding to the month of June, is the first month of the calendar; its seventeenth day signals the beginning of a new year. On the seventeenth of Whiteflower of the year 0SA, the Hundred awoke in a flower patch. **Year's eve**, the 16th of Whiteflower, is a day worthy of much merrymaking throughout the world. The seventeenth proper is devoted to prayer and thanks, though many will use the day to recover from the prior night's excesses. Both Year's eve and year's day are holidays, schools and work closed to allow festivities to run their course.



The second month is **Summersong**, signaled by the song of the Cicada in the northern Birthland. The sun shines bright and warm over Avonmyth during the whole month, and farmers busily tend their fields. **Moonfest** is celebrated on the first full moon of the month of Summersong, a holiday celebrating life and the building of families, and emphasizes love-making, romance and courtships. During the day, it is common for people, children especially, to scatter rose petals in streets and homes.

The month of **Wheatfield** signals the harvest of wheat and the start of some other grain harvests in the northern Birthland, such as corn. It is a time for much work for during its last week -**Carnival week**- it is common for people to travel between villages, buying goods and trading information. Roads are crowded with wagons and horses as villagers travel to the city fairs and visit with distant relatives.

The month of **Redleaf** signals the start of autumn, a time when the Hundred expe-

rienced the first bite of cold and grew scared at the sight of the falling leaves. Children return to school and homes of the Northern Birthland stock up on provisions.

The month of **Leapdeer** is named after an animal closely resembling a common deer but whose flesh is much more nutritious. A vast herd of these animals migrated near Avonmyth during this month of the third year of the Second Age, saving the Hundred from starvation. Ever since, the number of leapdeer has diminished so that today, very few remain in the Northern Birthland. As the nights grow short and the cold more biting, mortal sinners have reason to fear **Thieves' Night,** celebrated on the 31st of Leapdeer. This macabre holiday marks the day the first sinner Firmath died on his bed. Firmath was responsible for reacquainting the people of the Second Age with death, and therefore was given the responsibility of guiding the spirits of the deceased to the gates of Heaven. His spirit is said to have wandered the world ever since his death, haunting the world to this very day. Every year on Thieve's Night he tries to redeem himself by ridding the world of evil and hopefully gaining access to Heaven. Especifically after the sun is down, on Thieve's Night his spirit is known to visit those that committed sins in the past year, making them ill or making them disappear altogether. It is customary for people to leave their doors unlocked during this night, for to do otherwise is to challenge death itself. Since the spirit war many communities use Thieve's Night to cleanse their city of evil by organizing witch hunts and filling up hanging cages...

The month of **Moonmoss** was named after a family of mosses which glow eerily under moonlight. Quite comestible -and surprisingly tasty- these mosses have saved countless lost woodland travelers from starvation. It is during this month that the **Week of Ascensions** is celebrated, starting on Amday of the last full week of the month. It celebrates the seven consecutive years in which the Kingsways ascended to Heaven as the Seven Spirits. The week is spent in silent prayer to each individual spirit in turn, on the day named after them. Each day ends with the blessing of the year's newborns; those born on Amday of the past year shall be known as *Ambrose-blessed*, and be blessed on Amday of the Week of Acensions; those born on a Lyday shall be known as *Lyra-blessed* and be blessed on Lyday of the Week of Ascensions.

The month of **Whitehare** saw the first of the heavy snows upon Avonmyth, marked the first sightings of the white hares and signaled the onset of winter. Throughout the first winter, white hares provided the people of Avonmyth with an abundant supply of proteins and uncovered various berries and plants which proved equally nutritious. The month of Whitehare is relatively obscure; little festivity is invited, for people are preparing for the winter ahead. Homes will be found well stocked with wood and oil, and hunters busy hunting game for meat and fur.

During the month of **Winterhound** Avonmyth shall be found covered by heavy snows. It is during this month that the Hundred first tamed the winterhounds, a breed of large wolfish beasts found foraging for food in the great forest south of Avonmyth that would later bear their name. The month of Winterhound is harsh, and people may be found indoors come nightfall, substituting campfires and outdoor activity for storytelling and various indoor crafts.

The month of **Snowtree** is perhaps the harshest month of the year in most northerly regions.

So harsh was it during 3SA that only the Snowtree of Avonmyth saved the Hundred from starvation, feeding them from its sap and winterfruits.

The month of **Springberry** is a happy time for it marks the end of winter and the beginning of spring and its days will see the appearance of the first springberries. Of a sublime red, springberries are tasty and filling, and dozens of recipes involve their juices or meat. Springberry is also the month of marriages, while on the fifteenth day of this month, the **Wintermelt** celebration is held marking the start of spring melt. Schools are closed and no work is allowed, myriad outdoor sports and activities encouraged instead.

The month of **Goldwall** sees children enjoying the last of the snows and the **Feast of thanks**, held on the 1st of Goldwall. On this day people from all over the world give thanks to the All-Seeing for the past year's harvest and ask for a promising one for the current year. Festivities span right into the night, and may exceed those of Year's eve if much food remains from the winter months. Before finally going to bed, revelers leave morsels of meat and grains in the streets to feed birds, rodents, insects, dogs and cats.

The month of **Summerspell** is the doorway into summer; prairies burst to life with the blooming of flowers and forests reverberate with the song of birds and the chirps of insects. The much anticipated **Sundance** is enjoyed on the last Lyday of Summerspell, a day which will see dancing, singing and partying as summer finally sets in.

Daily life

By far the most frequent community of the Unconquered Lands is the village, a collection of perhaps thirty to two hundred houses surrounding a church. Small shops lead to a market square, where villagers often meet come orday to talk and haggle over the latest wares. Very few villages have any permanent Angelion presence.

Towns are much less frequent communities, one perhaps for every ten to twenty villages. They may have upwards of five hundred homes, some large central market where some administrative buildings and offices stand as well as rudiments of an industrial sector where can be found half a dozen mills, shops and small metalworking factories. A small minority of towns have a resident Angelion either watching over or exploiting their townspeople.

Rarest of mortal communities, cities have upwards of a thousand roofs, most being home to no less than five to ten thousand people. Large cities such as Orcanager, Wiltoncrow and Dawnhedge sport a population that may number in the tens of thousands; Antiaadar, most populous of them all, is home to six hundred thousand city folk. Cities favor districts, each built of a market, church and offices surrounded by homes. Cities are invariably surrounded by a number of towns and villages.

Trade and communication

Since most communities are focused on a specific type of activity, be it farming, fishing or toolmaking, trade is common between neighboring settlements. Merchant caravans travel between towns and villages to deliver goods ordered the week before. Doubling as couriers, merchant caravans

often supplement their income by carrying messages between the family members of neighboring communities at reasonable pricing. For faster -and more professional- courier services, folk may hire the services of a community's dedicated courier; small villages will have only one, usually the fastest and most skilled horseman, while large cities can have upwards of a hundred expert couriers. Letters and parcels may be sealed using a community's mayoral seal, a signet that only a town's mayor possesses. Coastal communities also use shipborne courier services at a meager cost for small letters and packages. The cost rises steeply with package size, and sending a trusted courier onboard merchant vessels to hand-deliver parcels is a truly expensive option.

Communities along the three Pilgrim trails benefit from added traffic and many opt to use pilgrims as cheap couriers between towns and villages of the trails. In exchange for a warm meal or a place to stay, these incessant travelers may deliver messages or carry small parcels between adjacent towns and bring news of the happenings within the communities they have visited.

The land of no countries

The Unconquered Lands are home to more than a hundred million people, and each and every one of them speaks the One Language. A wheat farmer from the central Birthland valleys will understand a Sandfolk pilgrim from the Land of Fire just as he will be understood by the penitent villagers of Modea near Apanon mountain. The One Language -the language of the All-Seeing as etched on Avonmyth's great wall- is spoken by all. Those that would speak any other language would be guilty of the highest blasphemy. Countries are inexistent, as are dialects and political flags. The only political -and non religious- office known is that of mayor. Titles such as ship captain, Crossbearer commander or leader of the Town Watch are necessary and accepted, but otherwise one's title, if not mayor or cleric, is inexistent. One cannot proclaim one's self as king, merchant prince or monarch without performing heresy. As testament to this divine law one might wish to visit the ruins of Barbarar, the headless monument to king Belad of Taub or the three golden statues of the merchant-kings of Salusa, Dirge and Calan.

A mortal community, whatever its size, has one mayor, who may appoint one or more councilors. These may serve as administrators, help lead work crews or bring aid to families in need. Clerics may disband a mayor's counselors if they become too powerful or abuse their authority.

Only Avonmyth's Order of Custodians, the sole religious order permitted by the Holy Word, can take decisions and make rulings that may affect lands far beyond the city's wall. The Crossbearers and the Order of Sovereign Daggers both answer to the Custodians, who in turn train and release clerics into the world.

Cartels, Orders and unfair economics

The Second Age is home to countless small businesses, enterprises, shops and markets. Its towns and villages are loud with vendors screaming their business and filled with shoppers pondering their next purchase. Yet the mark of the Kingsways is apparent in the mercantile activities of Second Age mortals, for the Holy Word has many pages devoted to the proper and moral use -and acquiring- of riches.

The Holy Word forbids any man or woman of having large enterprises or mercantile empires spanning more than one community; it is therefore forbidden for a man to have a courier service linking two cities, or two shops that deal in candies in adjoining villages or a merchant fleet with ships based in different ports. There is a limit as well on the number of employees an enterprise owner may have; although a shop keeper may have an assistant, a ship captain may have mates and a mill owner may have employees, if these are employed for the purposes of gathering riches beyond an acceptable limit, then one is going against the doctrines of the Holy Word. Clerics have the right to demand that a wealthy merchant donate some of his earnings to the poor lest he be marked within the church Clerical as greedy. Few refuse. Cartels and monopolies are therefore unlikely. Competition in business is encouraged, cooperation obligatory. A merchant running his rival into the ground is guilty of a sin, for in doing so his rival and his rival's children may suffer. It is common for prosperous merchants to fear their increased wealth and give more than their fair share back to their community.

Though recently greed and unfair mercantile practices have been on the rise, the Second Age is still one where the poor are rare. Beggars, though not unknown in these troubled times, are rarely able-bodied and well-spirited; clerics sometimes offer them shelter, though many fear those stricken with mental illnesses; their disease might be the result of prior sins.

Orders, sects and private clubs are forbidden. Though their purpose may be benign, their very existence is heretical. Being unveiled as the head of such a group, a mortal can expect immediate punishment. Depending on the nature and extent of his organization, punishments can vary from a mark in the Clerical to prompt imprisonment in a hanging cage until death.

Mortal Law

During the Golden Thousand -the ten centuries of prosperity that came to be between the crusade of Anabad and the spirit war- mayors had little need for men-at-arms or the law itself; their people were pleasant and easily managed; a drunken brawl or the theft of a bowl of fruit would be the talk of the town for an entire week! Few were the mortals that wished to bring the ire of the All-Seeing upon their homes by commiting vile acts of more sinister importance. The *mayor's netmen* became synonymous with a community's preferred strong arms that a mayor would call upon to settle scuffles and visit with delinquents, throwing nets of heavy rope as needed. Most communities had special holding rooms with barred windows to hold drunken rabble-rousers until morning, or particularly vicious or unruly lawbreakers until such time as a proper judgment could be dealt. For crimes of religious nature, the local cleric would hand out judgment after hearing the offender and all involved parties speak. Criminals of non-religious nature would be dealt

with by a community's mayor in the same manner. For murderers and rapists, as well as habitual and violent thieves, some villages and most towns and cities had *hanging cages* which hung from great trees,

remnants of the witch hunts of the 700s. Criminals could be locked up therein for a determined amount of time or until death, depending on the severity of their crime.

Petty crimes incured no punishment other than the scorn of the community, restitution of damages and the cleric or mayor's judgment of guilty. In the eyes of folk of those times, being found guilty of a crime was a serious matter; the more such judgments a person gathered, the more he took the chance of being unable to bear children, of having his home struck by lightning or fire, of having his fields wither and die or of being found dead come morning. The All-Seeing carried his name well, for his eye saw everything, and come Thieve's Night his hammer stroke fell on those that had committed the most (or gravest) sins.

Since the spirit war unleashed its insidious evil upon the world, mortal law has had to adapt quickly, for no longer are the wretched of many communities punished come Thieve's Night. In the Land of Ebuleon and the southern Birthland, every community has at least one hanging cage gently swaying in the wind, and in the most troubled towns even petty criminals can be found dying slowly within them. Clerics now hunt for sinister evil amongst the people of their communities and the forests that surround them. More significantly, netmen of many communities have been supplanted by the heavily armed Town Watch under the commands of the local cleric.

The Town Watch

The period after the war is horribly frightening for mortals. A mysterious, palpable dread is prevalent. The Forbidden Land, once considered holy, is now spoken of as the *Demon Land*, from which a malicious evil is oozing forth. Already the regions closest to this demon land -namely eastern Ebuleon and the southern Birthland- have seen people fleeing before waves of evil spirits and foul creatures. Warped, chaotic beasts now stalk many forests and mountains, while malicious First Age spirits -often taking on the appearance of men and women, even children- walk the streets of many cities across the world. Towns and villages fall prey every year to battles between spirits as they shed their mortal forms and levitate into the air, unleashing bolts of arcane energy at one another. It is becoming customary -and seen as a sign of good faith- for strangers to announce their arrival in a foreign city by going to see the local cleric. Those who

do not run the risk of meeting him, along with an armed contingent of *concerned* townspeople known as the *Town Watch*.

The Town Watch was born of the war; as communities from eastern Ebuleon and the southern Birthland suffered an influx of fell beasts, townspeople took it upon themselves to root out this evil and expunge it from their communities as best they could. Unlawfully, they visited with sympathizers and formed what would later be called the Town Watch. They patrolled streets at night, enforcing cur-

fews and keeping watch over their community. They built walls, gates and watch towers. They nabbed thieves and strangers coming in unannounced. In some cases, they battled fell beasts and laid down their lives to protect their fellow kinsmen.

Custodians forbade the formation of the Town Watch, and promised sorrow to communities harboring them. But for embattled towns whose people were dying at the claws of beasts or were incinerated by the foul powers of evil spirits, the word of the Custodians had lost its power. Though the Town Watch encouraged its members to wear masks or veils to hide their identities, their gesture was more symbolic than necessary. Their numbers swelled, and the practice of forming a Town Watch spread to most cities, even reaching backward communities of the northern Birthland. Though Custodians officialized the Town Watch in 1974SA, the practice of hiding their faces remained among Town Watch members.

A Town Watch frequently appears as nothing more than a mob of armed men and women under the authority of the cleric. They patrol streets at night looking for signs of evil, ready to battle fell beasts or spirits using swords, daggers, pitchforks and bows. It is standard for citizens to present themselves to the Town Watch when asked, and most young men of good health will volunteer their time after a brief training. Seen by their kinsmen as protectors, the Town Watch is respected and well supported. It has become customary for townspeople to leave food and drinks of water or unallowed glasses of spirits for members of the Watch.

In a very small minority of communities, the Town Watch has mutated into an unpleasant form; under the leadership of a corrupt cleric or Syba, the Town Watch can become an armed posse of hoodlums intent on levying taxes off the people of their community, in lieu of of food demanding sums of money for protection.

The Farmer's field and the All-Seeing Land

Let this be a land where the only vice is the drinking of a good bottle of wine amongst loved ones!

Ambrose Kingsway

The All-Seeing Land, a chapter of the Tome of Three Crafts dealing with the laws concerning the growing of food and the hunting of beasts, forbids the gathering of food except by the hand of man. A man may therefore harvest the apples of his orchards as long as he or his helpers do the picking; a hunter may hunt game as long as his arm pulls the bow string. Fishermen can

fish using nets they themselves throw into the water. It would be sinful for a man to invent a machine that picks apples automatically, for a weapon to be invented that slays animals without requiring the hunter's aim or arm muscle and for a fishing boat that drags in large amounts of fish using processes, machines or mixtures not requiring extensive manual work. It is allowed to use animals in the tending of fields, such as bulls and horses to pull field equipment, and to hunt game, such as hunters that use dogs and horses in the hunt.

The All-Seeing Land allows the harvesting of food in precise and well-defined quantities; per year, a single man may not harvest more than a certain quantity of food, be it grain or animal, fruit or vegetable. Commercial quotas allow workers to bring in higher quantities of food so that the business may thrive, but otherwise impose limits as well. When they cannot meet the demand, the owners of a food business must hire more hands, not invent more effective machines or tools.

Otherwise, food growing is as it once was, and fields of wheat, corn and vegetables surround most villages and towns. Fond of wine, vineyards are a common sight in many regions. The staple diet of Second Age folk includes bread, vegetables and the meat of pigs. In some regions fish, beef or chicken, boar, deer, caribou, moose or rabbit meat complements or replaces pig meat as the main source of protein. Wine is the drink most adults favor after a hard day of work, with both men and women enjoying a fine bottle during supper and afterwards during the evening. Beer is a cruder, less refined but substantially cheaper alternative, most villages brewing their own variety. Strong spirits are also brewed in many regions, especially in Ebuleon. Smoking is rare but men in particular are given to the smoking of pipe filled with herbs and tobacco grown in southern Birthland. Delicacies include cinnamon, chocolate, manufactured sweets, springberries, caviar, leapdeer, truffles, Bacchus grapes (which are illegal) and several species of river fish. A lost person in the woods can munch on most plants, moonmoss, grains or berries without fear of food poisoning.

The slaying of animals

I thank the All-Seeing for the bounty of the forest.

I will slay only what I require and slay swiftly.

I shall lay my lips upon the still warm flesh of my prey and close its eyes, for it has died so that I may live.

I thank the All-Seeing for the bounty of the forest.

To slay an animal of the All-Seeing, a hunter must intend to use every one of its parts. He and his kin will eat of its flesh, craft tools of its bones and sinew and make clothing of its skin and fur. Clerics or town healers will use extracts from its organs and glands to produce medicinal potions. Animals must be slayed in a quick and efficient manner so as to limit the beast's suffering, and proper respect be dealt afterwards. Poor hunters that maim or wound are forbidden by their peers to join the hunt and encouraged to seek another occupation. Hunters and fishermen alike are proud and respectful of the forests and seas, reciting verses from the All-Seeing Land before any expedition.

Clerics keep careful watch over the tools or inventions of hunters and fishermen. They have disallowed heretical tools in the past, such as

the scented snares Wiltoncrow hunters used to trap large numbers of wild boar, or the dual nets attached between two vessels which allowed fishermen from Orcanager to drag in large numbers of fish. Hunters and fishermen must ask permission before using any new tool or procedure in the gathering of food animals.

Technology and the Metal Verses

Of the making of machines, of the replacement of man's reach and scope by instruments of metal and gears that tick and that tock, the All-Seeing said to Ambrose:"You shall build none of these, for the world I have made, the fruits and animals I have given, you shall eat of them by your own will and reach for them with your own arms."

The Metal Verses, from the Tome of Three Crafts

The Metal Verses, a chapter of the Tome of Three Crafts, relates how technology led to the destruction of the First Age. People now instinctually fear mechanisms that function under their own power, and woe to the craftsman that presents a ticking machine during carnival week, or a simple pocket watch that keeps time of day or a firecracker that explodes.

The Metal Verses deals with the laws concerning the making of tools and machines and the working of metals, wood, resins and other materials not yet discovered or understood. If by building a tool a man replaces his mind or hand in a substantial and unclean way, then this tool is heretical. Tools that use forbidden chemicals, that require the divine power of the lightning strike or that produce the boom of the thunderbolt are forbidden. The First Age was destroyed because of the heretical machines it contained. Few would dare recreate them.

A man must think or else he is nothing; his hands must build or else he is nothing.

Clerics must approve any new industrial procedure, tool or process. Until his decision is taken, often many months or years following a request to the Custodians, the inventor must cease his activities related to the procedure, tool or process in question. If it is refused, the inventor must destroy all schematics or notes concerning the procedure, tool or process. The miners of Elkaone had to cease their use of explosives in the mining of ore, while after having discovered how to harness electricity, both the philosopher school of Ananan as well as the infamous Blackdoor Society of the 1200s were found guilty of heresy.

Construction & buildings

The Metal Verses encourages homes of earthly aspect, warm and welcoming through the use of natural and abundant construction materials. Wood and stone are much preferred to bricks, and expert home builders can make splendid works using even uncut stones. Their interior is pleasing to

the eye with all manner of crafted wares and artful decorations, and soft to the feet through furs and elegant carpets.

City streets usually have cobblestone surfaces, while dirt or gravel roads are still common between towns and villages.

Transport & power

By far the fastest way of travel is the horse. Either mounting it or being pulled by one in a cart, the horse is the preferred mount of couriers, while farmers use larger, stronger draft horses which they use to work their lands.

Power comes from horses and oxen. Electricity - the power of the lightning strike- is known and forbidden, people lighting themselves with oil lamps or candles.

Weapons

Prior to the spirit war, people had little use for weapons other than for the hunting of game. These were times of peace and tranquility, where doors were unlocked, wars unknown and fell beasts unheard of. There was no need for men-at-arms, Town Watches or heavy armor. A hunter's weapon of choice was the bow and arrow and men carried wooden staffs for long journeys. On occasion, crude swords and leather armor were worn by the men employed by caravan merchants carrying valuable cargo between cities.

Since the rise of the Fell God, the creation of the Town Watch and the second rise of the Crossbearers, blacksmiths and metalworks have had to produce weapons and armor of more dedicated nature; thus were born the heavy swords, war maces, shields, chain and steel plate armors. The armored ships from Orcanager were built and sent to protect the seas and merchant lanes. Though at first they were allowed to carry heavy arrow and stone throwers as well as primitive cannons using the forbidden explosive mixture of the miners of Elkaone, Custodians later forbade the practice or manufacture of such weapons. Their captains instead chose to carry tons of oil with which they could light the arrows their men could launch. Boarding still remained the best option an Orcanager captain had against other vessels. Barnesmarin, most defended city of the east, has two stone walls upon which many ballistas and catapults could be built to defend its people from fellkin hordes, yet their construction was disallowed. Crossbearer blacksmith have the knowledge to build powerful crossbows, though Custodians forbade their manufacture as machines that go against the Metal Verses. The use of poisons, explosives and complex mechanisms in the killing of others, even in a war against a foul enemy, is still forbidden.

Taint Relics

Any artifact or device from the First Age is called a *taint relic*, and townspeople that happen upon them must immediately report the find to their cleric. The latter should carry the device in a special pouch, box or crate, depending on its size, and bury it in the Church's basement depository. If the taint relic is too large, it is to be buried under tons of earth and never spoken of again. Children must warn parents whenever they come across

any device that looks suspicious, and never to touch these evil contraptions. To be found with a taint relic inside one's house is to be found guilty of the highest of heresy, punishable by death in a hanging cage.

Healers and the Body Canon

The Body Canon, a chapter of the Tome of Three Crafts, deals with the laws concerning the healing of people and animals, the use of plant extracts for the brewing of medicinal mixtures and of chemicals and machines for the purposes of healing.

The Metal Verses clearly forbids the manufacture of complex chemical mixtures, and the Body Canon further states that chemicals to be used for the purposes of mending the body are to be found naturally and left unmolested. The Second Age has many new plants and animal extracts that, used as is and naturally, relieve the great majority of ailments. It is therefore permitted to extract medicinal ingredients from an animal, plant, wood or mineral but forbidden to transform, mix or otherwise alter these substances in any substantial manner without first consulting with a cleric.

Town healers

Town healers are overwhelmingly clerics, who are trained in Avonmyth to gather and use medicinal ingredients to heal the sick within their communities. Clerics know which processes are permitted and which are forbidden and are taught how to recognize plants, animals and minerals from which can be extracted healing ingredients. Not all town healers need be clerics; some begin their lives as explorers, botanists or animal healers, thereafter using their acquired knowledge to heal the people of their community. In large cities, many town healers divide their time between the sick and wounded.

It became known as well that certain illnesses were beyond the crafts of the town healer. Strange and expeditious illnesses would strike within the night and leave their victims wailing through morning and dead before next nightfall. These illnesses, seen as the divine hand, were unrelieved by the healings of the town healer. Often times however, these insidious and lethal diseases would strike those of vile or tainted natures.

Modifying the body

The Body Canon disallows the modification of one's body in any shape or form; tattoos are forbidden both because symbols are unallowed and because they desecrate the body. Piercings, though allowed for the ears, are disallowed everywhere else. The wearing of perfumes is allowed, though these must be of natural provenance and not have come of animals slayed specifically for this use.

Family

Women share equal status with men. They may work -even hunt- though it is more common for women to stay home after having children. Intimate relationships prior to marriage are accepted, though no such relations are to be had by one of less than sixteen years of age; intimacy is limited to two

consenting people and must not entail the inflicting of physical or psychological harm on one or the other. Pregnant women are responsible for their child's care from conception until the age of sixteen. If the mother dies, the child's responsibility falls to the father or closest living relative. Delivery is often done under the supervision of the local cleric or town healer.

Marriage and divorce

The Holy Word encourages the unity of marriage. Allowed only during the month of Springberry, the marriage ceremony involves song, dance, the eating of springberry cake and much merrymaking. The couple must agree as to which name they will sport as a new family; either the husband or wife's name will become their family name and their children's as well. In cases where the couple must end the marriage for personal reasons, they can do so by asking for a marriage cancellation, in which provisions will be made by the cleric on a case by case basis for the proper allocation of possessions.

Blessed Children

Children are seen as blessings, for many couples have no success producing even one. It is recognized that the All-Seeing blesses the virtuous with many children while those of tainted nature often die with no progeny. Thus the more children a couple has, the more they are seen by townspeople as blessed and virtuous. Two children are very common, three somewhat rarer, four the exception and five or six children are a definite sign of blessing. Families of seven children, the most blessed of them all, gain even greater recognition within their community; townspeople will place food baskets and gifts on their doorstep and their children, all seven of them, will stand a greater chance of being accepted in the *Crafts and Sciences* schools. They will be the talk and envy of the region. Thus is the Hillsea family of Wiltoncrow, with seven children, known throughout the city and surrounding villages and invited to all events and gatherings.

As they grow and reach six years of age, children start attending *basic school*, there learning about the world, its history and how to read, write and count. They'll learn the crafts and

skills necessary to start working themselves at around 14 or so, when they graduate. If they show a talent for learning or some interest in the higher sciences and crafts, they may be accepted into a city's *Crafts and Sciences school*, which most cities offer. Large towns may have one, while villages usually do not. There they will sit on a bench for up to 6 years more learning a specialized craft such as healing, science, faith or history. Those studying faith and showing talent may be called to Avonmyth to begin cleric training. Only for exceptionally gifted children may their pilgrimage and cleric training start at the age of fourteen; usually, they are sent after completing their Crafts and Sciences training at the age of twenty.

Language

Speaking the words of the All-Seeing

People speak, read and write the One Language, whose words were taught to the Hundred by the Seven, and whose written form is etched clearly on the wall of Avonmyth. To speak, read or write any other language is forbidden.

Local populations must have new words officialized by the Custodians before their use is allowed. Plants, animals or conditions that may be specific to their regions, that require words proper to them, will be addressed generically until the proper words are received from Avonmyth. It is the duty of the local cleric to request name attribution to hitherto unknown things or animals. He stands to be summoned to Avonmyth or his cleric status revoked if it be found that his people speak using words that do not have Custodian approval.

Writing

The Metal Verses detail what one can and cannot do using the words of the All-Seeing; The printing press was disallowed in the 1500s. The One Language is not to be written by machine but by the hand of man. People write using their hands, employing inks made from soot, oil and animal fat and crude paper made of soft-woods. Calligraphy has become quite the practiced art in the Unconquered Lands, with mayoral calligraphers acting as a community's official writers. For couriers, the best proof of a message's authenticity is to have it written in the hand of a known mayoral calligrapher. Though mayoral seals are added protection against fraud, many mayors and clerics refuse to accept letters not of an expert calligrapher's hand.

Symbols and effigies

The Metal Verses forbids the writing of symbols other than the One Language's letters, though Custodians and clerics alike have been permissive. They do allow some limited symbology, on a case per case basis, mostly pertaining to inoffensive drawings made by shopkeepers to denote their wares. Fruit and vegetable vendors have been allowed to draw the symbols of fruits or vegetables on their vending stand to allow foreign clients easy recognition of their type of

merchandise. Symbols must be unique to one shop or establishment; a symbol appearing in two or more communities is forbidden, so that when seafood shops from Orcanager and Dawnhedge used the symbol of three ripples and the head of a fish to denote their establishments, clerics from both cities forced them to adopt new and different symbology. Clerics are knowledgeable in the ways of deciphering symbols and hidden codes that may lie buried in lines of apparently benign text; the Blackdoor society, which caused havoc in the 1200s, used its trademark black doors as a way to circumvent this code cracking skill, though it was eventually unveiled and destroyed. Caspathian extremists would disallow symbols altogether, and have been known to burn down or otherwise deface an establishment's facade flauntingthe the most inoffensive of symbols.

The Ambrosian Cross, clearly marked on the facades of churches, on the Holy Word and the armors of Crossbearers (responsible for their name) is an accepted and prevalent symbol. But one limited to these uses. A person cannot carry or mark himself with the Ambrosian Cross, though Town Watches may sometimes be seen carrying it since the spirit war for added protection against evil.

Statues and effigies are as well forbidden though monuments to noteworthy happenings approved by the Custodians do exist, such as Ebuleon's Star, the golden statue of Elizabeth Kingsway or the three golden monuments to the kings of Salusa, Dirge and Calan.

Entertainement & leisure

Folk of the Second Age are hearty and festive, and for many centuries their lands resounded with cheer and song. Even today in times much darker people love their song and dance, poetry and festivals. They are fond of games and sport as well, and much of their leisure time is spent in fields and streets enjoying stickball and skinball or in their homes crafting and painting, a most favored of hobbies. A definite tendency towards abstract renderings of the beginning of the world, using bright oranges and reds and depicting the Shrine and its seven Kingsways is very common; the hanging of a *birth of the World* painting above the main dinner table or fireplace does a family proud when welcoming neighbors. Poetic, litteral, visual or musical works dealing with the creation of the world are quite common. Amusingly, many homes have rudiments of billiards tables. Violin, guitar, trumpets, drums and harps are common instruments played throughout the Unconquered Lands.

First Age sports have their Second Age equivalent, with crude forms of baseball (*stickball*), soccer (*football*) and American football (*skinball*) being played by children and adults alike. Many communities hold inter-city skinball tournaments during Carnival week, when the increased rains and muddy playing fields make for interesting matches.

Although people are forbidden from gambling for money

or of reading omens using cards, animal entrails or the throwing of bones, a deck of cards has become widespread throughout the world. Using *The world deck* of 50 cards, each representing either of two colors (black or white), five numbers (1-5) and one of the five elements of fire, water, air, earth and life, folk play a plethora of games.

Religion

"I doubt your beliefs constitute a religion; you really were created..."

Since the birth of the Hundred and for the better part of two thousand years, mortals have known but one god and read but from one holy book. The words of Avonmyth that pilgrims have read and touched for two millenias, etched in gold into the black matter of its great wall, cannot have been written by the hand of man. Not even the foundries of the Antiaadar metalworks could melt even a small parcel of Avonmyth's wall, and the sharpest blade would be incapable of chipping any of its matter. Avonmyth is built of a stone that hums and glitters and is indestructible to the hand of man, proof that it was crafted by a higher force.

As etched on its great wall, The Holy Word has predicted many of the happenings of the world since the birth of the Second Age, from the golden butterfly and the giant raven to the year of cleansing 300SA. Proof has been found as well of the First Age the Holy Word speaks of; townsfolk of many regions have happened upon bits of queer shiny matter and artifacts of unknown origins -taint relics- in the cracked earth of dried-up riverbeds or buried deep under the soil of forests and valleys, further proof of the accuracy of the Holy Word's teachings.

But the greatest proof of the All-Seeing's existence can be observed casually; the virtuous and noble spirits of the world thrive, producing great and flourishing lineages, while the wretched, of which few remain, die childless. No -will the common man say-, the All-Seeing is there up above, and the only belief of any worth is in Him. To say or believe otherwise is to be either a dullard or a heretic.

Custodians of Avonmyth

Since the Year of Cleansing 300SA, Custodians and their families are the only mortals allowed to reside in Avonmyth in a permanent fashion. In fact, they are forbidden from leaving it, while clerics in formation and pilgrims can only remain for limited durations. Custodians are recognizable by their long flowing cloaks of brilliant white which they wear during the day to welcome pilgrims and teach clerics. Made of treated moon-moss fibers, the robes glow faintly under the moon's light. A Custodian is addressed as *Custodian* by anyone but his direct family and other Custodians, who may call him by his true name.

The mandate of Custodians is broad; they officialize new words, train and appoint clerics, interpret the Holy Word and the Tome of Three Crafts and take decisions concerning matters abroad. They put to paper the history of the Second Age by transcribing events into the Purple Codex and copy it laboriously into volumes bound for towns and cities. Since the war, they command the Crossbearer forces and complete the training of the Sovereign Daggers. The wives, husbands, brothers and sisters of Custodians gather food, cook, raise and

teach to children, guide pilgrims and care for apprentice clerics. Some also work in the Avonmyth foundries producing the golden mint along with other tools and wares. Children play in the city's groves and gardens and learn in its basic and Crafts and Sciences schools. Those that show intelligence and resolve will become Custodians.

Two thousand Custodians and six thousand of their family members live within Avonmyth, divided into 11 families decending from the first Custodians; the Eliandra, Riverna, Ebus, Asbeth, Ashan, Anneth, Harin, Nan, Calan, Allas and Gilian family lines are the only ones to have resided within Avonmyth for the last eighteen centuries. There had once been twelve, but the Taubs of Avonmyth perished along with their kin following the year of cleansing.

Custodians and their families are born and will die within Avonmyth. They are forbidden from leaving its walls and must feed exclusively from the city's fruits and animals and drink of its water fountains. From the Great Spire, Custodians will speak of the world as told from the Holy Word yet see nothing of it except the trees of Winterhound Forest to the south, Delphina's Garden to the west and the distant Moren waterfalls of the north. They may hear of the world's wonders from pilgrims and apprentice clerics, transcribe its great events into the Purple Codex and dream of its magnificience, but are not to see it with their own eyes.

In 1905, in answer to the war, the Custodians reactivated the Crossbearers and set up a vast training facility in the port city of Antiaadar. Now likened to warmasters more than spiritual guides, their time is spent coordinating Crossbearer contingents from the inviolability of Avonmyth's gardens and chambers. They rely on the skilled Avonmyth couriers, which travel the world to bring back news of the war and bring Custodian orders to field commanders. Yet the evil of these dark times is not limited to the outside world, and the eleven families feel the poison of their foe creep into their city and hearts. The families have begun to distrust one another, and secret plans are drawn within Avonmyth's many gardens following whispers and moonlit rendez-vous. Many wish for a mortal replacement to the High Custodian, preferably of their own blood

Last of the High Custodians

Since the year 19SA, Custodians have obeyed the High Custodian, a man not entirely of their ilk and said to carry the wisdom of the Seven. Though not immortal, the nine High Custodians which have come to Avonmyth and unlocked its Silver Door have enjoyed unnaturally long lifespans. A High Custodian's death summoned his successor from the depths of Winterhound Forest within seven days and in the body of a child of perhaps nine years of age. Reaching the Great Spire of Avonmyth, this child unlocked its silver door and assumed his position as High Custodian. All High Custodians have been male and nameless, referred to only as High Custodian, and under his guidance the Custodians had managed to remain the symbol of spiritual power for more than eighteen hundred years. The wisdom of their words in times of peril served to give hope to

millions, and their teachings helped clerics do the same within communities from across the world.

In 1901SA tragedy struck; the ninth High Custodian died of a sudden illness, and no child came forth from the woodlands. The following months Custodians prayed in vain for his successor, but the silver door remained locked. It would remain so for the next one hundred and ninety years, to this very day.

The twenty-strong Circle of Sacred Swords that has overseen the activities of Custodians and their families for the last hundreds of years has remained steadfast in its war against the enemy, though little implicated in the recent bickerings of the Custodians. Three are now to be counted amongst the white-cloaked, their calming words keeping the families away from escalating hostility. Alongside the Silverfast Crossbearers, the Sacred Swords thwarted the fell invasion of 1962SA using a store of potent artifacts. They have managed to keep Avonmyth's people from falling into despair but their attempts at opening the silver door -inside which is the Tome of Three Crafts, the original Purple Codex and many other artifacts- have remained fruitless.

The reawakening of the Crossbearers

Once infamous for the atrocities they committed during the witch hunts of the 700s, the Crossbearers have been reactivated since 1905SA to battle evil once more. They now train in Antiaadar, a convenient port city where they can be sent to the distant embattled regions of the world. Close to seventy thousand Crossbearers are currently active, and since their rebirth their actions have been many.

Crossbearers are trained in pairs; one will become a master of the sword and his Cross-Brother a master of bow and arrow. Swordmaster Crossbearers are highly skilled in hand-to-hand battle, wielding their swords with lethal skill. Bowmaster Crossbearers are trained in both squirmish archery and long range archery. In squirmish archery, bowmasters use specially crafted arrows with large end-notches to launch a volley of small arrows in rapid succession from point-blank range slightly to the rear of their supported comrades. In long range (or suppression archery) they use long and well-crafted arrows to strike down foes at great distances. Both swordmasters and bowmasters wear chain and black steel plate armor etched with a silver Ambrosian Cross and carry twin daggers. Swordmasters carry shields while bowmasters carry a quiver of thirty squirmish arrows and fifteen long range arrows.

Crossbearer units range from the *brace*, which is composed of an archer and a sword-wielder, to *guards* (made up of five braces), *companies* (ten guards) and *contingents* (five companies). A Crossbearer army is the largest formation and may count from two to twenty contingents. Braces are commonly sent as scouts into hostile regions such as the Ghost Lands and may attack targets of opportunity. Guards are sent to hunt down beasts lurking around villages and towns or to root out evil following the leads of a local cleric. Companies may be temporarily assigned to a city's defense in times of

need or be sent against fellkin hordes in eastern Ebuleon or the southern Birthland. Contingents as well as armies are found in heavily embattled cities such as Barnesmarin and Dawnhedge. The largest Crossbearer army is based around Avonmyth in the nearby city of Silverfast, and counts twenty contingents or around ten thousand men.

Crossbearers answer only to their commanders; community clerics or mayors have no authority over them, though Crossbearers find it useful to have their support. All units including the brace have a commander, so that a guard commander leads ten men, a company commander a hundred and son on. The Crossbearer army commanders fall under the command of the Custodians and -unknowingly- the Circle of Sacred Swords, whose Angelions have numerous mortal forms among army and contingent commanders.

The Order of Sovereign Daggers

The man sat on the wooden chair, and let his hands rest on the table between us. On his left little finger was a bejeweled ring that sparkled red, and I recognized it for what it was. The ruby ring of the Order of Sovereign Daggers!

"Tell me of the westward park of Avonmyth's second spire." I asked of him, my voice trembling. I looked about us worriedly, but found the inn empty. Only he and I remained after the night's festivities.

"It is small with trees no higher than two men, with a fountain made of orange stone streaked with black. I have been there often, passing under the silver archway to its south." He answered with confidence.

"How may I serve you?" I asked, falling to one knee.

As much as the Crossbearers are the muscle of the Custodians, the Order of Sovereign Daggers is their divine dagger. The Custodians allowed the formation of the Sovereign Daggers -which operate discretely and hidden from mortal eyes- after the spirit war, shortly after the Crossbearers were reactivated. Their Order was deemed necessary to protect the world from the insidious evil that oozed forth from the Forbidden Land.

Less than two hundred Sovereign Daggers are currently active. Secretly trained in Antiaadar but sent to Avonmyth for ten years prior to being set loose, every member of the Order is a highly trained and disciplined operative charged with the protection of the world, with authority above and beyond that of a cleric or mayor. Never alone, a Sovereign Dagger works as part of a Bloodhand comprised of five operatives. Bloodhands are sent to communities suspect-

ed of harboring corrupt citizenry, secret orders, heretics and blasphemers. They are given authority to monitor and observe, sequester and interrogate and need be, kill. Each operative is highly trained in infiltration, interrogation and assassination. They possess the knowledge of a cleric and the fighting skills of either a Crossbearer swordmaster or bowmaster.

Disguised as pilgrims or merchants, a Sovereign Dagger carries little in the form of weapon and armor, save for his Order's long and thin poignard and his ruby ring bearing the Order's symbol -an eye and a lightning bolt- either on his finger or for discretion's sake hidden on his person. One by one the members of a Bloodhand will infiltrate a community or lie in wait on its fringes ready to support operatives within. They are trained to notice the signs of evil, root out Awakened cells and dispose of fellkin posing as humans. Sovereign Daggers carry the full authority of a Custodian and may sentence people to the hanging cages or death by immolation. They may remove a mayor or cleric's powers and seize mayoral funds or a church's Clerical Tome for analysis. Clerics know of a Sovereign Dagger's identity by his Order ring and poignard, his knowledge of healing and medicinal plants and his knowledge of the inner quarters of Avonmyth.

In many cases, the actions of Sovereing Daggers either interfere with or actually help Dagonheir do theirs; though usually unable to significantly affect the actions of Sybas or Fell Prince corruptors, Sovereign Daggers can unknowingly help Dagonheir pinpoint the locations of these foes.

Clerics

"The clerics of the First Age were different. I saw many when I was a mortal, in those evil times." Lord Ravencross spoke with calm and understanding, for the question had been legitimate.

"They wore robes and holy necklaces adorned with precious symbology. They chanted and gave sermons in forgotten languages so that their lesser kin might revel at the wisdom of words they did not understand. However a wiser man might have noticed that the gods they spoke of were silent. They had always been silent"

The young immortals, sitting in the purple alcove, clawed into the thick carpet with their fingers.

"Now with the Second Age, we decided that clerics needed no such trickeries; they should dress, talk and drink as common folk. They should have no ritual or ceremony. They needed none of these illusions for they were but the interpreters of the Holy Word, not charlatans meant to reinforce the faith of their communities. Their people would believe in their words and act according to the Holy Word for if they did not, they knew with grim certainty that the All-Seeing would exact retribution upon them; their villages might be battered by storms, their fields might wither or their loved ones might be found dead come morning. Clerics need not use trickery when the existence of a god is fact!"

Villages and towns are never without at least one cleric, while great towns and cities may be home to more than

a dozen. Far different from his First Age ancestor, the Second Age cleric has no clerical robe or hat but rather dresses casually, and may be found drinking ale with friends and singing at dusk with neighbors. He may be calm or prone to drunken brawls but is invariably well learned, intelligent and observant, in tune with his people and the cares of his community.

A cleric maintains the community's Clerical, judges those accused of religious crimes, counsels the mayor, heals the sick or wounded and interprets the Holy Word and the Tome of Three Crafts. The cleric is also mandated with the maintenance and upkeep of his community's church. Though he is not required to do the actual labor, he must see it done. Without a cleric a community is lost, and its people will lead pilgrimages to Avonmyth to demand one be assigned.

Clerics can marry and bear children and may drink and sing as common folk. Their lives may be spent doing any of the crafts they studied or preferred during basic schooling, and a stranger may very well find a community's cleric serving ale at an inn or serving as a blacksmith's assistant.

Becoming a cleric

A potential cleric starts off as a child that shows a remarkable grasp of the Holy Word and an exceptional commitment towards his community. His town's cleric may recommend to his parents that he be sent to a nearby city's Crafts and Sciences school for faith training, and if the child completes the course, by the time he is 20 he may be sent to Avonmyth for cleric training. In rare cases, clerics have been known to forego a child's Crafts and Sciences education and send him to Avonmyth when he is but fourteen. Such cases are extremely rare, and only exceptionally gifted children are sent into pilgrimages to Avonmyth at fourteen. Boys and girls can become clerics, though boys are more common.

Children sent to Avonmyth for cleric training will live within the city and study under the Custodians for no less than ten years, though some elect to stay for longer periods. Those that fail will be sent back to their communities after one or many years of study; those that complete their training will become clerics. They will have been taught the healing arts as well as the interpretation and prophecies of the Holy Word and the Tome of Three Crafts. These ten years will have been grueling, both psychologically and physically; apprentice clerics often do the chores of the Custodians, and along with their transcriptions of the Holy Word they transcribe the Purple Codex unto volumes bound for distant communities. Their leisure time is quite limited, and many fail not out of lack of skill but rather out of exhaustion.

Upon leaving Avonmyth, a cleric either receives a clerical stone kept in a wooden box or will use the clerical stone of his assigned community's departing cleric. In most cases, when a young cleric leaves Avonmyth, he will return to his home community and replace his predecessor immediately.

Clerical stones and the Clerical Tome

The clerical stone (see the *Items of Power* chapter) is a bronze-colored spherical artifact the size of an orange, which most clerics of the late Second Age were given and trusted to keep safe in the church of their community. Kept in small wooden boxes, they were to be used only when the community came under great peril. Assaults by brigands and highwaymen, communities terrorized by a serial killer or a corrupt mayor and the discovery of still active and horrible Taint relics of great size could warrant a cleric's use of a clerical stone.

When such troubles arose, a cleric would open the stone's wood box and gently rub the bronze surface with his fingers. Stating the nature of the disturbance, he would also ask for aid from the All-Seeing and his spirits.

Prior to the war, a small village's cleric might never in his lifetime activate his clerical stone's powers, and the small wooden box remained a forgotten, dusty curio in the local church. Since the war, clerical stones have been used frantically but their powers seemed lessened; many clerics found that their pleas for aid went unanswered, and though the Custodians still hand out these artifacts to newly graduated clerics, word has spread that their power might now be compromised.

Clerics keep a register of their community's accomplishments and troubles as well as its citizen's deeds in a book called *The Clerical Tome* or simply the Clerical. This tome holds, chiefly, the cleric's notes on judgments against citizens for both religious and non-religious crimes as well as the brave or selfless acts of the community's more virtuous. Any and all significant discoveries, inventions, births, deaths and events were recorded therein. The Clerical is a book of great importance; every year and for the entire week immediately preceding Thieve's Night, the Clerical is left open on the church altar for all to see under the supervision of the cleric. Come Thieve's Night, those whose names appear within for crimes of religious or non-religious nature would likely be visited by hardships and misfortunes during Thieve's Night or the year following it.

Once filled with text, perhaps every ten to thirty years, the voluminous Clerical of a community would be sent to Avonmyth for storage and another one begun. The archives, held within the Great Spire of Avonmyth, therefore contain the noble or vile acts of every community's people since the last two thousand years!

Churches

The church is the first community structure built in a new village. Generally settled from Springberry to Summersong, villages without a church and cleric for first winter are asking for misfortunes. If no cleric is immediately available, the new community's mayor will ordain, temporarily, a villager to the title of church-keeper, an interim position until a true cleric can settle into the community.

Churches are quite different in form from one community to the

next; some are built of stone, others of wood. Many large city churches sport domes and spires of bronze and may be capable of accomodating two thousand people, while villages may have a small and homely church capable of seating perhaps two hundred villagers. Small communities will have a single church, while cities may have more than a dozen. All churches will sport the Ambrozian Cross and may adorn their walls with some religious paintings. A small altar of bronze bearing the Ambrozian cross -upon which rests a copy of the Holy Word- is perhaps the only noteworthy and standard feature of every church.

The church is uninhabited; its purpose is to welcome vagrants and travelers in need and to give a community's people a place to reflect on their actions and ask for aid. In rare cases or in times of great hardship, a cleric is expected to address his people from the church and offer them words of comfort. Church doors are always open though its basement and vaults are kept locked, for there may be found the Clerical, the clerical stone and various other manuscripts.

The Holy Word

By the time of his fourteenth birthday, every child of the Unconquered Lands has transcribed the Holy Word in its entirety and learned of every verse's meaning. Though for many centuries children were sent to Avonmyth to transcribe the Holy Word directly from the great wall, the practice is today less favored, especially now that the spirit war has unleashed fell beasts into the forests and evil spirits onto the roads of the world. Only clerics are now obliged to transcribe -for the second time- the Holy word from Avonmyth's wall.

The Holy Word is the word of the All-Seeing, and has been studied and interpreted for two thousand years. Only

a fool would forget to bring his Holy Word along any significant journey. Hunters bring it along during the hunt, seamen never leave port without it and Crossbearers fight and die carrying it.

The Holy Word is built along a historical book format. It relates an account of the First Age, of its people and its corruption. In particular, it relates the tribulations of the Kingsways, a family of great virtue in a sea of taint. The Holy Word does speak in length of the cleansing flame that brought an end to the accursed First Age, and that the Kingsways hid in a shrine while the All-Seeing rebuilt the world for a thousand years. Only after the Kingsway's emergence into this new and pure world does the Holy Word focus more on the principles and virtues by which man is to live in this new kingdom. From then on that the word of the All-Seeing, his laws and doctrine are unleashed upon the reader. Mingling with the prose, various prophecies have been deciphered over the ages; the seven years of Taint and the Seven Curses, the High custodian's death in 177SA and the child that would open the silver door, the year of cleansing of 300SA and the Hatter-Taupe mice invasion of 1455SA are examples of events prophesized by the Holy Word. Curiously - from a mortal perspective- it did not prophesize the Red Plague or the spirit war, though it did prophesize many events of lesser importance yet to manifest, such as a great fireball that would incinerate a sinful city in 2136SA and the seven trees of miracles that would grow in the seven largest cities of the world in the year 2202SA.

The Holy Word's doctrine however makes up the bulk of its pages and message. It promotes the three divine virtues of Temperance, Benevolence and Faith.

Through temperance, one holds back the beast inside one's self. Temperance allows one to step back when angered, to pull back the hand in front of immoral gold, to remain silent rather than chastise, to keep faithful in times of temptation, to turn down corruption rather than welcome it and to consume only what one needs to consume.

Benevolence is a mark of divinity. The All-Seeing is benevolent, for he has given humanity a second chance at life. He rewards acts of benevolence with long life and scores of children. Benevolence is one's welcoming of others, one's power of forgiveness, one's generosity and one's treatment of others, including animals and the land itself.

Faith is perhaps the most important; the All-Seeing is the maker. He allowed people to eat of his fruits and of his animals. He allows the fields to grow food and the water to carry fish. The All-Seeing blesses mortals by allowing them to bear children. In the All-Seeing shall mortals put their faith and in no other.

Death, the burying of the dead and the afterlife

Ol' Armian Gillian struggled up the stone steps leading to the park, so that when the last step was defeated his breath was quick and wheezing. His cane shook, and he rested his other arm upon the stone wall of the inn, profiting from the shade of its generous roof to escape the burning midday sun. Off in the distance, a cicada sang a long song. Still quite a number of yards away, the park lay silent as it always had, within its soil the peaceful remains of his long dead wife. Soon, he mused, he would be buried next to her and watch over their grandsons and granddaughters, before his spirit could finally rest and join her in Heaven.

People of the Second Age believe in Heaven and Hell. They believe those that lead virtuous lives will ascend to Heaven and be with their ancestors, while those that live sinful lives will die lonely and their spirits will go to Hell. The dead are buried naked into the ground near where they lived and during the burial friends and family speak of the deceased and tell of his deeds, both worthy and foul. Once the speakings are over, a white rose is planted over the tomb and will remain as the only allowed symbol, gift or monument marking the burial. Even great historical figures such as Anabad the Crusader were buried within no special shrine. The dead are returned to the land from which they came simply and expeditiously.

Spirits of the dead are said to linger among the living; they protect their still living kin and punish those that would harm them. They leave medicines at the doorsteps of the ill and bring food or mints to the poor. As the corpe decomposes, the spirit's potency diminishes so that when only bones remain, the spirit has ascended to the kingdom of the All-Seeing. Thus no one -except the wretched soul- has reason to fear the dead. Children play around the burial spots of their recently deceased ancestors and neighbors, trusting to their spiritual power for protection and companionship. The young and old alike are fond of seeing the actions of their beloved dead in mundane everyday happenings.

In extremely rare cases, and only after a cleric proclaims a death to be unclean, the body of a tyrannical or evil individual will be buried far from the community in which he lived so that his spirit might not find its way back. Villagers on horseback will carry the body hundreds of kilometers from their community and bury it somewhere remote and hopefully never hear word of the deceased again.

The Spirit War

"The spirits of our forebearers have risen!!!" Said some, chanting and yelling and jumping.

"They shall protect our lands and our homes! Hail the dead!"Said others. Torches were lit and great fires emblazoned, upon which the carcasses of the fell beasts were thrown. Children danced and sang along with elders that threw their fists angrily at the sight of the dead creatures.

I stood by the alley, removed from the commotion. Outside the exterior wall, I heard the wail of an unknown thing, off into the woods no doubt, its call carried by the cool night air. The spirits had come to our village, and with it, they brought war.

The spirit war is the greatest threat to the people of the world since the birth of this Age. Its cause is shrouded in mystery; some believe the citizens of Haffergroves, after happening on a half-buried cemetery of the First Age, awoke spirits of the accursed age; others believe ships from Orcanager disregarded the warnings of the Holy Word and traveled to the Forbidden Land, thereby unleashing evil upon the people of the earth; still others prefer the theory that the strange and disturbing words seen in various communities during the 1800s somehow summoned through vile magics the Fell God, a god of the old world that now battles the All-Seeing for control of the Earth.

What is certain is that in 1901SA several terrifying occurrences marked its beginning; peasants from the southen jungles of the Land of Fire saw a flurry of winged beasts take to the sky, followed by a gleaming monster of metal the size of a village. To the south of Dawnhedge, fishing boats were capsized by gigantic monsters that rose from the deep waters and slithered their way upon the land, their path of destruction leading up to the foothills of Emerald Mountain. Villages near the forest of Ushergillian were razed when a great tower fell from the skies, while a fell forest rose from the icy steppes of northern Ebuleon, at its middle a dread tower. All over the world horrible beasts spread fear and death while apparently common mortals shed their disguise to reveal their spirit powers, either benevolent or evil. Cities burned and people died, farmlands withered and birthrates declined.

Word of the Fell God has become common even in the Northern Birthland. It is said the lands near this god's Fell Kingdoms -once known as the Forbidden Land- have already been lost to his evil. Spirits of the recently departed are said to battle alongside the spirits of the Seven, taking physical form inside the bodies of mortals to slay fell beasts and foul spirits. They may wield great power, unleashing bolts of fire or leaping from rooftop to rooftop as no mortal should; or they may be subtle, monitoring the communities they dwell in until troubles arise. On rare occasions, it is said some animals have become possessed of their wisdom as well.

The Town Watch may see glimpses of spirits; on moonlit nights they may see the ghost of a shadow or hear the ethereal footsteps of the deceased watching over them as they patrol dark streets. When battles do occur between spirits, the Watch usually stays well back unless a given spirit is obviously benevolent, in which case they may lend a helping hand.

Evil Spirits -Spirits of the Accursed Age

The kneeling peasant looked at the seated man, the latter's robes eerily floating upon unknown winds.

"May you be a benevolent spirit? May you bring us food and protection? The kneeling man asked longingly.

But the seated man said nothing, his robes still dancing around him slowly. Not a movement of his face might have given the kneeling man any indication as to his disposition or intent.

"May you be good? Asked the man once more, eyes red with tears.

The robed man said nothing, only the faintest of smiles partingthe edges of his lips.

A hyena's smile...

Wailing and hungry, evil spirits wish to supplant the benevolent spirits of this age. Above all, they wish vengeance upon the All-Seeing for having sentenced them to oblivion. They wish to rule the living, for they long to be living themselves. They are known by various names; Sorceror Lords, lurking demons, fell minions or accursed spirits speak of the same maliciousness.

Evil spirits can take pleasing or unassuming form, hiding their great sorcerous power within the bodies of men, women, children and animals. The mark of evil common to all fellkin may or may not be seen on possessed mortals. They may be enchanting in form and speak of pleasant things, for the foulest evil is that which cannot be seen. They may appear anywhere and within many bodies at once, and no region of the world can be said to be free of their presence. It is also believed that an evil spirit cannot be slayed except by another spirit, that though one or all of its physical bodies may be destroyed by mortal means, its evil will one day return in other forms.

The distinction between benevolent spirits - the recently deceased- and those of evil spirits -deceased of the First Age- may be made difficult by the insidiousness of the latter. Evil spirits are known to tempt and sway mortals to their ways, offering aid and companionship when in reality they seek control and power. Clerics are now sent forth from Avonmyth with new ways of determining which spirits are benevolent and which are not, but spirits of the accursed age are crafty; they know of deception well, and may baffle mortals -even clerics- until their power is well rooted and no longer assailable. They will then rule and subjugate their people, slay and love at their leisure, and use their powers and fell attributes openly.

People of the Unconquered Lands are warned by their clerics not to trust those that profess to be able to perform miracles; the benevolent spirit is not one to vaunt his exploits and not one to be seen by mortal eyes. Indeed, for two thousand years their actions had been hidden and delicate. The spirit that announces itself openly is not to be followed, for it is surely a minion of evil.

Fell beasts and Fellkin

Fell beasts and fellkin are new additions to the world; their devastation oozes forth from the eastern parts of Ebuleon and aims itself westward, where only the fortress city of Barnesmarin stands between them and the peaceful villages of the west.

Fellkin are human-looking beasts possessed of intelligence, though all bear at least one deformity -*the mark of evil*- that sets them apart from humanity. They may roam in bands or be solitary, and be either inoffensive or belligerent. Fellkin have been known to live within mortal communities, hiding their mark of evil as best they can; those that fail are burned promptly and their ashes scattered, for mortals believe that to bury a fellkin is to give birth to an evil spirit. Some have been discovered and burned in communities as westward as Ebuleon's Star, while very few have been immolated in the northern Birthland.

Fell beasts trade intelligence for monstrousness, and are also known as the *nameless* for they bear no official name; at best possessed of animal cunning, they are ghastly and terrifying creatures, to be slain and burned when discovered. Hunters are especially loath of these monsters which pose a significant threat to their livelihood, and Custodians may send Crossbearer guards or companies to regions where sightings are common.

Northern Birthland

The northern Birthland is where the beauty of Ambrose's Second Age can be seen in its uncorrupted form. In countless villages set snuggly within valleys, people live peacefully and pleasantly, oblivious to distant dangers. Fiercely obedient of the Scriptures, Dagonheir have managed to keep incursions from corruptors, spies and Sybas to a minimum, and battle those of tainted nature -be they mortal or immortal- with every ounce of their strength. A boundless expanse of green, the Northern Birthland is testament to the magic of the Second Genesis.

The Shrine

And the All-Seeing said to Ambrose, so that he may offer salvation to his family: "You shall remain here, under the rock of this Shrine, and you shall sleep a deep sleep for a thousand years while my breath draws the poison from the world."

And Ambrose hid, taking in his wife Elizabeth, and their three sons Corvus, Eridan and Ori and their two daughters Delphina and Lyra. And they hid for a thousand years, and they slept a deep slumber as the All-Seeing had said.

And for a thousand years, the All-Seeing breathed a cleansing flame unto the world, erasing all that was bad.

And after a thousand years, the All-Seeing again spoke to Ambrose: "Come out under the sky, Ambrose, and your family will not be burned."

And Ambrose came out, and his family was not burned.

And the All-Seeing spoke:" I have cleansed the world of all that is bad. I have seeded it once more with the fruits of creation. Go and build and eat of these fruits. I shall take a tear, a bead of blood and a hair from you and your kin and make a hundred more for you to teach and love. Teach them of my word and of your ancestors. Let these children know that I have given them new breath. They may go as they please, but upon the Forbidden Land, they shall not go, for there they shall die.

Second Genesis, from the Holy Word

The Holy Word firmly places the birth of Second Age humanity in the Shrine, a small underground cavern in which the seven Kingsways hid and were protected from the fury of the All-Seeing's wrath. The year 0SA, according to the Holy Word, marks the year the Kingsways came out of the Shrine and looked upon the world.

The Shrine is but a small unpretentious cavern of stone. It is now surrounded by a wall of pebbles, which pilgrims of the southern trail deposit during their pilgrimage to Avonmyth.

Obviously not where the Kingsways hid during the cataclysm that ended the First Age, the Shrine was built by Ori mere days after the completion of Avonmyth, and marked the next-to-last undertaking of the Second Genesis; the last would be the birth of the Hundred.

Avonmyth

"In the Second Age, all roads shall lead to Avonmyth"

Ambrose Kingsway

Avonmyth is the first city of the Second Age, built by the All-Seeing and its wall etched with his word. It is the city to which the Hundred were led by the Kingsways and has been the beacon of hope for countless generations of mortals.

Its architecture and construction materials leave little doubt that it was divinely crafted; for no instrument born of human hands can damage, chip or even mark its eerily black structures in even the slightest of ways. Surrounded by a wall of the same dark matter, upon which the Holy Word has been etched in gold, Avonmyth is a little over ten square kilometers in area. Its architecture contains patterns whose meanings the Custodians have yet to understand.

To enter the city its black and silver gate must be raised, which is under the guardianship of the Avonmyth contingent, an elite corps of Crossbearers patrolling the perimeter surrounding the city proper. Around the great city are dozens of towns, farmlands and mines.The largest city is Silverfast, home to the Crossbearer army of Silverfast known for its adamant soldiers and proud history; it suffered great losses in the worm invasion of 1962SA.

Following one of three trails, pilgrims reach the city after thousands of kilometers of travel, there to read the Holy Word in its divine transcription upon the great wall and seek counsel with Custodians. Since the spirit war, any given day will see no less than a thousand pilgrims reading from the great wall or conversing with Custodians.

Pilgrims aside, Avonmyth is home to the Custodians, their families and clerics in formation. Custodians and their families make up the bulk of Avonmyth's population of eight thousand, being the only mortals to permanently inhabit the city since the Year of Cleansing. Its dark masonry notwithstanding, Avonmyth's living area is colorful and majestic, replete with fountains, parks and archways. The city supports its citizens entirely with the fruits and grains produced from the Snowtrees of its parks, which bear fruit of such succulence thieves would steal them rather than gold. Even the water of its fountains possesses divine properties.

Known as the Circle of Sacred Swords, the Avonmyth Sacred Circle is the most powerful Sacred Circle known, its twenty Dagonheir possessing a great store of artifacts. Led by Brother-Sky, the Sacred Swords only welcome Lyrans of established feats, most having fought together alongside Lyra during the war.

In terms of immortal battles, Avonmyth has been quiet since the dispatch of the Vidian Destroyers and the Fell army during the year of 1962SA. Brother-Sky is said to possess an artifact of such potency that it could thwart any attacker. Its nature is a mystery, but the great sunbolt that slayed the Fell army may have been born of it.

The port city of Antiaadar

Overlooking the cliffs of the eastern shores, Antiaadar is the largest and most populous city of the Second Age. Six hundred thousand call it home, and its streets bustle with activity year round. Its port can welcome no less

than forty sea vessels and countless smaller fishing boats, and features trolleys and lifts for rapid cargo unloading. The great river of Harin divides Antiaadar in two; northern Antiaadar holds the city center and wealthy merchant quarters, with large and well furnished homes. Southern Antiaadar, home to most of the population, farmers, dock workers and the families of seamen is made up of more conservative dwellings and includes the newly built Antiaadar Crossbearer barracks. To the city's south lies Moon Forest, an endless expanse of trees stretching all the way to the southern gulf.

As much as Avonmyth is the spirit of the mortal world, since the war Antiaadar has become its backbone. Eight thousand Crossbearers and support personnel claim the city as their home base, and its military facilities train and equip more than five thousand yearly. The Order of Sovereign Daggers is trained here as well.

Antiaadar is home to a Dagonheir Sacred Circle of great power, possibly bowing down only to Avonmyth's Circle of Sacred Swords. Led by Angel-Of-Fire, the fifteen-strong Circle has been key to the protection of Antiaadar since the war. They monitor ship arrivals and cargo using bodies of man or beast, and are well endowed in terms of artifacts and experience. Countless fell spies have had their long journeys from the Fell Kingdoms thwarted in Antiaadar.

The Genomancer Guild maintains a temple within Antiaadar disguised as a massive armory tower. Behind countless rows of swords and armor, bows and arrows, a secret doorway will open to a stone stairway leading down into the bowels of the earth. At the count of a thousand steps, when the air has become heavy and musty, Angelions will come upon a mighty stone door behind which guild organisms are stored and matured. Here Words-of-Might, the Temple Curator, dabbles in sciences and experiments, welcoming clients using any of his myriad forms. Still underground but outside the city proper, the temple's production facility can produce large organisms which it can unleash through great steel doors that open up within Moon Forest. To enter the tower, Angelions must first meet Words-of-Might through his second form, that of Fiodor Gilian, a local brewer of spirits who sells his brews to the Crossbearer contingents.

Wiltoncrow

Wiltoncrow is surrounded by rolling hills, rustling creeks and a string of small villages and marks the halfway point of the western Pilgrim's trail between Orcanager and Avonmyth. Pleasantly referred to as the biggest village of the world, the city is home to thirty thousand people, mostly farmers and hunters though a sizeable number of blacksmiths and miners also do business in Wiltoncrow. Wiltoncrow is a city well under the protection of a stable and skilled Sacred Circle comprised of four Dagonheir, which vigilantly monitor traffic on the western trail.

The Fallen Tower

Ori's sky tower fell during the war, crashing thunderously into the forest of Ushergillian. It vaporized three villages, over a thousand square kilometers of trees

and incinerated twice as many, causing general panic amongst the populations of the neighboring regions. The blast was heard and the mushrooming ball of flame seen from hundreds of kilometers away.

Today the region surrounding the fallen tower is still recovering from this terrible incident; trees are still small and few, the earth still blackened and poisoned because of the chemicals released during the tower's explosion. Mortals fear it.

The Deadnorth

In 2069SA, the Fell Kingdom of Valor's Rest fell from the skies over the Birthland's northwestern region. It had been attacked by over thirty Dagonheir that pierced the Kingdom's terraformatron and sent it crashing to the earth. Its fall killed everything within a thousand kilometers of its crash site. Raging firestorms and earthquakes ravaged the region and led to its naming; the Deadnorth, for still today nothing will grow or live there.

The Western Pilgrim's Trail

Ever since settlers left Avonmyth, pilgrims have traveled back to the Holy City. Three great pilgrim trails -the western, southern and eastern trails- now cater to these travelers. The shortest of the three, the western trail is also the oldest, safest and most pleasant. It stretches from Avonmyth to the port city of Orcanager and is populated by no less than sixty villages and towns. Its only great city is Wiltoncrow, situated midway along the western trail.

It is customary for pilgrims to carry news and deliver messages between the villages and towns along the trail. In exchange for their services, they receive discounts on food and lodging, and today all three trails follow this principle. Dagonheir occupate many of the villages along the western trail and although few incidents have occured since the war, these Angelions may be counted among the fiercest of their kind.

The southern Pilgrim's Trail

The southern trail is colorful and exciting; its winding roads traverse a broad range of environments and climates. From the south it climbs and meanders through mountains, follows cliff sides on the edge of the Black Ocean, requires passage by small boats and ends majestically in the green forests of the Northern Birthland. It links Avonmyth to no less than forty villages and towns right down to the very last of the southern villages, Pennibree. Since the war, the southern pilgrim's trail has become a dangerous road to follow in its most southern regions. South of Dawnhedge it is no more than a weed-infested, muddy and nearly impassable trail fraught with many dangers and abandoned villages.

Orcanager

The westernmost city of the Birthland, Orcanager has been a fisherman's city since the arrival of the first settlers to the west coast in the 200s. The city has since grown to an impressive population of one hundred thousand, divided between fishermen, farmers, hunters and boat makers. Orcanager vessels are reputed to be the sturdiest and most seaworthy of the world, desireable characteristics considering that in times past they had to undertake the perilous voyage from Orcanager to Haffergroves on the stormy waters of the Azure Ocean. Now that Haffergroves is no more, Orcanager vessels travel to Dawnhedge to deliver goods, weapons and supplies, returning with gold, spices and herbs.

Orcanager has seen an influx of strange individuals of late, its eastern sector nearly demolished after spirits fought in its streets. On more than one occasion vessels were found drifting in the Azure Ocean, their crew missing or replaced by foul creatures. Vessels are now required to pass a thorough inspection of their cargo before being allowed to dock. Failure to stop once summoned for an inspection may mean the fast Orcanager armored vessels will either intercept them or their sailors send volleys of flaming arrows upon their decks.

The Guild of genomancers keeps a temple within Orcanager, disguised as a seafood shop and tended to by Endless Sea, a temple Curator of turbulent character that goes by the mortal name and body of "smelly" Erk Marin. Underneath the fetid shop a vast network of earthly tunnels lead to chambers filled with the Guild's latest creations.

Wolf valleys

To the south of Wiltoncrow the Wolf valleys are the haunts of Wolfpack, a Phantoma of legendary power and evil. Since his coming, dozens of horse-sized wolves terrorize the villages of the valleys, stalking the forests and slaying hunters and farmers. Half a Crossbearer contingent -Over three hundred men- have left their bones to rot under the sun in the Wolf valleys so far, falling to the deadly beasts and their immortal master. Wolfpack has been known to roam as far west as Orcanager and as far north as the Land of Ice using his beastly forms, though he is suspected of having hid-

den his essence in the Wolf valleys. Villagers from the region have taken to the habit of wearing wolf head pendants made of wood to ward off the giant wolves of their forests

The Ruins of Barbarar

Barbarar was destroyed during the year of cleansing, 300SA, its buildings and streets covered with a queer black substance and its citizens killed. No mortal dared approach it afterwards, its location deemed evil by clerics. Eighteen centuries later, the half-buried city is difficult to locate; trees and brush have grown around it and roads fade at its approach. To reach the lost city, one has to look for it specifically and be knowledgeable with maps and ancient texts, for its mention in the Purple Codex is limited.

Those happening upon the ghostly city will find it as told in the accounts of the Year of Cleansing; a dead city covered with an eerie black substance. The petrified bones of its dead can be found everywhere. Yet not all is quiet in Barbarar, for within its ruins lurk the many forms of the Angelion known as Night's Ocean. Using the dead city for unknown purposes, Night's Ocean is known to be a recluse of unpredictable temperament, and many suspect he may have found some potent treasure or understanding within the city of the dead. Perhaps a secret the Kingsways themselves wished to bury along with the city

Southern Birthland

The Southern Birthland was long reputed as a land of wonder and mystery, where dark jungles stood ready to engulf the unwary traveler and where colorful fishing villages dotted the coastline from top to bottom, home to a festive people. Today its reputation is more sinister, for it suffered dearly during the war; Dawnhedge, its greatest city, has been assaulted by foul beasts, and demon swamps have risen to its south. More and more Crossbearers are thus heading south from Antiaadar to battle this evil.

The port city of Dawnhedge

Dawnhedge is the largest city of the Southern Birthland with thirty thousand rooftops. It has become a walled fortress city as well, with three contingents of Crossbearers manning its guard towers and inspecting the ships anchored to its docks. Built along the western shoreline, Dawnhedge deals frequently with Orcanager to the north and infrequently with Antiaadar. It is a city of fishermen and farmers but a great number of gold and iron miners also allow the city to export sizeable amounts of ore.

Dawnhedge, like all major cities of the Birthland, is under the aegis of a Sacred Circle. Not of the Lyrans, its five Dagonheir are somewhat reclusive and uncooperative to the efforts of the Sacred Swords or Dagonheir of Antiaadar, instead content in handling the safety of their city their own way. The garrison of Crossbearers was accepted only under the condition that its commander and highest sub-commanders be members of the Dawnhedge Sacred Circle. As such, they lead their mortal underlings into the Demon Swamps where they battle fellkin hordes and fell beasts. Their priority for the moment is the management and escort of the refugees fleeing the southern coastline villages.

The Dawnhedge guild temple is built within the sea cliffs; to reach it Angelions must first contact Evi Landabras, a Dawnhedge seaman and very ancient Angelion known as Reef who will lead them by nightly boat excursion to the temple's cavern entrance.

The Tower of Emerald and Bronze

Built atop Emerald Mountain, Lyra's Tower of Emerald and Bronze now stands in ruin, no more than jagged blocks of green stone scattered about a massive crater. From the ground, an explorer standing at the foothills of Emerald Mountain could identify the ruins as a barely discernible collection of bronze and green specks at the very top of the mountain, and that only on a clear day; nine days out of every ten, the ruins are hidden by the clouds and mist of Emerald Mountain's peak.

The war claimed the tower in a spectacular way; a great explosion ripped through it, brightening the blackened sky with the brilliance of a second sun. Wherever its debris fell, the lands turned poisonous and mutagenic, thus creating the regions of fetid malevolence known as the Demon Swamps.

The Demon Swamps

Near and about Emerald Mountain and for many hundreds of kilometers around it lie the Demon Swamps. Here the lone traveler had better clutch his Holy Word dearly with one hand and carry a drawn sword in the other for since the spirit war, myriad beasts stalk these lands, some quite abominable. Fellkin hordes meander about, ready to bring about the ruin of the careless traveler. The swamps grow progressively more brackish as one nears Emerald Mountain, their stench reaching summits of putrescence at its foothills.

The southern coastline villages

The mainland south of Dawnhedge was mostly uninhabited when war struck, and still today less than a dozen villages there remain, most empty. The bulk of the southern population inhabits the small fishing villages that dot the coastline on both sides of the mainland. Once quite peaceful, some now stand abandoned, their villagers having been witness to the menace that leaches towards their village from the Demon Swamps. Many others are unaware of the danger, and still today carry on their lives normally. Crossbearers from Dawnhedge have evacuated more than two dozen villages but dozens more would require attention.

Western Ebuleon

Western Ebuleon has seen an influx of refugees from the east since the start of the spirit war. Fueled by the horrific accounts of the easterners, western communities have become small fortresses; villages, towns and cities are surrounded by walls, patrolled at night by heavily armed men. At night their gates are closed, nightly travelers thoroughly questioned before allowed entry. A palpable danger comes forth from the east; people are cautious, observing and suspicious. They know of the spirits that walk in human form and the destruction their battles can unleash upon a city. Easterners have told them as well of the fellkin hordes that advance towards the west, hungry for human flesh.

Though not the best of times, westerners are a hardy folk and although some do leave in sea vessels bound for the safety of the Birthland, most choose to stand and fight, trusting to the All-Seeing and the thrust of their blades for protection against evil.

Ebuleon's Star

Ebuleon's Star is the beacon port city that ship captains look for when approaching the Land of Ebuleon. Its great fire light -the star- shines continually, fed with oil and maintained by no less than ten men so that not a single night has passed without the star burning bright. Home to over two hundred thousand people, Ebuleon's Star is the most populous city of the land of Ebuleon and second only to the Birthland's great port city of Antiaadar. Dozens of towns and villages surround the great city which boasts the tallest structure of the world: the star itself!

Ebuleon's Star was destined to prosper; pilgrims of the east passed through it to board ships destined for the Birthland while from the 700s on, ships from the Birthland carried settlers and pilgrims traveling to Apanon Mountain for healing and the Trial of Apanon. Merchant vessels from Sennakar came to it bearing gold and parting with food and spice, while surrounding communities came to it for trade and festivities. Even in these direst of times Ebuleon's Star remains a vibrant, lively city with a booming economy. Its mayor Morri Harrin is in reality Bane-of-Darkness, a Lyran Dagonheir of great power and wisdom that has protected the integrity of Ebuleon's Star with the help of five of his kin. Together possessing six of the forty-seven Named war rings, Bane-of-Darkness and his Dagonheir comrades form a mighty and most cunning of Sacred Circle.

The Guild of Genomancers maintains a temple within Ebuleon's Star, hidden under the great Star tower. Led through by a secret trapdoor, Angelions may peruse the Guild bodies in store therein, and haggle over prices with White Mountain, the temple Curator and custodian of the lighthouse.

The Eastern Pilgrim's Trail

Greatly improved during the 900s, the eastern pilgrim's trail was born in the late 600s; pilgrims from the eastern settlements then crossed its thousands of kilometers to reach Ebuleon's Star and board vessels destined for the Birthland. More than ten centuries later, the trail is serviced by thirty settlements and stretches from the ruins of Haffergroves on the eastern shores of Ebuleon to Ebuleon's Star and continuing on the Birthland from the port city of Antiaadar to Avonmyth itself. Of the three pilgrim trails, the eastern one is easily the longest and most treacherous, especially in its easterly portions. East of Apanon Mountain, the

fortress city of Barnesmarin lies as the last stronghold between the west and the fellkin hordes of the east. There the trail has become overgrown with weeds and nearly impassable, its roadside villages abandoned.

The Tower of Stone

Eridan's ruined Tower of Stone remains today as the most subtle monument to the war; blackened blocks of stone litter its surroundings along with mysterious trinkets of twisted metal. Its contents looted following the war by the followers of Ravencross, the ruins are now weed-infested and silent, for mortals fear its presence and steer clear of it. Unwary travelers had best be cautious when approaching the tower's ruins; a vast underground tunnel network was built under the Stone Tower, and cave-ins are a dangerous hazard.

The port city of Stonemorgan

Stonemorgan is a small and disorganized port town of three thousand inhabitants experiencing a disproportionate upsurge in its activities following the destruction of Aldabante, whose population fled their city following a massive firestorm that left it flattened and charred. The sea vessels and travelers it once serviced have since used Stonemorgan's inadequate port and facilities: the port of Stonemorgan is a haphazard collection of wooden docks hurriedly upgraded for the larger vessels it is now required to service.

Stonemorgan is a Tyrant Haven, the haunt of a monstrous Syba known as Dream, and Aldabante was burned of his hand. The malicious immortal has since turned Stonemorgan's people into his slave army, working tirelessly day and night to build Stonemorgan's docks and ferrying great stones from the nearby quarries so that the city might be surrounded by a high wall. Dream has come into possession of many potent artifacts including at least one greater war ring, and queer storms above Stonemorgan may suggest that he holds Prolegomenon as well, the terrible staff Corvus used to cross the Great Desert.

Island-Keep of Bladewielder

The Island-Keep of Bladewielder has been a thorn in the side of the Dagonheir since it was built some forty years ago. Set firmly on an artificial island erected on the waters of the sea-lakes of Perwood, its thick stone walls shelter no less than sixteen Angelions, easily the strongest Syba posse of the world. Bladewielder - the prodigal sword master - is the leader of the posse and can count on many of

the most cunning Sybas of the world as his minions. It is said Bladewielder possesses the essences of all those within his posse, in a mimic of Lord Ravencross' hoarding of essences. He has so far been content in ruling over the dozens of small villages and towns that dot the frigid landscape around his Island-Keep, hunting away the Dagonheir or Phantomas that dare intrude in his Realm. Relations entertained between Bladewielder and Lord Ravencross are uncertain; many Dagonheir think he may be one of his Lords intent on ruining the Unconquered Lands from within.

The Mountain Stronghold of Boreas

The largest of the Guild's seven temples, the mountain stronghold of Boreas is also its least accessible and best defended. Built as a labyrinthine series of stone tunnels and chambers, it possesses several entrances all along the mountain chain. Along with that of Sarpe, it is one of only two temples which may store and sell monstrous-sized organisms.

To reach the stronghold Angelions use bodies capable of flight for the landbound crossing to reach any of its entrances is treacherous. If queried tactfully, villagers from the mountain's foothills may give travelers information as to the stronghold's general whereabouts, though they will counsel them not to seek it; it is thought to be a place where strange creatures lurk about, and during the night many villagers claim to have seen the moonlit shadows of great beasts disappearing through cloud and mist.

Near any of the stronghold's entrances, Angelions will be greeted by the Boreas Curator, an Angelion known as Night-Voice who favors animal bodies of often uncanny abilities.

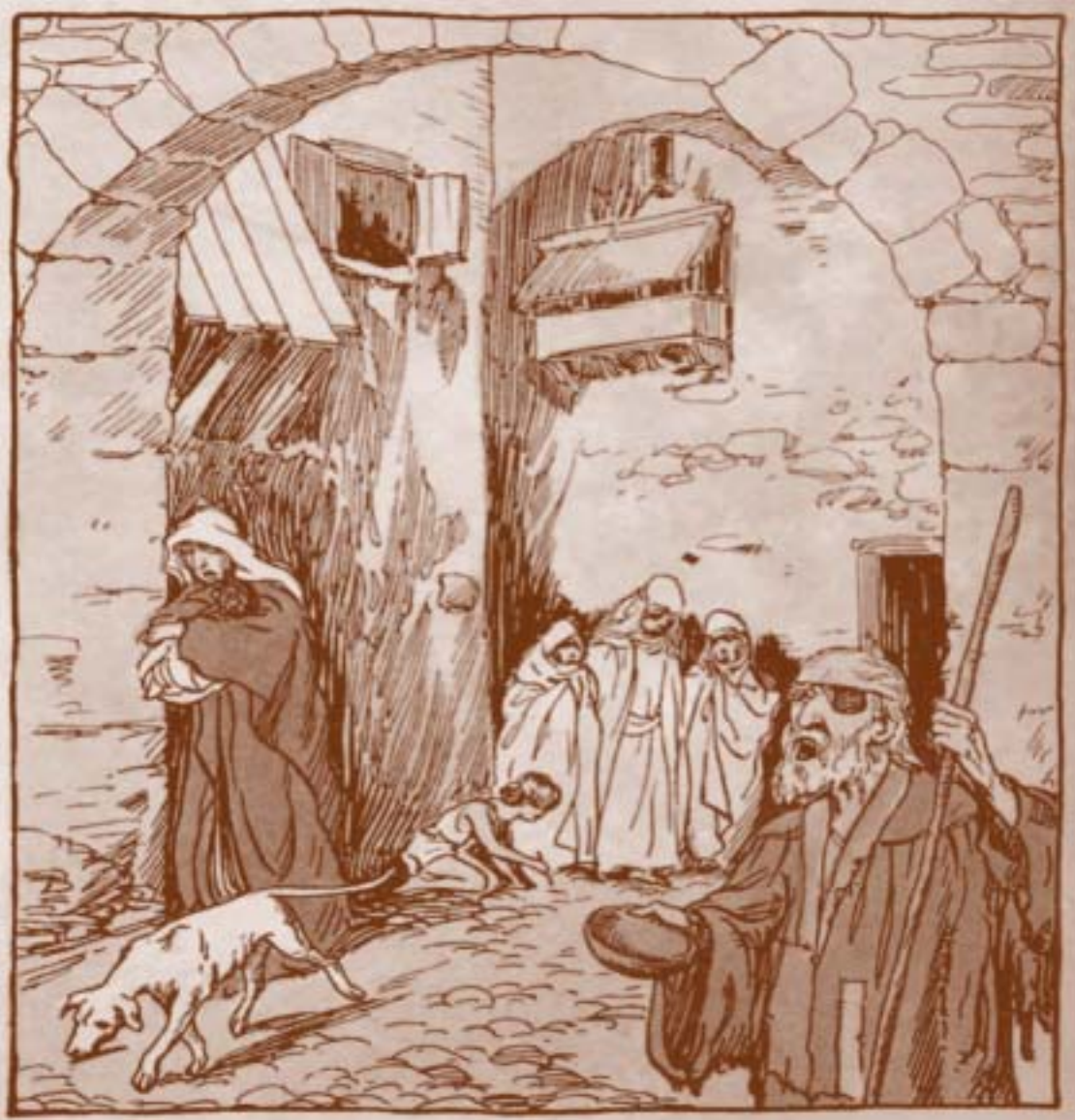
Apanon mountain and the city of Modea

Apanon Mountain rose from under Apanon city, destroying it and killing its citizens in the year 702SA. A rush of water coursed down its slopes, healing surrounding people that drank from it. For the last fourteen hundred years, people have established settlements around the mountain to benefit from the healing powers of its waters and to cater to its many pilgrims. One major city -Modea- and several towns and villages stood in great Apanon Mountain's shadow, bustling with activity.

Prior to the war, people that dared climb Apanon Mountain's grassy slopes found themselves tested and judged during what came to be known as the Trial of Apanon. Birds and squirrels would query them, test their knowledge and faith, their courage and virtue. Those that succeeded would rise to the air and disappear behind a whisp of cloud, transported to the All-Seeing to become one of his eternal servants. Those that did not would be disfigured, blinded or otherwise marked and cast down from the mountain to live in shame. Very few would succeed the Trial of Apanon, so that Modea became known as the city of the scarred.

Since the war, Apanon Moun-

tain's powers of healing and testing are no more. The last scarring occurred two hundred and eight years ago, so that today the last generation of scarred folk are growing old and dying in the streets of Modea. No longer are pilgrims flocking to the mountain by the thousands each year, and many surrounding villages have been abandoned. Modea itself sports less than a third of its former population, its buildings abandoned and its streets in urgent need of upkeep. To compound matters, a number of fellkin have managed to infiltrate the city and squat in its streets, passing themselves off as scarred folk. There they beg and steal in order to survive, fearing the Modean Town Watch, a haphazard collection of boozehounds and miscreants notorious for arbitrarily cleansing the city's streets of the unwanted.



Eastern Ebuleon

Eastern Ebuleon has become a place of lurking evil, where chill winds howl through ghost towns and the Dread Tower casts its ominous shadow. Eastern Ebuleon lies at the heart of the struggle between good and evil, for it is here that Crossbearers die in droves battling the wave of foulness that lurches towards the west. It is a land where evil spirits scour about unchecked tormenting as they please, and where fanged beasts lie in wait for the careless traveler.

The Tower of White and Silver and the Fell Forest

Since the war the potent illusions Delphina crafted to camouflage her tower have been inoperative, and so the Tower of White and Silver is now visible to mortal eyes. In mortal speech it has become known as the dread tower, for its appearance transformed the icy plains surrounding it into a forest of terrible trees and vile animals, exuding fetid and unnatural warmth. The fell forest grew forth from just a single of Delphina's monstrous demon eggs and to this day the trees and animals that blasted egg created are still living.

On most days the tower's summit is hidden by a silvery mist. A low, guttural rumbling is often heard within the mysterious tower, whose structure seems built of a material not unlike ivory. In 2035SA, two

Crossbearer contingents took assault to it but their attack was thwarted in a spectacular way; as they neared the tower, a monstrous creature appeared over it, hovering in the air and turning the bulk of the sword- and bowmaster army mad. Though most perished in the frozen north in the years that followed, some of these mad warriors can be encountered today on the streets of Modea or surrounding villages, gibbering nonsense and begging for mints, their piecemeal armor shot and rusted and their words meaningless.

The fortress city of Barnesmarin

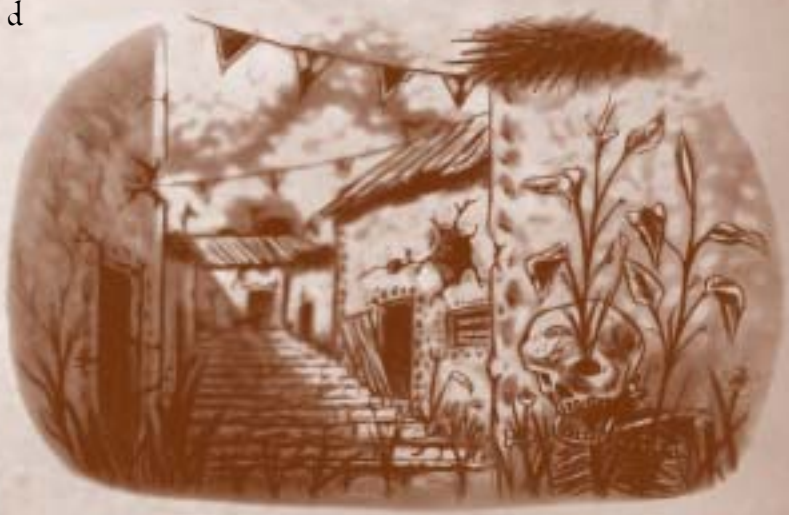
The last heavily inhabited settlement before the Ghost Lands, Barnesmarin rises from the earth as a mighty fist of stone; at night, its great lights can be seen from far away, so that the city is known as Firerock as well. Few are those that can approach it without first encountering a guard or brace of bow- and swordmasters, for Barnesmarin is home to ten full contingents of Crossbearers -over five thousand men. Most of the citizenry caters to the soldiery, who lead perilous excursions into the Ghost Lands to root out fellkin hordes. As of 2100SA, Barnesmarin is the only city built specifically as a city of war, and bears this heritage well; it is surrounded by two walls of stone, each ten feet thick, from which a single steel gate on opposing sides allow travel to the city's interior. Atop these walls are fortified guard towers, armories and lookouts from which soldiers keep a guarded eye to the east.

Merchants and travelers can pay a token fee to be allowed the safety of sleeping within Barnesmarin's two stone walls, an area called the ring. Come morning, local shopkeepers set up shop within the ring as well, trading with outsiders and amongst themselves. Only the farmers, administrators and merchants of Barnesmarin, along with soldier families and soldiers on leave are admitted to Barnesmarin's inner area, where warm homes, enchanting parks and refreshing ponds afford soldiers a welcome respite from patrols and battles.

Barnesmarin is the city where the Fellwatch maintains more than a token presence, and where the Guild keeps the smallest of its seven temples. Its solitary access point is through the home of Vana Longam, the Temple Curator posing as a local blacksmith of poor reputation. Underneath his simple home a stone tunnel leads to a series of chambers where four dozen bodies are stored at any given time, some of which already paid for by members of the Fellwatch.

Ghost lands

Ghost Lands cover the easternmost portions of the Land of Ebuleon. Here is a



land of muddy roads linking dead villages, home to a grim few survivalists eeking out existences amidst the nightly howls of beasts. It is a cursed land for a cursed people, long ago abandoned by men of reason, who left for the safety of the west shortly after the beginning of the war. In their wake moved in more troubling denizens.

Many things now scuttle within abandoned cities and villages; the night bears the bellows of myriad nameless beasts and of the men that walk these regions very few are actually men proper and simply. The Ghost Lands are the hunting grounds of the Fellwatch, a Phantoma pack that actively hunts the foul beasts that haunt these regions. Thousands of Crossbearers also roam its windswept hills and mountains.

Very few mortals dare inhabit the Ghost Lands; these regions are improper for the raising of children or the growing of grain. Towns and villages stand silent, their streets overrun with weeds, their buildings falling into ruin and their surrounding farmlands growing wild. The few mortals that here dwell stand to be counted among the most xenophobic of the Second Age; many unnatural things, of human or beastly appearance, stalk the woodlands surrounding their farms.

What more, the mountains of the Ghost Lands carry added dangers to immortals, for Awakened cells are known to operate in these regions. Using mountain tunnels, their operatives are known to be well versed in the ways of identifying and battling Angelion-kind.

Fellkin bands

The walls of Barnesmarin are high and their guards heedful, for to the east there is nothing but the Ghost Lands and the rank creatures that there live. If you must breathe their tainted air, know that in the first woodland you will come upon lairs a large band of fellkin having the skins of lizards and the disposition of rabid crocodiles. They will most likely eat your flesh and wear your bones around their necks. Further still, you may see at night the glowing eyes of the small-folk, a minuscule people that many say drifted to these lands on wooden logs from lands much farther and foul. Should your courage be so great that you reach the shores of the Azure Ocean, be wary or the toad-people that lay their eggs on the rocky cliffs close to the ruins of Haffergroves; they are unwelcoming and their younglings are fond of human flesh.

Fellkin is a word officialized by the Custodians (albeit without the support of the High Custodian) to refer to human-looking creatures bearing a mark that differentiates them from normal humans. Hence a man with blue skin and webbed toes is a fellkin as is as a woman having a third eye in her forehead. Normal folk give them a wide berth and people of the east may banish or slay them on sight. Since the eradication of the fell warriors and the Vidian destroyers in 1962SA, fellkin are virtually unknown in the Northern Birthland and extremely rare in Western Ebuleon. They live in moderate numbers in the southern jungles of the Land of Fire and the Southern Birthland but as far as the Unconquered Lands are concerned, Fellkin are to be found in the Ghost Lands. Here fellkin live in increasingly vast numbers, often ravaging the natural ecosystems and clashing with its people. Fellkin bands have been known to appropriate ghost towns for themselves, while others huddle together frightened in burrows.

Fellkin of Eastern

Ebuleon are overwhelmingly the mutated descendants of entities sent here to assault the Tower of Silver and White during the war. Their ill-favored journey through the Fell Forest changed many, not always to their detriment, so that some survived and bred though their original purpose was to live but a few years and die off peacefully. A lesser number of Fellkin somehow escaped their Fell Kingdoms and managed to reach these lands. But oblivious to their origins, Fellkin may be belligerent, frightened, confused or wholeheartedly murderous when encountered. The overwhelming majority have little or no idea of the world they live in or its history, may never have seen humans and may believe in gods or myths specific to their Fell Kingdom. The cautious explorer should use prudence when encountering a Fellkin for though they are possessed of intelligence, their reasoning and reactions are often incomprehensible.

The ruins of Haffergroves

Haffergroves long stood as the largest city of eastern Ebuleon and boasted a population of more than fifty thousand. A port city, its sea vessels rivaled those of Orcanager and its streets brimmed with life day and night. City folk of Haffergroves were known to be rugged and adventurous, for their ancestors had braved a long and perilous journey to reach the eastern shores of Ebuleon. Built on a high cliff overlooking the Azure Ocean, Haffergroves grew to be a proud city of sea merchants.

When the spirit war tore the world apart, Dagonheir of Haffergroves were the first to react. They transformed the ships of their merchant fleet into war vessels equipped with large ballistas and stone throwers. They added steel plates to their sides and trained their seamen in the art of battle.

In the spring of 1905SA, Haffergrove's six Dagonheir launched their flotilla of armored ships against the Fell God. A hundred vessels and twenty thousand armed sailors set sail towards the Furious Seas alongside their six immortal protectors. Their sails fed by unnatural winds, they traveled the seas for ten days and ten nights, reaching the shores of the Forbidden Land on the eleventh morning and never after heard or seen again. All twenty thousand men perished on the sand beaches of the Forbidden Land, falling to the eldritch energies of Ravencross and his minions. The fate of their immortal guardians was little better; the six Dagonheir did make it to the Tower of Anekron and succeeded in destroying many of the twisted forms of their foes, but in the end they too fell.

As punishment Lord Ravencross unleashed his forces against Haffergroves; sea monsters and other horrors fell upon the city and ravaged it completely, slaying its people indiscriminately and showering their blood upon its streets. When the great raven flew over it some years later, a great bolt of light caused the rock cliff under Haffergroves to crack and yield, sending the city crashing down into the sea. Today an explorer may see the blackened ruins of Haffergroves battered by the waves below the cliffs where it once stood proud.

The Land of Fire

"In manipulating the energies of creation, we may do many things, but this stretch of land escapes our control; as it did in the previous age, it will do so in the present; it will scorch the lungs and burn the feet." Lyra spoke with confidence. It was no hypothesis, but rather conclusion.

"Is there no solution?" asked Ambrose, pensive.

"No father. I am afraid it seems to be beyond my control. It will burn" she saw his answer before he even spoke it.

"Then it is the will of the All-Seeing. Cease your trials, and let us think of other ways to make it proper for our children."

The Land of Fire is hot and dry, its main feature a desert so vast it is seen as a test of faith to cross it. Near its southernmost shores, the sands give way to jungles of tall trees, where the air is moist and rich with scents. Here however the taint of Ravencross is well entrenched; the jungles are home to fell beasts that either drifted on the currents from the Fell Kingdoms or escaped the Dark Tower before it was destroyed by Eridan and his ring Windgod. The scorching heat of the desert and the foul beasts of the southern jungles have made the Land of Fire the least populated landmass of the Unconquered Lands. Its coastline is pockmarked with dozens of small villages and two cities worthy of mention; the city of Sennakar on its western shores and Barakeith, the golden city of the north.

The city of Barakeith

On the northernmost shores of the Land of Fire, Barakeith is known as the golden city; through it tons of gold and oil are delivered from adjoining towns and shipped by small boats to the towns on the nearby coast of Ebuleon, there to be loaded onto caravans destined for Ebuleon's Star. It is a city of romance and excitement, renowned for its jewelers and craftsmen and home to a varied lot of seamen, merchants, pilgrims and urbanized sandfolk. Barakeith's white-stone buildings are surrounded by a great wall etched with the Holy Word in mimickry of Avonmyth's. Pilgrims and seamen alike can read its verses and ask for favorable conditions in their journeys into the sands or seas.

Since the war, the golden city has welcomed a sizeable immortal presence, in the form of a Syba posse of notorious reputation. Together the city's six ruling Sybas control trade and commerce - both legal and illegal- and keep vigilant watch for signs of other immortals. Using a retinue of well trained mortal henchmen known as the Purple Daggers, they make troublemakers disappear and keep the flow of illegal goods flowing. Potions, litterature and artifacts along with spies from the Fell Kingdoms are to be found in sizeable quantity in Barakeith.

The coastal villages and the port city of Sennakar

Dotting the Land of Fire's coastline one may happen upon dozens of small fishing villages, their people colorful and welcoming. These villages are generally devoid of immortal presence and their people often unaware of the troubles abroad.

Sennakar was once the largest mortal community on the Land of Fire, but now stands as a shadow of its former self, well on its way to becoming a ghost town. Trying to quell the influx of fell spies that used Sennakar as a waypoint to the Birthland, Dagonheir assaulted the city in 2016SA trying to overthrow its mayor, a Fell Lord known as Desert Wind. Unsuccessful, the assault only served to slay a quarter of the city's forty thousand citizens and burn down its port along with most of its serviced sea vessels. Though the Dagonheir had their bodies slain, they returned four years later in different form when Desert Wind had rebuilt the city and port, and this time quickly destroyed the port using deadly artifacts. Since these terrible battles the city's people have left for the safety of Ebuleon, Barakeith or the coastal villages. Three thousand now remain, amidst ruined buildings and an abandoned port.

The village of Sarpe

Once a pleasant coastal village, Sarpe was abandoned by its villagers shortly after the war. Its people fled north to Sennakar, and since the second destruction of Sennakar's port in 2020SA most can be found in Ebuleon's Star or Barakeith. For more than a decade, Sarpe was the home of birds and rodents, host only to the warm ocean breeze. As such it remained until 2035SA, when several hooded figures set about building a large Guild temple under the abandoned village.

Sixty-five years later, the guild temple of Sarpe is second in size only to the mountain keep of Boreas. Its underground tunnels spread forth from under the tiny village for many miles around it, leading to dozens of cavernous chambers where organisms await, silent and

dormant within berths or growing and bubbling inside vats. To gain entrance to the temple, Angelions must first contact Sand Flower, the Sarpe Curator known for her stormy temperament. She maintains human forms in Barakeith, Ebuleon's Star, and Silverfast, where she goes by various mortal names. Around Sarpe itself she is known to control beastly forms with which she speaks to her temple's clients or confronts those that may come for less profitable motives.

The Great Desert and the thirteen sandfolk tribes

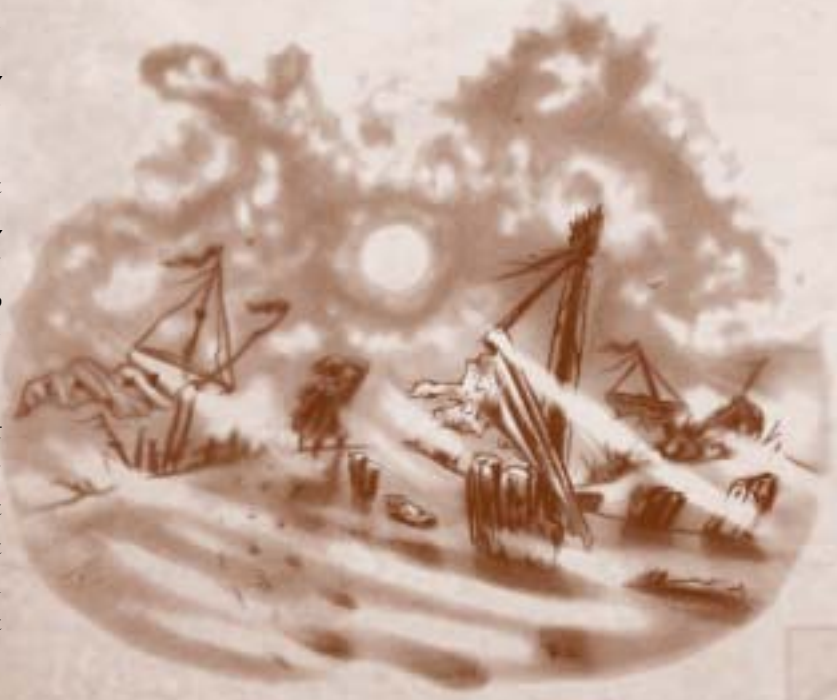
An endless of sand dunes and desiccated shrubs, the Great Desert covers most of the Land of Fire. A dry wind courses through it, burning the lungs and howling eerily over the sands. When the conditions are proper and the skies darken, this wind can summon sandstorms of such malevolence to skin people alive and bury entire villages in sand.

Sandfolk-also called desert walkers- are a hardy collection of survivalists that have lived in the depths of the Great Desert for more than fifteen centuries and know the dangers of its dunes well. They protect the thirteen oases and guide voyagers at the peril of their own lives, for the Sandfolk are to be counted among the most fervent followers of the Holy Word. Around their oases, fruit-bearing trees have allowed Sandfolk families to build small communities where travelers and pilgrims can seek shelter and company. At night when the stars are many and the sands cool, Sandfolk and their guests sing, tell stories and read from the Holy Word, drinking the fermented juices of desert fruits.

The windswept sands of the Great Desert are traveled by very few Angelions. Of those that lived here prior to the war, most either succumbed with the demise of the Dark Tower or became the Lords and Princes of the Fell Kingdoms. A single Dagonheir is known to protect the Graveyard, while a small number of Angelions -either benevolent or belligerent- travel the sands surrounding it.

The Graveyard

In the deepest regions of the Great Desert, where the dunes are ten man-heights tall and the desert wind at its driest, one may happen upon the Graveyard, a collection of ships, buildings and people transported here and petrified by the All-Seeing. The armored ships of Aamar Crickwell are here, as well as the twenty sea vessels that



left the port of Ebuleon's Star during the years of the Red Plague and the village of Caspath, half-buried in the sand. Mummified corpses, sand-blasted by the winds, litter the sands and ruins of the Graveyard. It is a sacred place to the Sandfolk; they dare not venture into it, and will not guide travelers to it.

A Dagonheir once known as Silent Heart has taken refuge inside the armored ships of Aamar and keeps the Graveyard safe from unwanted visitors intent on desecrating it.

The Southern Jungles

Two hundred kilometers' worth of dark jungleland separates the southern shores of the Land of Fire from the first grains of sand of the Great Desert. Gradually giving way in the north to sand dunes, the jungles are thickest to the south, fed with moist ocean winds. Amidst the trees and ferns, myriad small ghost towns and villages stand as monuments to the great exodus of some decades past. Now populated with grassy outgrowths and an occasional lairing beast, these communities were once buzzing with life, their people fed from the plentiful fish life of the South Seas and the abundance of fruits and wildlife living in the jungles.

In 1901SA the Southern Jungles suffered atrociously as Eridan Kingsway summoned the power of Windgod to tear the Dark Tower of his brother from the earth; in so doing he unleashed myriad beasts and spores germinating in the tower's lower chambers into the surrounding jungles and dunes, so that today the region is quite hazardous to the unprepared explorer.

The ruins of the Dark Tower

Resting in its underwater burial site, the ruined Dark Tower remains today where it fell two centuries ago, silent and brooding. From the high cliffs of the Southern Jungles and using a longview a careful explorer might see a region of darkness in otherwise clear waters marking the spot where the terrible tower rests. Countless artifacts -in various states of disrepair- are still to be found within, though caution had best be used before seeking them out: devious pitfalls and automated defenses might still be active, and the waters surrounding the Dark Tower have acquired disturbing characteristics; they are reputed for fish species and marine life that simply should not be.

Angelions of the Unconquered Lands

On the trunk of the birch tree was a moth, one that would have looked like any other moth had one of the thugs seen it. After the last of the horsemen had passed, it flew into the air with a silent flutter of its wings and landed on the helm of the last miscreant on rear guard, and would remain there until the dark of night forced the men to set up camp. As they uncorked their bottles of spirits the little moth took flight once more, this time to land upon a high branch above their heads. As they ate and drank, anticipating the next day's plunder, the little moth stood silent all through the night, hearing all that they said as their plans were drawn into the sands with sticks and rocks.

Prior to the war and for more than ten centuries, Angelions walked the Earth long after their mortal death. Closing their eyes on their death bed, they awoke in meadows and forests and embarked on a journey to the Forbidden Land guided by dreams and ghostly voices. Thus did they walk the Earth in bodies not their own, climbing mountains and braving treacherous seas to reach this distant land of mystery; a land where a great and ancient tower pierced the sky, inside which dwelt intelligences more ancient still. Following the guidance of these spirits -the Kingsways- Angelions endured a grueling training in the shadow of the black tower; sometimes for more than a century they were tested and challenged, left to feed on maggots and weeds. In dark forests did they come under assault by beasts and learn how to fight using hand or blade; lying in grottoes and chasms did they remain alone for decades, learning to ward off the nameless beast within by trusting to the All-Seeing. Those that despaired had their essences cast into the firepit; those that succeeded learned of their heavenly duties and were sent back to the lands of mortals. There they posed as pilgrims or traveling merchants, secretly exacting judgment upon the sinner and bringing aid to the virtuous. Rarely sedentary, the lives of Angelions in those days were more akin to that of current day Phantomas than of Dagonheir.

The week leading up to Thieve's Night saw Angelion-kind quite busy; immortals would travel to communities for the sole purpose of examining their Clerical, taking note of the vile or noble deeds of their people. During Thieve's Night proper they would visit those responsible for the most exceptionally sinful deeds and exact a punishment upon them they deemed proper; a greedy merchant might see his place of business put to flame and his store of mints disappear, while a crooked sea captain might see his ship bottomed, its holds filled with illegal contraband. A corrupt mayor might see his sins exposed to

the community while the most heartless or murderous sinner might be slayed outright during the night by blade or Thorn-of-God, his progeny administered droplets of blackroot milk so that his evil might not spread further. Yet the actions of Angelions were not only to punish; guided to a village plagued by an insidious disease, an Angelion posing as a pilgrim would show villagers how to grind the petals of the blue field flowers into a potent healing powder; to a city plagued by famine, an Angelion posing as a traveling merchant would bring mints repossessed from the greedy or sinful of a neighboring city and teach the ways of proper food growing. Against world-spanning threats only the most ancient and capable Angelions were sent; Dream was sent to battle the tyrant of Blakwik and put the dread village of Moygrim to flame. Red Lotus singlehandedly dismantled the contraband smuggling ring of Antiaadar and slayed Barakeith's corrupt mayor and cleric and their retinue of thugs.

Since the war however, the ghostly voices that once guided Angelions to communities requiring their aid have fallen silent. Alone in a world of mortals, many Angelions have become sedentary creatures; little good and much danger can now come of moving unannounced into an unknown community. Dagonheir and Sybas, most common of the Unconquered Lands' immortal inhabitants, lay claim to a Realm and defend it vigorously. Phantomas ignore the dangers of travel, claiming no Realm and free to wander about from community to community. Rarest of the Angelions of these lands, Fell Princes and Lords move about using the bodies of men, animals or things stranger still.

Dagonheir

The name Dagonheir comes from the Holy Word, which describes in poetic verses the tribulations of two young friends named Dagon and Syba; in a creek Dagon found a peculiar stone that glittered and hummed eerily, yet the boy let it be. Syba, deceptively claiming no interest in the stone, came back to the creek that very night and would use its magics to better his life, often to the detriment of others; Dagon went on to lead a simple but happy existence and had many children, while Syba died clutching his humming stone to the very last of his childless days.

Dagonheir are those Angelions that still keep true to the purpose of their immortal existence: the safekeeping of the world and its people. They are fiercely faithful to the All-Seeing and believe in the divinity of the Holy Word. Though they accept that it was the hand of Ambrose that etched the Holy Word upon the wall of Avonmyth, they reason that his hand was guided by a divine force. Perhaps the Kingsways did rebuild the world using forbidden machines, but the knowledge to do so came to them, not of them. Their immortal spirit may indeed be contained within essences of gold and circuitry, but the power of the lightning strike is born of the All-Seeing, not of them. Thus to the Dagonheir, the great tragedy of this age

came to be the day the Kingsway children used this divine knowledge for their personal gain; to wage their war upon the Earth and to create organisms unfit for the natural world. Thus have they fallen into sin.

Dagonheir answer to the Scriptures as ardently today as ever before. Their dream is to ascend to the kingdom of Heaven once their earthly mandate is completed, but between them and this dream stand many challenges; Sybas are the fallen among Angelion-kind that have forsaken their afterlife for the pleasures of mortal existence; Fell Lords and their retinue of Princes, all puppets of the Arch enemy Lord Ravencross, pose a great threat to this dream, for if rumors be true they are bent on covering the world under a second darkness. But their greatest battle is against an insidious enemy; faithlessness, a foe that strikes mercilessly and slays them faster than any other enemy can.

What more, a rift divides them, one that has so far prevented a greater alliance between all Dagonheir. The most aggressive and active Dagonheir of the war, the Lyrans believe Lyra is not to be counted among the fallen Kingsways; they wish to rekindle the flame of lost technology for the sole purposes of battling their fallen foes; they seek to build once-forbidden weapons of war and actively hunt for any artifact crafted by either Lyra or Ambrose. They have little qualms about using mortal forms of unnatural qualities and believe the war can only be won by destroying the Fell Kingdoms and crushing the essence of Lord Ravencross. Avonmyth's Circle of Sacred Swords as well as Antiaadar's Sacred Circle are comprised of Lyrans, and have gathered an impressive amount of war artifacts. They stand as the first line of defense against an invasion from the Fell Kingdoms, keeping many forms throughout the world looking for any sign of the enemy's approach from the seas. Those not of the Lyrans believe all Kingsway children are fallen, and that any research into forbidden technology is heretical. They are passive participants of the war, protecting the people of their Realm from harm but wishing no part in the battles abroad, for they claim these trying times only mark the coming of the Third Age and the ascension to Heaven of all Dagonheir, as prophesized by the Holy word;

And in the last days of this Age,

When my children shall no longer battle their kin,

Then shall a second burning wind come,

And take away the Angelions,

And leave my children

Forever onto the world

They wait for the burning wind to come, while every few years ominous rumblings in the Fell Kingdoms mark the awakening of a new World-Maker.

The scriptures

"I happen to believe that man can transcend his earthliness, and with great age will come great control and deep wisdom."

"Hopefully you are right. Probably you are right... For if not... If, for example, an immortal man gains only desire with age, then these Angelions will become a race of monsters."

Elizabeth and

Ambrose Kingsway

For fifteen hundred years Angelions lived by the Scriptures, the set of laws which limited their actions upon mortals and governed their activities within mortal lands. Hand-written by Ori Kingsway in the latter 400s, the original Scriptures are com-

prised of three chapters and nine hundred pages of inked parables, doctrines and laws spanning everything from correct dental hygiene to the forty-nine proper methods for the slaying of sinners. Written in the secret Second Language, the Scriptures were an Angelion's modus operandi; not a facet of his immortal life did they not dictate.

Though quite practical, the everyday concerns of the Scriptures are of little use in these pages; far from us to relate what length of blade an Angelion can use to slash a sinner's throat or what secret symbols may summon the aid of his immortal brethren; suffice it to be written here the three laws of the Scriptures, synthesized down to their very essence with none of the Lion's wordiness to burden the reader:

You are the Guardian of the World

As an Angelion, you live only to serve the All-Seeing and his people

You will bring ruin to the sinner and reward the virtuous. Your actions shall be invisible to those you protect. You will guide from the shadows and watch from darkness. You will heal, mend or slay when no one sees.

You are a pillar of Temperance

As an Angelion, you are free of desire

You will heal, mend or slay not out of love, hate, wrath or envy, and shall desire or seek no reward. You know nothing of glory, of pride or of wealth. Your heart must remain cold, and of mortal lust you shall remain free, for of mortal life you shall taste no more.

You are unfaltering

As an Angelion, you shall fight until the end.

The journey will be long. Those you protect will grow old and die in an unending procession of faces and names. With every passing season, every decade, every mortal generation you shall be there, upholding the principles by which you were given immortal life. You will fight those that seek to corrupt or destroy the world, and it is a fight you shall see to the end of this Age.

The life of Dagonheir

Dagonheir are overwhelmingly sedentary, protecting their Realm from outside dangers such as fell beasts and fallen immortals. A well established Dagonheir's Realm might be comprised of a small number of mortal communities, totaling perhaps two to ten thousand people, while smaller ones might count as little as one or two hundred people from a single village, perhaps even less. By day Dagonheir may pose as farmers or craftsmen, merchants or healers and keep an eye out for signs of danger or corruption. By night they strike against those that bring evil to their Realm either from within or from beyond, and ward off any other danger that may lurk about.

A sizeable part of a Dagonheir's time is also devoted to prayer, meditation and extinguishing the earthly flame that now threaten him. Before the war Angelions lived though the centuries as selfless creatures of the night, watching coldly as mortals grew old and

died all about them, smothering emotion with faith and replacing mortal embrace with prayer. That which held them together was absolute and unquestioned faith in the All-Seeing and his Seven messengers.

A faith that now stands attacked and wounded.

Lyra's terrible message seeded the worm of faithlessness in even the most devout of their kind, so that they now confront mortal desire while burdened with doubt. Their humanity, long ago forgotten, is resurfacing once more and wreaking havoc within their hearts. Memories of earthly pleasures are a Dagonheir's most implacable enemies, and much time is spent in silent prayer.

Forms and Bodies

"Careful where you speak of such matters Sata... Many lurk within our cities that wear veils upon their true selves. Be mindful of the maiden that serves you drinks, the beggar that shakes a jar at your passing or the moth that lands on your bed at night"

Prior to the war Angelions had only one human body at a time; upon death, they would wake in another and carry on their duties. Since the birth of the Guild of Genomancers however, Lyrans have had little misgivings about acquiring forms that -although unnatural- may help them against the fallen; they protect their people and wage their holy war using bodies of men or beasts which often carry attributes or powers beyond anything this side of natural. For as long as these bodies or their unnatural attributes remain invisible to mortal eyes, Lyrans argue that no long term harm can come of them. Of the Dagonheir not to be counted among the Lyrans, most refuse to acquire such bodies, preferring instead to be hosted by run-of-the-mill human forms, albeit at the summum of their physical capacities.

The Invisible Hand

Your hand shall remain invisible to the mortal eye, else you be deemed careless.

To you, the careless that brings about mortal suspicion, you shall leave before first light and walk for a thousand days, not to return to these regions before its newborns have had time to grow, live and die of old age.

A Dagonheir is the eyes and ears of his Realm, yet his actions must be invisible. Those he slays, those he helps and those he spies upon must not know of his presence or stand witness to his actions.

The Scriptures demand that careless Angelions whose actions arouse suspicion from one or more mortals travel for no less than a thousand days and never be seen again in these regions. During the period preceding the war, Angelions had little choice but to do so.

In current times, Dagonheir have been given to some imaginative interpretation concerning this facet of the Scriptures. Since many can now control more than one body, they can remain within their Realm after one of their forms is unveiled. By either destroying this body or exiling it to the end of the world, they can still keep guardianship over their Realm using another form without breaching the Scriptures. Others, predominantly Lyrans, have even bestowed upon themselves the right to kill mortals -innocent though they may be- that stand witness to their activities or otherwise stand to interfere in the holy war by their very presence.

The Rewards of Virtue

Dagonheir reward virtuous mortals using a plethora of ways; they may see to it that kindred spirits meet and thereafter bless them with many children; with mints, they may feed the poor and hungry; with their

wisdom, they may teach the ways of war and of healing. For as long as a Dagonheir's aid is justified, measured and discrete, it is allowed by the Scriptures.

The Hierarchy of Sin

Via the swift stroke of the blade, the whistle and sting of the Thorn-of-God or the invisible action of Jade pearls, Dagonheir weed out the foulest elements of their Realm, yet not all sinners are deserving of death.

The *Hierarchy of Sin*, examined in length in the Scriptures, allows for seven forms of punishment for every crime, from theft and greed to idolatry, rape and murder. Lust of flesh and adultery is not punished; the lustful heart can expect mortal scowl, but not divine punishment. Faithlessness is not a sin, but idolatry or the promotion of faithlessness is a serious one. An Angelion is free to choose, among the seven possible chastisements, which he will deal out against a sinner.

The Hierarchy of Sin will not be listed in these paragraphs, for the list would be long and the corresponding punishments seven times longer. Let it be said that lesser sins merit material or status loss while greater crimes may bring about the use of crimson brew, jade pearls or the flick of a blade. Only the most inhuman crimes merit the use of black resin.

Sacred Circles

Since the war Dagonheir Sacred Circles have slowly begun to coalesce, becoming as faint beams of light in a time of darkness. They are the beacons of hope to which a growing number of Dagonheir flock seeking companionship, family and added strength.

A Sacred Circle is an alliance of Dagonheir who guard a collection of neighboring Realms. A typical Circle can count between three and six Dagonheir, heard to refer to their kin as *brother* or *sister*. In some cases, an ancient Dagonheir may be a Circle's *patriarch* or *matriarch*, to be be counted on for leadership and cohesion.

Though growing, the number of Sacred Circles is still small and the greatest among them -Avonmyth's Circle of Sacred Swords- is still dwarfed many times over by the forces slowly gelling in the Fell Kingdoms. Lyrans are perhaps those most keen on joining Sacred Circles, seeing in them the key to fighting the fallen more efficiently.

Example Dagonheir Realm: Merclox

At the intersection of 7th street and Thompep road In Merclox, a large village of the Northern Birthland bordering on the western Pilgrim's trail, one will hear the clatter of old Brownbeard the local beggar and the ringing of the small bell affixed to the top of the Merclox candy shop door. Children will come here to sample the latest confections of Sona Balit, the old lady with chocolate fingers. Inside the shop children will find sweet morsels that are unique to the Merclox candy shop. Well visited by merchants and pilgrims and conveniently located in front of the Merclox inn, the shop does quite well selling valued bits of sweetness to foreigners and merchant caravans. Dola, a small orphan girl found wandering the valleys around Merclox, has been adopted by Sona and lives with the old woman in the rooms above the candy shop proper.

The Merclox candy shop is in reality the sanctum of Tiger Stripe, an old Dagonheir who spent her mortal life in the hills and valleys near and about Merclox centuries before the village came to be. After the war, she chose to establish herself in the lands she frequented as a mortal and claimed Merclox village as her Realm. Using an old supply of invisible ink, she leaves her mark -three stripes within a circle- on the two great trees near the Pilgrim's trail that passes through the village.

Tiger Stripe uses three bodies; her Sona form, Brownbeard and the orphan Dola. She mastered the ways of increased celerity through tedious meditation and trial, and can currently control her three bodies simultaneously.

Tiger Stripe uses Brownbeard's body as her lookout; Brownbeard "sleeps"on the other side of the street at night, keeping one eye slightly open to the shop and the other on the comings and goings around the Merclox inn. Brownbeard -though looking every bit the part of the drunken fool- is capable of prodigious feats of agility and strength when duty demands it. At night, he will be seen deambulating around people and places suspected of tainted activity while Dola lurks about in her cloak, jumping from rooftop to rooftop, her pureblade and a Thorn-of-God at the ready.

Sybas

Many Sybas were once Dagonheir, but in them the worm of faithlessness has won, leaving their heart defeated by earthly desire. Thus has the beast long bound by faith been freed, unleashing centuries of trapped earthliness upon the world. A Syba will be prone to emotional outbursts, fits of anger and periods of unexplained happiness or sorrow; he will often be found among humans, for he seeks companionship no matter its nature; a Syba may be as content in a loving marriage as in being the Tyrant Lord of an entire city.

Much like Dagonheir, Sybas claim Realms of their own, but there the similarities end; where the Dagonheir protects, the Syba exploits, and often openly. He no longer answers to the Scriptures, instead ruling his Realm guided by his nature. Sybas find the Unconquered Lands to be their horn of plenty; villages, secluded and unaware of the dangers lurking about offer only limited resistance against their craftiness and hunger.

Syba Protectorates

The Syba Protectorate is not under the rule of a Syba posse (see below), but rather of an individual Syba. It will often be remotely located, far away from the hustle and bustle of the great cities or the pilgrim trails, nestled quietly in distant valleys or coastlines. The resident Syba's presence is often invisible, his people unaware of the immortal living among them. He may favor a person or family -possibly his own- and unjustly award them good fortunes to the detriment of others, though he will hide his immortal abilities and not use artifacts of power openly, preferring instead to adopt the Dagonheir's Invisible Hand techniques. If the syba wishes for a simple life mimicking that of the average mortal, he may pose as a simple farmer, craftsman or merchant and build a mortal family of whom he will be highly protective.

To Dagonheir, the Protectorate is insidiously hard to locate; it may resemble any otherwise normal mortal community while the whereabouts of the Syba and his sanctum will be much harder to pinpoint.

Lordly Realms

The Lordly Realm is the most commonly encountered Syba Realm, while the actions of its resident Syba are much more observable than in the Protectorate; here the Syba is likely to be the most prosperous merchant, the young new cleric or the popular mayor. If pressed, he does not shy away from using his immortal abilities or artifacts openly. If he chooses to use his artifacts or speak his wisdom liberally to his people, they may believe him to be a guardian spirit, leaving baskets of food and other offerings at his doorstep in return for his protection in these evil times. In some cases, he may demand other things as well, such as mints, gems or mortal passion. Under him will be a half-dozen mortal ruffians, lookouts and spies that do his bidding in exchange for privileges and wealth. Lordly Realms are commonly ruled by Syba posses.

Tyrant havens

Since receiving Lyra's message, the heart of many immortals has turned black, transforming them into monsters walking amongst mortals. Their thoughts gow more venomous with every passing year, and wherever these beasts settle, a Tyrant Haven is born.

Rarest of all the Syba Realms, Dagonheir know to recognize a Tyrant Haven by

the gloominess of its people. They are a terrified people ruled by an immortal monster they cannot hope to overthrow. Lurking about are the many forms of the Tyrant Syba, of either monstrous or deceptively pleasant human features. Of the few known Tyrant Havens, all have been under the rule of a single Syba. A particularly notorious Haven is the port city of Stonemorgan, its people forced to do the bidding of Dream.

Syba posses

The few Syba posses in existence group together two or more Sybas who rule over a string of Lordly Realms; villages and towns along a river, within the same valley or mountainside are likely targets of a Syba posse. A posse can better defend itself against wandering Dagonheir or Phantomas than a lone Syba, and can better manage the mortals under their grip. Barakeith, the Golden City of the Land of Fire, is home to a powerful Syba posse who grow fat and rich off the gold, oil and contraband that pass through its docks.

Example Syba Realm: Stonesteps

If you need to travel north, know then that you must first cross the village of Tama then the town of Forna and finally the plateau village of Stonesteps. I urge you to renounce your journey, for it can only end with your doom. Though both Tama and Forna are gloomy in their own respect, the real danger lies perhaps twenty thousand paces beyond Forna, where a clearing in the forest will yield to a small rise and an icy plateau on which the village of Stonesteps stands. At the foot of the rise a man-wolf of stone almost ten man heights tall will mean you have neared Stonesteps, and behind the grim statue will be two hundred and fourteen steps leading up to the village itself. If you dare walk these steps, be weary of the frozen bodies and dessicated bones of those that have walked them before you; they will hinder your climb from the very first step until its summit. In all fairness, you shall doubtlessly become one of them. It is a place of unnatural, unpunished evil, the haunt of an evil First Age spirit of dreadful power that holds the people of Stonesteps as its prisoners. None from our town that venture forth past the great statue ever return.

Stonesteps and its surroundings are home to Dark Radiance, a Syba of great age

and terrible desires. Her Tyrant Haven is far from being limited to Stonesteps; along with this village, the accompanying town of Forna and the village of Tama are as well under her grasp. All three communities have suffered greatly since her coming, for her madness is utterly murderous.

Dark Radiance's folly predates the war by many centuries, but the crafty Angelion hid her perversities well. The war only served to give her more leisure and freedom. Lyra's message offered redemption, for prior to receiving it, Dark Radiance was certain her fate was to burn in the afterlife. Now positive there was no such thing, she was free to satiate her desires without restraint.

Dark Radiance came to Stonesteps as a woman seeking employment in the gold mines. During a decade she managed to steal a great fortune and bodysnatched the Stonesteps mayor. After murdering the cleric, Dark Radiance was free to rule as she wished. She used her talents at assassination to dispose of those that opposed her heretical decrees, and used terrifying bodies (such as venomous rats and giant wolves) to strike terror into her people. Children were sent to her palace and heard to wail in the night, men and women alike forced to lay with her and men forced to work the mines until death. With her wealth, Dark Radiance purchased bodies of yet greater foulness, and for a while terrorized the people of Forna and Tama, forcing them to deliver their gold to the wolfish statue of Stonesteps. Ever so often, Dark Radiance expects delivery of young children or women of childbearing age as well. Using the body of a wolfman twelve feet tall, Dark Radiance has replaced the All-Seeing as the deity most worshipped by the people of her three communities.

Phantomas

Wolfpack visited the Wolf valley villages during the 1930s; many of them had been cut off from each other or their parent cities, and their few Dagonheir posed little threat to Wolfpack. Wolf valley legends now speak of great wolves the size of horses that stalk their forests and plains. To this day the Wolf valley clerics strive to contain their kinsmen from wearing small wolf head necklaces that many believe ward off the Wolf Spirit

The war saw many peoples displaced; hundreds of villages and towns of eastern Ebuleon were abandoned with news of the approaching wave of evil. Overnight, their Angelions found themselves shepperds without flocks, their people displaced, scattered or slayed. Some decided to guide these mortals to the welcoming communities of the west and walked alongside them for many years.

Those that wander to this day became known as the Phantomas.

Least common of the Angelions, Phantomas are also the most mistrusted. Where the Dagonheir, Syba and Fell Prince's intentions are usually clear, rarely are the motives of a Phantoma apparent. Their name alone, no matter if once synonymous with great virtue and faith, is no longer considered an accurate measure of their character. Too little information as to their whereabouts and activities since the war has cast a shroud over their reputation and intentions. In whichever Realm a Phantoma wanders, he is unwelcome and considered an enemy.

Still, the Phantoma presence in the Unconquered Lands has helped contain the incursions of Ravencross on multiple occasions; immediately following the war, when Dagonheir from the central regions of Ebuleon were still reeling from the influx of mortals of the east, many dispossessed Angelions went off into the Ghost Lands to contain the wave of horror unleashed during the battle of the Tower of White and Silver. When Vidian Destroyers and the fell warrior hordes rampaged through the Birthland, at least thirteen Phantomas stood side by side with the Dagonheir forces of Brother-Sky to stay their advance, preventing the fall of Avonmyth. Whatever may be said of the Phantomas, it is clear most of them stand to be counted among Ravencross' enemies. To mortals, they have become known as wandering spirits.

Phantoma packs

Though generally loners, a minority of Phantomas are known to have banded together into Phantoma packs numbering from two to five individuals. In these evil days, they travel and rely on each other for company and strength. The Fellwatch, the largest known Phantoma pack of the world, is comprised of dispossessed Angelions that fought together in the years following the war. They are led by Born-of-War, an Angelion of mythical prowess and wisdom, travelling the world in search of anything foul to slay, and currently many of their forms patrol the Ghost Lands east of Barnesmarin.

Fell Prince spies, corruptors and slayers

The rat rose on its hind legs and jumped onto the table. It swayed its head to the left and right, uncannily using the same movements as any man would. It scratched its whiskers with its front paws -which looked disturbingly human-like- and hesitated for a moment. It is then that I knew this was no mere rat.

It reached the envelope and used its paws to open it, carefully pulling out the enclosed letter as gently as any woman could using delicate fingers. Unfolding it, it started to pass over its words with its head, obviously reading its phrases.

Trembling, I gathered my spirit and burst out of the closet and as I did so, the creature reared its head at me and let out a loud hiss that froze me in my steps.

I nearly fell unconscious when, using a raucous voice, it spoke.

"Be still little man, or I shall bring misery to your house! Let me through or forever your children shall be unsafe walking in the woods or swimming in the river. Let me through, or I shall see that your wife sees the death of her children!!"

Blindly, I opened the door, and the thing scurried off, carrying in its hands the letter I had so laboriously composed.

The intentions of Lord Ravencross towards the Unconquered Lands have remained mysterious since the war; save for his failed invasion

of Avonmyth in 1962SA, his forces have remained far and wide of the Unconquered Lands. Still it is here that lie the last of the immortals that oppose him, and his minions are known to scour these lands using deceitful form; fell rats, moths, birds, cats and dogs along with men and women of fair and pleasing form have been revealed as his Princes and Lords.

Fell spies, the most common of the minions of Ravencross found within the Unconquered Lands, are the eyes of their Lord. As merchant captains traveling the seas or as ravens and sparrows carried by the winds they reach the Unconquered Lands, there to infiltrate mortal communities and travel the pilgrim trails with dark purpose; many hunt for goldrooms, others for specific artifacts, occurrences, immortals or mortals of interest to their master. Fell spies are notoriously hard to identify and dispose of.

Fell slayers follow a more macabre purpose; these ancient and lethal masters of war, often Lords or Princes of proven worthiness, follow the guidance of fell spies to regions where Goldrooms or artifacts are to be found. Inching their way forth towards their objective, they will surround it and attack it during the night, leaving behind them ruined villages and empty Goldrooms come sunrise. Where the fell spy prefers bodies of discrete nature, the fell slayer has been known to use monstrous forms with which to decapitate his foes and breach into Goldrooms. The terrible marine worm that destroyed Midden in 1977 was the form of Red Lotus, who came to the Unconquered Lands as a fell slayer, sacking the Goldroom of Midden's Dagonheir Noble Sea.

Fell corruptors, less keen on open battle, are infinitely more insidious and their purpose as yet unclear; they are known to live within communities for indefinite periods of time, their skills at disguise and deceit unmatched. Through drugs, temptation, fear and power they can poison a community until it is nothing but a den of corruption.

The Watchful Eye

The heavy woman looked innocent enough, and I wondered for a moment what my purpose here was. Sitting in front of her talking about her missing sons and drinking a vile concoction she called tea, I was as well furtively wandering downstairs on furry paws, having infiltrated her basement through an open window.

For all my cleverness, I suspected she was not the one I sought.

"It is unfortunate the trouble cleric Maken's death has brought upon this town. I hope it will not incite others to mischief. There is a lesson to be learned here" She said, with an old and rickety voice. Downstairs, I followed a peculiar odor to its source. Still dark, my cat's eyes had difficulty discerning the features of the basement.

"His death is no accident I am afraid. His body could not have fallen where it lay without help. Someone is not saying all that he knows. " I remarked, looking for signs of deceit. But the old woman was

invisible to me, a trait the very old often acquired I had noticed.

But something was amiss. Downstairs, I had been led by the foul odor to a pile of rags. With my paws, I removed the top layers of filth and unveiled a lump of bovine flesh, half-rotten, its bone protruding at one end. It is then I knew I had been played for a fool. Not a moment later everything went black as something heavy dropped onto my furry little head.

Upstairs, I flung my tea at the old woman using speed of motion as no mortal could, but she avoided most of the scalding brew. I saw not a sign of disbelief upon her face.

She had been the one all along!

Shadows lurked suddenly at the window as I heard a thunderous bang and felt the dull pain of something sharp and warm entering my body. I fell to the floor, my legs unable to carry my weight and try as I might on its wooden boards I could not move my legs, for the projectile must have gone through my spine. After some quick and complicated gestures which I gathered were of their secret sign-tongue, the woman went beyond my field of vision and beyond the reach of my arms. Wise she was, for if she had ventured too close I could have grabbed her with my hands and disposed of her messily. They had lured me here purposefully and I now found myself trapped downstairs and dying upstairs.

Far beyond, I opened yet another pair of eyes, rising from a berth locked well within my goldroom. As I did so, an eerie lighting flickered to life, and I saw myself surrounded by stone walls and closely racked weapons. On a wooden board lay a ring of gold which now hummed at my waking, and quickly I passed it unto my left middle finger; I would need its power very soon, for the Awakened nest I had disturbed would doubtlessly seek me here. Correctly they would judge the time proper to sack my Goldroom and shatter my essence upon its stone floor, for I now had only this form to save me from the Dreamless Sleep.

Moving about from city to city, Awakened humans are shadows in a world of shadows, masters of deception; during the day they may grow vegetables, teach or hunt but not a waking moment passes that does not see them scheming. Their eyes ever watchful, they know of the dark secrets of this Age, for they are the children of the Watchful Eye, a mortal human sect that has wormed its way into most every human city. Its weapons are truth and discipline, its agenda epic and holy: the Watchful Eye seeks to rid the Earth of its immortal subjugators, the Angelions. The sect can count on possibly two to ten thousand Awakened operatives - either men or women- each belonging to a specific Awakened cell comprised of two to nine operatives. Though each cell is independent of the other, the Watchful Eye is known to have a central base known as the Mother Den which may summon the help of one or more Awakened cells for crucial missions or for its defense.

While its numbers are suspected of having doubled since the war, the threat posed by the Watchful Eye is still little recognized by Dagonheir, who believe the only menace worthy of their attention can be found centered about the Fell Kingdoms.

Meanwhile, the Watchful Eye builds its forces and recruits new operatives from within mortal ranks, while their immortal foes war against one another.

Origins of the Watchful Eye -The Blackdoor Society

The Watchful Eye is the continuation of the defunct Blackdoor society discovered and disbanded in the 1200s, believed to have been born of the discovery of First Age books by a mortal from the Northern Birthland. This mortal may have exposed his children to their forbidden knowledge and thus from this single family was born the now mighty sect of the Watchful Eye.

Blessed Mothers and Purebloods

The Watchful Eye only recruits children of very young age, preferably born of Awakened union. Very young orphans may be recruited on occasion, and extremely rarely, cells have been known to kidnap children, especially newborn girls.

Women within a cell are known as blessed mothers and carry great importance. They are fiercely protected, and not encouraged to participate in battles or otherwise perilous activity. They are the key to producing more operatives, and must sometimes suffer the seed of Awakened men they may not desire; certain unions, unromantic though they may be, have a higher probability of producing pregnancies, and so Blessed mothers are encouraged to lay with a given operative for some years and if this union fails to produce a child, promptly proceed to another mate.

Much effort by the Tinkerlords has gone into augmenting the fertility of both men and women, but they have met with little success. They have however isolated a subspecies of men and women - called *Purebloods* for they are thought to carry a genetic structure identical to that of First Age humans- which seems capable of breeding amongst themselves much more easily than people of the Second Age. Awakened Pureblood males and women that lay together produce many children, but cannot have children with the genetically-modified people of the Second Age. As an added complication, their children bear the mark of this heritage; they resemble their parents and can potentially lead to their discovery. As of 2100SA, close to a hundred pureblood operatives are active within the Watchful Eye.

Blessed mothers that become pregnant become sleepers; they cease all Awakened activity and often relinquish their Awakened artifacts. They raise their children and indoctrinate them into the Watchful Eye. They show their younglings the lies of the Holy Word, teach them the forbidden sciences and train them in the arts of battle and deceit. By the time they are ten, they are wise and cunning soldiers. When they are deemed ready, usually by the time they are sixteen, they are sent away on pilgrimages, though such pilgrimages do not end at Avonmyth

The secret sign-tongue

Adolescent children born of Awakened couples do not stay with their parents. Once they have learned the secret sign-tongue, young Awakened are sent away to other cities, feigning pilgrimages to Avonmyth when in reality they aim for any large city harboring one or more Awakened cells. There they shall assume new names and seek contact with other Awakened. The manner by which they meet requires some patience; operatives know to walk, speak and handle themselves in ways that -ever so subtly- differentiate them from the unawakened, so that the peculiar way an ear is scratched or a glass of wine held might lead two operatives to one another. These mannerisms, largely unnoticed by the population at large, are instantly rec-

ognizable to those taught the secret sign-tongue and thus permit Awakened from different cities to meet without uttering a single word. An entire conversation might be had with but a few twitches of the eyebrows and beard scratchings!

It is through the use of this secret sign-tongue that the children of Awakened, their false pilgrimage over, can come into contact with Awakened operatives from other cities and hope to become operatives themselves.

The Wailing Ceremony

Something happens to a child after the Wailing Ceremony, if it is performed correctly; his eyes will become glassy as those of the dead and as dark as the bottomless seas. This blackness is what you must bring about in this one's eyes as well, for if I perceive even the ghost of weakness in them come morning, then we will bury him together.

He who can fear shall not be one of us.

The few Awakened caught alive by their foes shed no light on the sect or its purpose. Under heavy torture, operatives remain silent as their flesh is flayed and their eyes plucked from their skull. Their silence speaks of a pain much greater than any that can now be inflicted upon their mind or body, for they have endured the Wailing Ceremony.

Perfected over the course of nine centuries, the Wailing Ceremony aims to break the mind of candidates through both mental and physical torture. Fine hollow needles, measured amounts of plant toxins, resounding words and a single night are its only ingredients. Come morning, a steely-eyed operative has either been born or a wailing apprentice buried. Little good would come of explaining in gruesome detail the Wailing Ceremony itself; suffice it to say it combines elements of nerve pain induction, chemical poisoning and mental torment using melodious song. Not every cell has an operative -a Songster- qualified to perform the Wailing Ceremony, but most every city harboring a sizeable Awakened presence has at least one. If need be, Songsters will travel to neighboring cities to perform their macabre craft. Well versed in the peculiar physiology of Second Age folk, specifically pertaining to their vulnerabilities to certain sounds, Songsters are highly valued individuals within a cell.

Awakened Cells

Awakened cells range in size from two to nine individuals, never more, and are under the leadership of a cell boss. Great cities may have more than a dozen independent cells. Occasionally, cell bosses may come under the leadership of one or more Legends (see below).

Awakened cells convene only when absolutely necessary; otherwise their operatives have specific duties which revolve around monitoring the Angelions of their community, researching forbidden lore and seeking news from abroad. The Watchful Eye is still in a dormant state; at present, openly waging war against the Angelions would be tantamount to suicide. For now, breeding more operatives is the highest priority. Perhaps one out of every hundred Awakened might lead an assault upon an Angelion Goldroom and actually battle an immortal.

Awakened Hierarchy - from Operative to Legend

The Watchful Eye follows a strict chain of command; operatives are the lowest rung of Awakened and serve as the eyes and fists of a cell. Every nine years, one of a cell's operatives, chosen by his kin, will become cell boss and lead its activities. In general, cell bosses keep

their position by popular vote unless exhibiting any form of incompetence or negligence. A cell boss may command his operatives to undertake any kind of mission, from covert observation to outright attacks of opportunity. Only a Legend may usurp his command and in the case of a boss' death, remaining operatives elect a new cell boss promptly.

Awakened Legends were once operatives or cell bosses, but their courageous and wise actions, which benefited the greater struggle of the Watchful Eye, served to separate them from the rest. Learned of by the Nine-Moon cell, these actions might have been key to the sacking of a Goldroom, the liberating of a town or the manufacture/discovery of a revolutionary artifact. Commanded to travel to the Mother Den, they follow a series of obscure directions and meet even more obscure operatives. Once in the Mother Den, they are promoted to Legend status, possibly trusted with one or more artifacts and sent out into the world once more. Their authority over operative cells is unquestioned, for their flesh is marked with the secret seal of the Nine-Moon cell. Wherever Legends travel, they outrank cell bosses as long as the latter is not a Legend as well. They may take over a cell for a given amount of time and relinquish its command once a specific mission is over, and periodically travel back to the Mother Den for new missions every ten to twenty years.

The title of Legend is rarely handed out; less than three dozen live at any given time, nine of which forming the Nine-Moon cell.

The Mother Den and the Nine-Moon Cell

Only the oldest Awakened have heard of the Mother Den, the mythical network of underground tunnels and chambers home to the Nine-Moon cell which holds authority over all others. It is within this Mother Den and under the authority of this cell that the Tinkerlords operate and that strategic decisions are taken in regards with the holy war against the Angelions; from this lair are Legends sent out into the world carrying orders that may save mankind from doom.

The Mother Den is said to be a vast labyrinth of chambers and secret passageways hidden deep under a mountain. Within its walls the Golden Rose and the Archivist-Godmaker along with numerous other artifacts stand as the Watchful Eye's most precious valuables. Well hidden, the Mother Den is also fiercely guarded by the Nine-Moon cell's Keepers, for if it should fall to the Angelions, much would be lost.

Nine Legends -called the nine Keepers- act as the Mother Den's protectors and coordinate the activity and research of the Tinkerlords. Five times transformed by the mysterious Archivist-Godmaker (see the *Items of Power* chapter)) into beings bridging the gap between mortality and immortality, the nine Keepers of the Nine-Moon cell arguably stand as the most powerful mortals of the world. Near death, their final trip to the taint relic shall kill them but preserve their memories and knowledge for future Keepers.

Hotbeds of Awakened activity

The Watchful Eye seeks to establish new cells in large population centers threatened by outside forces or fought over by different Angelion factions. Here they can blend in perfectly within mortal populations and their activities carried out with little chance of attracting Angelion attention. Consequently two similar cities such as Wiltoncrow and Dawnhedge would be home to two very different levels of

Awakened activity. Assaulted by fell beasts and fellkin, Dawnhedge would bear a much greater Awakened presence than Wiltoncrow, whose peaceful surroundings mean its Dagonheir are more capable of isolating Awakened operatives and slaying them before they multiply. Likewise Barnesmarin would prove to be a hotbed of Awakened activity, while most small villages of the northern Birthland would in all likelihood have no Awakened presence.

The Genomancers

Inside the room was the pungent smell of blood and steel, of flesh boiling and yet living. A terrible smell... I noticed a hooded man busy near some machine's controls, pulling levers ever so lightly and looking up at the ceiling.

It is then I followed his stare and felt my legs go weak. Gasping in horror and grinding my teeth, I forced myself to watch, for my duty was to report.

Linked to cables and conduits, throbbing and pulsating, was a heart that beat slowly and thunderously. The thing must have weighed more than a horse, and its girth would have accepted ten men. Blue veins coursed over it, feeding it with blood. Evidently, the thing was still growing, an experiment not yet completed.

How I longed to put fire to this horrible place.

In the years immediately following the war, Angelions not under the hold of Ravencross faced a dire situation; those that fought his minions and succumbed to deadly wounds did not rejoin their comrades in youthful bodies; they remained fallen and did not reawaken. Angelions fighting in the name of the All-Seeing worried the end of the holy war would come not through battle, but through old age. In contrast Lords and

Princes of Ravencross who lost some or all of their bodies to the war could draw upon many others already attuned to their essence and laying dormant. Their master controlled the Tower of Anekron's biofactory, and time was definitely on the side of Ravencross.

Knowing this Corvus and to a lesser extent Delphina - who still maintained her genolabs in the catacombs of the Tower of White and Silver- summoned many Angelions to their sides offering replacement bodies in exchange for their essence. As Lord Ravencross proclaimed, the alternative was inevitable: *your bodies shall grow old and die and you shall experience the dreamless sleep for a thousand centuries while those around you live through the Third Age. Come to me and we shall build it together; remain my foe and you shall die a fool's death!*

Some answered their call and became minions. Most did not, and but a few years after the fall of Lyra's Tower a message of hope came to them as word spread of a secret guild that could ward off the dreamless sleep.

Dark Blue was its leader, Lyra's mightiest ally. After the explosion of the Tower of Emerald and Bronze, it is said Dark Blue carried a pendant bearing a sizeable crimson data shard which contained Lyra's directives and technical lore concerning the growing and attunement of bodies, as well as the pattern colors of most every free Angelion of the world. It is even said that both Dark Blue and Lyra worked in a distant and secret location crafting the guild's laboratory and installations many years before her Tower's demise. With this crystal and Lyra's disappearance, Dark Blue became the ruler of the Guild of Genomancers.

For close to thirty years the guild's location remained secret, for the fell beasts of the enemy were intent on destroying it. Ravens and rats scurried the lands looking for it; it was an affront to their Lord's mastery, a threat to his dominion of the world. Guild agents frantically attuned bodies to the essence of free Angelions, and reawakened those that had succumbed during the war or thereafter.

Those fighting Ravencross could die and be reborn once more, and so the Genomancers became the beacon of hope Dagonheir needed to fight their powerful enemy. But troubles were on the horizon.

Though at first the guild grew and attuned bodies without fee, since the 1950s agents demanded gold from Angelions requiring their services, under the pretense that their machines and processes consumed vast amounts of the rare element. And so from the 1950s onward Angelions bought bodies from the Genomancers, and at an increasingly steep price.

Still the Guild was seen as a defender of the Holy Word, until its clientele diversified further.

With the loss of many Dagonheir to sorrow or taint, Sybas and Phantomas came into being. Brother-Sky, old friend of Dark Blue and leader of Avonmyth's Circle of Sacred Swords, demanded that the Guild sell no bodies to these fallen, for their actions led to the ruin of mortals and stood interference to the Holy war waged by the Dagonheir against the minions of Ravencross. But Dark Blue disagreed, reasoning that to refuse Phantomas and Sybas the Guild's services would be to send as many essences into the hands of Ravencross.

And so the Guild would allow the sale of bodies to Sybas and Phantomas.

Still, Dark Blue said, the Guild wishes for the great enemy to fall and the world of mortals be brought back to the days of the Golden Thousand.

With time however, even this last affirmation would be questioned; the Guild now sells bodies, no matter how unnatural their form and the impact

they may have on mortals, to those that have gold.

Dagonheir today see the Guild as a neutral party, its loyalties and objectives mysterious, a necessary evil in an age where to be bodiless is akin to death.

The Secret Greater Temple

The Guild of Genomancers maintains a secret genolab hidden under the surface of the world. From this secret Greater Temple genomancers design and grow organisms for the Guild's clientele and has them transported out to one of the seven Guild temples. There they either complete maturation or wait patiently to be awakened. The Greater Temple is also where the essences of the seven Curators are stored, along with -doubtlessly- the essences of the Angelions that work in the genolabs.

The location of this Greater Temple is perhaps the best-kept secret since the war, for if it came to be discovered by Ravencross, it would come under heavy attack.

The Seven Guild Temples

For many decades minions of Ravencross hunted Guild temples furiously; scouring the land they would attack and destroy any that they found. Over half a dozen temples were destroyed before Lord Ravencross realized the futility of his attacks; for every temple his minions destroyed, another was promptly erected in a distant land. He lost many artifacts during these battles which often left mortal communities heavily damaged.

Seven Guild temples currently exist; Dawnhedge, Antiaadar, Orcanager, Ebuleon's Star and Barnesmarin each have one. The mountain stronghold of Boreas is the sixth and the seventh can be found within the abandoned village of Sarpe near the city of Sennakar. Their facades and earth-level rooms may seem mundane or unexceptional to mortal eyes, while their sub-basements, hidden through secret doorways and tunnels, hold row upon row of dormant organisms and bodies. Guild temples are subterranean, vast and well defended. Their surface entrance(s) are guarded by lethal organic sentinels and protected by numerous pitfalls and artifacts. By far the largest and most defended, the mountain stronghold of Boreas can store over a thousand bodies of normal size, a limitless number of tiny ones and several dozen bodies of large or monstrous size. Of the six other temples, only that of Sarpe holds monstrous-sized bodies.

Guild temples are not limited to the storage and attunement of bodies; the services they offer vary from identifying, powering up, powering down or otherwise toying with captured essences, attuning artifacts or detuning them, and some other services as well (see below under *Other Guild Services*).

Temple Curators

Every Guild temple is under the custodianship of a Temple Curator, whose essence has been handed to Dark Blue and is kept in the Greater Temple. Seven Curators now live, one for each Guild temple, and a single Curator is always in charge of a temple. In case of attack, the other six Curators each keep at least three dormant bodies in every temple. Curators guide and welcome Angelions to their temple, show them to the body racks, receive gold and see to the temple's safety. They can refuse troublesome Angelions they do not wish to deal with.

Purchasing Guild bodies and creatures

Angelions in need of bodies need to contact a Temple Curator, all of whom keep mortal forms near and about their temple proper for just such

rendez-vous. A simple exchange of gold later and an Angelion has acquired a new body, attuned to his essence and ready for use 4 hours to a day after purchase. If desired, a Guild client may peruse the body racks himself from within the closest temple if its Curator knows and trusts him well. Thus by traveling to the mountain stronghold of Boreas and meeting with its venerable Curator Night-Voice an Angelion may choose from hundreds of available bodies. By winning his trust or offering more gold, Night-Voice may allow him to enter the temple and take a closer look. If none are to his liking, the Curator may suggest a body from any of the six other temples or offer to have it custom-grown to the Angelion's exact requirements. This is a costly option, and may require years (even decades!) of design and growth before the body can be ready for attunement.

In game terms, it is up to the GM to determine which kinds of bodies are available at any given time and temple; most will have various human bodies, both male and female, ready for Dagonheir use, as well as more exotic and powerful human and non-human bodies to please Lyrans, Sybas and Phantomas.

If a character's desired body is not found in the temple he is visiting, its Curator may inform him of another temple that may have this body ready for purchase or one of very similar form and attributes; Curators keep careful records of the bodies stored in other temples. An Angelion purchasing a body from another temple than the one he is currently visiting may face a troubling situation; the body may very well be on the other side of the planet! He can pay to have it transported to a place of his choosing (see *Other Guild Services and Fees* , below) or the Angelion may take control of it from the far away temple once it is attuned to his essence and leave with it at no added cost. If no temple possesses an acceptable body, then it will be grown by the Guild in its Greater Temple and transported to one of the seven temples according to the character's wishes. See *Body Growth Times* in the *Behind the Veil* chapter.

An Angelion suffering the Dreamless sleep by having all of his attuned bodies destroyed or that is otherwise incapable of reaching a Guild temple faces a grim situation; he must rely on a trusted friend to seek out a Curator and purchase a body for him. By knowing the name of any Angelion of the Unconquered Lands and paying the required amount of gold, an Angelion may purchase and have a Guild body attuned for him as a gift or to save him from the Dreamless sleep. It is also a convenient -though costly- way to speak with a distant friend without actually traveling! The recipient of this newly acquired body will be aware of it as soon as it is attuned to his essence by "feeling it", but free to him to actually activate it or not.

Attuning Bodysnatched organisms

The bodies stored in any of the seven Guild temples are received from the Greater Temple already fitted with the miniature cybernetic feelers and receptors necessary for attunement; Curators do not have the means or the knowledge necessary for the cybernetic preparation of otherwise natural bodies brought to them from the outside. Thus they can attune (or detune) bodies grown from the Greater Temple but cannot implant the cybernetic feelers necessary to attune a bodysnatched body; they must send it to the Greater Temple, and this is a costly endeavor. The Guild is suspicious of any artifact, package or body destined for its Greater Temple. Any of them could hide monitoring or tracking devices. Curators need to examine these bodies thoroughly and transport them inside darkstone trapboxes from which no monitoring device may transmit or receive. Still, the procedure is pro-

hibitively costly, and often refused.

Refer yourself to the *Behind the Veil* chapter under *Bodysnatching* for the costs of bodysnatching.

Dangerous organisms

The Guild will not grow or sell organisms that can ravage entire landmasses through diseases or plagues. Though they have no qualms about manufacturing bodies equipped with poisonous fangs, acid saliva and myriad other foul attributes, they will not create bodies that may potentially destroy the world or sizeable fractions of it. Creatures that may unbalance ecosystems through their reproductive cycles or that pose any threat to the world and its inhabitants will not be designed even for the tallest mountain of gold.

Sterile organisms

The Guild produces organisms incapable of reproduction, both because of the danger of releasing newly created animal strains into the wild and because it keeps their clientele coming back for more. As well, Dagonheir would see it as one more reason to despise and possibly attack the Guild if it grew bodies with which Angelions could produce unnaturally evolved mortal lineages or ungodly animal species. Hence Guild-grown human bodies cannot create children (though they may mate) and Guild animals cannot produce herds.

However there have been some instances where the Guild allowed an Angelion to buy animal bodies capable of producing offsprings. The herd of silver horses thundering about Bladewielder Keep and the giant wolves of the Wolf valleys stand as testament to this. Their owners did pay outlandish sums of money however, and the bodies they purchased do have some limitations. The silver horses of Bladewielder Keep each cost their master ten times the cost of a single sterile silver horse, and the silver mares can only produce foals every six years. Human bodies capable of breeding must be of unmolested Second Age stock; human bodies bearing even trivial modifications are incapable of producing offspring.

Characters that wish to buy organisms capable of breeding must travel to a Guild temple and negociate with a Curator. Haggling with potent artifacts, sensitive information and large sums of gold work best, though most will be turned back. Persuasive characters will need to spend at the very least ten times the amount of mints (or more) than what an infertile but otherwise identical body would have cost. Archfiend bodies may not be created fertile; their very nature prevents it, though GMs may rule that an Archfiend is accidentally fertile for the story's advancement.

Other Guild Services and Fees

The Guild has become proficient in fields other than genomancy; its seven temples contain adequate organic and mixtures facilities, and Dark Blue's crystal seems to have been imbued with more than passing knowledge on physics, forbidden technology and machinery. The Guild can therefore analyse, modify and attune artifacts and essences. However a word of caution is worth mentioning: in some circumstances it may be dangerous to ask of the Guild's services; as an example, an Angelion may bring a captured essence to a Guild temple, but cannot know the personal relationship his captive had with any of the seven Curators or the Guild in general. He may be refused the right to hitchhike on this essence or forced to relinquish it with or without compensation. Likewise, bringing forth artifacts of legendary power may be unwise and at the very least characters should be prepared to defend their claim appropriately. The Guild's politics may come into play whenever the GM feels like it, and on occasion a specific Curator may even doublecross characters for personal

reasons.

The seven Guild temples have the following facilities and expertise. Keep in mind temples are not where organisms are grown; the secret Greater Temple will have facilities of greater quality and size.

Temple	OL	ML	SL	PF	Base PL (organic task)	Base PL (other)
Boreas	3	3	2	4	18	15
Antiaadar	2	2	2	-	16	13
Ebuleon's Star	2	2	2	-	16	14
Orcanager	1	2	1	-	15	12
Sarpe	2	2	2	3	16	15
Dawnhedge	2	2	2	-	18	16
Barnesmarin	1	-	-	-	15	13

Basic fee for services

As a rule of thumb, a Temple Curator will charge around 50k mints as a base fee for any service. Depending on the difficulty, time, costs in material and facilities required, an added fee equal to 100 mints x GN x days x facility level x cost in mints x 2 is applicable. Fees are payable up front with no guarantee of success. Multiple attempts will multiply costs accordingly.

Hence to have a Curator complete a project requiring a GN25 Intelligence + Wisdom task requiring SL3 facilities, two months of work and 200k mints in material and time would have a fee of 900k mints.

Body Transport fees

The cost in mints to transport a Guild body from a temple to a desired location, per kilometer traveled, can be determined as follows: 10 mints for tiny or minuscule bodies, 20 mints for small bodies, 40 mints for normal bodies, 60 mints for large bodies and 100 mints for monstrous bodies, subject to change depending on body, location and circumstance. The client is responsible for any injury or death resulting from this transport. Custom-grown bodies originating from the Guild's secret Greater Temple may be delivered anywhere at no added fee.

Temple Goldrooms

The Guild offers Goldrooms at a flat fee of 10 000 mints per interim chapter. Angelions may rely on its potent defenses towards the safekeeping of their essence, though few trust the mysterious and secretive organization.

Guild credit

Many Angelions stand in the Guild's debt, for Curators do allow clients some payment plans other than amounts of gold. In lieu of payment, the Guild may demand that an Angelion or his friends bring his essence to one of their temples. There it shall remain until such time as he can repay the sum owed. Those accumulating too large a debt may become the Guild's minions, acting as its guards, keeping watch over happenings around one of its temples or become spies or couriers.

The Guild also accepts other forms of payment than gold and mints; artifacts, information or willing services may be acceptable depending on the needs of a specific Curator. Tricking or double-dealing the Guild is unwise; Curators have blacklisted such insolents in the past.

The Fell Kingdoms

An old man had once said to me that there is no better feeling than the sudden removal of pain, and at this very moment I understood and agreed with him; the seas, as violent a moment ago as the winds, became as calm as the waters of Lake Asbeth; the winds were no more, eerily dissipated by an unknown hand. I looked about me, and saw that two of our brethren had been flung overboard, lost to the sea, while another lay unconscious and bleeding on the boat's deck. A dazed trio looked about as did I, one of them feebly reaching for a bucket, doubtlessly to rid the deck of the sea water that rippled about our boots. I surmised much of our embarkation's seaworthiness had gone. In any case, it would not endure the return journey, should we be so fortunate. I looked up to the sails and saw they were now but rags in the wind, clinging weakly to the masts.

But my eyes drifted then, for a peculiar glimmer of light caught their attention off into the distance. A thing hung in the skies directly in front of us, a monstrous island that floated eerily upon cloud and empty, basking in the rays of a sun we had not seen for weeks. It was a vision of madness, and sick I felt at my stomach at the sight of it. I kneeled down to the deck and picked up my longview, and upon looking at the monster through the lens, I found it to be populated with trees and mountains, though I could make very little else; it was covered in a thick fog that hid most of its features. Still I had seen enough; my navigation had been flawless, and what lay before us was the Sky Kingdom of Desert Wind.

At long last we had reached the Fell Kingdoms.

The Fell Kingdoms are comprised of thirty-six island kingdoms that surround and include the Dream Kingdom of Ravencross. Usually hidden by enormous black tempests of wind and cloud, on rare occasions the darkness dissipates giving merchant ships close to the Furious Seas rare glimpses into their mysterious lands. Using magnifying lenses, their captain can then make out great islands of forests and mountains that either float on the seas or fly in the sky. Some even propose they stood witness to the flight of birds or some such beasts, though such accounts are likely born of the drinking of mariner's brew. As they sail away, captain and crew will leave baskets of food and flowers upon the waters so that the rest of their journey might be without incident.

In the years following the war, the Lords of Ravencross used great machines to displace mountains and levitate islands into the sky to create these Fell Kingdoms. Islands were submerged, others created, and the reverberations of their engineering were felt on the other side of the world as queer earthly tremblings and aberrant weather. Terraformatrons were combined to lift enormous amounts of earth from the bottom of the sea in order to create the Kingdoms that today travel the skies around the Dream Kingdom, while tidal waves engulfed coastal villages of the Unconquered Lands.

Together with the Dream Kingdom, the Fell Kingdoms today cover more than twelve million square kilometers, are home to more than a million intelligent beings and are administered by no less than two hundred Fell Princes and Lords. Countless new animal and plant phylums can be found within their boundaries; the unwitting traveler can be happened upon by poisonous cats, soporiphic birds, giant golden dragonflies, prehistoric animals, half-human beasts, giant or diminutive people and beasts once known in First Age folklore as unicorns, trolls and fire-breathing dragons

The Furious Seas

Know that if the waters are calm, that if your ship's decks do not buckle or cringe and your crew not beg for you to turn back, then you are nowhere near the Furious Seas

As a vessel approaches the Fell Kingdoms, the Azure Ocean invariably takes to life, becoming animated and hostile. As the first storm rings are seen, fierce gusts of wind and giant waves try to snap ships in two and send them to the sea floor. Only the most skilled sea captain can hope to keep a vessel of good size afloat. These turbulent waters are called the Furious Seas, and have been responsible for the deaths of many seamen. A ship has perhaps one and a half to two weeks' worth of this terror before entering the first of the storm rings, more if its captain gets his bearings lost.

The storm rings

In front of us lay an ominous column of black cloud as I had never seen before. Rising up into the boundless sky, crisscrossed with lightning, the cyclopean thing was a nightmare's nightmare. It drove me to wretching uncontrollably, for directly towards this monster is where I now aimed the ship.

A Fell Kingdom, no matter if it is sea- or airborne, is often surrounded by a mysterious region of dark clouds and fiercely aberrant weather. Seen as a solid column of black, here and there traversed by lightning, sheets of ice or firestorms, a storm ring can drive ship crews mad. Their origins lie at the very heart of a Fell Kingdom: the terraformatron. Fell Lords manipulate the skies and clouds over their Kingdoms, thwarting rain or tempest with ancient machines of dreadful energy. Yet though their artifices do allow them to enjoy the sun when nature had summoned rain, the

effects these manipulations have on weather patterns abroad are often cataclysmic, and these rings of darkness are born of this chaos. Here nature violently takes back her control over weather and winds, producing the ominous black column of cloud as well as hail, snow, fire and lightning. Storm rings pose a significant threat to ships of any size, and their passage may result in a ship capsizing, freezing in place or catching fire.

Fortunately, as any ship captain from Orcanager or Dawnhedge knows, storm rings can be either active or passive. While an active storm ring is as described earlier, a passive one is absent altogether. The massive black column of storm clouds is no more, and the seas no more angered than in other regions of the Furious Seas. It is when storm rings are passive that far away ships on the Azure Ocean can see the actual geographical features of a Sky Kingdom. Otherwise the dreaded black column of a storm ring hides everything.

A Kingdom's storm ring is all but invisible from the inside; the terraformatron compensates for its presence so that people within the realm only see blue sky and sun. Desiring escape, an unfortunate inhabitant will suffer a terrifying experience upon approaching his Kingdom's border. As his Lord's power diminishes rapidly and he enters the storm ring, the sky will turn red, purple and green, he will suffer the biting cold of frost winds or be set aflame by fiery storms. The storm ring itself is the best defense against escape a Lord can have; it may very well turn unwitting escapees utterly mad!

Fell Kingdoms

Fell Kingdoms are either natural or artificial islands that float on the waves of the Furious Seas or hang in the skies, sometimes disappearing above cloud cover. They are substantially terraformed and have at their heart - buried under many meters of rock - a mighty terraformatron.

Sea Kingdoms are easier for Dagonheir of the Unconquered Lands to infiltrate. Even mortals on sea vessels have been found shipwrecked on their beaches. Sky Kingdoms can only be reached by people or entities able to fly, and their location may change often; Lords can command their Sky Kingdoms to travel about!

Pleasure Kingdoms

Of the thirty-six Fell Kingdoms, the most common is the Pleasure Kingdom; here one may find enchanting forests, exotic beasts and splendid cities of gems and gold home to mortals that kneel before their immortal Lord. *The Fairybook Realm* is one such Kingdom.

Terror Kingdoms

Few Terror Kingdoms exist; Lord Ravencross has allowed only five of his malefic Lords to craft them, and only because their actions and support during the war were exceptional. For a newly appointed Lord to be given the right to craft a Terror Kingdom, Lord Ravencross would need to hear many compelling arguments, and be swayed through other measures as well. *The Black Sands Kingdom*, detailed at the end of this chapter, is an example of a Terror Kingdom.

In a Terror Kingdom, the depravity of an immortal Lord has been unleashed, his murderous nature flowing forth

freely from his sickened mind. Monstrous beasts stalk forests, feeding on the eyes of children; The fruits of trees are poisonous, their rivers filled with things that bite or sting; black towers hold prisoners in their dungeons, in which torturers flay them all though the night, while Fell Lords and Princes bathe in the blood of their worshippers, walking the lands as tormentors and deceivers. Dagonheir bent on assaulting one or more Fell Kingdoms would likely target Terror Kingdoms first, both to cleanse the world of evil and afford their mortals some peace in death.

First Age replicas

First Age replicas mimic specific time periods or cultures of the First Age; examples might include Kingdoms mimicking the Roman Empire, the medieval European era or prehistoric ages. Their reason for being lies in the underground ruins of Uthemion, where Lord Ravencross read passages from First Age books to his followers; thus many Fell Lords were swayed by the stories of Odysseus, the Caesars, the Pharaos and King Arthur, and marveled at the stories of Tolkien, Lovecraft and Shakespeare. Finding and deciphering Homer's Iliad might push a Lord to recreate the Trojan war era, he and his Fell Princes being the Gods that bless champions such as Achilles with divine gifts. Keep in mind that modern eras or events, such as the Second World War, would prove impossible to replicate; the technology and production facilities they would require is absent. As of 2100SA, only two First Age replicas exists: one of them, *the Kingdom of Thoth*, is detailed among the three example Kingdoms given at the end of this section.

Second Age replicas

His mind eaten by disease and his heart attacked by a consuming nosthalgia, Fell Lord Burning Rite used the power of the Terraformatrons to craft a replica of his boyhood village of Gladephoe, where as a young mortal he was raised and as a man he grew corn and vegetables. After the war, he used the body of a cat and a sparrow to carefully map out how Gladephoe now stood and recreated it exactly on the surface of his Sky Kingdom, right down to the forest and river surrounding it. Once satisfied of its genuine appearance, he used sleep stones to put to slumber the people of Gladephoe and transported them, their cattle and their wares to his Kingdom using a greater War ring. His people awoke to the new village of Gladephoe dazed and troubled by minor discrepancies, but otherwise believing the town and its surroundings to be genuine. Burning Rite has chosen to be carried in a form reminiscent of his once mortal body and go to school, play with friends and reenact moments of his childhood. His Fell Princes, equally carried by mortal forms living within the village, help organize events recorded in Burning Rite's lifeshard, and see that merchant caravans pass through the village bringing goods and wares from far away cities that no longer exist. As well, they make certain that mortals do not reach the edges of the Sky Kingdom and see the nothingness that lies beyond

Warped Kingdoms

The people chanted to the life spirit of the sky, and one after the other they planted their bone knives into the abdomen of the elder. As his blood spilled and after every strike, the old man chanted and coughed until he could no more, and then he lay still in the hands of death.

If his death had been simple and his life free of sin, his spirit would be reborn in the body of a child. If it had been noble and great, his new body would carry a greatness or power. If his life had been sinful, if he had angered the life spirit, no child would come, the soul of

the elder would be lost and the tribe would be one step closer to extinction.

Warped Kingdoms include Kingdoms where fellkin are the dominant species, where abnormal human living conditions exist or where aberrant effects are common. A Kingdom in which winged humans fly from mountains levitating in the sky would be another example, as well as a Kingdom in which six-inch tall humans fight huge predators such as rats and night owls. The Purple Island of Red Lotus where scorpion-men roam in great bands and Fell worms writhe on the beach sands is an example of a Warped Kingdom which will be described in the upcoming supplement.

The Skyfall of Valor's Rest's Kingdom

Sky Kingdoms are generally smaller than sea Kingdoms and capable of lesser amounts of weather control, but their airborne nature allows them to travel the skies over the Furious Seas. They are immune to seaborne invasion but as one dreadful incident proved, far from immune to concentrated attack by a determined enemy.

In 2069SA the Sky Kingdom of Fell Lord Valor's Rest ventured far to the north, leaving the Furious Seas for an unknown destination. It passed close to Orcanager and came over the north-western Birthland where Dagonheir attacked it in droves. Carrying powerful artifacts to assault and slay the mortal forms of its Fell rulers, they accidentally hit the Kingdom's palace directly, incinerating it at once but causing much more insidious damage; the fiery lance of energy bit deep enough to reach the terraformatron and destroy it, sending the Kingdom crashing to the lands below as a great ball of flame. Its fall produced an explosion of such force that to this day no life remains in what has become known as the Deadnorth. The essence of Valor's Rest was shattered by Ravencross, and his Lords forbidden from leaving the Furious Seas. Though they may travel near and about the Dream Kingdom, they are not to stray from it, for together they shield it against possible invasion. The uncertainty as to any of their exact location at any given time renders any invasion planning quite difficult.

The heart of a Fell Kingdom -The Terraformatron

Terraformatrons were instrumental machines during the Second Genesis, but were not of Kingsway manufacture; their origins lay in the darkest days of the First Age, when man created machines to build realms of fantasy. Their cities levitated and their skies became alive through their power, and soon men of simple pleasures became akin to idiot gods, wielding great energies with no great purpose.

As the First Age succumbed, the Kingsways used the terraformatrons to rebuild the shattered world, and for ten centuries these great machines labored incessantly before being powered down in the dungeons of the Tower of Anekron. For two thousand years they lay dormant, until that time when the world makers would be reawakened once more, one each to become the heart of a Fell Kingdom. For decades Lords used their power to craft their Kingdom, to sculpt its lands, carve its riverbeds, transport its forests, carve and cut stones, melt iron and create great cities for the people that would soon worship them. Once populated, the Lords could use their terraformatron to rid the skies of cloud or produce

rain for their people's crops. The terraformatron allowed all that -the creation and management of a new world.

Terraformatrons are hidden from view and protected from attack, nestled in the bedrock of a Kingdom or otherwise inaccessible. Though not fragile things, their destruction may very well spell catastrophe for a Kingdom, such as the doomed Sky Kingdom of Valor's Rest.

People of the Fell Kingdoms

"In the Third Age, people shall no longer fear the specter of death. We shall live on a world and in a time that allows us to unravel our destinies, not hampered by aging and decrepitude. The worth of our peers will no longer be defined by the appeal of their bodies or the embroidery of the clothes they wear. It shall be judged on the realms of reality they choose to surround themselves in, on the things they create given infinite power and time. That is how you shall judge the worth of your kin."

Lord Ravencross

Although no two Fell Kingdoms are alike, in terms of their denizens they share many similarities; a Fell Kingdom will be ruled by a single Fell Lord, under which a retinue of Fell Princes are given estates or realms in which a small or great number of mortal beings live. Only the prison realm of Elizabeth Kingsway, the Kingdom of a Thousand Meadows to be described in the upcoming supplement, carries no intelligent mortal or immortal population save Elizabeth herself.

Fell Lords

Each of you shall become the crafter of a world, the ruler of a people; you shall live your lives as you desire, without fear of the scorching fires of an after-life. You are my Lords, and together we will give birth to the Third Age and rise together to the stars!

Lord Ravencross

Underlings only to Ravencross, a great number of Fell Lords were of his valued lieutenants during the war. Their loyalty and power allowed him to gain possession of the Tower of Anekron and become the most powerful immortal of the world and so as a sign of his gratitude, he rewarded each with a Kingdom to craft and rule. Since the war, a handful of Fell Princes have been granted the title of Lord after performing exceptional deeds, and now rule Kingdoms of their own. Lords have the power of their Kingdom's terraformatron attuned to their essence; through it they may summon vast energies to control their lands and effect miracles upon them.

Fell Lords are known to convene regularly with Lord Ravencross by traveling to the Dream Kingdom or having mortal forms within its many palaces and cities. These Lords serve as added protection for the Dream Kingdom, and may fill various other functions alongside the three Dreamlords. The duties of Lords are many and varied; those excelling in war are mandated with the

protection of the Fell Kingdoms and may become slayers, leading assaults into the Unconquered Lands to sack Dagonheir Goldrooms. Lords of deceitful nature may become the spies of Ravencross and keep watch over other Lords, while those of more cerebral penchant will research ancient texts, blueprints and technical manuals found in First Age ruins in the hopes of rekindling the flame of lost science.

Little contact is encouraged between Lords but when they do need to communicate amongst themselves they are encouraged to do so using Dreamfolk messengers. Every Fell Kingdom has one or more Dreamfolk messengers for just this purpose, acting as emissaries of their Lord. For messages of perhaps secretive nature -not in any case worthy of mention to Lord Ravencross- Fell Princes may act as couriers in lieu of Dreamfolk, for the elegant winged Dreamfolk are said to hold allegiance to Ravencross above that of their own Lord.

Fell Lords may on occasion invite other Lords to their Kingdom along with some or all of their Princes for festivities. Lords are proud of their Kingdom, of the creatures that there dwell and the crafstmanship it may contain. Dreamfolk messengers are invariably used to carry out the invites, else the gathering be proclaimed of suspicious nature.

Fell Princes

Walk here and walk there, for this is your estate; your service is so that you are worthy of rewards; thus be the king of these parts when I am not here.

Fell Princes are the workhorses of a Kingdom, seeing to its maintenance, protection and prosperity under the commands of its Lord. Anywhere from two to two dozen Fell Princes may answer to a Kingdom's Lord, to whom their allegiance must remain above any other except Ravencross himself. Given estates within the Kingdom of their Lord, they may rule over a mortal population of varying size, though not all Fell Princes receive estates in this manner. Some are used by their Lord as protection, as watchdogs over the Kingdom's own Princes or mortals or as spies sent to other Kingdoms or the Unconquered Lands.

Fell Princes may work cooperatively or vie for the love and power of their Lord; gaining his favor can mean a Prince may wield more of a Terraformatron's energy and come closer to becoming Lord himself, while lesser Princes may toil in the same Kingdom for ages.

Though wielding only a fraction of their Lord's power, Fell Princes are crucial to his management of his Kingdom and to his status within the Fell Kingdoms. Princes are the eyes, ears and emissaries of their Lord abroad, and their action or lack thereof reflect directly on him. Princes that belittle their Lord to other Princes serve to diminish his influence abroad, and may one day lead to his downfall. Thus Lords strive to keep their Princes happy whenever possible, for to do otherwise could bring about unnecessary trouble.

Forms and Bodies

The creature was as tall as ten trees, and its mouth doubtlessly able to swallow as many elephants whole; each of its hundred legs was as broad as the trunk of an oak, and when it moved the earth trembled.

The Lord had finally woken his warform, and one proper to his character.

What hurt did this Age foment in the minds of men for a once faithful man to

become such a monster!

Fell Lords and Princes acquire their mortal forms from Lord Ravencross, who grows them using the Tower of Anekron's underground biofactory. Little restraint does Corvus show in the design of organisms of obvious unnaturality, yet he has crafted bodies of mystifying beauty as well; Lords and Princes are keen on using human bodies of exceptional beauty and superhuman capacities, the better with which to command respect and awe from their mortal populations. Lords and their retinue of Princes will also have dormant bodies -their warforms- hidden throughout their Kingdom, ready to be awakened should trouble arise. Warforms of monstrous natures have been created in the Tower of Anekron, some belittling the greatest fell beasts created for the war itself.

Angelion slaves, the unwilling minions of Ravencross

You shall crawl on your belly as a slithering snake

You shall be born again and again into vile forms

You shall endure pain and torment day and night

You shall fester in your filth and feast on rats while I love and dream and play

I shall kill you ten thousand times using ten thousand ways

But death is a luxury I shall forever deny you...

Not all Angelions become willing servants of Ravencross when their essences are taken by his minions; of those he captured during the war, many refuse to do his bidding to this day, either because of their faith in the All-Seeing or for reasons of their own. Many would suffer the Silent Wail rather than serve him. A minority of Angelion slaves were once Fell Princes or Lords, but their disservice (or disloyalty) incurred the fury of Ravencross and their subsequent fall into slavery.

The life of an Angelion slave is a terrible one; many are to be found slithering on the marbled floors of Valruin Palace or locked in the cages of its main hall. Given foul or diseased bodies, they may be sent to Terror Kingdoms, there to become amusement for a Lord or be forced to endure endless torment as their captor toys with their essence.

Mortal humans

Walking inside the burned underground labyrinths of the Tower of Anekron, a distraught Corvus would come upon the wrecked hulks of hundreds of golems, the nine shattered and incinerated data obelisks and the defunct immortality machine, all emblazoned by Ambrose as his last desperate act. Most of the facilities and a small number of Terraformatrons lay in ruin as well. But to his surprise, his father's destructive impulse had spared -likely through accident- the extensive biofactories of the Tower. These Lord Ravencross used to great effect in the years immediately following his capture of the Tower; after granting his highest Lords the lands that would later be called Fell Kingdoms, he populated their Kingdoms with all manner of people and beasts designed and grown within these biofactories.

Close to a million humans live in the Fell Kingdoms; born and grown in the biofactories of the Tower of Anekron less than two hundred years ago, the ancestors of these mortals were thrust into Fell Kingdoms and taught

to serve their Lord blindly. Their experiences may closely resemble that of the Hundred, two thousand years ago, and they are likely to consider their Lord as god and his retinue of Princes as demigods. Mortals of the Fell Kingdoms have no knowledge of the Holy Word, of the Seven Kingsways, of the history of the Second Age or of the world beyond the confines of their specific Kingdom. Consequently, their budding beliefs may seem utterly unreasonable to a mortal of the Unconquered Lands. Those living in Sky Kingdoms, who have seen the edge of their Kingdom, may believe that beyond it lies only chaos.

Mortals of the Fell Kingdoms were created for their Lord, and though an overwhelming majority are completely human, some may carry discrete (and hidden) special attributes -physical or mental- in relation to his wishes. Those bearing any noticeable difference -be it foul or fair- are called Fellkin.

The Fellkin

The creature turned to hiss, and I saw myself staring right down its eyes. They carried no animal instinct there, but rather the glow of intelligence. Behind those teeth and scales, there lurked the mind of a man.

The great majority of Fell Lords chose to rule human populations, but a rare few elected to be gods to races of beings not entirely human. These entities became known as the Fellkin, the very same that may be seen stalking the Ghost Lands of Eastern Ebuleon and that took assault to the six Towers during the war. Though their form may vary greatly, all species of human intelligence but non-human body are of the Fellkin.

Fellkin may fly in the clouds with wings while others breathe through gills and swim in seas. Some have fur, others shine under the sun with golden skins and silvery hair. The smallfolk barely reach six inches in height while the giants of Glaadfel's Kingdom (to be described in detail in the upcoming supplement) reach fifty feet in height! Often bearers of human or human-derived brains, Fellkin may be quite crafty and inquisitive, possessed of the same desires, instincts and mental capacities as humans. Exceptionally, Fellkin species such as the Eidech have become widespread in many Kingdoms (as well as some regions of the Unconquered Lands). Normally, Fellkin species are Kingdom specific.

3 example Kingdoms

What follows, *The Fairybook Realm*, *The Sky-Kingdom of Thoth* and *The Black Sands Kingdom* are but three of the thirty-six Fell Kingdoms known to exist as of the year 2100SA. They are briefly described, and much room has been left for you to craft them further to your liking.

The Fairybook Realm
(Gravitational energy: 50, Electromagnetic energy: 50)

There is no more malleable thing than the mind of a newly created mortal, nor more promising a thing. Thrust upon an unknown land, a mortal will cower like a frightened child until you take him by the hand and guide him; in less than a generation he will have built you cities and monuments and given your name to his children. These are my children, and never shall they stand witness to the horrors abroad.

At war's end, Lord Ravencross quickly rewarded

his three highest lieutenants; first came mighty Red Lotus, the Angelion who brought him his father's essence, then Shard-of-Jade, who handed him his mother's. Red Lotus was given carte blanche to engineer the dreaded Purple Island, while Shard-of-Jade crafted the Fairybook Realm. As such, today both these island-Kingdoms are somewhat more evolved and complete than other Fell Kingdoms, and significantly larger.

To the south of the Dream Kingdom lies the Fairybook Realm, an island Kingdom where herds of unicorn run from the claws of golden-scaled dragons and where a powerful Sorceror-King rules from the city Perjade. Inspired by a First Age picture book his daughter Jade had found buried in a box in the desert, Shard-of-Jade crafted the Fairybook Realm in remembrance of her, who died tragically at a very young age. Thus the Fairybook Realm emulates what the world could be under the spell of machine-born magics...

Forests, rivers, hills and meadows are the predominant features of Shard-of-Jade's Fairybook Realm, along with a great city of green crystal at its center. A tall mountain chain encircles the entire Kingdom, beyond which sandy shores give way to the waters of the Furious Seas. Here the sunny skies quickly turn violet and black as the power of the terraformatron wanes. Nine Fell Princes, known to mortals as Sorceror-Princes, divide the Kingdom in a like number of Princely Estates.

The City of Perjade

Perjade was built upon a large hillside, its structures and temples serviced by a winding series of intertwining streets meandering their way up from the small lake at its base to the green castle at its summit. Massive trees had grown about it, of a kind similar to those of the Dream Kingdom's Forest of Worlds. Very little save the rustling of the fountain waters did I hear, only once my nerves rattled by the sound of a winged Dreamfolk Guardian passing overhead. What a journey we had endured to reach this city; many friends had been lost to the magics of Shard-of-Jade and the perils of his Kingdom.

The Sorceror-King's city of Perjade, built of a crystal that glows an eerie green come nightfall, is home to all the denizens of the Kingdom; its highest streets invariably lead to the great gate of the Green Castle and the Dreamfolk villas. Throughout the city are schools, homes, administrative buildings, parks and fountains of sparkling sweet water. This is the Kingdom's only city; come nightfall, all will be found sleeping within Perjade under its green lights.

Every year on the 4th of Leapdeer, Jade's birthday, a celebration commemorating the creation of the Realm is held in the city, with festivities and parades lasting for a complete week. It is during this time that Shard-of-Jade and his nine Princes are fond of inviting other Lords and their Princes to the Green Castle, so that they may partake in the revelry and take moonlit walks in Whistling Forest.

The Floating prison-keeps

On this floating rock you will find mosses and foul-tasting berries; of its tree you may scrape some fungi and dig for some grubs, drinking of its bitter sap to relieve your thirst. But know that when you have bled this tree dry and eaten of the last berry, your last day will near. May the All-Seeing save you, should he have some power in my Kingdom

The Sorceror-King has fabricated dozens of floating prison-keeps, each a chunk of rock, grass and trees no more than fifty to a hundred meters across. Kept buoyant some hundreds of meters or more above the surface by the power of his Kingdom, Shard-of-Jade sometimes exiles thieving children and other such miscreants from his Kingdom upon these verdant prisons so that they may reflect upon their foulness. On some occasions, Fell Princes (and once, a Lord) from other Kingdoms who brought upon the fury of Ravencross himself were cast here as well. A prison-keep is made self-sufficient and can provide meager sustenance - from its few berries, mushrooms and other eatables- to its prisoner. The Sorceror-King keeps at least one floating prison-keep (or pleasure-keep?) of his own, upon which he and his guests may wander the skies above the Kingdom.

The Whistling Forest

To the north of Perjade and for some forty kilometers is the Whistling Forest, home to Giant Elms. Whistling Forest is off limits to the children of the Kingdom, a stretch of woodland where the Sorceror-King and his Princes hunt leapdeer and silver boar on the backs of their unicorn steeds. On occasion Fell Lords or Princes with whom Shard-of-Jade entertains amicable relations will be allowed to participate in these hunts and listen to the whistling song of the

Green Singer, a bird engineered to sing the song Jade is heard to hum on Shard-of-Jade's life pendant.

The Border Mountains

The Kingdom's limits are clearly defined by the Border Mountains, beyond which no mortal has gone. Easily as tall as the mightiest peaks of the Unconquered Lands, the Border Mountains are home to the golden-scaled dragons which lair in deep grottoes and feed on mountain goats and stray unicorns. A single network of tunnels located at the south of the Kingdom, well guarded by the Kingdom's Princes, could allow passage through the mountains.

Wildlife

"What's that...?" I asked, for the ground shook and trembled...

"We are discovered!!! He is disrupting the earth under our feet!!"

"It is nothing of the sort. What makes the earth tremble is nothing but animals." Did the Prince say, with a snicker.

"They're unicorns..."He added with a grin. "A herd of unicorns"

I looked at the ground. First Age mythology was filled with these elusive creatures.

"Unicorns?" I asked, expecting no answer but a grin, and was not disappointed.

"Unicorns...!"I added.

"Should I fear the fire breath of dragons then? Or the petrifying gaze of medusas?" I too had been there listening to Corvus as he spoke of the fairy tales of the First Age, a long time ago.

The Prince thought a while, and looked serious.

"I don't know about medusas, but if we do encounter a dragon, let me do the talking"

Smiling as a child I followed his advance, while the ground trembled at our feet.

Along with mundane animals, Shard-of-Jade made it so that the forests surrounding Perjade carry denizens of more magical aspect, true to the story book found by his dead daughter; thus can one see unicorns run freely and an occasional fairy fly from flower to flower; giant trees and hallucinogenic flowers may be happened upon, while reclusive night trolls encourage children to stay within Perjade at night. Nearly as intelligent as humans, the golden-scaled dragons which lair in the Border Mountains speak a crude form of the One Language and are subject to the same

power symbols and words as are the people of the Kingdom. They keep watch over the mountains and the shores beyond, ensuring that no unwanted visitors come unannounced and that not child wanders off. Though said to be fond of human flesh, in reality they are not; should a stray child get caught by a dragon's claws, he would more likely be brought to a prison-keep than eaten. Of the three dozen or so dragons that lair in the mountains, nine are attuned to the essence of a Prince, and one -a giant black dragon- is attuned to the spirit of Shard-of-Jade. Myriad other beasts, too many to describe here, may be encountered in the vast Fairybook Realm.

The people

"Before the Sorceror-King came to these lands, only brackish swamps and the buried remains of an ancient age were to be found here, a land forgotten by the god of the ancient world. When finally he did come, the Sorceror-King gave birth to new life, and where there was swamp he grew trees with roots that solidified the earth; where there were snakes and beasts more foul he seeded the land with unicorns, faeries and birds of song. Seeing that the ancient god mocked him and ignored his work, he created us, so that we could marvel at it. But this angered the ancient god, who allowed mortal eyes only upon himself! He warned the Sorceror-King that his Realm would never be at peace and cursed it with trolls and fiery dragons. But the Sorceror-King's power is great, and in one day, he made the mountains on all sides of the Realm rise from the Earth and put an end to the evil incursions. Ever since the birth of our land, he has protected us from evil, and asked but one thing of us: beyond the mountains we may not go, for there lurks the jealous ancient god that transforms people into vile creatures of darkness. May the Sorceror-King live forever, and may the corrupting hand of the ancient god never reach our home.

May the Sorceror-King hear us... We thank him.

Let us sleep tight!"

In the Fairybook Realm, an explorer from beyond may be awe-struck at the lack of adults, and with good reason for there are none! Shard-of-Jade wished for his people to be immortal or just about, their complex physiology allowing them to live some two thousand years or more. As such, they age extremely slowly, and it may take more than two centuries before the first young adults become worthy of the name. Still, though they are wee in height and fair of face, children here are nearing their two hundredth birthday! Childish in form, they hunt in forests on the backs of unicorns and farm the fields around Perjade as any adult would, only with the vigor and somewhat limited strength of children.

Five thousand children claim Perjade as their city and the Fairybook Realm as their kingdom, one they believe to have been forged by the great Sorceror-King Shard-of-Jade who crafted it during ten thousand nights, while the ancient god slept. When his work was over, he surrounded it with a spectacular mountain chain so that the fiery breath of the ancient god could not reach it. Beyond these mountains -children

here would have you believe- lies the dead world; lands of poison and fire, home to rocks and winds.

The Fairybook children speak the One Language and closely resemble Second Age folk. Some exceptions in their physiology include: fairybook children cannot yet breed, and will need to wait a further two hundred years or so before they sense-and can act upon- the need to create children of their own. They are even more colorful in their hair and skin color than Second Age folk, and are much more vulnerable to certain sounds and sights. In fact, Shard-of-Jade has made it so that a plethora of hand gestures, word strings and melodies can put his children to sleep, hypnotize, or slay them outright when the need arises. They may be made peaceful and content by a series of quick hand gestures; a man, be he mortal or immortal, that knows all one hundred and seventy-seven power symbols, songs and words of the Sorceror-King may very well do with these children what he please.

The Dreamfolk Guardians

Along with his nine Fell Princes, Shard-of-Jade has mandated five hundred Dreamfolk with the care and guardianship of the Kingdom and its children. As such they patrol the shores and seas beyond its mountains on the lookout for unwanted newcomers and see to the well being of its mortals. They carry off troublemakers to the prison-keeps and act as couriers between mortals, the Sorceror-Princes and the Sorceror-King. Dreamfolk cocoon fields litter the valleys nestled within the Whistling Forest, and as adults they live in villas within Perjade itself.

The Nine Sorceror-Princes

During the war Shard-of-Jade used and lost many bodies, but one in particular became quite notorious; while Lord Ravencross battled his father on the top balcony of the Tower of Anekron, Shard-of-Jade commanded a great Vidian Destroyer and led it all the way to the Tower itself, coiling its massive body around it and from its mouth disgorging nine snake warriors into the Tower from one of its windows. Together these nine followers would wreak so much havoc within that Shard-of-Jade used them again and again as his preferred comrades in arms, and following the war all nine wished to accompany him to his Fairybook Realm, there to become his Princes.

Weaknesses

Overwhelming Hatred

those who harm the innocent, and murderers and fanatics in general.

Lurking madness

Shard-of-Jade is still haunted by the memories of his daughter, more than a thousand years after her death. He believes she speaks to him from beyond the grave, and may be heard to whisper to her as well in any of his forms.

Present bodies (known)

Shard-of-Jade has perhaps two dozen bodies, the most grandiose of which swimming in the seas around his Kingdom and beyond in the Azure Ocean. He is fond of birds and has visited with old acquaintances in the form of a giant albatross with eyes of fire. His human forms are many; he is rumored to maintain a mortal form within Orcanager, where he is surely to be found as a mariner or sea captain of some sort. In the Fairybook Realm in the personality of the Sorceror-King, Shard-of-Jade uses the body of an old man wearing robes fitting for his

Fell Lord Shard-of-Jade, Sorceror-King of Perjade

Masteries	
(Major) War	●●●●●●●●●
(1st Minor) Domination	●●●●●●●
(2nd Minor) Passions	●●●●
(3rd Minor) Wisdom	●●●
(Achilles Heel) Deceit	●●
Intelligence	7
Temperance	6
Presence	8
Celerity Pool	+4
Cardinal nature	Sun
Age	1415 years old

mood; when his spirits are good, he is fond of white, much like the good sorcerer of Jade's ancient story book. When his children bring about his wrath, he dresses in black robes adorned with bones, claws and the black feathers of crows.

Shard-of-Jade was born in 685SA and went by the mortal name of Arin until his death in 721SA. A man known by his peers as a quiet and hardworking fisherman, Arin lived with his wife and daughter in the chaotic years following the Red Plague in a small coastline village of the Land of Fire called Brissum. Much happiness did they enjoy before the fateful year of 721SA, when a notorious Crossbearer company came forth from the desert into Brissum, demanding of its cleric the name of at least one heretic. After some brutal persuasion, the cleric uttered the name Arin, the sailor who had sinfully carved the name of his daughter on the mast of his boat to ward off misfortunes at sea. While Arin was at large, the company took torches to his home, wife and daughter securely tightened to their beds. Before continuing their campaign down the coast, Bowmasters greeted Arin's return with a volley of flaming arrows upon his boat, setting fire to his sail and sending it adrift into the deep sea. An arrow deep in his belly, Arin lay dying in his boat, his life trickling into the sea as a fine string of crimson.

Having followed the murderous Crossbearer company as a jet black raven since they first set off, Corvus Kingsway found Arin adrift, dying and clutching his Holy Word as his last breath drew near. Reborn as an Angelion, Arin took the immortal name Shard-of-Jade in remembrance of his daughter, a name that would become synonymous with vengeance from beyond the grave; Shard-of-Jade would slay over sixty Crossbearer and clerical fanatics during the War of Crosses, on one occasion defeating an entire Crossbearer guard -ten men- with only sword and shield. Many centuries later, his hand red with the blood of a thousand murderers and fanatics, Shard-of-Jade's mortal form was killed by Corvus, and he woke in the catacombs of Uthemion facing an immortal calling himself Ravencross, who spoke of the lies that had provoked Jade's death and the death of countless other children. Of the first to be swayed, Shard-of-Jade also became one of Ravencross' most loyal followers; he fought the six Kingsways with a rabid determination, bringing an end to their deceitful Age Tower after Tower.

The Sky-Kingdom of Thoth
(Gravitational energy: 15, Electromagnetic energy: 15)

The pyramid was easily as tall as a hundred men, doubtless larger than its First Age predecessors. As I heard the wails of slaves and the great drums of Thoth, the God of this land, my mind wandered then to a land of long ago where the reverberations of the lute and the crack of whips echoed over golden sands. How had a simple man become capable of such madness? How could the world become what it is now? A place of madness where eras, peoples and beliefs are entwined into this confused mass of reality. I must destroy this place, for it is simply overwhelmingly wrong any way you look at it.

The Sky Kingdom of Thoth drifts upon the winds to the northwest of the Dream Kingdom, a monstrous chunk of earth with a surface area of roughly ten thousand square kilometers. It is harsh and dry; rocky sand dunes are its main features, a single river traveling its length. It is a Kingdom ruled by Fell Lord Truthful Word, an immortal that now wishes to be addressed as Thoth; a Kingdom in which the glory of the Egyptian era is reborn.

Truthful Word shifts the orientation of the Kingdom relative to the earth so that the sun rises and sets on its sunward side; thus by looking towards the Kingdom's sunward edge at dawn or dusk his people will see the sun atop the Great Pyramid, and by looking towards its nightward edge they will shudder at the cold darkness that there lies. Its back to the sunward edge - beyond which lies the void of nothingness- stands the Great Pyramid from which Thoth rules his people. At its foot lies Ghizeh, the great city of white towers and limestone roads in which live the Kingdom's fifth generation of slaves. Still nightward, a half-dozen small villages follow the silent River of Ra, which proceeds forth from the Great Pyramid's base to the nightward edge of the Kingdom, there to disappear into the void.

As one nears the Kingdom's edges, the winds become fiercer and the rocks sharper, biting at the feet and cutting through sandals. A peculiar breed of gnarled trees having white bark and poisonous fruits becomes prevalent. The Kingdom's treacherous edges lie hidden by a wall of wind and sand, and a careless mortal desiring escape may very well fall to his doom into the Furious Seas following a fall of some three or four kilometers. None have been

so foolish however, for Thoth's people believe that beyond the wall of sand lies the endless void, untouched by the power of creation of their god and as such hostile to all life. Only the punished are sent to hunt or gather herbs and wood near the fury of the Kingdom's borders.

People of the Kingdom

Ten thousand mortal children were brought to the Kingdom of Thoth some one hundred and fifty years ago, before a great pyramid of stone and a god whose eyes could summon lightning; following his teachings, they learned the Egyptian tongue and of hieroglyphs, mathematics and the ways of stonecrafting. Taught their Kingdom had been born of the written word of Thoth -who by using nothing but ink and paper wrote that which he desired to be and gave birth to his children- they kneeled down before him when he levitated great boulders into the air to craft the city of Ghizeh; their descendants started building two lesser pyramids for his Demi-God servitors, and the fourth generation adults are just now finishing the last, but their lives have been hard and sorrowful: many thousands have died in the quarries, crushed under stones, decapitated by the Thralls of Thoth or left to burn upon the basalt monoliths of Ghizeh City.

Contrary to Second Age folk of the Unconquered Lands, Thoth's people are strikingly similar in terms of features and hair/skin color; olive-skinned with jet-black hair, their eyes are generally light grey to sky blue, their faces pleasing and their build athletic. Both men and women are infertile, and only by drinking of the elixir of life, believed to be drawn from the flesh of their god, may they produce children. Every twenty-one years, during the year of Ra, the worthiest slave couples are given droplets of this elixir which allows them to produce children.

Only the last generation of children may inhabit the city of Ghizeh; when the last of their children reaches fourteen years of age, parents leave the city for the nightward villages along the River of Ra and become farmers, hunters and craftsmen that see to the welfare of the slaves who toil in the quarries and the children that live in Ghizeh. In villages one may hear the barking of dogs and the meowing of cats, while in Ghizeh proper only a peculiar breed of black cat is allowed.

In the Kingdom of

Thoth, people trade amongst each other and pay taxes to Thralls with labor and services, raw resources such as grains and gems and manufactured goods. Gold is used solely to craft statues of Thoth and Ra. The most worthy and intelligent among slaves are sometimes awarded special privileges; taken to the Great Pyramid, they may see the physical form of Thoth and be sent to a mysterious land beyond the Kingdom, a land protected from the chaos of the void by a different god, where the sun travels the sky in an arc and rises and sets in two different places. Unable to speak the One Language, they keep some distance from this Kingdom's people, who seem ill at ease at the sight of their dark skin and light-colored eyes. They keep close to the human forms of Thoth and his servitors, mining for artifacts during the night and sleeping during the day.

The River of Ra

In the center of Ghizeh the Great pyramid casts an ominous shadow over the city. Two hundred meters tall and built of limestone and granite, its only opening is a twenty-foot tall bronze door at the pyramid's very summit from which the monstrous form of Thoth can sometimes be seen. At the pyramid's base a large cavity is carved through its stone blocks, from which a calm river of water -the River of Ra- courses down into Ghizeh, providing its people with the only source of water in the Kingdom. It meanders its way nightward, past sand dunes and villages to the very edges of the Kingdom, where it falls many kilometers into the Furious Seas below; from the sea, the Sky Kingdom of Thoth is easily identified once its storm ring is crossed: from one of its edges, the waters of the River of Ra can be seen thundering down into the sea with deafening roar, while under the Kingdom's opposite end, underneath the Great pyramid, a fountain of sea water rises up through an orifice in its bedrock. It is a fantastic sight to behold.

Villages are built along the River of Ra, south of Ghizeh, so that they may enjoy its waters. Along its banks crocodiles bask in the mud, now and then feeding ravenously on the flesh of antelopes and careless villagers. Highly venomous, gigantic snakes known as Thoth's Black scales inhabit the sand dunes closest to the outlying storms, further deterrent to the curious or foolhardy. There are also rumors of a terrible monster known as Ammit, stalking the desert sands near the Kingdom's nightward edge. Since the people's arrival, the River of Ra has stopped flowing only once when a slave refused to send his four daughters to the Great Pyramid for the Night of Sacrifice.

Nights of Sacrifice

Every seven years and on the twenty-first day of Whitehare (according to the Second Age calendar), Thoth and his God-Children summon fifty men and fifty women to the Great Pyramid during the morning hours, where they are levitated to the pyramid's summit and disappear behind its bronze doors. Few people wish to see what transpires inside, for the hundred sacrifices are never seen again and the waters of the River of Ra run red the entire day. Come dusk, the people are forbidden from leaving their homes as Thoth leads a small raft gently down the river, quietly standing at its helm hoping to see the great form of Ra appear behind him before the raft reaches the edge of the Kingdom and falls to the seas below.

Thralls of Thoth

The notoriously savage Thralls of Thoth are giant four-armed hawkish beasts, having some features of birds but favoring scales over feathers. They wield axes, blossom wands and a few elite Thralls carry great bows whose arrows explode in a ball of fire upon striking their targets (fire damage: DL12, Blast scale 0.5m). The Thralls of Thoth live in great villas in the center of Ghizeh, served by many slaves.

POWER	FINESSE	VIGOR	BEAUTY
11	4	5	N/A
FEAR	TOUGHNESS	LIFESPAN	HEALING
7	3	100	1
MOVE	VISION	HEARING	SMELL
22(L), 40(F)	8	3	2

Attribute Cost: 152pts
Body Traits Additional attack(bite DL8)(10pts)
Multiple manipulators (15pts)
Night vision (5pts)
Trait Cost: 30pts
Size: Large
Health: 50
Cost Modifier (Angelion/other): -40/-10
Base Cost (Angelion): 142pts
Base Cost(Other): 172pts

Fell Princes

Two Fell Princes answer to Truthful Word, each residing in one of the lesser pyramids. The two Princes manage their Lord's Kingdom sometimes as Thralls and sometimes as three young boys possessed of godly powers (Truthful Word allows them to tap into his Kingdom's energies somewhat liberally), known to the people as the God-Children of Thoth. These mortal forms age very slowly, remaining as children while mortals around them age naturally; one Prince also possesses the body of a man with the head of a crocodile and is keen on slaying slaves by swallowing them in his jaws whole and spitting out their bones. Together they see to the people's subservience, teach them new crafts and keep the Kingdom free of unwanted intruders. As well, a fraction of their consciousness is devoted to the Unconquered Lands, where they keep human forms near and about the city of Barakeith. Disguised as jewelers they travel with their Lord beyond the city's wall to hunt for buried ruins that may contain artifacts of Egyptian origin. So far they have found very little material artifacts but have discovered ancient Egyptian tablets which Truthful Word is feverishly trying to decipher. Very recently they have come upon an underground ruin whose depth and location may indicate that it was built in the era of the great pharaos, and have brought some slaves and hired local help under pretense that they are searching for gems to help excavate the find.

Weaknesses

Lurking madness:
he believes he is Thoth, God of Time and truth and that the God Ra exists and speaks to him

Lurking madness:
obsession with young mortal boys

Present bodies (known)

A twenty foot tall man's body having the head of an Ibis is Truthful Word's main form in his Kingdom. Powerful (Power 14) and terrifying (Fear 9) this body is also quite tough and enduring (toughness of 3 and five picks of increased health). He possesses the body of a black cat as well, a sleek creature that lives in the streets of Ghizeh and spies on its children. Another of his forms is that of a young man with dark skin and a thick beard that lives as a jeweler in the city of Barakeith.

Fell Lord Shard-of-Jade

Masteries	
(Major) Wisdom	●●●●●●●●
(1st Minor) Deceit	●●●●
(2nd Minor) War	●●●
(3rd Minor) Domination	●●
(Achilles Heel) Passions	●

Intelligence	9
Temperance	5
Presence	3
Celerity Pool	+3
Cardinal nature	Moon
Age	1241 years old

In the buried ruin of Uthemion the second most ancient man of the world once spoke of gods that had risen more than ten thousand years ago, in a time so ancient even he knew of it from legend. This man was Ravencross, and the gods he spoke of were the gods of ancient Egypt. As the sole artifact he possessed of that forgotten time was a small statuette of gold, which he allowed his followers to touch and discuss. It was the statue of an Egyptian god in the form of a man with the head of an Ibis, and passed from hand to hand. It lingered long in those of Truthful Word, an Angelion whose mortal life was spent as a calligrapher to the High Custodian of Avonmyth. During his mortal life not a word did he speak or write that was not truthful.

In his hands was the golden representation of Thoth, the Egyptian god of Truth, of All That Is Measurable and All That Is Written. He marveled at it, and his fingers traced every inch of its form. Yet he relinquished it to his master and sadly would not see it until the end of the war when, in the purple alcove, he was given by Lord Ravencross a wooden box in which the golden statue lay. Fascinated by it, he studied texts and learned of the Egyptian tongue from data crystals preserved by Corvus and during many years, while he crafted the seed of his Kingdom, he used human forms to seek out buried artifacts from the Unconquered Lands near the city of Barakeith. It is during these years of travel and solitude that Truthful Word became quite mad; the statuette of gold now spoke to him, and him to it; he heard a god calling to him, wishing to be reborn once more and rule as once he did, for so long his dominion over the world had been usurped by the All-Seeing god. This voice convinced him that he is both the present manifestation of Thoth and that his purpose is to reawaken the Sun-God Ra, and every day that goes by without Ra waking is another wound inflicted in Truthful Word's spirit. As such, his activities in the Unconquered Lands have intensified around the city of Barakeith, and quite recently bore fruit; he has learned of the book of the dead, which was buried along with the deceased in ancient Egypt, and believes its pages contain spells and incanatations that may be able to awaken Ra from his timeless slumber.

The Black Sands Kingdom
(Gravitational energy: 46, Electromagnetic energy: 40)

During their ascension the twins Rain and Sun eerily dreamt the same dream; in this dream they saw a city of red stone overlooking a desert of ashes. Overhead loomed a black sun that crackled while off in the distance columns of orange fire danced on the horizon. The twins rode to battle on the backs of alien beasts, proceeding forth from the Red City to the cheers of a strange people. This Kingdom is that very dream... it is madness incarnate.

The Black Sands Kingdom is a Sky-Kingdom of relatively small size; no more than a hundred kilometers need be crossed to cover its widest portion. Usually gravitating over the Furious Seas some two thousand kilometers due east of the Dream Kingdom, this terrible realm may be the first Fell Kingdom encountered by a wayward sea vessel from Dawnhedge or Orcanager, its seamen in grave danger of being carried off to its surface by some of its denizens. Its Storm Ring may be recognized as a rolling vortex of black and orange fury; maddening to behold, even this Storm Ring will be hidden behind thick layers of sea fog summoned from the machines of the Kingdom's Lords, the immortal twins Rain and Sun.

The Black Sands Kingdom was born of a dream they shared during their essencing; as their brains were digitalized, both twins dreamt of a land basking under a black sun, pierced in its heart by a great plateau city of red stone. In this dream, Sun rode on the back of Dimiagor, a giant elephant which ate of raw flesh, while Rain rode a Darion, a black horse-like creature having the snout of an elephant and the

horn of a narwhal. Followed by an army of warriors, they passed under the great iron gate of the Red City to the cheers of its mortal people, off to battle an unknown enemy in a desert of ashes.

The Vampiric Kingdom

The Black Sands Kingdom has a definite propensity for bold (and usually forbidden) travel; on three separate occasions it traversed the skies over the Furious Seas, crossing into the southern portions of the Azure Ocean to reach the western coastline of the Southern Birthland. A queer mist signaled its approach to coastal villagers, and on these three occasions upon dissipating the fog had taken a village -bedrock and all- leaving only a massive crater as the mark of its passage. Thus were the villages of Twail (in 1955SA), Lucre and Naasa (2091SA) prey to this insidious evil, their populations, houses and church nowhere to be found following a day of inexplicable sea fog.

The Black Sands Kingdom is built on the ashes of its prior iterations; three times has it been destroyed, only to be reborn in a form more to the likeness of the twins and to the exactness of their dream. Trees, animals and people from earlier versions of the Kingdom have thus perished, struck down by a celestial fire, so that the dark sands of the Fanged Desert owe their ashen color

to these silent dead. Only the Darions, Dimiagors, some underground human survivors and the Red City have survived the third cleansing flame, so that some of these beasts bear peculiar burn scars on their bodies and in some parts of the Red City observant Kothanfolk may witness the engravings of the city's earlier inhabitants. The current Black Sands Kingdom -the fourth- was created some forty three years ago, and populated with denizens more proper to the twin's dream. The villagers of Naasa and Lucre, who roam the Fanged Desert to this day, were displaced nine years ago.

Black Sun, Eternal Twilight

Dark and turbulent, the skies are ever angry with green-hued clouds, here and there, now and then producing glimpses of nameless faces and beasts. Neither night or day exists here, an eerie and perpetual twilight instead. At the sky's zenith a black sun there burns, fiery and menacing.

Neither night or day exists in the Black Sands Kingdom; it is bathed in perpetual twilight, its sky a diluted grey tinged with yellow or red. Rarely, the color of the sky has varied according to the Lords' wishes, so that it has become fiery red, utterly white, pitch black or filled with faces and monsters with little forewarning; Sun's nightmares, often involving the murder of their mother, have summoned cloudy apparitions of her death. Maddening is this sky to humans, who prefer looking down at the ashen floor rather than upwards into this unnatural void. What more, the sky's zenith is where a colossal orb of fiery blackness -a terrible black sun- burns with a fury and breadth subject to the twins' desires.

The Fanged Desert

This land was unlike any other I had seen or heard about; its sands were dark grey, the color of wet ash, bitter tasting and light to the wind so that we found ourselves covered in grey from head to toe. This ash found its way into the most sealed of enclosures and when the children opened their Holy Word, seeking comfort in its wisdom, they discovered to their horror that this foul ash had desecrated its pages as well. Hideous rock spires, darkly colored and bearing the likeness of people, animals or things even stranger pierced the dunes on a regular basis; by walking no more than half an hour we could cross two or three. Easily as tall as fifty men, these fangs produced a maddening howl when touched by the desert wind, a wail the children and women cared very little for. Unable even to escape this hell with the coming of night, many of our group became wide-eyed after only what I surmise had been three or four days of walking.

The Black Sands Kingdom is dominated by endless dunes of sand and ash pierced by thousands of tall rock formations of dark brown, red or grey-colored stone, eerily sculpted into various form. The slightest wind is heard to wail as it passes through these stone columns, and summons a flurry of ashes. Shrubs, mosses and trees of a gnarled variety grow in some areas, while scattered oases of ash-tainted water offer meager supplies of liquids to desert travelers. The Fanged Desert is home to a variety of bizarre creatures, many born of the twins' dreamstuff; the wild Darions, solitary horse-like creatures, roam the sands feeding on shrubs and poisonous berries. Cleansed of grey ashes, their mane is pure blackness, their nose replaced

by what could only be called an elephant's trunk and their forehead the base of a twirling horn. The giant Dimiagors are a species of enormous carnivorous elephants which thunder about the desert in great herds, feeding on the flesh of people and beasts they encircle and trample to death. Weighing up to twenty tons, Dimiagors are domesticated by the Kothanfolk, who use them as beasts of burden and on war sorties against the Displaced. Some species of rodents, including common rats, as well as lizards and snakes of myriad form also populate the Fanged Desert.

In the last four decades alone over twenty thousand people -the Displaced- have been kidnapped from the Unconquered Lands and brought to the Black Sands Kingdom. Mostly seamen snatched from their vessels, coastal villagers from the southern Birthland and on occasion Crossbearer Guards on patrol in its dangerous Demon Swamps, eighteen thousand of the Displaced have since perished so that a little over two thousand remain today. Much like in the Land of Fire's Graveyard, displaced vessels (and their crew) levitated from the waters of the Azure Ocean (namely the *Sea Glider, the Dawnhedge Seventh* and *the Barras*) and villages displaced from the southern Birthland (Lucre and Naasa) may be found in the Fanged Desert in various states of ruin; their former crew or inhabitants are in all likelihood scattered or dead.

Underneath the Fanged Desert's thick layer of ash and sands, the desert floor is oddly porous; it is traversed by thousands of grottoes and chasms formed during the Kingdom's genesis, when the twins used the power of their terraformatrons to heave it into the air and mould its surface. In this vast underground network, lakes and streams can sometimes carry untainted water, mosses and small scurrying herbivores, so that these underground refuges may allow the Displaced to eek out a living with some respite from the surface's belligerent denizens and other dangers. Some thirty villagers of Twail, with the aid of a Displaced Guard of Crossbearers, have used these caverns to survive the fiery cleansings of the Kingdom. Believed dead by the immortal twins, they can now sleep a more restful sleep, liberated from the surface's unending twilight.

Kothan- The Red City

In the distance, I could see through the lens a great plateau of red stone rising up from the sands, at its very summit a city carved from the same redness. I could not tell where plateau ended and city began, only that as my gaze was carried upwards the stones became more regular and structured and at the very top carried darker regions I reasoned to be windows. At the foot of the plateau I could see fields of green trees and shrubs... Endless fields of green as once I had known in a land far distant...

Located at the heart of the Fanged Desert, the Red City is built on a high plateau made of a hard red stone, and stands as the only city of the Kingdom. Should one be so fortunate to reach its base unnoticed, a difficult climb awaits, for the red stone is smooth and slippery. The best way to enter the city -save for its massive iron gate- is through its underground catacombs which reach all the way down to the cavern network that permeates the breadth of the Kingdom floor. Here as well may be found the Kingdom's two terraformatrons, well hidden and pro-

tected by thick layers of rock and a contingent of blessed guardians.

For some two kilometers around the Red City, the desert fangs and ashes are replaced by lush green vegetation -the Red City Garden- where exotic fruits and vegetables grow. Rainfall occurs here regularly and the soil is of a permissive sort; the engineered plant life grows fiercely, and bears nutritive and palatable qualities of the most bewildering kind.

Inside the Red City, mortals of the Unconquered Lands would find its design troubling; its archways and causeways are odd, its architecture illogical and oftentimes impractical. Numerous spires abound, many of which bearing large lenses with which locals scour the desert for signs of desert folk. At the city's heart lies the Obsidian Tower, a spire of unnerving blackness surrounded by an obsidian ring altar, upon which the captured folk of the desert are sacrificed. At the tower's highest level will be found the twin obsidian thrones of the demon-gods Rain and Sun, who may be seen during the sacrificial feast looking down at the feast or upwards at the black sun.

Nine thousand engineered people live within Koth, a people calling themselves the Kothanfolk.

Kothanfolk

Protected from the desert ash by the Red City's high wall, Kothanfolk are human in form. Though their skin and hair may vary from white to light red or black, their eyes are invariably as dark as their sun, their faces possessed of strong features and their bodies of thick bones and muscles.

Kothanfolk are a rugged people that do not shy from difficult travel or battle. They wear turbans and long dark cloaks emblazoned with the symbol of their dark gods -the black fiery sun- a symbol that may be found inked on the skin of their backs as well. Both men and women share the same status in the Red City, and may become warriors of equal renown. Off into the desert riding on Darions or walking in the streets of the Red City they will be found carrying swords, bows and daggers, while their belts hold flasks of water and Buka, a mind-expanding brew extracted from certain fruits of the Red City Garden. Kept in a state of near-perpetual dreaming by the drinking of this mixture, Kothanfolk may seem odd, distant and somewhat cryptical to Second Age folk. Under Buka's effects and the teachings of their gods they are easily given to bloodletting, and none feel the need to look away from the many horrors of their sacrificial feast. They are comfortable walking or riding long distances in the Fanged Desert, being well versed in its dangers and travel requirements.

Having no night or day, kept in a dream state by the drinking of Buka, Kothanfolk have very little notion of time. The mere concept of days is alien to them as is the concept of day or night, so that the only measure of time known is *the hunt*, during which a Kothanfolk warrior band may leave the Red City on foot, patrol for some time and have a decent chance of bringing back some food (such as a brown rat-eater or a desert dweller). Two hunts would equal a day of normal time, so that warriors leaving for the *Seven Hundred hunt pilgrimage* leave for the equivalent of no less than three hundred and fifty days of normal time, or just shy of one year.

Kothanfolk are particular in that they are incapable of sleep; their only possible respite from waking is in the

drinking of Buka, which allows them to have waking dreams and -when consumed in large quantities- to fall into a dream-state that can last many hunts. Without Buka, a Kothanfolk is doomed to become agitated, convulsive and die of mental collapse after some very unpleasant weeks of atrocious lucidity. Kothanfolk that misbehave are therefore disallowed the drinking of Buka for a set amount of time; those guilty of the most intolerable crimes may be cast into the desert and left to die the waking death, a terrifying prospect.

In terms of culture Kothanfolk are fanatical worshippers of their demon-gods, and cannibals to boot; in promise of eternal afterlife, they would butcher the people of an entire village and feast on their organs without hesitation. Given everything they need to survive by their gods -namely the city which shelters them, the garden that feeds them and buka that allows them to dream- they need only defend themselves from the desert dwellers and keep the black sun from engulfing them all; once per hundred hunts, the black sun over their city expands terribly, signaling the beginning of the sacrificial feast, during which seven people need be slain on the Red City's ring altar. During this night of sacrifice, the sacrificed-to-be are given copious amounts of Buka and their organs ceremoniously removed while they are still alive, then to be sliced, prepared and served to a hundred feasting Kothanfolk chosen from the masses for their glorious deeds of the past sacrificial cycle. They shall eat of this divine meat and lie out under the black sun, dreaming a dream that shall last for many hunts. Sacrificed people are most often desert dwellers caught by Kothanfolk hunters but when these prove to be lacking, Kothanfolk will replace them with their kin, usually those that prove to be ineffective in hunts, the tending of the garden or are found guilty of crimes at this inopportune moment.

Kothanfolk believe an apocalypse is ravaging the world abroad (a world none have seen), but that while the Red City and its former inhabitants were transported to hell, the twin Demon-Gods caught it, rid it of its former people and kept it safe ever since, populating it with a people more to their liking; only by the twin gods' power are the forces of hell kept outside the Fanged Desert. They believe the desert dwellers -brought here by the Blessed (see below)- are chosen mortals from the living world that the twin-gods wish to torment; as such, the Displaced are despised by the Kothanfolk, who wish only to eat their organs come the sacrificial feast so as to appease their Demon-Gods.

Dozens of Kothanfolk have been transported to the Southern Birthland to witness the apocalypse, while a scattered few are to be found on most other landmasses as well. There to monitor happenings and relate their finds to their gods, they could be recognized by their somewhat odd behavior, their flasks of sweet-smelling Buka (the plants for which grow readily in normal soil and whose effects are similar on Second Age folk as on Kothanfolk) while stripped of clothing they would be instantly branded as heretics because of the black sun tattoo etched on their backs. A less obvious sign of their otherworldliness is the obsidian medallion all wear around their necks, usually hidden under their cloaks when spying abroad, whose stone is in fact a pebble eye attuned to the essence of either Rain or Sun.

The Blessed

Kothanfolk are not human; they are a fellkin species, their human form being a chrysalis stage much like the caterpillar before the buttefly. But unlike the caterpillar, only a small fraction of Kothanfolk will experience their transformation so that of the nine thousand Kothanfolk currently living in the Red City, more than eighty-nine hundred are still in the chrysalis (human) stage of their lives. Most will die as chrysalis some twenty years from now. To pass from chrysalis stage to adult form, a Kothanfolk must be blessed by either Rain or Sun, and only the most deserving are thus rewarded.

Prior to the sacrificial feast, one hundred Kothanfolk, chosen for their recent worthiness, shall follow the Twin-Gods into the Fanged Desert, some on the backs of Darions or Dimiagors, others on foot. They shall hunt desert dwellers for no less than fourteen hunts, and come back to the Red City with -hopefully- the seven sacrifices required to contain the black sun's expansion.

From this hunt shall be selected seven Kothanfolk warriors that impressed the twin-gods with their skill and valor; after participating in the sacrificial feast and subsequent dreaming, these seven shall be sent to the very limits of the Fanged Desert -where the fire demons dwell- to survive a series of tests as part of the Seven Hundred Hunt pilgrimage. Of these seven, no more than three shall return, often none at all. Those that do return shall be known as the Blessed, and be marked by the twin-gods. They shall be summoned to the Obsidian Tower, there to bear witness to the blessed pattern -a series of hand gestures traced by one of the gods- that shall trigger the blessed change. During the next interim chapter, the Blessed shall grow wings, a tough carapace, skin of a fiery red and become a lieutenant of the gods. He shall be sent on missions into the living world, there to bring back desert dwellers fit for sacrifice. Following the directions of Kothanfolk spies, they grasp their victims in their arms and fly away into the night. Able to breed amongst themselves normally, the Blessed shall one day replace normal Kothanfolk and become the inheritors of the Red City.

In terms of game statistics, Kothanfolk make interesting Fellkin characters to either play or meet. They possess the *Chrysalis* Trait, rated at 40pts but otherwise have the same attributes and limitations as normal humans. The Blessed gain a Move (F) score of 30, an *inherent Toughness* of 4, the *Increased Health* (15) Trait and the *Night Vision* Trait. This is the adult stage following their chrysalis form, and is worth the entire 40pt chrysalis Trait.

The Kingdom Border

The Fanged Desert is known by Kothanfolk to be surrounded by some half-dozen fire demons, which take the form of ghostly maelstroms of wind and fire, dancing along its border and occasionally burning desert dwellers to ashes. They believe them to be fire demons barred from further incursion by the power of the twin-gods, but as one nears the Desert edges, fire demons are keen on challenging pilgrims with riddles. Those that succeed may be unharmed, while those that fail miserably may be burned and their ashes mingled with those of the Fanged Desert. The Kingdom borders are as well home to mortal beasts fouler still than Darions and Dimiagors; very disturbing things are said to move about here...

Fell Lord Rain, Demon-God of the Red City

Masteries	
(Major) Domination	●●●●●●
(1st Minor) War	●●●
(2nd Minor) Deceit	●●●●
(3rd Minor) Wisdom	●●
(Achilles Heel) Passions	●●
Intelligence	7
Temperance	7
Presence	6
Celerity Pool	+2
Cardinal nature	Dusk
Age	658 years old

Weaknesses

Overwhelming Hatred

Second Age mortals of blind faith, and all Dagonheir

Burning Love

Rain is secretly in love with Sun

Lurking madness

believes dreams reveal the future, and that the Black Sands Kingdom is the key to understanding some great event.

Present bodies (known)

as the Demon-God of the Red City, Rain uses the body of a giant Kothanfolk warrior, seven feet tall and somewhat obese and out of shape. This is deceiving, for this monster is possessed of enormous strength and uncanny agility. His face is often decorated and his lips painted, while his right eye boasts the mark of the Black Sands Kingdom -the fiery black sun. He has appeared as a snake, a dog and a misshappen demon beast as well.

Sun and Rain -born respectively Emi and Renn Hostersea- began life as seventh and eighth child of a most blessed family. Born in Methger, the twin's birth signalled an event unknown in the history of the Second Age: a family of eight children. Thus was the Hostersea family seen as a blessing to the village of Methger, which had endured many years of hardships.

Under the careful administration of the village's mayor -Emi and Renn's very mother- the people of Methger-Hostersea (as Methger was now known) grew in number and put their prior hardships behind them, experiencing an unprecedented boom in their economy. Yet when their mother sold small stone statuettes of Emi and Renn, the twins slew her in cold blood, proclaiming her guilty of idolatry. Witnessed by Corvus Kingsway, who admired the twins' resolve (and cold-bloodedness), the twins were brought to the Tower of Anekron for judgment and found deserving of essencing by Ambrose. Ori Kingsway would later use a potent chemical mutagen to transform Methger-Hostersea's villagers -who had profited from the income provided by the Hostersea idol trade- into misshappen monsters bearing the likeness of swine-men.

Centuries of service as Angelions showed the twins to have a high tolerance for the slaying of sinners, and in their later years both would be used to exact the most difficult of judgments upon the mortal people of the Land of Fire. Their apparent propensity for acts of murder would be compounded by the revelations they would experience in the ruins of Uthemion, revelations which would eventually lead to the twin's utterly perverse mentality and hatred of the world itself. Blaming the All-Seeing (and Ambrose's world of lies) for the premature death of their mother (thus relieving much of the guilt that plagued them), the twins would create a Kingdom as different from the world as they could, in fact emulating the alien dream they experienced during their essencing. They would later use its terrifying aspect to torment faithful people of the Unconquered Lands both to soothe their growing desire for blood and to bring chaos and terror to the world of Ambrose Kingsway.

Game and Combat Help Sheet

Final Proficiency Level (PL)	packet size	packet size	packet size
-4 or less	Grim Push!	-	-
-3, -2	Hard Push!	-	-
-1, 0	Push!	-	-
1	1	-	-
2	2	-	-
3	3	-	-
4	4	-	-
5	5	-	-
6	6	1	-
7	7	2	-
8	8	3	-
9	9	4	-
10	10	5	-
11	11	6	1
12	12	7	2
13	13	8	3
14	14	9	4
15	15	10	5
16	16	11	6
17	17	12	7
18	18	13	8
19	19	14	9
20	20	15	10
per + 1	+1	+1	+1

Ascent Table

Attacking- opposed Finesse+War task against a *defending* target, GN 5 against a *cautious* target, GN3 against an *unaware* (or inanimate) target.
Cinematic action- under a cinematic action (which costs 1 Available Power Points), D6s spill on 5-6, D10s on 9-10 and D20s on 19-20.

Damage- an attack's final DL will be the sum of its base DL and the attack's added effects. A maximum of 5 added effects can serve to raise final DL this way. Treat the attack's final DL as a final PL and roll on the Ascent Table. Subtract the target's Toughness from the RR and this will be the number of Health points the target loses.

Epic roll- by sacrificing (not rolling) a certain number of D20s, a player's Roll Result will receive a positive bonus equal to 2x the number of sacrificed D20s.

Fumble- When rolling tasks, if all the rolled dice come up as "1", a fumble occurs.
In the case of any type of Push!, if any die comes up as "1", a fumble occurs.
Damage dice cannot fumble.

Initiative- Intelligence+War task. For animals, consider their Intelligence as equal to 5 for purposes of Initiative. Their War mastery rating usually ranges from +1 to +3.

Monstrous attack- For attacks with DLs of 20 or more, every added effect raises DL by +5.

Movement (combat)- During an *action*, a character may move up to half his MOVE score. During a *round*, he may move up to his MOVE score but no more.

Multiple attacks- per action, a character can attack any number of times with readied weapons, but each attack suffers a negative modifier equal to 3x to total number of attacks delivered this action.

Perfect Strike- A perfect strike is scored if an attack gets 1 added effect against an *unaware* target, 2 added effects against a *cautious* target or 5 added effects against a target that uses a defense.

Power attack- Finesse/Power+War task. For Power attributes higher than 20, consider Power equal to 20 for purposes of resolving the power attack.

Push!, Hard Push!, Grim Push!- roll 2D6, 3D6 or 4D6, respectively, and keep lowest die as Roll Result. Such task/damage rolls cannot spill.

Roll Result (RR)- When rolling dice packets for tasks and/or damage, the Roll Result will be the rolled die showing the highest value.

Seriously injured- A character is considered seriously injured if he loses more Health points than his body's *halfway point*.

Spill- D6s, D10s and D20s spill on a 6, 10 or 20, respectively. For each D6 and D10 that spills, roll a D10 or D20 spill die, respectively, and keep its result if it comes up higher than the original die that caused the spill. D20s that spill require the throw of a D10 spill die, whose result will be added to 20 for purposes of determining the RR.

Successive defenses- per round, a character can defend any number of times, but each successive defense after the first suffers a cumulative -2 modifier, which lasts until the start of the next round.

Tie- In cases of ties in opposed tasks, the participant with the higher number of dice at the RR wins, else each rolls a D20 and the one with the higher result wins.

Index

Actions 61-63

Actions per round 61

Added effects 47-48, 50, 72-73

Adjustment period 319-320

Aging 306-307

All-Seeing 11, 14-18, 27, 29, 322, 334, 336-343, 348, 357, 361, 368-372, 397-399

All-Seeing Land 337-338, 352-353

Anabad 235, 342

Angelions 14, 16-29, 30-38, 327, 329, 348, 395-406, 411-416, 424

Anguish points 113, 143, 306, 309-311

Animal and monster attacks 66

Animal table 181-182

Antiaadar 341, 348, 363-364, 376-377

Apanon 342, 344, 383, 385

Archfiends 123-125, 196, 249, 415

Armor 76-78

Armor piercing weapons 81

Armor, special rules 77

Armor table 283

Artifacts 190, 207, 209-280

Artifacts, awakened 210-212, 263-272, 408

Artifacts, black 210, 212, 220-262

Artifacts, common 211, 272-281

Ascent System 39, 45

Ascent Table 45

Assistant GM 288

Attack, additional 170-172

Attack, natural 170

Attack, venomous 171

Attacking inanimate objects 83-84

Attributes 39-41, 43-44

Body 163, 166-170, 173-174

Mental 137-139

Avonmyth 14-16, 27, 337-342, 344-349, 358, 361-368, 375-376, 383, 392, 405, 406, 408, 412

Awakened 129-131, 365, 389, 407-411

Backannan 19-20, 221, 343

Backannan, Helenoire 19, 221, 254-255

Barakeith 391-392, 403, 437-439

Barbarar 17, 339, 349, 380

Barnesmarin 355, 364, 373, 384, 388-389, 405, 411, 413

Birthland, Northern 22, 334, 346-347, 374-380, 411

Birthland, Southern 23, 351, 364, 380-382, 389, 443, 445

Black Sands Kingdom 419, 440-448

Blackdoor society 271, 343, 354, 359, 408

Bladewielder 327, 384-385, 415

Blast scale 78-79, 205-206

Body Canon 337-338, 356

Body growth times 318

Bodysnatching 318

Building a body from scratch 162-163

Building/repairing things 53-59

Calendar, festivals and holidays 346, 436

Campaign type 109-110

Cardinal nature 110, 140-143

Cardinal, Dawn 142

Cardinal, Dusk 142

Cardinal, Moon 142

Cardinal, Sun 141

Celerity 35-36, 64-65, 309

Celerity Bonus 64-65

Celerity Pool 139, 203

Character evolution 306

Character type 110-136

Choosing dice 45

Churches 359, 367-368

Cinematic action 49-50

Cleric 275, 322, 339, 341, 350-353, 356-367, 396, 402, 404

Clerical 350, 365-368, 395

Clerical stone 275, 341, 366-367

Combat 60

- Close 65-67, 69, 76
- Ranged 70-71, 79

Sequence 64

Crossbearers 340-345, 355, 361-365, 373, 376-377, 379, 381, 388, 389, 433, 443

Custodians 338-345, 349, 352, 355, 358, 361-367, 373, 376

Dagonheir 29, 111-113, 210, 212, 327, 365, 376-378, 392, 395-406, 412, 414-415

Damage and wounds 72

Damage, close combat 76

Damage, other sources of 82

Damage results 84

Data shards 217-219, 234, 254, 255, 272, 274, 275

Dawnhedge 348, 364, 378, 379, 381- 382, 410-411

Deadnorth 345, 378, 421

Die type 45-46, 48

Drama trumps 190, 193-194, 197, 200, 206-207

Dreamfolk 177, 326, 423, 428, 431

Dreamless Sleep 37, 239, 300, 317,

Ebuleon, Eastern 328, 344, 351, 387-390, 425

Ebuleon, Western 22, 382-386, 389

Ebuleon's Star 340-341, 359, 383

Emerald Mountain 18, 23, 28, 381-382

Epic Rolls 47-48

Essences 11-12, 23-38, 61, 193-194, 210, 211, 213-218, 223, 231, 232, 238-241, 257, 327, 329, 414-416

Eterdynes 214, 215-217, 238

Experience 306-312

Experience (spending points) 314-316

Fairybook Realm 419, 426-433

Falling damage 81-82

Fell beasts 344, 351-352, 368, 371, 373, 381, 391, 398, 424

Fell Kingdoms 29, 87, 191, 327, 333-334, 371, 397, 417-448

Fell Lords 29, 248, 333, 397, 418, 420-425

Fell Princes 120-122, 191, 296-297, 319, 327, 396, 405-406, 422-424, 428, 437

Fellkin 135-137, 174, 372, 373, 381-384, 386, 388-390, 425, 446

Fire damage 81, 82

First Age 10, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 209-212, 216, 218-219, 255, 263, 274-275

Fumble 10

Furious Seas 390, 418-419, 421

Genomancers (Guild of) 33, 190, 193, 300, 317-319, 377, 379, 381, 383, 385, 388, 392, 411-416

Ghost Lands 363, 388-389, 405, 425

Goal Number 40, 43-47, 50, 52

Godshards 210-214, 220-262

Golden Thousand 27, 342, 350, 412

Goldrooms 32, 157, 193-194, 270, 406-407, 409-410, 416, 423

Golems 14, 26, 63, 64, 70, 82, 85, 86, 211, 215-216, 229, 424

Golem, Rogue 126-128, 139, 168, 200, 203, 206, 295-297, 315

Grappling 67-68

Graveyard 343, 393-394, 443

Great desert 18, 340-344, 384, 393-394

Haffergroves 344, 371, 383, 390

Healing 86

Heroic actions 49-50

Hierarchy of Sin 400

Holy Word 14-17, 200, 337-339, 341-342, 349, 361-362, 365-366, 368-369, 396, 425

Hundred, the 14-16, 19, 335-338, 346-348, 358, 361, 375-376, 425

Illness 82

Immortality machine 11-12, 20, 24, 26, 31, 38, 324, 327, 424

Income 190-192, 207

Initiative 61-63

Interim chapter 306-317

Kingsways, the 9-15, 18, 20-22, 27-33, 37-38, 152, 290-294, 323-331, 335-336, 347, 369, 375, 421

Kingsway, Ambrose 9-11, 15, 20, 24, 26, 27, 29, 31, 127, 179, 211, 262, 324-325, 336-338, 374

Kingsway, Corvus 9-11, 15, 18-21, 23-27, 29, 212, 254, 256, 310, 326-327, 336-337, 412, 424

Kingsway, Delphina 10-11, 14, 17, 21, 22, 25-29, 210, 212, 246-247, 258, 259, 261-262, 328-329, 336-338, 387, 412

Kingsway, Elizabeth 10-11, 14, 24, 26-27, 251, 255, 259, 325-326, 336, 338, 374

Kingsway, Eridan 10-11, 15, 18, 22, 24-27, 260, 331, 336-337, 374, 384, 391, 394

Kingsway, Lyra 9, 28-29, 33, 294-295, 329-330, 336, 338, 347, 374, 376, 381, 412,

Kingsway, Ori 10-11, 17-18, 20-21, 24, 26, 250, 260, 330-331, 336-338, 375, 377, 397

Land of Fire 340-344, 371, 391-394

Language, One 15, 336-338, 343, 349, 358

Lesser Shades of Evil Saga 289, 295

Life shard 218, 242, 254-255, 262, 272, 291

Lyra Kingsway's message 9-28, 294-295

Master abilities 150-159, 195, 207, 309, 315

Masteries 39, 41, 43, 147-161, 195, 314

Mastery of Deceit 42, 157-159

Mastery of Domination 42, 156-157

Mastery of Passions 42, 159-161

Mastery of War 41, 153-155

Mastery of Wisdom 41, 151-153

Mastery rating 39, 41, 43-45

Metal Verses, the 337-338, 343, 354-356, 358

Mindcasters 213-216, 223, 238, 270

Mint 190, 339, 362

Modea 385-386, 388

Modifiers 39-41, 44-46

Monstrous attacks 74, 84

Mortal law 350-351

Mortal timeline 336-345

Mountain stronghold of Boreas 385, 413-414

Notoriety (NOTO) 139-140, 157, 160, 306, 313, 314

Orcanager 345, 378, 379, 413, 421

Order of Sovereign Daggers 349, 361, 364-365, 377

Perfect strike 74-76

Phantomas 117-119, 190, 206, 294, 296-297, 389, 404-405, 412

Pilgrim trail, eastern 383-384

Pilgrim trail, southern 378

Pilgrim trail, western 377-378

Poison 82-83, 171-172

Power attack 66-67

Power Points 110, 149, 162, 173, 190, 194, 206-207, 314-318

Powers 63, 87-108

Boost effects 91

Divine powers 88, 103-108

Electromagnetic powers 88, 98-102

Gravitational powers 88, 92-98

Tweaks 91

Proficiency Level 39-40, 44-50

Purchasing new bodies 317-319

Push!, Hard Push!, Grim Push! 45, 47-48

Rate of fire 79-80

Raven and the Cripple, the 26-27, 325, 344

Ravencross, Lord 21-24, 28, 29, 31, 33, 38, 210, 238, 253, 254, 256, 258-259, 262, 296, 319, 326-327, 397, 405, 412, 419, 424

Reach 65-67,

Realm 9, 22, 29, 190-191, 207, 314-316

Recognition (RECO) 139-140, 157, 160, 306, 313, 314

Red Plague 341-342, 369

Renown 139-140, 306, 313, 314

Repairing golem bodies 86

Roll Result 40, 46-49

Rounds 61-63

Sacred Circles 29, 112-113, 376-377, 381, 400

Sample non-player characters 301-305

Sanctum 190, 192-193, 207

Sarpe 385, 392-393, 413

Scriptures 17, 29, 112-113, 115, 118, 139-140, 294, 310, 397-398

Second Age 14, 17, 29, 321

Second Genesis 14, 374-375, 421

Shrine 336, 359, 369, 374-375

Silent Wail 37, 232, 239-240

Size 65, 67-71, 84, 162-163

Size classes (bodies) 164-165

Size/weight classes table (powers) 90, 91

Sky-Kingdom of Thoth 420, 434-439

Spill 46-47, 49, 73, 74

Stonemorgan 344, 384, 403

Storm Ring 418-419, 440

Stun damage 74

Sybas 29, 114-116, 190, 207, 294, 296, 384-385, 392, 396, 402-404

Taint Relics 212, 263, 267, 271, 274-275, 355-356

Taint Weapons 275-276

Tasks 39-52

Tasks, normal 41-42

Tasks, opposed 50-51

Task outcome 47-48

Tasks, perception 48-49

Tasks, raw attribute 40-41

Tasks, resolving 45-47

Terraformatron 14, 26, 87, 254, 256, 327, 418-424

Tiebreaker 49-50

Ties 50

Tome of Three Crafts 338, 352, 354, 356, 361, 363, 366

Total Power 206-207

Tower of Anekron 9, 12, 17-18, 20, 23-26, 28, 29, 33, 38, 127, 254, 255-259, 281, 291, 293, 319, 390, 412, 421, 422, 424

Tower of Emerald and Bronze 211, 244, 280, 381, 412

Tower of Stone 18, 22, 384

Tower of White and Silver 18, 22, 25, 275, 281, 328-329, 344-345, 387, 405, 412

Tower, Dark 391, 393-394,

Tower, Fallen 377-378

Town healers 356, 357

Town Watch 29, 345, 351-352, 355, 371, 386

Traits 163-164, 169, 172-174, 194-207

Traits table, mundane 197

Traits table, exotic 197

Traits table, extraordinary 198

Unconquered Lands 29, 327, 333-417

Uthemion 21, 420, 433, 439, 448

Venomhead 23-25, 256-258

Venomous attack 170-172

War of Crosses 235, 255, 342, 433

War of Ravencross 22-25

War, Spirit 29, 267, 322, 342, 347, 350-351, 355, 359, 368-369, 371, 382-383, 390

Watchful Eye 29, 130-131, 211, 212, 216, 263, 266-272, 276, 295, 297

Weaknesses 143-147, 286, 311, 314, 316

Weapons 72, 76

Weapons, special rules 78-81

Weapons table 281-282

Weight (bodies) 168

Wiltoncrow 343, 377-378

Wolf Valleys 379-380, 415

Year of Cleansing 328, 339-340, 361-362, 380

Years of Taint 337, 369

Body Sheet

Name/alias/known as: _____

Height/weight(Kg): _____

Body Cost (do not include carried artifacts): ( ) Pts

History/description: _____

Natural DL ( )

Spot/Ranged attack modifier ( )

Base Reach ( )

( )

Health ( )

Halfway point ( )

Current Health Points ( )

( )

POWER	FINESSE	VIGOR	BEAUTY
FEAR	**TOUGHNESS**	**LIFESPAN**	**HEALING**
MOVE	**VISION**	**HEARING**	**SMELL**

Body Attributes Cost:

Size:_____ Cost modifier:____

Body Traits

Name	Effect	Cost

Carried Artifacts&Equipment

Name	Effect	Cost

Mind Sheet

Name(s): _____
Character Type/Age: _____
Total Power
(Mind cost+Body(ies) cost+Wealth&Possessions
+Available Power Points): _____ Pts
Mind cost (Ignore Wealth&Possessions): _____ Pts
Total income/Interim chapter
(Realm-independant and Realm-specific):_____mints
Weaknesses (-50pts each):
_____
_____
_____

RECO: ◯ NOTO: ◯

Available Power Points: ◯

White Drama trumps: ◯◯

Black Drama trumps: ◯◯

Current Anguish Points:____

		Cost
Intelligence	◯	____
Temperance	◯	____
Presence	◯	____
Celerity pool	◯	____

Wealth&Possessions

	Cost
Cash on hand:_____mints	____
Income (Realm-independant): _____mints/interim ch.	____
Artifact value (total amounts from each body sheet or artifacts otherwise possessed):	____
Realm (describe on back sheet):	
# of large cities: ____	____
# of med. cities: ____	____
# of small cities: ____	____
# of towns: ____	____
# of villages: ____	____
Sanctum(s)_____	____

Mind Traits	Cost
_____	____
_____	____
_____	____

Mind Traits	Cost
_____	____
_____	____
_____	____

Masteries

		+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8	+9	+10	Cost
Major	( )	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	____
1st Minor	( )	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯			____
2nd Minor	( )	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯					____
3rd Minor	( )	◯	◯	◯	◯							____
Achilles Heel	( )	◯	◯									____

Master ability	Cost
_____	____
_____	____
_____	____
_____	____
_____	____

Master ability	Cost
_____	____
_____	____
_____	____
_____	____
_____	____

1st Legendary ability	Cost
_____	____

2nd Legendary ability	Cost
_____	____

A world destroyed and reborn...

A people oblivious to an immortal menace...

The last days of an Age on the brink of war...

This is the world of Lesser Shades of Evil.

Thousands of years after an apocalyptic war, people live in a new Dark Age; they milk their cows, plow their fields and come nightfall give prayer to the All-Seeing. But while their lives may seem simple, among them walk those that have kept the dark technology of the First Age alive and hidden. For two thousand years, these silent ghosts have watched over the mortal masses from the shadows, blessing the virtuous with long life and rewarding the malicious with swift death. They call themselves Angelions, immortal guardians that keep the people of the world free from war and tyranny.

But a recent treachery has divided them, leaving them scattered, leaderless, and increasingly unpredictable; as digital ghosts they now roam the Earth, wandering from flesh to flesh, known by many names and possessing many forms. They may speak from the mouth of a child but bite with the jaws of a snake; they may walk using the legs of men, fly over cloud using the wings of birds or swim in the seas using the fins of fish.
You can play one of them...

This is the world of Lesser Shades of Evil; a science-fantasy roleplaying game where to be immortal is only the first step to uncovering your destiny...

Published by Eos Press ● EOS 1200
Produced by Ravencross Publishing enr.
ISBN 978-2-9809783-0-2 ● $44.95US