

SCROLL OF THE MONK™



EXALTED
SECOND EDITION

SCROLL OF THE MONK™

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RISE,
IF YOU CAN.
WHO ARE YOU?

I HAVE... NO NAME...
BUT "STUDENT"...



WHO, THEN, IS YOUR MASTER?

I WOULD THAT...
YOU WERE
MY MASTER.

ME?
WHAT MAKES
YOU THINK YOU'RE
WORTHY OF
THAT?



FOR THREE DAYS, I'VE
FASTED HERE AND PRAYED.
I'VE ALSO MEMORIZED
THE IMMACULATE—

STOP.



ARE YOU
EVEN EXALTED?

THE DRAGONS
HAVE NOT YET
GRACED ME, NO.

I SEE.



GO HOME.
YOU CAN'T LEARN
WHAT I HAVE
TO TEACH.





INTRODUCTION

Welcome to **Scroll of the Monk**, a supplement about supernatural martial arts for **Exalted**. Spectacular, over-the-top martial arts appear in several of the media and genres that inspire **Exalted**, from ancient Chinese epics to modern manga and video games. Therefore, the martial arts also play an important role in **Exalted**.

Portrayals of the martial arts range from gritty realism to utter fantasy. **Exalted**, naturally, leans toward the flashy and fantastical side. The gods' Chosen don't just hit people in fancy ways: They punch through walls, banish spirits, cloud men's minds and even ascend to Heaven through the power of their martial arts mastery.

Exalted martial arts can look a lot like magic—but where sorcery relies on formulas and book learning, the martial arts get their magic from intense discipline of body, mind and soul. The Exalted wield a mystical Essence that pervades all things. Therefore, by controlling the Essence in their own bodies, Exalted martial artists can affect the Essence in the

wider world and produce miracles. The greatest martial artists can devastate armies and challenge the gods.

WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK

Scroll of the Monk offers players and Storytellers a few dozen supernatural martial arts. Those arts range from combat styles that are just a little too formidable to be human to mystic arts of apocalyptic power. Some martial arts are subtle and sneaky, while others are so loud and flashy an entire town knows a fight is going on... shortly before the town is destroyed, most likely. From forest barbarians to supernatural courtiers, you can find a martial art for any character concept you can imagine.

More specifically, here's what you'll find in each chapter:

Chapter One: The Martial Arts World explains how supernatural martial artists progress from mundane combat skills to awesome magical power. Not every sort of Exalt can learn every type of supernatural martial art,



though, so this chapter goes on to explain who can learn what class of styles. The chapter continues with an exploration of the special subculture of martial artists, with notes on how to incorporate it into stories and where the Exalted fit within it. Storytellers also receive brief descriptions of the sort of organizations whose members practice martial arts, with examples they can develop for their own **Exalted** series.

Chapter Two: Terrestrial Martial Arts describes 13 of the least class of supernatural martial arts. These are the favored martial arts of the Dragon-Blooded, and even un-Exalted mortals can learn them (with difficulty). And although the Terrestrial martial arts make up the least class, their practitioners remain powerful enough that no one can ignore them.

Chapter Three: Celestial Martial Arts details nine of the mighty martial arts practiced by the Solar Exalted and their Abyssal, Lunar and Sidereal rivals and foes. No mortal can hope to equal the power of these magical fighting styles, though the Dragon-Blooded can master them (with difficulty).

Chapter Four: Sidereal Martial Arts reveals the mysteries of Creation's strangest, strongest and most magical fighting styles. The enigmatic Sidereal Exalted have kept these awesomely powerful martial arts secret for centuries. In this Time of Tumult, however, ancient secrets could be at last revealed—for better or worse.

Finally, the **Appendix** provides miscellaneous resources for **Exalted** players and Storytellers, including two new Backgrounds for martial artists, an explanation of the rare and peculiar “infectious” martial arts and more weapons for **Exalted** characters to wield—including new artifact weapons for martial artists and other Exalted heroes and villains.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Scroll of the Monk does more than set forth a smorgasbord of magical martial arts for players and Storytellers to give their characters. One can also find ideas for character origins. Even the Chosen of the Gods don't just happen to know these amazing fighting styles. The Exalted must undergo special training to wield supernatural martial arts. Admittedly, the training might have happened in a former life, but Exaltation falls on people who already possess remarkable skills and force of character. An Exalt might have belonged to a martial arts organization before the gods chose her for ultimate power, for instance.

Storytellers can also find the seeds of stories hidden among the backgrounds of various martial arts. Some of these styles are entangled with ancient crimes and modern rivalries. Characters who decide to learn these styles—or who remember them from former lives—may involve themselves in these plots if the Storyteller so chooses. The Martial Arts World itself is a source of stories. Classic plots include initiation and training in these powerful fighting styles, rivalries between individual martial artists and martial arts schools, and the ever-popular tournament where diverse martial artists battle for glory and more tangible prizes.

INSPIRATIONAL MATERIAL

The following manga, movies and other material are of particular use for players and Storytellers who want to make supernatural martial arts an important part of their **Exalted** series. They are only a small selection or the more easily accessible material. A great deal of wuxia cinema, for instance, is available only in specialty video stores.

PRINT

Naruto

This manga, with its elementally aspected ninja clans and Charm-like jutsus, is a great resource for understanding Exalted stunts and martial arts. In addition, it birthed an awesome anime series, currently running on Cartoon Network.

Weapons of the Gods

This comic book from Taiwan recently inspired a roleplaying game of the same name. This is pure wuxia, with powerful magic weapons and magical martial arts, all set in a mystical China split into warring states and dominated by an evil, nigh-omnipotent Emperor.

TELEVISION AND MOVIES

Kung-Fu Hustle

This silly, cheeky story is as much absurd comedy as it is kung-fu action movie, but it can't be overstated how much the martial arts showdowns resemble Exalted-level combat.

Avatar: The Last Airbender

If you want to get a handle on Immaculate martial arts, watch this show. It has elementally powered soldiers and martial artists and a scarlet-clad expansionist empire lording over everybody else with its superior military. Now, why does that sound so familiar?

Eagle Shooting Heroes

An older wuxia movie, more than half parody, that features several oddball martial arts styles—and one Sidereal martial arts power that's no joke at all. Plus you get ancient martial arts secrets, monsters, fiendish tortures (that don't work at all as intended...), ascension to godhood and songs.

Hero

A splendid wuxia movie full of incredible, Celestial-level martial arts by its nameless protagonist and the three rebel martial artists he has sworn to kill.

House of Flying Daggers

Another wuxia movie from the makers of *Hero*, and similarly replete with fantastic martial arts involving extendible sleeves, bamboo spears, thrown daggers and more. This and *Hero* incidentally provide excellent models for Realm military action, both overt and covert.

Ranma 1/2

It's a comical anime about teenage martial artists and their demented parents and mentors who change gender or turn into animals when splashed with water, but don't let that turn you off. It has rivalries, secret techniques, a



nigh-invincible martial arts master (complete with anima banner) and just about everything else in the martial arts panoply—all played for laughs.

The Storm Riders

This is probably the best example of Terrestrial martial arts ever committed to live-action film. The story loses a lot from the Chinese comic on which it was based, but it's still a fun and visually thrilling ride. And it's got Streetfighter's Sonny Chiba as the villain. C'mon, that's win-win.

Wind and Cloud and Wind and Cloud 2

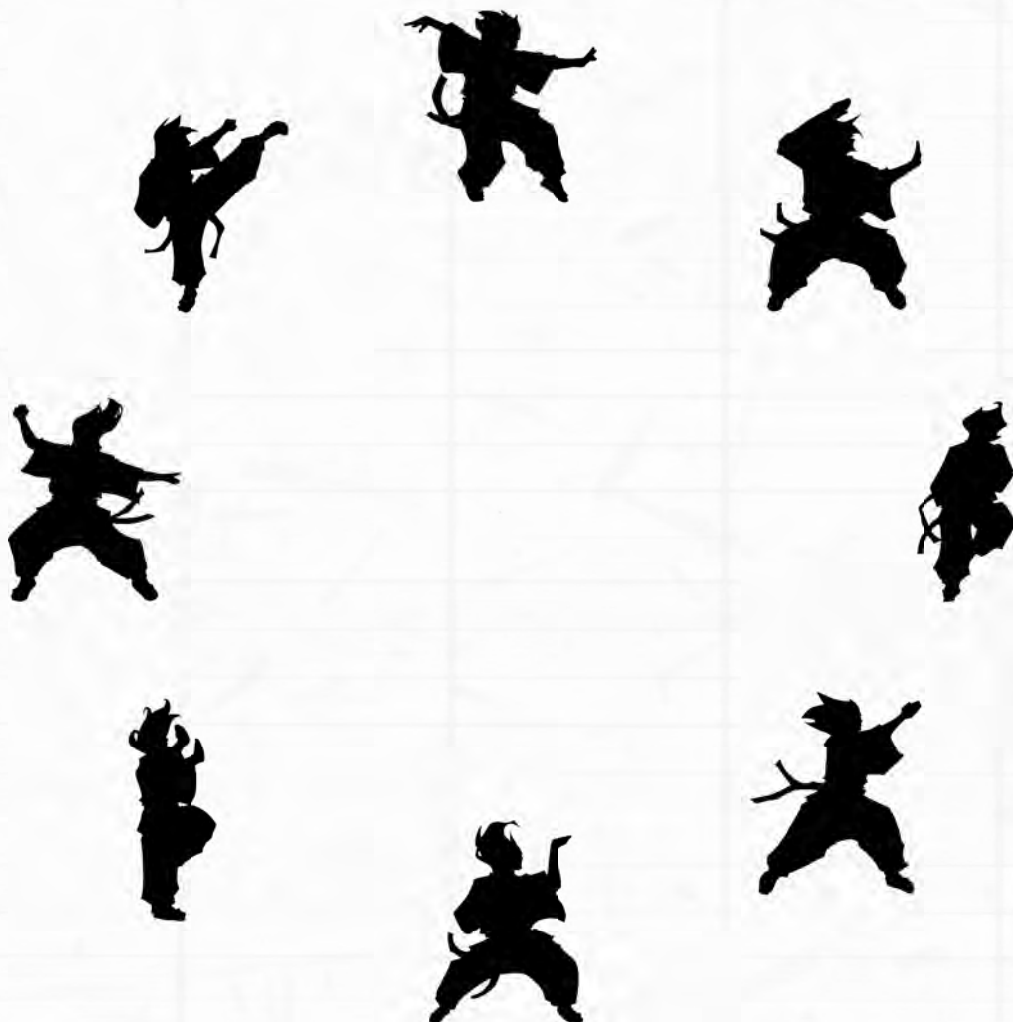
These two Taiwanese television series are based on the highly successful Storm Riders comic and motion picture. It's ostensibly a subtitled Taiwanese soap opera, but it has

wire fu, supernatural martial arts (with computer-generated elemental effects), dragons, gods and daiklave-scale magic weapons. Check these out if you get the chance.

VIDEO GAMES

Jade Empire

Sure, it's mentioned in the main book, and maybe it's a bit much to keep harping on it, but seriously, this game rocks. In addition to all the stuff mentioned in the **Exalted** core about why this is a great game, it has the best video game presentation of elementally aspected martial arts powers ever and is crazily evocative of the feel of the Immaculate Order and its signature styles.



BUT I THOUGHT
SIFU TOOK YOU
ASIDE FOR SPECIAL
TRAINING.

BAH, THIS STUPID
PLACE! I HATE
THIS SCHOOL!

WHAT? WHY,
BROTHER?

BECAUSE I'M
WASTING MY TIME HERE,
THAT'S WHY!

SPECIAL
TRAINING? DO YOU
KNOW WHAT WE'VE
BEEN DOING ALL MONTH
LONG, HE AND I?

SLAP SLAP SLAP...

EVERY DAY, HE SETS
DOWN A PAN OF WATER
AND BIDS ME SPLASH
ALL THE WATER OUT
WITH ONE PALM.



AND WHEN I'M DONE, HE
FILLS A NEW PAN AND
BIDS ME DO THE SAME
WITH THE OTHER HAND.

THAT'S ALL
I'VE DONE ALL MONTH.
SIFU'S "SPECIAL TRAINING"
HAS TAUGHT ME
NOTHING!

NOTHING!!!

CRACK!

WHOA...



CHAPTER ONE THE MARTIAL ARTS WORLD

Supernatural martial arts are some of the greatest powers available to the Exalted. These magical fighting arts enable the Chosen to perform all manner of wonderful feats, not just to hit people really hard. Depending on which arts she knows, a practitioner might be able to exorcise spirits, heal disease, twist minds or project blasts of flame. Some martial arts look more like sorcery than boxing, wrestling or other conventional forms of combat. Like sorcery, supernatural martial arts require intensive study and training in order to channel Essence in special ways, but there the resemblance ends. These fighting arts are not sorcery. However strange their Charms might seem, supernatural martial arts all grow from mundane Abilities—especially (of course) the Martial Arts Ability. To understand the supernatural martial arts, therefore, one first needs to understand mundane martial arts and the eponymous Ability.

The need for training creates a special subculture, a Martial Arts World that extends throughout Creation. Many different groups teach or practice supernatural fighting arts.

Chosen who want to learn Martial Arts Charms cannot avoid interacting with that subculture. Life in the Martial Arts World brings many special challenges... and some great opportunities for stories.

FROM NATURAL TO SUPERNATURAL

Skilled hand-to-hand fighters do a lot more than swing their fists, and a winning fighter needs more than muscle. A martial artist applies his strength with speed, precision and control. When a boxer delivers his knockout punch, he moves to channel the full force of his body—legs, chest and shoulder, not just his arm—into his fist. Then he delivers that tremendous impact to some specific location where the shock and pain will overload his opponent's nervous system, causing unconsciousness. A throw, on the other hand, applies a small force in exactly the right way to redirect an opponent's momentum, flipping him helplessly onto the ground.

Either way—a powerful impact or a deft redirection—achieving that degree of control over one’s body demands studying a lot more than combat. The Martial Arts Ability, therefore, overlaps with many other Abilities. A martial artist character has good reasons to develop those Abilities.

Athletics: This Skill describes how well a character controls and coordinates his body to run, lift, climb, jump and so on. A martial artist could use this Ability to run up a wall, fight while balancing on a narrow ledge, jump and bounce off an awning, and then land on his feet on the ground after a flying somersault.

Awareness: Martial artists train their minds as well as their bodies. To strike an opponent in precisely the right place and time, a fighter must anticipate his foe’s actions by noticing shifts in his stance or how he moves his weapon. An expert martial artist could also develop this Ability to avoid ambushes or surprise attacks.

Dodge: Any fighter who stands and lets her opponent hit her is either very confident in her armor or a fool. Smart fighters prefer to use footwork and flexibility to be where an attack isn’t.

Integrity: Martial arts training demands great self-discipline to train for hours in defiance of pain, fatigue and boredom. On a subtler level, a great fighter must keep a clear head in a fight so his opponent can’t fake him out or goad him into losing control. This mental and physical discipline can help a martial artist resist drugs and attempts to break his will.

Larceny: Even if a martial artist doesn’t care about picking locks or running scams, she might want to deceive a foe through feints or quickly produce a weapon from a hidden location.

Medicine: To attack the weak points of the body, one must know where those weak points are. Knowledge of medicine also proves useful when training hard. After a fight, a prudent martial artist might also want to know how to deal with wounds. One way or another, refined fighting styles often include some medical knowledge.

Resistance: The search for perfect control of the body often includes training to counter the body’s weaknesses. In a fight, victory can go to he who tires last or can endure the most pain. Martial arts training often involves toughening striking surfaces with patches of callus so it doesn’t hurt so much to hit someone. Muscles tensed at the right moment can reduce the force of a blow. Martial artists might also train to resist heat, cold or other fatiguing conditions.

Stealth: Not every martial artist necessarily wants to sneak around, but moving without making a sound or leaving any trace of your passage is an excellent test of how well one controls one’s body.

Thrown: A small thrown weapon can incapacitate a foe just as well as a larger weapon, if you strike the right location. Throwing objects at a small target is also a good test of coordination.

Conceivably, a martial artist might find almost any Ability useful in developing his combat prowess. The Ability labeled “Martial Arts,” therefore, represents more than hitting people. It also represents how





well a character integrates all of his mental and physical skills—which may be represented by other Abilities—for the purpose of combat. Therefore, an expert martial artist has as much in common with an ordinary bar brawler as a lion has with a household mouser.

A highly trained martial artist can perform amazing feats. To a person who lacks his training, breaking bricks with a punch, vaulting over a fence or catching a sword between the hands seems almost magical. When the first Exalted applied their mystic energies to the martial arts, they discovered a peculiar power in the overlap between unarmed combat and other Abilities.

At first they applied Essence to the martial arts in the way they applied it to other mundane skills, by instinct. They created Charms that grew naturally from fisticuffs, wrestling and other basic forms of unarmed combat. As with other Abilities, some Charms were refined, standardized and organized into Charm trees. Exalts could invent their own variations or more powerful versions as they gained in combat skill and Essence mastery. Each class of Exalt generated its own set of Martial Arts Charms to reflect its particular affinities for Essence. Terrestrial Charms, for instance, tend to show watery effects because water—mobile yet dense, pushing with immense pressure but yielding to any outside force—is the element that best expresses a martial artist's agility and power.

These “natural” Charms, however, are fundamentally limited. One can do only so much with plain old brawling, even highly skilled brawling. The Essence merely adds power to something mortals can do anyway. Therefore, the Exalted refined their powers further, combining martial arts and Essence in reverse. They took the training methods, the focus and the integration of mind and body required for highly skilled combat and applied them to their own Essence.

The Exalted found that the physical and mental training needed to become exceptional hand-to-hand fighters also enabled them to wield Essence with greater speed, precision and control than they could achieve any other way. They not only created new Charms, they created a whole new kind of Charm. It wasn't combat with Essence thrown in, but genuinely supernatural martial arts.

The first experiments resulted in powerful new fighting arts that still looked a lot like mundane forms of unarmed combat. Over time, however, the Exalted learned how to apply martial arts techniques to other forms of combat. Some weapons proved easy to use with any of the new fighting arts. Others could be used only with fighting arts specially adapted for them. The process of invention continues, with the result that some “martial arts styles” look nothing at all like unarmed combat.

In fact, some supernatural martial arts seem very similar to sorcery. These martial arts styles recognize that if an Exalt trains her anima with the same finely honed skill needed for a knockout punch or throw, she can use that precisely controlled force for more than beating people up. She can also “punch” souls, “wrestle” minds or “throw” elemental

forces. The Sidereal Exalted possess the greatest aptitude for this mode of wielding Essence, and their martial arts affect fundamental aspects of reality such as space and motion, health and sickness, fate, identity and Essence itself. The Chosen of the Maidens devote great effort to mastering their esoteric fighting styles. Creation's most dangerous foes, such as demon princes and Deathlords, exist beyond fate—which makes them resistant to normal Sidereal Charms—but Sidereal martial arts can still affect them.

The Exalted found another way these specialized, supernatural fighting arts differed from ordinary Charms. Once an Exalt created a fighting art, that art was fixed. The same precision and control that gives mundane martial arts their power also removes the improvisational aspect from Martial Arts Charms. If a martial artist doesn't hit a brick exactly right, his hand breaks instead of the brick. Similarly, if an Exalt doesn't perform a supernatural combat Charm exactly right, it doesn't work. Each Charm assumes that a martial artist trained his Essence in very specific ways—not just for that particular Charm, but for each Charm preceding it in the style. As a result, an Exalt cannot customize a Martial Arts Charm (except in certain limited, special cases) or add new Charms to a style. If a martial artist wants to adjust a style to her own interests or aptitudes, she has to re-invent it from the beginning.

Supernatural martial arts do enjoy a special advantage over normal Charms, though: They are not limited to one type of Exalt. The Essence manipulations for supernatural fighting arts aren't natural, any more than anyone naturally knows how to perform a back flip or smash a brick with his bare hand. They come as much from intensive training as from an Exalt's supernatural affinities. As a result, Exalted characters can learn a wide variety of fighting arts. They can even imitate other sorts of Exalted to a certain degree.

THE PERFECTED LOTUS OF UNDERSTANDING

Supernatural martial arts ignore some of the restrictions on what Charms an Exalt can learn, but some limits still apply. These fighting styles group into three distinct levels of power, named for the Exalts who learn them most easily.

Terrestrial styles are the weakest. Terrestrial Exalted learn them with no greater difficulty than their normal Charms, and even a few extraordinarily gifted mortals can master their Charms. Celestial Exalts can learn these styles easily, but most ignore them in favor of more powerful supernatural styles.

Celestial styles are more powerful. Solar, Lunar, Sidereal and Abyssal Exalted can readily learn them, as can Terrestrials of extraordinary talent and dedication.

Sidereal styles form the apex of martial arts power. No one but the Chosen of the Maidens can learn these styles without extraordinary effort, and even the Sidereals don't exactly find them easy.





CHARM CONCEPT: EXALTED HERO STYLES

The Charms that arise “naturally” or “intuitively” from applying Essence to unarmed combat can’t achieve the wondrous results of true supernatural martial arts, but that doesn’t make them weak. These Martial Arts Charms form styles of their own. For purposes of the game they are called hero styles. The Charms that come naturally to Terrestrial Exalts form the Terrestrial Hero Style, while Martial Arts Charms natural for Solars form the Solar Hero Style. The natural combat Charms for Lunars and Abyssals similarly form a Lunar Hero Style and an Abyssal Hero Style, respectively. The Sidereals collect their natural Martial Arts Charms into the Violet Bier of Sorrows Style. Storytellers can decide for themselves whether supernatural martial artists ever speak of “hero styles” or invent names for them as the Sidereals did.

Just as Exalted characters can learn supernatural martial arts invented by and for other sorts of Exalted, they can learn hero styles that are not their own. In such cases, however, the character learns the style as a formalized fighting art. She must study a fixed tree of Charms, with no potential to create new Charms of her own. For instance, a Sidereal could learn the Solar Hero Style or an Abyssal could learn Terrestrial Hero Style—or vice versa. It wouldn’t be easy, but the character could do it. Just like learning other supernatural martial arts, however, the character would need some source of instruction as she trained her Essence to imitate the natural forms of a different Exaltation. Admittedly, some Exalted have little reason to formalize their Charms into a martial art that other Exalted could learn—but the possibility remains.

Supernatural martial arts also differ in how “magical” they seem, as well as how far they extend beyond ordinary unarmed combat. Some sages would rather describe supernatural fighting arts by the refinement of their Essence usage, rather than classes of Exaltation. These sages use a symbolic image that compares the martial arts to a lotus plant: the Perfected Lotus of Understanding.

The mud in which the lotus grows represents training in mundane Martial Arts and all the related Abilities. The mud is not the lotus, but the plant would not exist without it. To an Exalt accustomed to commanding reality through the overwhelming power of his Essence, the sweat and boredom of endless hours of exercise, slow-motion combat drills and apparently senseless tasks can seem like descending from Heaven to grub in the dirt. Martial arts masters say, however, that the richer this mulch of mundane effort is, the more beautifully the lotus of achievement grows.

The sages refer to Terrestrial martial arts as the Roots of the Perfected Lotus. The roots of the lotus anchor it and draw

sustenance from the mud. Similarly, the Terrestrial arts retain an intimate and obvious connection to mundane physical training and skills. A practitioner hits people, breaks things, grapples, throws, performs acrobatics—but in a magical way. At this level of initiation, a martial artist is still learning how to control his Essence with the same disciplined skill with which he controls his body.

The roots of the lotus plant converge on the plant’s bulb, from which the stem reaches out of the mud. Similarly, the lessons of Terrestrial training feed into Celestial martial arts, the Bulb of the Perfected Lotus. Celestial martial arts display a great evolution of power and refinement between their initial and terminal Charms. The first Charms in a style usually resemble those of Terrestrial arts, as they are still part of the roots. As a practitioner develops her understanding of Essence and her chosen fighting art, however, she applies her martial prowess to spiritual forces and performs feats no mortal could possibly achieve. The power drawn from the earth of training now reaches beyond its source, toward the light of divinity.

When the lotus stem breaks the surface of the water, the plant puts forth leaves and a flower. In the Blossom of the Perfected Lotus, Sidereal martial arts transcend their source within Creation. Mud becomes perfume. The martial artist applies the lessons gained from combat to cosmic forces and abstract principles. A practitioner moves from hitting things to working godlike miracles that equal the wildest feats of sorcery.

The savants add another point. The lotus needs every part of itself to survive, from the roots hidden in the mud to the blossom shining in the sun. In the same way, the classes of supernatural martial arts are not completely divided from each other. With great effort, people can learn fighting styles above their level of Exaltation. Most notably, a large number of Terrestrial Exalted—monks in the Immaculate Order—practice martial arts of Celestial power. Solars (and Abyssals) can learn Sidereal styles. Even mortals can struggle out of the mud to learn Terrestrial martial arts. It isn’t easy, but all human beings can climb a little further up the Perfected Lotus than where their birth or Exaltation placed them. In this way, they improve their understanding of Essence, Creation and themselves. They become greater creatures than the gods made them to be.

THE IMMACULATE VIEWPOINT

The Immaculate Order does not teach any of this. Monks do not learn about Terrestrial, Celestial and Sidereal styles, much less the Perfected Lotus of Understanding. The Order divides supernatural fighting arts into three different classes: the Immaculate styles, blessed by the Dragons, whose power demonstrates their spiritual perfection; lesser, secular but legitimate styles, such as the Five Dragons Style and other styles openly taught in the Realm; and heretical styles practiced by criminals, Anathema, forbidden cults and other bad sorts. The appearance of the Solars and Abyssals presents



something of a challenge to the Immaculate viewpoint, since the Anathema's blasphemous martial arts are obviously just as powerful as the Immaculates' best. The monks will never even hear about Sidereal styles—at least, not if the Bronze Faction can help it.

SIMPLE COMPARISONS

A mundane martial arts master can split a brick and jump over a hedge.

A Terrestrial martial arts master can split a boulder and jump over a house.

A Celestial martial arts master can split a city wall and jump over a mountain.

A Sidereal martial arts master can split a soul and jump to Yu-Shan

WHO CAN LEARN SUPERNATURAL MARTIAL ARTS

In brief, any person who can perceive and direct Essence can learn supernatural martial arts if she works hard enough. The ranks of martial artists, therefore, include Exalts but also Essence-wielding mortals, a wide variety of gods, ghosts and demons, and their half-human offspring. Not every Essence-wielder can learn every sort of fighting art, though. Very few entities can follow the Perfected Lotus of Understanding to its blossoming. Different sorts of Essence-wielders are also restricted in how they learn supernatural martial arts. Some arts can be learned through self-study (guided by books or memory crystals), while others require the active help of a teacher. Characters who seek to learn martial arts beyond their normal affinities of Essence also pay special surcharges of time and experience points to learn its Charms or motes of Essence to use them.

Some people can even learn martial arts that are more advanced than their level of Exaltation would suggest. Before characters can learn to use supernatural martial arts above their normal limits, they must learn to perceive and channel Essence in new ways. Heroic mortals must learn to perceive Essence, period. The Dragon-Blooded undergo more difficult initiations before they can learn Celestial martial arts. Each Dragon-Blood must learn at least two special Charms before Celestial arts become possible. Solar and Abyssal Exalts who want to learn Sidereal styles only need prior expertise with Celestial fighting arts, but hardly anyone outside Yu-Shan knows that these martial arts even exist.

THE SIDEREAL EXALTED

The Chosen of the Five Maidens can learn any martial arts they want. They alone can create Sidereal martial arts, and they account for all known practitioners at the

Blossom of the Perfected Lotus. Sidereals can also learn Celestial martial arts with ease and often find them useful. The Shapers of Fate could learn Terrestrial arts too, but they typically consider them too weak to be worth the bother. Nonetheless, Sidereals created many of the Terrestrial arts for the Dragon-Bloods and heroic mortals, and those who did so know the styles they teach.

Most Sidereal martial arts styles are so difficult and esoteric that only an Exalt with Martial Arts 5 and Essence 4 can learn their basic Charms. Anyone who wants to reach the Blossom of the Perfected Lotus must have spent years, possibly decades, training her body, mind and Essence to the utmost refinement. In theory, a Chosen of the Maidens could engage in all this training without studying any other supernatural combat, then start on a Sidereal art. In practice, no Sidereal attempts this. Sidereal sifus urge would-be martial artists to learn at least one Celestial style before they study Sidereal martial arts, just to practice controlling their Essence.

Before a Sidereal can attain competence with a greater martial art—defined as learning a Sidereal style's Form-type Charm—the Chosen of Fate must fully master some martial art from the Bulb of the Perfected Lotus. This martial art may be the Sidereals' own characteristic fighting style, the Violet Bier of Sorrows Style (briefly described in *Exalted*, p. 336, and in the *Exalted Storytellers Companion*, pp. 73–74), or one of the Celestial styles. Since a Sidereal martial artist must study a lower art eventually, she might as well start as soon as possible.

A Sidereal sifu needs to know a style's Form-type Charm to be able to teach its lower Charms, but he need not have mastered the style to its end. Indeed, some of the most powerful Sidereal styles seem to render their masters incapable of explaining the greatest secrets of the terminal Charms.

CHARM CONCEPT: FORM-TYPE CHARMS

Every supernatural martial art includes a special Charm called a Form-type Charm at the center of its Charm tree. This Charm typically expresses the core concept of the style. When a character activates a Form-type Charm, the character gains certain benefits and powers for the rest of the scene. The character can use other Charms while still enjoying the benefits of the Form-type Charm. Unless otherwise stated, however, a martial artist cannot use more than one Form-type Charm at a time. Using a Form-type Charm ends the effects of any other Form-type Charm the character was using up to that point.

THE SOLAR EXALTED

The Chosen of Unconquered Sun can learn any Celestial martial art, provided they can find a source of instruction.



Usually the source is another Exalt, but a Solar can study instructional texts or commune with memory crystals. Any Solar can learn any Celestial martial art, including those created by and for the Lunars or the Abyssals. After a great deal of self-training and study of both combat and Essence, a Solar could even create a new Celestial martial art from scratch.

The Bureau of Destiny believes that no Solar knows a Sidereal martial art, and the Bureau intends to keep it that way. Even the Gold Faction has no intention of teaching the highest arts to its Solar allies. Elder Sidereals know that a few Solars of the Old Realm learned at least a few Sidereal Martial Arts Charms. The Old Realm lasted a very long time, after all, and the early Sidereals sometimes trusted their Solar lieges more than turned out to be wise. The Sidereals also know that the Solar Exaltations always forgot those Charms between incarnations. Sidereals have enough problems remembering their supreme martial arts between incarnations, so how could the Solars manage it? The Sidereals' leaders are confident they can anticipate and forestall any circumstance that could lead to one of their number imparting the forbidden knowledge.

Solar Exalted can also learn Terrestrial martial arts as easily as they learn Celestial arts. Terrestrial arts are weaker than Celestial styles, but considerably more of them exist in Creation. Some Terrestrial styles are specially adapted for particular activities, purposes or environments, so a Solar who shares such interests could have a good reason to learn an associated style. Solars can readily learn Terrestrial styles from fighting manuals or memory crystals.

THE ABYSSAL EXALTED

The deathknights learn supernatural martial arts exactly like their Solar counterparts do. An Abyssal Exalt who managed to learn a Sidereal art would be a terrible threat to Creation—not least because it would mean a Sidereal was deceived, subverted or coerced to serve Oblivion.

So far, the Abyssals have invented few martial arts styles of their own. They prefer to learn styles gleaned from books, memory crystals or remembered from previous incarnations. The Deathlords themselves certainly know Celestial arts they could teach to their greatest acolytes.

INITIATION INTO SIDEREAL MARTIAL ARTS

Any Solar or Abyssal can learn a Sidereal martial art if he already knows at least one Celestial fighting art to its Form-type Charm. He would need a Sidereal sifu of great wisdom, experience and power (defined as Martial Arts 6, Essence 5) who was qualified to teach the style in the first place (defined as knowing the Sidereal style's Form-type Charm). One Solar cannot teach another these supreme and mystical martial arts. Only the Chosen of the Maidens themselves can push the limits of destiny that the Unconquered Sun decreed for his favored servants. Similarly, an Abyssal would be unable to pass on her knowledge of Sidereal martial arts to another deathknight. For either type of Exalt, finding a Sidereal teacher would be a formidable achievement in itself, since the Chosen of Fate hide themselves so well.



ECLIPSE AND MOONSHADOW CASTES

Eclipse Caste Solars and Moonshadow Abyssals present a special case. These Exalted can learn Terrestrial, Celestial or Sidereal martial arts as normal for their kind of Exalt. Anyone sensitive to Essence, however, can tell the difference between, say, a Solar using a Terrestrial martial art and a Dragon-Blood using the same fighting style. For a few more experience points and a great deal more time, these two castes can learn a martial art exactly like another form of Exalt. The character could enhance Sidereal arts with prayer strips like the Chosen of the Maidens or perform the Seafaring Hero Style indistinguishably from a Water-aspected Dragon-Blood.

Moonshadows and Eclipse Castes would also need some form of instruction to duplicate another Exalt's martial arts so precisely. For Celestial or Terrestrial arts, books or memory crystals will suffice. Sidereal arts still require an actual Sidereal sifu.

THE LUNAR EXALTED

The Chosen of Luna can learn Celestial martial arts or create their own. In the First Age, Lunars might have devised the Snake Style and the other animal-inspired styles (though some savants in the know believe it was the Solars who did so, inspired by the animal forms of their Lunar mates). The Lunars can also learn Terrestrial martial arts if they find an appropriate source of instruction.

Lunar Exalted cannot, however, learn Sidereal styles under any known circumstances. Perhaps they could in the First Age, but now, they are too tainted by the Wyld to access the subtle order of cosmic forces that underlies the Sidereal arts. Since other Exalted hardly ever get the chance to learn Sidereal arts in the first place, though, the Chosen of Luna seldom feel deprived (or even know of this limitation).

THE TERRESTRIAL EXALTED

The Dragon-Blooded naturally learn Terrestrial martial arts. In theory, any Dragon-Blood can learn any Terrestrial style. In practice, though, some styles are easier to use than others. Only the Water Aspects learn and practice all Terrestrial arts with equal facility. Other aspects learn supernatural martial arts more slowly (unless a character has Martial Arts as a Favored Ability). They also pay an extra mote of Essence for each use of a Charm of a supernatural martial art.

Over the Ages, however, the Dragon-Blooded have devised supernatural martial arts attuned to Fire, Air, Earth or Wood instead of the default Water. A Dragon-Blood who practices a martial art that shares her aspect does not pay the extra Essence. Some styles also have no aspect at all, so any Dragon-Blood can use their Charms without paying extra Essence, but these styles tend to be limited in other ways. For instance, a Fire Aspect can use the Golden Janissary Style without paying more Essence, because that style is itself aspected to Fire. A Water Aspect could also use the style without an Essence surcharge, because he's a Water Aspect.

A Dragon-Blood attuned to Wood, however, would expend one extra mote for each Golden Janissary Charm she used.

Practicing a style attuned to a different element than one's own also imposes other small hindrances on a Terrestrial Exalt. See **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded** for details.

Terrestrial Exalts can learn Celestial styles if they can find a tutor who knows such a style. The tutor can be another Terrestrial, though the Dragon-Blood must learn directly from a teacher. Instructional texts and memory crystals do not suffice. The character must also undergo a special initiation and learn new Charms for perceiving and channeling Essence.

Under no circumstances can a Terrestrial Exalt learn a Sidereal martial art. The Sidereals have tried on numerous occasions to initiate Dragon-Bloods into the Blossom of the Perfected Lotus, but it has never worked. The Sidereal sifus did find some interesting (if impractical) ways to kill Terrestrial Exalted, though.

INITIATION INTO CELESTIAL MARTIAL ARTS

Before a Dragon-Blood can hope to learn a Celestial fighting art, he must learn a pair of special Charms that attune his body, mind and soul to other modes of sensing and wielding Essence. One Charm enables the character to perceive Essence in a new way. The other grants some new power to interact with Essence and the supernatural.

The Immaculate Order teaches its initiates a pair of Charms called Pasiap's Humility and Moment of Daana'd. The first enables an Exalt to see invisible, dematerialized spirits; the second, to interact with them so a spirit cannot escape an Immaculate monk simply by dematerializing.

The Immaculate Charms are refined versions of older Charms called Walker-Among-Irises Perception and Iris-Bulb Discourse. Dragon-Blooded mandarins of the Shogunate period and Old Realm used these Charms to increase their power over spirits. To an Exalt who knows these charms, dematerialized spirits look like animate, god-shaped windows into an endless field of blossoming irises.

Terrestrial warriors of the First Age sometimes used a different process, the Tiger-and-Bear Initiation. The first Charm, Tiger-and-Bear Awareness, confers an uncanny anticipation of danger and the power to see through natural concealment. Tiger-and-Bear Unity uses Essence to increase the force of blows.

All these Charms are described in detail in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**. While learning these Charms, the Exalt must engage in long, intensive study and ascetic training before she can even think of mastering her first Celestial Martial Arts Charm. The whole process takes at least a year.

Rare tomes from the First Age describe other processes by which Terrestrial Exalts gained initiation into Celestial arts. Those methods are even more difficult than learning the initiatory Charms.





The Yoga of Celestial Refinement was an ascetic regimen of special diet, meditation, exercise and prayer designed to attune a Dragon-Blood's body to Celestial modes of channeling Essence. Celestial Exalted of the Old Realm often used it to train their Terrestrial servants. Anyone with Lore 4 and Martial Arts 4 can benefit from the instructional sutras for this method. The Yoga of Celestial Refinement works more quickly if an Exalt has a teacher who knows the method, but such sifus are now more rare than the instructions themselves. The process takes at least 10 years in any case.

Ancient texts also speak of a method the Terrestrial Exalted can use to gain Celestial initiation by spending months committing all their Essence to huge, specially shaped blocks of the various magical materials. These massive artifacts apparently reshaped and refined a Terrestrial's Essence so she could practice Celestial martial arts. No one in the Second Age has tried to reconstruct this method, since no one but the Empress ever owned enough jade, moonsilver and orichalcum to attempt such experiments (and she didn't need to). If the mystic statues ever existed at all, they were lost or broken up for their precious magical materials long ago.

Regardless of how a Terrestrial refines her Essence, she still needs a sifu of rare proficiency (defined as at least Essence 4 and Martial Arts 5) in order to learn Celestial Martial Arts Charms. Her sifu also must have mastered the entire Celestial martial art himself as well as whatever pair of Charms the student uses to enlighten herself. Learning each Charm in a Celestial style takes a Dragon-Blood twice as long as learning Charms for a Terrestrial style. On the other hand, the Dragon-Blooded do not need to learn a complete Terrestrial style before they can master Celestial martial arts. In fact, they don't have to learn Terrestrial arts at all. (Immaculate monks don't, for instance.)

As a further hindrance, Terrestrial Exalts must pay a one-mote surcharge to use Charms from the Bulb of the Perfected Lotus, such as Solar Hero Style or Snake Style. The Five Glorious Dragon styles taught by the Immaculate Order form the only exceptions, because the Sidereals created them specifically for Terrestrials to use. In this case, the strong elemental aspect of each Dragon Path counters the natural difficulty a Terrestrial Exalt experiences when practicing Celestial martial arts.

SPIRITS

Elementals, gods and demons can learn supernatural martial arts, but they rarely do so. Powerful ghosts might remember martial arts from life or acquire them in the Underworld. Study and training don't come easily to most spirits, though. These creatures wield Essence by instinct according to their fundamental nature, not from conscious effort. For a spirit to practice doing something is like asking a human to practice breathing or digestion. Nevertheless, a few gods do possess enough self-reflection to try to change their nature by learning in a mortal fashion, and that can

RIISING ABOVE YOUR STATION

When Solars or Abyssals learn Sidereal martial arts, Dragon-Bloods learn Celestial fighting styles or enlightened mortals learn any supernatural Martial Arts Charms at all, they must pay half again as many experience points per Charm as normal: 15 experience points (or 12 if Martial Arts is a Favored Ability).

Mortals who learn supernatural martial arts also suffer a restriction much like the one Dragon-Blooded characters face when they learn a Celestial martial art. Mortals face extra difficulty if they study more than one supernatural martial art at a time. If an enlightened mortal interrupts her training in one Terrestrial art to learn a Charm from another style, all subsequent Charms for both styles cost one more experience point each. Trying to learn a third style raises the experience cost by another point per Charm. These surcharges continue until the character completes a Charm tree for one style. The experience surcharge then drops by one for the remaining Charms of each style.

include martial arts. "Few" is also a relative term. Given the countless spirits in Creation, a tiny percentage can still add up to hundreds or thousands of martial artists. The same goes for the swarming demons of Malfeas or the ghosts in the Underworld.

A spirit's Essence limits what styles it can learn. A god with an Essence rating of 5 or less can learn only Terrestrial arts. Gods with Essence 6 or higher can learn Celestial martial arts. No gods less mighty than the Incarnae could ever learn Sidereal martial arts (and deities of such power are the least inclined to learn them). Elementals, demons and gods can form Combos incorporating Martial Arts Charms and can even mix Martial Arts and innate spirit Charms within a Combo.

One set of martial arts forms an exception to this rule. The quartet of Celestial fighting arts called the Four Arguments of Virtue can be learned by spirits with Essence as low as 3. These styles were specially created for gods, the way the Immaculate styles were specially created for the Dragon-Blooded.

Most gods must learn from living (or divine) teachers. Only a few sorts, such as gods of literature, have sufficient affinity for abstract thought to learn from an instructional text.

Why would an elemental, god or demon learn supernatural martial arts from mortals, even Exalted mortals? A war god's nature might demand that it learn every fighting skill it can. Other spirits might strive to evolve past their nature because they have spent a lot of time around mortals and the mortal tendency to change has rubbed off. A spirit that suffered repeated, humiliating defeats from Exalted martial artists might feel driven to learn the skills of its nemeses in order to counter them.



A god might also seem to know a supernatural martial art even if it really doesn't. An animal totem-spirit, for instance, might exhibit the same combat Charms as a martial art inspired by that animal. In this case, however, the Charms are instinctive expressions of the spirit's nature, not something the god ever learned. In fact, the art might have begun as an Exalt's attempt to copy the totem-spirit's natural Charms. A war god could also possess innate Charms that superficially resemble a martial art. A few demons of the Second and Third Circle are also martial artists of great skill. As far as anyone knows, though, only Exalted humans can consciously create supernatural martial arts in a form that other beings can learn.

HEROIC MORTALS

A rare few un-Exalted mortals can channel Essence and learn supernatural martial arts. Again, "rare" is a relative term. Heroic mortals account for a large fraction of all supernatural martial artists in Creation. Entire schools of supernatural martial arts sustain themselves with only mortal members or, at most, a few Exalted or divine leaders.

Heroic mortals are limited to the Roots of the Perfected Lotus, however, and the process of mastery is long, slow and difficult. What's more, heroic mortals cannot place their Martial Arts Charms in Combos. Most limiting of all, they just don't have much Essence to expend when compared to the Chosen.

The God-Blooded sometimes naturally channel Essence as part of their heritage. Various methods can also confer the power to wield Essence upon mortals. All such methods carry risks and limitations.

ATTITUDES TOWARD ENLIGHTENED MORTALS

The Realm loathes enlightened mortals (with the exception of mortal Immaculates, who are seen as heroes likely to Exalt in their next life), as such people blur the distinction between powerless mortals and divinely empowered Exalts. Out in the Threshold, attitudes are more varied. Outcasts might see enlightened mortals as upstart rivals, or valuable force multipliers. The Lunars wield so much more power than any enlightened barbarian that they feel no threat. Indeed, some Lunars encourage Essence-use among the barbarians and beastmen they lead. Mortal attitudes to their Essence-wielding fellows are too diverse to summarize. It all depends on how the enlightened mortals use their power, and the wider social context.

INITIATION INTO TERRESTRIAL MARTIAL ARTS

Mere mortals cannot normally perceive Essence, and what they cannot perceive, they cannot control. Fortunately for them, Creation offers several procedures to open mortal

eyes to the subtle world. Some methods are safe and easy but dependent on the goodwill of an Exalt or god. Other methods are difficult and horribly dangerous, but mortals can use them without assistance.

All these methods have the same result: The mortal gains an Essence pool equal to (his permanent Essence x 10). The mortal character can use the first (Essence x 3) motes of this pool at will. Accessing the remaining motes requires spending a Willpower point. Mortals who can perceive and channel Essence are called enlightened mortals.

(Actually, enlightened mortals can have Essence pools of different size. See the exorcist and Wyld shaman in **Exalted** for examples. Unless the Storyteller runs a series about heroic mortals, however, the different possible formulas for calculating mortal Essence pools can be overlooked. One simple formula will suffice if small differences in Essence pools will not become important in the series.)

Most techniques for activating Essence work only on willing recipients (though a mortal need not understand what he's getting into). Whatever method a mortal uses to activate his Essence, he still requires a sifu with at least Essence 3 and Martial Arts 5 to learn supernatural fighting arts.

ASCETICISM

Just as a long regimen of yoga, meditation, special diet and stranger ascetic practices can enable the Dragon-Blooded to channel Essence in Celestial ways, similar regimens enable un-Exalted mortals to perceive and channel Essence in Terrestrial ways. Such regimens take years, with no guarantee of success, but a skillful scholar can locate the instructional sutras.

WYLD EXPOSURE

The Wyld dissolves all boundaries. The flood of undirected transformative power can activate the Essence of a lucky or strong-willed mortal. Of course, if he's not quite lucky or strong-willed enough, he can grow a second head or have his arms replaced by tentacles. Few people deliberately enter Wyld zones in hope of learning to channel Essence.

TOUCH OF DIVINITY

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

Type: Simple (Dramatic Action)

Keywords: Obvious, Shaping, Touch

Duration: Indefinite (see below)

Prerequisite Charms: None

This Charm enables a spirit to commit three motes of its Essence to a favored mortal. The process can take many forms, such as a light kiss on the brow, a sigil branded on the mortal's back, a chanted rite ending in a drink of strong wine or whatever suits the spirit's fancy. Elemental versions emphasize the spirit's chosen element. Demons favor cruelty, pain and degradation. Nephwracks or other powerful ghosts might place the subject in a bone-strewn coffin. The procedure involved can range from less than a minute to hours.



Whatever form the Charm takes, the blessed recipient feels the unaccustomed power of Essence flood through her body in an unmistakable, electric surge. All her senses seem sharper, colors look brighter, and she feels transcendent joy—or terror.

Touch of Divinity grants no measurable benefits beyond enabling its recipient to perceive Essence in use. The spirit can take back its committed Essence whenever it wants. A mortal can use his new sense for Essence to learn how to channel it himself, though. After each month the recipient carries the borrowed Essence, the recipient's player rolls ([highest Mental Attribute] + Martial Arts) at difficulty 3. Once the roll succeeds, the mortal gains his own Essence pool, and the spirit can take back the committed motes. The mortal's permanent Essence hasn't changed (that requires bonus points or experience points to raise), but he has joined the supernatural world. The enlightened mortal character can now learn supernatural martial arts.

The mortal gains an affinity for whatever divine force empowered her. A mortal empowered by a sacred cavern's elemental, for instance, is aspected to the element earth. A mortal empowered by a demon would possess a demonic aspect, while a ghost's use of this Charm would confer a necromantic aspect. This affinity of Essence does not affect how an enlightened mortal learns or practices supernatural martial arts, but it could become important in other circumstances. (For instance, any Exalt would feel justifiable suspicion of any mortal whose Essence carries a demonic taint.)

Touch of Divinity offers little benefit to people who are already Exalted or otherwise able to use Essence. The spirit simply passes three motes to the recipient. If the recipient has a full Essence pool already, the three motes are wasted.

NEW KEYWORD: ENLIGHTENING

Charms with this keyword enable a person to perceive and channel Essence in a new and greater way. In some cases (such as the Charms that prepare Terrestrial Exalted to perform Celestial martial arts), the subject of the Charm is the Exalt herself. In other cases, the Exalt enlightens another person. Most Enlightening Charms have a permanent effect.

SOUL-ENLIGHTENING BENEFICENCE

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Lore 4, Essence 3; **T**

ype: Simple (Dramatic Action)

Keywords: Enlightening, Obvious, Touch

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Essence-Lending Method

This variation on the better known Power-Awarding Prana (see *Exalted*, p. 218) immediately and permanently blasts open a willing mortal's doors of perception, opening him to the



world's currents of Essence. Soul-Enlightening Beneficence requires a short ceremony to steel both donor and recipient for the awesome forces they shall unleash. The ceremony takes whatever form the participants feel is appropriate to solemnize the event. Then the mortal and the Exalt simply touch—and the cataract of Essence flooding through the recipient's soul knocks him out for (5 – his Stamina) hours. The recipient also trades one permanent dot of Willpower for another point of permanent Essence. After the character recovers, however, he possesses his own Essence pool.

Like Touch of Divinity, this Charm offers no benefit to beings who already channel Essence. The donor merely transfers 15 motes of his own Essence.

All types of Celestial (and Abyssal and Infernal) Exalts possess a variation of Soul-Enlightening Beneficence. The recipient gains an affinity for the source of the Exalt's power, like that granted by Touch of Divinity, which other Essence-sensing creatures can perceive.

THAUMATURGY

Mortal thaumaturgy also supplies a ritual that confers the use of Essence. The ritual is far more dangerous than most thaumaturgical procedures or the Charms available to spirits and Exalted. Nevertheless, this Master-degree geomantic ritual enables mortals to bootstrap their way into supernatural martial arts. It is somewhat safer, however, if performed by someone who already wields Essence. A martial-arts society that lacks Exalted or godlike members might know this potent ritual as a procedure, without knowing any other thaumaturgy.

ESSENTIAL RIVER CHANNELING

Degree 3, Intelligence, 5, 24 hours

This ritual draws the Essence from some external source and channels it into the thaumaturge or a designated recipient who participates in the ritual. The source can be an object from the deep Wyld, a region soaked in uncontrolled Essence (such as a Middlemarch or a demesne), a three-dot (or greater) artifact, a summoned spirit, a human sacrifice, an Exalt or whatever else the Storyteller considers suitable. This requirement is in addition to the ritual's Resources cost. An Exalted thaumaturge can be her own Essence source.

The thaumaturge's player rolls (Intelligence + Occult + Degree known), as usual for thaumaturgy. Success means the mortal recipient gains an Essence pool, though his permanent Essence does not change. Failure means the thaumaturge suffers five dice of aggravated damage, plus a debility (as from Wyld exposure; see *Exalted*, p. 289) if the player then fails a Willpower roll at the same difficulty as the ritual. A botch inflicts eight dice of aggravated damage, plus an absolutely certain deformity (see *Exalted*, pp. 289–290). A recipient merely suffers three dice of aggravated damage, plus a deficiency (see *Exalted*, pp. 288–289) if his player fails the Willpower roll.

A thaumaturge who already wields Essence can do more than reduce the Resources cost of the ritual. Her player also subtracts her permanent Essence rating from the ritual's

difficulty. Multiple thaumaturges can also work together to gain a limited cooperation bonus, reducing the chance of catastrophic failure.

ARTIFACTS AND DRUGS

Certain rare artifacts can confer the ability to channel Essence, if a mortal can unlock their secrets. Such artifacts tend to be quite dangerous, at least to mortals who don't know exactly what they're doing. Objects exposed to powerful discharges of Essence might become spontaneous artifacts, at least to the extent of opening a mortal's soul to supernatural power.

"Drug," in this case, is merely a catchall term for any magical substance that grants Essence perception to those who consume it. Possible drugs include opium from poppies grown in the heart of a shadowland, a tincture of ingredients from five elemental demesnes or a drop of a war god's blood. Supernatural drugs vary widely in their safety and efficacy. A user's player certainly has to succeed at some sort of roll for the character to gain the benefit of the drug. Failure could mean sickness, madness or some other curse—even success might carry serious side effects. The safest and most effective supernatural drugs are invariably the most rare and difficult to obtain. A drug that temporarily confers Essence channeling or that requires continued use to grant a permanent Essence pool, has a Resources cost of 3. A drug that confers Essence use in a single dose should have a Resources cost of 4 or 5.

War Devil's Skull (Artifact •••)

The War Devil's Skull looks like a fanged, inhuman skull carved of black stone, with the top of the cranium removed. Pouring a pint of fresh-drawn human blood in the skull-bowl and saying the incantation engraved in Old Realm glyphs around its rim activates its magic. The blood catches fire and burns for three hours. As long as the skull-brazier burns, its user gains one dot each to Strength, Dexterity and Stamina, as well as two dots of Martial Arts and Melee (maximum 5). He also soaks lethal damage with half his Stamina (rounded down) as an Exalt does. Plus, the user's player rolls (Intelligence + Occult), difficulty 3. Success means the character's Essence activates and he gains an Essence pool.

On the other hand, the artifact's owner suffers an increasingly violent temper. Each time he feels anger or frustration, his player attempts a resisted roll of (the character's Willpower versus the number of times the character has used the artifact). Success or a tie means the character retains self-control. If the (number of times) roll scores more successes, the character flies into a rage and attacks the cause of his anger.

The skull-brazier speaks in the owner's dreams, telling him how to fight and urging him to violence. The dreams become stronger once the character's Essence activates. At this point, the artifact begins to teach him a Terrestrial martial art (pick one from this book or any other Exalted supplement.) For each Charm, however, the skull demands a human sacrifice.

Once the character uses the brazier a number of times equal to his Willpower, he has ceded his free will and can no longer resist its demands. Until then, the character's player still must



spend experience points to learn Martial Arts Charms. This is no longer necessary once the character becomes a puppet. Once the owner learns the entire martial art, he might stop being a person completely. At any time thereafter, Octavian, the Second Circle demon who carved the artifact from the black stone of Malfeas (see **Exalted**, pp. 308–309), can use the hapless mortal as a portal into Creation, erupting from his body in a burst of ruptured flesh and blood. Octavian remains free in Creation until he is slain or until someone smashes the War Devil's Skull, but the demon's pawn will have probably sent the skull far away by then to claim another victim.

Celestial Cocaine (Resources ●●●●●)

Cocaine extracted from coca trees grown in Yu-Shan possesses a greater and more dangerous power than the mortal drug. A person who snorts the glittering, luminous white powder gains one dot each of Dexterity, Stamina and Intelligence for at least five hours and can perceive Essence flows as if he were using All-Encompassing Sorcerer's Sight (see **Exalted**, p. 222). The celestial drug is nonetheless a poison with these traits: Damage 5A/hour, Toxicity 2 (4 for mortals), Tolerance —/—, Penalty -0, or -3 for the rest of the day after the high fades. Multiple doses extend both the benefits and the length of time the user takes damage. (See **Exalted**, p. 130, for complete rules about poisons.)

While she is high on celestial cocaine, a person can try to activate her latent Essence. Doing so requires a simple success on a (Stamina + Awareness) roll, difficulty 2. The user's player also has to succeed at a Willpower roll for the character to avoid addiction, at +1 difficulty for every other dose of celestial cocaine taken in the last year. If this roll fails, the character is addicted to both celestial cocaine and its mundane counterpart, though he will prefer the celestial variety.

MARTIAL ARTS CULTURE

Practitioners of refined fighting arts form a loose-knit subculture that extends throughout Creation (and maybe beyond): the Martial Arts World. Great fighters spend years learning difficult and demanding fighting styles. They want to know who has similar skills.

Prudence explains some of the curiosity. A warrior likes to know who he might have to fight someday. Figuring this out becomes especially difficult with martial artists, since the little old lady pulling the needles from her hair could be more dangerous than the big slab of beef cracking his knuckles. And that's just the mundane martial artists.

Many martial artists, however, feel a genuine curiosity about other practitioners. What technique does he know? Where did she study? What are their stories? Martial artists sometimes feel a camaraderie for their fellows that cuts across nationality, gender, race and metaphysical species. They share a fascination with a dangerous activity. Combat isn't a job for them, it's a calling—even a spiritual exercise. Most ordinary people can't imagine the dedication it takes to become a martial arts master. These elite fighters battle each other, sometimes to the death—they might even hate each other

SECRET TECHNIQUES

In martial arts adventures, one common trope is the powerful, secret technique that makes one fighter unbeatable. Major adversaries often know a secret technique; the heroes can defeat him only by learning the same technique or some other martial secret that trumps it.

"Secret" is a relative term. For the un-Exalted, all supernatural fighting arts are secrets beyond their mastery. To the Dragon-Blooded, Celestial martial arts are powerful secret techniques held by the Immaculate Order or the demonic Anathema. For Solars, Sidereal martial arts fill the role of secret arts held by enigmatic masters.

A martial art can also be secret just because hardly anyone knows it. In this sense, virtually every Celestial and Sidereal martial art is a secret technique because there just aren't many Solars, Lunars or Sidereals. If an Exalt doesn't remember a martial art from a past life, finding a sifu for any Celestial art could require a world-spanning quest.

Taking a narrower focus, the final Charms for a martial art might be kept secret. Perhaps the only living master doesn't teach them to her students, so none of them can challenge and surpass her. Perhaps the advanced Charms have been lost simply because no one now living ever learned the style in its entirety, in this life or lives before. Without a sifu, any Exalt who wants to master the art must seek a long-lost scroll or memory crystal or consult knowledgeable gods, ghosts or demons. Learning the secret final Charms of a style might involve difficult investigations or terrible dangers to body, mind or soul.

with a fiery passion—but when two martial artists square off, they still have much in common. More, perhaps, than they do with the ordinary people gawking at them.

So martial artists try to learn about other great fighters. When they aren't fighting each other, they swap stories about who trained them, they discuss techniques, they brag about their achievements, and they talk about other martial arts they've seen. "When I was in Marukan, I saw one of their circuit riders knock out a claw strider with a side kick—while he stood on the back of his horse!" "I've heard of tribes in the Far Southeast who fight with yo-yos. Do you know anything about that?"

Travelers from distant lands carry more stories. Martial artists themselves often travel in search of new combat techniques and worthy adversaries. The ordinary brawler or sword-swinging won't cross mountains and seas to train with a legendary warrior, but a martial artist will. The greatest teachers attract eager students from throughout Creation. Information travels slowly in the Second Age of Man, but it does travel—and into more and stranger locales than most people imagine.



BECOMING A MARTIAL ARTIST

Some of the most important customs in the Martial Arts World deal with becoming a martial artist oneself. Some people (Exalted or otherwise) manage to train themselves, but most martial artists learn from someone else.

THE SIFU

To learn the martial arts, would-be warriors need a teacher. A martial arts instructor is called a sifu. Some people manage to learn martial arts on their own, from books or by communing with memory crystals, but doing so is slow and difficult, even for the Exalted. A book or memory crystal can't spot your mistakes or devise special training exercises to correct your weaknesses. A sifu can.

One unquestioned tradition runs through the entire Martial Arts World: A student must respect her sifu. And showing respect involves more than just exercising sensible caution about offending a fighter who could beat the stuffing out of you. No matter how skilled a martial artist you become, or how powerful, tradition says you must honor your teachers—especially your first teacher. Martial artists who break this tradition earn contempt throughout the Martial Arts World.

This tradition endures through the millennia because it recognizes the truth. Your sifu found you ignorant and unformed. She shaped you into a new and greater being, as a smith transforms dull ore into a shining sword. You owe her, like you owe your parents. Maybe more.

Supernatural rank and power doesn't affect this tradition. Gods of war who descend from Yu-Shan to study the latest mortal fighting arts still bow and address their teachers as sifu. A master found worthy to teach a god shall be honored forever in Heaven.

The Exalted honor their sifus as well, even if a teacher is merely mortal. Their fantastic and powerful arts remain grounded in a mundane Ability the Chosen must develop through mundane training. Some Sidereals think the Solars of the First Age could have remained righteous had they not outlived their first mortal sifus by thousands of years.

Respect does not end when a student defeats her own master. The student, now master, thanks her sifu with a deep obeisance. This event provides the crowning glory to a sifu's career: He has created a being greater than himself. The gods themselves never dared as much, nor the Primordials before them. Of course, the contest must be fair. Defeating a master enfeebled with sickness or advanced age is a humiliation, not a triumph; likewise for an Exalted student to defeat a mortal teacher. Loyal disciples go to great lengths to defend the honor and reputation of their sifus.

Characters who join the Martial Arts World find that as they gain a reputation for combat prowess, other martial artists (or would-be martial artists) seek them out and ask for training. The longer a martial artist's career is, the more she is expected to take on students and pass on her skills.

Young martial artists can gallivant through Creation slaying monsters, defeating rivals and winning glory. When they age, however, a refusal to train students can be seen as selfish, or as a sign that they have not achieved true mastery. The Martial Arts World awards its highest respect to great fighters who prove they can train other great fighters.

UNLIKELY MASTERS

In martial arts stories, the most unlikely people turn out to be powerful fighters: not just elderly monks and soft-spoken priests (anyone with sense knows to leave them alone) but fishmongers, cleaning ladies, traveling musicians or crazy old beggars. Secret martial artists can live quietly for years and then surprise everyone by beating the snot out of some feared thug or arrogant warrior.

Heroic mortals and Exalts can each find reasons to conceal their true prowess. Classic backgrounds for covert martial arts masters include spies or assassins hiding from former employers, heroes of yesteryear who want a quiet retirement, masters traveling incognito while searching for a prophesied student of legendary potential and members of a cult. (The latter might be servants of some demonic evil or secret guardians against the same.)

Players should remember that their own characters could be unlikely martial arts masters. Why should Storyteller characters have all the fun? Indeed, in much of Creation, a Solar martial artist should pretend to be an ordinary person if he wants to avoid constant and escalating battle.

THE DOJO

A sifu generally teaches in a special facility called a dojo. Those who don't use a dojo prefer to teach out-of-doors or in ordinary settings. A dojo, however, provides freedom from interruptions, as well as training equipment and other resources.

The archetypal dojo is a building constructed just for that purpose, with shaven-headed students performing their exercises in unison under the watchful eye of their sifu. The students lead austere lives secluded from the world, meditating and studying when they aren't engaged in training. The dojos of the Immaculate Order created that image, and many martial arts schools follow the same model. Other possibilities exist, though. Some dojos, like some sifus, are hard to recognize if you don't know what to look for. A barbaric Lunar's dojo in the North might be a stretch of forest or a cave. On the Blessed Isle, the dojo of an aristocratic dueling club might look like a luxurious pavilion. The combat-master of a slum gang in Nexus might teach in a derelict building, the alley out back and the sewers beneath.



TRAINING

To master a supernatural martial art requires a great deal of specialized training. In the first place, anyone who wants to learn a supernatural fighting style needs to develop her mundane combat prowess—the Martial Arts Ability and other, related Abilities. Martial artists start with grueling exercises to develop their strength, endurance and agility: calisthenics, tumbling, running and similar activities.

Martial arts training often follows a program of greater difficulty or rigor. For instance, a hand-to-hand fighter needs to develop calluses on his knuckles, the edge of his palms, his shins and other striking surfaces. One common exercise consists of punching a bucket of soft sand, then moving on to fine gravel, coarser gravel and finally solid blocks of stone. Martial artists can develop their balance by performing their combat drills on a plank, then a narrow beam, a tightrope and finally a rope loosened to swing; or on small platforms that shrink to slender poles. Speed exercises range from snatching a pebble from the sifu's hand before it closes to stabbing a knife onto a tabletop between one's spread fingers, faster and faster.

Every system of martial training includes practice of combat maneuvers called *katas*. Before a fighter ever faces a live opponent, she goes through the motions of punches, kicks, blocks, dodges, trips, throws and other basic moves. The student performs the *katas* slowly at first, then more quickly—thousands of times, so her muscles know what to

do without the need for thought. Experienced martial artists go through their *katas* with dazzling speed... or extreme slowness, watching for the faintest tremor that indicates less-than-perfect control.

Slow-motion *katas* overlap with yoga and meditation. These practices discipline the mind as well as the body. The ability to hold a single position for long periods of time tests a martial artist's mental focus and muscle control. One common exercise involves balancing a saucer of water while holding a yoga position. If a student lacks focus and keeps spilling the water, her sifu may instead substitute acid or flaming oil. As sifus explain, distraction is a deadly enemy. Some masters even train students to blink less often in combat, because that fraction of a second's impaired vision could give an opponent the opening he needs.

Advanced exercises grow more esoteric. Martial arts that involve clinching or redirecting an opponent's force often include the push-hands exercise. Two students stand with palms touching and alternately push and yield, each one trying to keep his palms matched to his partner's. Experts at push-hands become like water, yielding to every force but impossible to push away.

Many sifus take ordinary activities and turn them into exercises. For instance, sifus of the sword might teach her students calligraphy to develop their wrist control. First, the students practice with an ordinary brush. Then the brush becomes longer and heavier, until the student writes or draws with a brush as long and heavy as a sword—or even longer.



Once a student can paint an impeccable portrait with a brush 10 feet long, drawing a line of death across an enemy's jugular is no problem.

Physical training overlaps with mental training. The ability to notice and react instantly to small details is vital for a warrior. Once a student can snatch a pebble from her master's hand, the sifu might challenge her to pluck the white pebble from a collection of black and gray ones, and finally to plunge her hand into a bowl of beads and instantly pull out the only red one.

A fighter also needs to stay alert for possible attack at all times. Quite a few sifus launch surprise attacks at their students or assign one student to hide behind a door to ambush another. Apart from the training aspect, it's fun (at least for the ambusher). It also injects healthy competition into the training regimen, as the thought of sweet revenge helps motivate students to train harder.

Other exercises are entirely mental and are designed as preparation for supernatural training. Students meditate on shapes or mantras to develop their powers of concentration. Manipulating Essence requires the mind to control forces and structures the eye does not see, and visualization exercises develop that facility. Other exercises test the will. For example, a sifu might challenge a student to sit for hours in front of a delicious meal while going hungry. Other tests include meditating or performing katas despite a small but persistent pain such as a pin thrust in the student's flesh. A few sifus, however, believe the ultimate test of will and focus consists of simply lying still... while spiders crawl over the student's naked body. The student must resist the urge to sweep them away, even when they crawl across his face.

As a martial artist strengthens his will and mind, a sifu might test his mental control with drugs. Hallucinogens and horror shows with realistic mannequins, costumed actors or agreeable local spirits force a martial artist to confront fear and master it. Other drugs can open the mind to other states of consciousness—more preparation for training the student's Essence.

Exalted martial artists (or other Essence-wielders) are taught to feel how the Essence moves through their bodies as they meditate, perform katas or engage in other training, or simply while they breathe. Most importantly, the student recognizes her body's chakras, centers where Essence flows intersect and the subtle force accumulates. Once a student understands the natural Essence flows in and around her body, she practices controlling them. The student concentrates her Essence in one chakra after another, first while meditating or during yoga, then while performing katas. When a student can make her Essence surge into her hand when she strikes, she is well on her way to learning a supernatural martial art.

Other drills involve rousing the anima. A sifu might drill his students in making their animas flare on command—first the entire aura, then around one chakra or another part of the body. With greater practice, a student can produce particular colors or patterns. Essence also gradually substitutes

for physical exercises. For instance, advanced push-hands training has the students step apart from each other so only their animas push against each other (a common exercise for the Terrestrial Hero Style).

Once a martial artist can precisely control her own Essence, she strives to feel the Essence in other things. Practitioners of Terrestrial arts focus on the Essence flows in the natural world, such as in flames, wind, running water, breaking stone, growing plants and wounded flesh. In some exercises, the martial artist tries to harmonize her Essence with the external flow so it passes through her without resistance. Other drills involve blocking or redirecting the elemental flow.

Celestial martial artists engage in such exercises as well but move beyond them to feel the Essence-flows in sunlight and moonlight, lightning bolts and the Wyld. Sifus might bring in small gods as “guest instructors” so students can feel a concentrated form of the divine forces that weave through Creation, before they try to feel those forces in grains of sand or prayers rising to Heaven.

Sidereal martial artists start with the still more subtle currents of power stirred by the Five Maidens and the Essence of abstract concepts. In the Essence of cosmic principles such as Consumption, Reflection and Understanding, the Sidereals believe they touch the framework on which the Primordials built Creation itself.

When the sifu believes her students have sufficiently mastered the basic moves and principles of a martial art, the sparring begins. In the merely physical stages of training, students attack and defend in brief exchanges of maneuvers. As they gain experience, they engage in real contests against each other. Depending on the sifu's temperament, sparring matches can range from carefully controlled drills where everyone wears padded safety gear to no-holds-barred, bloody brawls. Sparring partners might not be mortal.

Students also learn to perform special feats designed merely to show their physical, mental and supernatural control. Classics such as punching through a board or breaking a brick are examples of physical feats. Martial artists who channel Essence perform feats that are even more spectacular, such as cracking a boulder with a kick, performing a kata barefoot on a bed of coals or, balancing on a taut thread or running up a sunbeam.

THE TRAINING MONTAGE

Much of the time, characters undergo their martial arts training in the “downtime” of the series. You simply declare it happens. When a character learns a new Charm with the intent of using it against a foe who defeated her before, however, this calls for the ever-popular training montage. The Storyteller describes a few of the exercises the character performs to learn the new Charm, a few failed attempts and, at last, the student performing it correctly while the sifu nods in stern approval.



REPUTATION

Reputation matters a great deal in the Martial Arts World. The respect of other martial artists is one of the chief emotional rewards for mastery. If a martial artist decides to teach students, obviously she'd better have a reputation as a fighter of exceptional skill.

Combat prowess is the chief source of respect in the Martial Arts World, but not the only one. Martial artists often respect good sportsmanship, selfless courage, wise use of power and other traits that most people admire. On the other hand, being known for vicious cruelty or brutality provides a degree of respect as well, or at least fear.

Good or bad, a strong reputation can provide practical benefits as well. Other martial artists might hesitate to fight someone with a stronger reputation (because they either fear the consequences of losing or fear becoming unpopular for beating up someone other martial artists admire). At the Storyteller's option, such hesitancy can provide actual benefits in combat to a character with a strong reputation. See the Appendix for an optional new Background, Face, to represent the advantage one martial artist can have over another because of her reputation.

CHALLENGES

To be the best, you have to beat the best. Martial artists sometimes challenge each other to fight, just to see who possesses the greater skill and power. Some challenges are relatively friendly. Martial artists treat them as sport, training and maybe a chance to learn something. Neither martial artist really wants to hurt the other.

The chief reason to challenge another martial artist, though, is to defeat him and thus increase your own reputation. Such fights are not at all friendly, and the challenger never holds back. Some martial artists don't want to accept challenges because either they've tried to retire from the Martial Arts World, they think the fight is pointless, or they've suffered a crisis of confidence. To get the fight she wants, a martial artist might have to insult her chosen foe, launch an unprovoked attack or threaten his friends or family. Such tactics gain a fighter no friends in the martial arts community, but they bring fearful respect if the martial artist keeps winning. The greater the provocation, though, the greater the risk. If you kill someone's wife to make him fight you one-on-one, obviously you'd better be sure you can win—or you will surely die yourself. Most sifus recommend that students choose less extreme methods to test their prowess, but a few twisted sifus encourage deadly challenges.

If a martial artist refuses a challenge, other martial artists will probably think he's a coward, which tarnishes his reputation. This rule has exceptions, though. A true master has nothing to prove, and a true master doesn't need to fight to recognize another true master. True masters can recognize each other's prowess by how they walk or pour their tea. A known master can refuse a challenge now and then without loss to her reputation. She simply declares the challenger

unworthy. If the challenger persists, however, the master must act eventually. A sifu's usual strategy is to send out a few of her best students to fight the challenger first, to see if he's skilled enough to face the master (and, incidentally, to soften him up in case he is good enough). If the challenger can defeat the students, he wins the honor of facing the master.

Up-and-coming martial artists lack such options. They have started to gain Face as formidable fighters, but their reputations are not established. To secure their reputations, they must win battles against comparable or greater martial artists, and they lose Face if they refuse.

Every martial artist who starts to gain Face must repeatedly endure a particular type of challenger: the novice fighter who thinks he can build a reputation quickly by defeating some famous fighter. These cocky young punks usually think that because they could beat up everyone else back in their village, the older and more experienced fighter can't be that tough. Such fights often end with dead, or at least mortally humiliated, young fighters. Except, of course, if the young martial artist was just Exalted...

In the various Exalted communities, challenges proceed just as they do among mortals or enlightened mortals. Dynastic martial artists challenge each other all the time over points of pride, while outcaste Dragon-Blooded try to gain respect as their equals. Lunars battle for turf and dominance. Even the Sidereals, sure of their wisdom and place in Heaven, find reasons to test each other's martial accomplishments. The new Solars easily find their pride and anger at each other overpowering their finer instincts, while Abyssals compete for the favor of their dread masters. Lunar martial artists might emerge from the Wyld to determine whether a celebrated Solar hero is as great a martial artist as stories say. Abyssals challenge Dragon-Blooded sifus in hopes of enslaving them after death. Ego and the desire to test one's abilities inevitably leads to frequent challenges between Exalted martial artists.

RIVALRIES AND REVENGE

As the examples given earlier suggest, one of the surest ways to provoke a challenge is to harm a martial artist or someone close to her. Revenge is an extremely common motivation among martial artists, and the Time of Tumult gives all too many reasons for it. Slain parents, siblings, spouses, children, friends, sifus, employers... bandits, slavers, arrogant lords, cults of dark gods, merciless magistrates, Exalts on Limit-Break-induced rampages... Whatever the reason, a martial artist has the will, discipline and lethal power to pursue revenge a lot further than most people. A martial artist might seek revenge on a single person who wronged her, on an unjust empire or on anything in between.

The Martial Arts World also sees a great deal of rivalry between martial artists. Some rivalries are purely personal. For instance, two students of the same sifu might compete against each other for the rest of their lives, each one trying to outdo or defeat the other. Alternatively, the rivalry might be romantic (they loved the same girl or boy), class-based (Dynast

versus outcaste, magnate's son versus poor man's daughter), ethnic or anything else you can imagine. Even the wisest, most serene sifu might hold a quiet rivalry with another sifu who teaches better or attracts the best students.

Some rivalries extend to whole dojos or beyond. Two sifus might pass their personal animosity to their students. Centuries after the two sifus are dead, students of the two dojos might still challenge each other, raid the other dojo or otherwise express dislike. These institutional rivalries can even grow deadly, with followers of one school trying to exterminate the other.

In fact, an institutional rivalry can outlast the dojos. It's quite possible for most martial artists trained in one style, or according to one theory, to inherit a rivalry with all the martial artists of another style or training method. Does it make any sense? No, but it happens. National, ethnic or religious rivalries can also set groups of martial artists fighting one another.

The many dojos and martial arts styles of the Dragon-Blooded lend themselves to rivalry as much as their division into the Great Houses. Solars, on the other hand, are more likely to inherit institutional rivalries from their mortal lives. (They haven't been around long enough to create many martial arts schools of their own.) The religious strife between the Immaculate Order and the Cult of the Illuminated is a rivalry writ large. Solars can easily form rivalries with other Solars, though, or other Celestial Exalts. A Deathlord might even seek

out a mortal who was once a rival of a Solar martial artist and offer him the Black Exaltation, to create an Abyssal with extra determination to kill the hated Chosen of the Sun.

TOURNAMENTS

Supernatural martial artists from throughout Creation flock to tournaments where they can face each other in battle. Here, they learn who really is the best. The victor's prize might be nothing more than the crowd's acclaim or as grand as an artifact or a fortune in jade. The audience, in turn, receives spectacular entertainment.

Some tournaments are pure sporting events. The Guild sponsors tournaments because people pay to attend, either as contestants or spectators. Nobles might sponsor tournaments along with other sporting events to amuse and distract their subjects. Debauched tyrants are notorious for gladiatorial spectacles where criminals, slaves, warriors and beasts all meet their death in blood-soaked arenas.

Heads of state can use a tournament to find supremely skilled and powerful warriors. The usual plan is that the tournament's victor becomes the ruler's chief bodyguard, the commander or trainer of his troops... or his assassin. The Guild keeps an eye on tournaments to recruit elite mercenaries with exotic fighting skills. Unlike a monarch, the Guild doesn't need the best of the best. It settles for someone better than most likely opponents.





The greatest tournaments attract the Dragon-Blooded, martially inclined gods and other supernatural martial artists. Until recently, Immaculate monks were usually guaranteed victory if they deigned to display their skills in the arena. Out in the Threshold, tournaments have erupted in uproar when competitors were revealed as Anathema. Solars, Lunars and Abyssal Exalted have left arenas in ruins... but they've also set audiences cheering with the most incredible displays of combat anyone has ever seen. Fear of the Anathema (and danger to spectators) struggles against people's desire to witness a mind-staggering show.

CELEBRATED TOURNAMENTS

Any of the great cities in Creation might host a tournament now and then. A few, however, stand out from the rest.

The Heaven-and-Earth Invitational is held every 25 years in Yu-Shan. The Unconquered Sun himself invites the 100 greatest martial artists in Creation to participate, whether mortal (rarely), Exalted or divine. The gods have never invited anyone from the Underworld or Malfeas. The Incarnae themselves don't compete, and neither do the older Sidereals (though they watch the tournament closely). The prize is said to be a handshake from the Unconquered Sun, one move in the Games of Divinity and one day's training with the Maiden of Battles—and, of course, eternal glory. Some unusual conditions must apply to the tournament, because a few un-Exalted mortals have won.

The Empress sponsored the All-Creation Tournament of Dragons, held every five years in the Imperial City. The Tournament of Dragons includes separate contests for armed and unarmed combatants. Although it's an open contest, the dozens of Immaculate monks and Dynastic heroes in attendance—not to mention the Empress herself—made the tournament too risky for Anathema to attend. With the Empress gone, the next tournament might see some interesting new competitors who think they can hide their true natures. For its prize, the Tournament of Dragons offered a boon from the Empress: anything that was within her power to grant, within the limits of political prudence. Martial artists tell many stories of warriors who fought their way to victory in the Tournament of Dragons so they could ask the Empress to destroy a hated enemy, to change the rule of a nation or to force a lover's parents to permit their honorable marriage. With the Empress gone, the last tournament's winner received a talent of jade and a promissory note of a boon.

In the Far South, the god Kokage, Master of Duels, sponsors yearly tournaments at the Flaming Arena. Despite its well-deserved name (and the oppressive heat of the surrounding desert), the arena remains constantly temperate, with abundant refreshments and victuals for spectators and combatants. Kokage's tournaments offer prizes from Yu-Shan (minor by divine standards) and god-forged artifact weapons for the victor.

The Mask of Winters has announced that he will soon host an open tournament in Thorns to celebrate the anniversary of his conquest. The prize to the victor is immortality. It remains to be seen who dares to attend.

CHARM CONCEPT: FORM WEAPONS

Although the Martial Arts Ability deals chiefly with unarmed combat, supernatural martial arts allow the use of selected weapons with their Charms. In such cases, attacks with these particular weapons are treated as unarmed attacks, the Charm applies, and the player uses Martial Arts for the dice pool instead of Melee. The weapon's Speed, Accuracy, Damage and Defense bonuses still apply, though, as well as its Rate if the Charm is supplemental. The weapons that can be used with a supernatural martial art are called its form weapons.

MARTIAL ARTS SOCIETIES

The Immaculate Order is certainly Creation's most powerful and best-known teacher of supernatural fighting arts. No other group even comes close to the Immaculates' sheer number of supernatural martial artists. In the Realm and Threshold alike, when most people think of a supernatural martial artist, they imagine an Immaculate monk.

Nevertheless, many other people practice martial arts. A somewhat smaller selection knows the secrets of Essence and can practice supernatural fighting arts. No mortal could hope to count them all—not least because some of these groups shun the public eye.

Some dojos exist just because an experienced martial artist decided to take on students. The dojo is just a business that sells combat training. More often, however, a dojo exists because some group of people decides that knowing martial arts would help it achieve some other goal. A group might even create its own style tailored to its particular needs. The motives of martial artists range from mystic self-cultivation to armed robbery, but societies that study, practice or invent martial arts tend to fall into a few broad classes. Each general class presented here comes with one or two sample societies. Their locations are deliberately left vague so Storytellers can place each society where they want.

Characters might have gained their mundane Martial Arts Ability as part of a temple, gang, self-defense league or other society, or they might have sought supernatural training after their Exaltation. Many groups throughout Creation teach Terrestrial arts. Very few dojos are truly qualified to teach the Celestial martial arts, but a few might keep records of ancient and powerful techniques none of the current members can use. A perceptive mortal sifu might also help a newly Exalted character recover memories of martial arts she knew in a past life.



Players and Storytellers can use martial arts societies for many other purposes, too. Each type offers special dangers, opportunities and story hooks. A whole society might become an ally or an adversary, or a single member of a group might become a sidekick, a mentor, a jealous rival or a deadly foe. Martial arts societies can also present mysteries through their secret techniques, the agendas of their leaders or backers, or simply through the act of finding them in the first place. Since most groups have outside interests besides their martial arts, involvement with a martial arts society can draw characters into other conflicts and challenges.

TEMPLES

Many dojos operate as part of a temple, monastery or other religious institution; those of the Immaculate Order are only the best-known examples. The impersonal yet divine force of Essence connects supernatural martial arts to spirits, gods, mysticism and religion in general. Since the First Age, religion and mysticism have encouraged the invention and teaching of supernatural martial arts, and religious groups continue to sponsor many dojos throughout Creation.

Temples usually serve a congregation of worshippers. At one extreme, the Immaculate Order claims the entire Realm as its community of believers. At the other extreme, a shrine in the Far North might serve a few ascetic hermits who deliberately avoid contact with anyone else. Some temples demand that students take holy vows and train as priests before offering martial arts instruction, though this condition is far from universal.

A temple can provide more than a place to worship, too. The priests, monks or nuns probably conduct important community rituals—maybe just for immediate devotees; maybe for the community at large. It's a dangerous world, though. The congregation or the temple itself can come under attack. Priests and other religious officiants might also need to defend themselves from bandits, wild beasts and worse things as they go about their duties.

A temple might also serve as its community's school, hospital, court of law or some other learned institution. A martial artist's public role could be teacher, doctor, attorney or some other profession not usually associated with beating the stuffing out of people. Not only might a temple-trained martial artist be expected to perform public religious duties, the congregation might expect help with worldly problems as well.

Religious professionals also tend to value the martial arts for the physical and mental discipline they provide. Gods don't want half-hearted servants. A priest should display patience, diligence, the ability to focus his mind on holy matters, courage in the face of danger and a strong will to resist the influence of hostile spiritual forces, and martial arts training helps develop all those qualities. A religious group might teach a martial art to anyone willing to undergo the training as a way to impart spiritual lessons. For their part,

many students value the spiritual self-development as much as increased combat prowess.

Exalts, God-Bloods and other natural wielders of Essence find temples a useful source of instruction, but not essential ones. Mere mortals, on the other hand, find religious institutions some of the few places they can gain supernatural powers and training. Many gods can grant the ability to perceive and channel Essence, and that gift can be a powerful lure to attract mortal servants. In time, however, learned priests can develop thaumaturgical rites to pass on their own gifts, so the priesthood no longer needs the direct help of its god to teach supernatural martial arts.

Priests vary widely in their attitude to potential Exalted students. On one hand, the Exalted bring raw power to a religious group and are themselves deputies for the divine. Endorsement by a Dragon-Blood gives any temple more respectability in the Realm or its satrapies (though the priests would have to acknowledge the supremacy of the Immaculate Dragons). The Cult of the Illuminated, for its part, uses Solar recruits to boost its legitimacy. On the other hand, Exalts can seem too powerful. Merely mortal priests might fear that worshippers will pay more attention to a Solar than to the god and the priests themselves. Also, a temple's god might prefer to avoid a potential challenge to its authority. Instead, the god might prefer to breed or empower its own staff of priests or martial monks.

Of course, the priests might be led by an Exalt already—or the congregation might worship the Exalt herself. An Exalted priest might consider it his duty to help guide a fellow deputy of the divine or might instead fear a potential usurper. Deities who closely align themselves with the Unconquered Sun, Luna, the Maidens or the Immaculate Dragons might tell their priests to train one sort of Exalt but not others. If a temple is based on a philosophy or a great teacher of the past, rather than direct access to a god, the priests could consider an Exalt's powers unimportant compared to the truth of their doctrine. Whatever the nature of a temple's god, however, Exalted students had best remember the priests have power of their own—not just whatever supernatural power enables them to practice the martial arts, but temporal power in their community.

CULTS

Some religious groups must hide from society because most people hate what they stand for. In the Realm, any worship not approved by the Immaculate Order must take place in hiding. In just about every part of Creation, however, the worship of demons and other foul entities is forbidden. Nevertheless, a few people always worship forbidden gods or worship in ways the majority finds abhorrent. (Such standards are relative, of course. In a shadowland, worship of anything but the Deathlords and their Neverborn masters is forbidden.)

Illicit religious groups can practice mundane or supernatural martial arts for self-defense or spiritual discipline. They might also use martial arts to assist in robbery, kidnapping,

murder or other antisocial activities that require precise application of violence. Cultists, like secular criminals, need to keep a low profile, so they have an extra reason not to skulk around in heavy armor or carry obvious weaponry. A criminal cult's secret temple, therefore, might include a dojo, and the dojo's sifu probably doubles as the cult's high priest.

A cult that merely worships a god the local authorities don't like might be glad to train an Exalt in supernatural martial arts as a way to gain a powerful ally. A truly sinister cult, however, presents a terrible danger to an Exalt (or anyone else) who seeks training under false pretenses. A student of a supernatural art necessarily places herself in the power of her sifu. Not only does she enter situations where she could suffer grievous bodily harm, but she does not know the reason for every exercise her teacher demands. She could bind herself to some loathsome entity without knowing it. A student of supernatural martial arts also places her mind in her sifu's power. A cunning sifu can warp a powerful student's thinking so she no longer wants to leave the cult and any planned betrayal is forgotten.

THE TEMPLE OF THE VIOLET LOTUS

This small, ancient temple to the Maiden of Endings provides funeral rites for a province in the Threshold. The temple's name comes from the violet-hued lotuses that bloom in the temple's ceremonial pool. Local people believe that if a person is buried with a few of these lotus petals, his body and soul are protected against the Deathlords and other postmortem dangers. The temple includes a large graveyard

where the dead may rest for 50 years before their bones are moved to urns in the temple's labyrinthine catacombs.

The temple's doctrine forbids its white-robed priests from carrying any sort of weapon. It is not for them to choose the hour of others' deaths, only to bless and comfort the dying and see to their funerals. The priests are quite skilled at using their ceremonial spades as fighting staves, however, in case beasts or robbers try to waylay them on their missions. In fact, their fighting skills are supernatural. They become Essence-wielders through the ingestion of the fruit and sap of the mystic lotus and long meditations on death. The priests restrict their magic to a few thaumaturgical procedures to grant temporary peace to the living and lasting peace to the restless dead. Once every few decades, an outcaste Terrestrial Exalt joins the priesthood and incidentally helps train the other priests in the martial arts.

The catacombs and storehouses of the temple hold long-forgotten tablets that tell of greater secrets from the First Age. An Exalted visitor perusing these tablets could learn at least one Celestial martial art. Only one priest at the temple is sufficiently learned to translate the tablets, though.

Of course, things are not entirely what they seem. The learned priest is a Sidereal Exalt who built the "ancient" temple just a century ago and gradually planted false memories about it so that everyone in the province now thinks the temple always existed. He, not the sacred lotus, grants the power to channel Essence. He wrote the tablets, too.

A century ago, a small shadowland appeared near the province. While the Chosen of the Maidens cannot foresee





the fates of the Underworld's denizens, the Sidereal could foresee great upheaval affecting the destinies of the mortals of the region. To safeguard against these upheavals, he built the temple and trained the priests in supernatural martial arts. A Gold Faction member, he's recently begun to use the temple as a lure to attract returning Solars as well. By making the temple a source of training, he hopes to guide their thoughts and send them against the shadowland. The Sidereal also expects that an Abyssal will eventually be sent to the temple to find the source of his Solar foes' martial arts prowess... a victim the Sidereal believes he can capture and study for clues to the weaknesses of the Deathlords.

CRIMINALS

People who live on the far side of legality have good reason to learn martial arts, as making a dishonest living often involves violence. Even when crime doesn't specifically involve hurting other people, there are city guards to escape and rival crooks to hijack or defend against. Within a gang, leaders need bodyguards and enforcers to keep their other minions in line. In addition, other members of a gang can use martial arts to fight duels over points of pride and dominance. Criminal martial artists range from professional assassins to prostitutes who want to defend themselves from violent clients.

Not many criminals can channel Essence and learn supernatural fighting skills, though. Occasionally, a criminal Exalts as a Lunar, Solar, Sidereal or Abyssal, but these criminals face the problem of finding someone willing and able to train them. A disgraced or outcaste Terrestrial could turn to crime and bring magical fighting skills to the demiworld. If the power in her blood passes to her descendants, she could train them and found a lineage of Exalted criminals who practice supernatural martial arts.

A God-Blood could become a criminal, too. Gods and spirits are not always careful about providing for their bastards, while a part-divine heritage can leave a person feeling separated from normal society—anything from arrogant belief that he can take what he wants to bitterness at being a freak. Like a new Exalt, however, a God-Blood might have trouble finding a teacher. After years of difficult training, the God-Blooded martial artist might feel he can do better than a life of crime—or he might decide to become the prince of burglars, a bandit chief or an assassin of legend.

Mere mortals can learn supernatural martial arts if they learn to wield Essence, but the methods available to criminals are all dubious and dangerous. Weird drugs harvested from Wyld zones, pacts with demons and mystic relics with dark powers could all enable a desperate mortal to channel Essence... or lead to messy and painful deaths. Once a criminal does learn supernatural martial arts, however, she could decide to impart her training to other criminals and form an elite gang. Such a gang might show cult-like aspects, if only a cult of personality around the leader. In time, a gang that successfully teaches supernatural martial arts to its members might

attract more powerful entities such as Exalts determined to learn their secrets. This often means the replacement of a mortal leader with an Exalt or the destruction of the gang in a futile struggle to resist the newcomer's demands.

BANDITS AND PIRATES

Pirates and brigands deserve special mention. Some of these roving robbers are barbarians who raid civilization wherever they think they can get away with it. Others are soldiers left masterless by their employer's death or simply because peace has broken out and they find life by violence a hard habit to break. Outlaws and exiles might gather in bandit or pirate companies to combine robbery with revenge. On the other hand, governments or individual nobles might sponsor piracy or brigandage as a form of undeclared warfare or simply for profit. On rare occasions, though, outlaw bands arise as guerilla freedom fighters against tyranny, stealing from the oppressors to give to the oppressed. (These righteous robbers overlap with peasant revolts.)

Of necessity, pirates and bandits are fierce fighters. If they work to develop skill as well as ferocity, a company or crew can become part of the Martial Arts World. Naturally, the leaders possess the greatest combat skill, and the most formidable leaders are Exalted. Freebooters led by Abyssal Exalts show a cold lust for slaughter that helps the Deathlords create new shadowlands. Outlaws led by Lunars act more like frenzied barbarians. The feared leaders of the pirate crews of Eos Atitha and Sesus Ossissa, however, are outcaste Terrestrial Exalted.

THE FIVE SHADE ASSOCIATION

In one part of the Threshold, the most feared criminal gangs form a loose organization called the Five Shades. These crime syndicates make money through drugs, prostitution, gambling and other vices as well as protection rackets. The legal authorities and rival criminal gangs fear the Five Shades, as anyone who crosses this secretive association dies in short order. Five Shade gangs are notorious for possessing strange and powerful fighting skills that let them act with impunity. City guards rarely challenge these gangsters or enter their turf after dark. The clans have their own code of honor, however, with prohibitions against attempting to kill someone more than three times and against killing a priest or monk in his temple.

Families of outcaste Terrestrial Exalts often lead Five Shade gangs. The other gang members are un-Exalted relatives or recruits who marry or are adopted into the extended family. The Exalted families, in turn, group into five clans, each dominated by one aspect. Every local gang owes fealty to a particular clan.

The Clan Hidden in the Mist stalks the foggy streets in silence and strikes from surprise. The clan's members sometimes use sewers and storm drains to move without being seen. They often try to make deaths look accidental, and they rival the Clan Best Forgotten as poisoners. Their favorite weapon is the dagger, and they often dress in gray.



The Mountain Clan tries to keep a respectable façade of legitimate businesses and landholdings, but it ensures its profits by less-than-legal means. Clan members are experts at bribery and blackmail, as well as violence. The clan is associated with earth, and its members favor the baton or cudgel—often disguised as a gentleman's walking stick or a lady's parasol.

The Midnight Smoke Syndicate is particularly infamous for using arson and sabotage against its foes. The clan occasionally uses firedust weapons. Its element is fire, and its members' favored weapon is the short sword. When Midnight Smoke killers desire terror instead of stealth, they dress head to toe in flowing garments of black silk.

The Guild of the Ever-Shifting Breeze possesses rare skill at burglary, espionage and undercover work. No prince or magnate would admit to hiring spies from the Ever-Shifting Breeze, but they all do. When Ever-Shifting Breeze gangsters choose to wear a uniform, they wear sashes and many-folded garments, always covering the face, with dozens of places to hide their signature shuriken. Their element is air.

The Clan Best Forgotten operates outside the cities more than the other clans, perhaps befitting its elemental affinity with wood. Some Clan Best Forgotten gangs are rural bandits preying on caravans. Their Wood Aspect makes the clan's Dragon-Blooded leaders master poisoners. All the gangs in the clan are infamous for mind-stunning brutality. No one forgets how these gangsters murder the families of people who defy them—no matter how hard they might try. Clan members favor the tonfa (see p. 156).

The higher-ranking but mortal Five Shade Association gang members often know the same Terrestrial martial arts as their Exalted leaders, albeit to a lesser degree. Each clan also makes pacts with minor elemental gods who imbue favored gang members with power. Therefore, the gangs are cults as well as crime syndicates. The Immaculate Order condemns the Five Shade Association as part of the Hundred Gods Heresy.

The Five Shades began in the early centuries of the Empress's reign, when she tried to extend the Realm's grip over the Threshold. The region held several Dragon-Blooded families from the Shogunate period who survived the Great Contagion. These families wanted to retain power as local warlords instead of submitting to the Realm and the Scarlet Dynasty. The outcastes led insurgent groups against the Realm's legions. Some of these groups became the aristocracies of new kingdoms, while others lost their political focus to become mere gangsters. When some Five Shade leaders decided they needed greater numbers of elite fighters to counter the Realm's Dragon-Blooded warriors, they turned to local elementals for help. The clan leaders do not consider themselves heretics for doing so, since they believe their Exaltation gives them legitimate authority to negotiate with spirits as equals. Some local gangs, however, no longer include Dragon-Blooded leaders. They depend entirely on their patron gods for the power to wield Essence.

Since Five Shade membership is limited to Dragon-Blooded, mortal Essence-wielders and the occasional

God-Blooded offspring of the gang's patron elemental, these gangs practice only Terrestrial martial arts. Most notably, the gangs all know a special martial art named for them, the Fivefold Shadow Hand Style. Members also practice elementally aspected martial arts that match the favored aspect of their patron deity and parent clan.

REBEL MOVEMENTS

Rebels are criminals in the eyes of the ruling class, so rebels must avoid visible displays of armed might. Rebels also tend to lack funding compared to government troops, so they have to use whatever weapons and armor they can afford or improvise—or none at all. Therefore, rebels often turn to the martial arts in hopes that intense training can make up for poor equipment.

Rebel movements can start at any level of society. Peasant revolts begin among angry members of the lower classes—poor farmers, but also the lower artisan classes of the cities, slaves and the like. A peasant revolt can attract wider support if it lasts long enough, including wealthier members of society with their own discontents. By the time an insurgency can afford better equipment, however, it is hardly likely to abandon the martial arts training that worked well thus far.

At the other end of society, members of the upper classes sometimes form conspiracies to seize power for themselves. The secret society usually has some further goal, such as changing the form of government or suppressing a certain creed, but its members feel they cannot advance this goal by open, legitimate means. Secret society members see martial arts as a tool for assassination or otherwise forcing their will on the extant rulers... and a way to escape soldiers if their involvement in the conspiracy becomes known.

Insurgency often lies in the eye of the beholder. People in the lower or middle classes might form self-defense leagues and study martial arts simply to defend themselves from wild beasts, outlaws, barbarians, invading armies... or their own masters. From a ruler's point of view, it might not be a good thing for tenant farmers, canal boatmen or shopkeepers to deal with ruffians themselves. (If they no longer need the state to protect them, maybe they'll stop paying taxes.) Monarchs, mayors and magnates sometimes decide that any hint of martial arts training by the lower classes is a sign of insurrection. On the other hand, commoners who discover they can use violence effectively might turn criminal themselves, using their martial arts prowess to shake down anyone else outside their group. The lines between self-defense league, peasant revolt, secret society and gang are thin, and a martial-arts society could cross those lines several times in its history.

As usual, the greatest challenge lies in explaining how a rebel movement makes the jump to supernatural martial arts. Most simply, people who already channel Essence might join the rebellion and become its elite warriors. For instance, a rebel movement against the Realm could plausibly welcome any Solars who want to join up. Disgraced, exiled, illegitimately born or simply discontented Dragon-Bloods could join an

insurgency for revenge. The Scarlet Dynasty has long been a hotbed of secret societies scheming for power under the Empress, so with her disappearance, every Dynastic secret society that doesn't know martial arts already is learning them to battle its rivals. If a rebel movement gains a religious or mystical dimension, mortal rebels might become Essence-wielders with the help of patron gods or spirits, Exalted sorcerers or dangerous drugs and rites.

Most supernatural martial artists in a rebel movement are limited to Terrestrial martial arts because those are relatively easy to master (or because its enlightened mortal members are limited to such arts). An insurgency that gains the support of someone who can use Celestial martial arts—and teach them to any Terrestrial Exalted who join—becomes much more dangerous. Rebels who can perform Celestial martial arts will surely emerge as the movement's greatest champions, whom the authorities hate and fear above all others.

THE ANGRY GHOSTS

The peasant revolt called the Angry Ghosts jumps from satrapy to satrapy through the Threshold. As the Realm crushes it in one province, it reappears in another. Rebel fighters, their faces hidden by white scarves, murder government officials, burn plantation villas, waylay caravans and vanish as mysteriously as they appeared.

As their name makes clear, the Angry Ghosts are a militant outgrowth of the ancestor cult. The leaders and agitators of the rebellion say the land belongs to the peasants by right of their sweat and the bones of the ancestors the land has received. The ancestral spirits have heard the groans of their descendants suffering under the Realm's oppression. In their outrage, they bid their descendants to strike back—and offer them the power and guidance to do so. The Angry Ghosts have no weapons except farm implements, kitchen tools and sticks cut from the forest, so that's what they use. As recruits spar and practice the katas taught by more experienced members, they become more dangerous fighters than the Realm's legions expect.

And they have magic. Each cell of the Angry Ghosts includes a spirit medium, a virgin maiden who channels messages from the ancestors in trances or even summons them into visible appearance. The most skilled and devoted rebel fighters can also undergo a terrifying and dangerous rite that fills them with power from the ghosts of their ancestors. These warriors pass beyond mortal fighting prowess to learn various Terrestrial martial arts at secret dojos.

Of course, a Deathlord masterminds the whole operation. This figure, yet unidentified by





the Realm, sends Abyssals and rogue Terrestrial Exalted to teach the founders of new Angry Ghost cells and imbue the insurgency's champions with necromantic power over Essence. The Angry Ghosts now include many thaumaturgene-cromancers who know a few minor spells and can perform the ritual of empowerment using artifacts supplied by the Abyssals. The mediums who form the most visible expression of the Angry Ghosts' mysticism, however, are powerless dupes. They are merely deluded girls trained to surrender their wills to remote deathknights or other minions of the Deathlord, and they have no command over the alleged ancestral spirits they call. The Deathlord knows the Angry Ghosts can never seriously harm the Realm, but when the Realm strikes back and massacres thousands of rebel peasants, it plants the seeds of new shadowlands.

ELITE MILITARY ORDERS

Common soldiers see war as a job, or they were drafted and simply hope to survive and go home. Some warriors, however, consciously choose war as a way of life. They devote their lives to combat mastery. Such elite warriors often join special military societies. A military order might constitute the special forces of a nation, or it could exist independently of nations to pursue some goal of its own. These societies range from honorable orders of elite cataphracts to black-hearted mercenary companies.

Whatever their purpose, military orders usually concentrate on weapons combat and the Melee Ability. Some supernatural martial arts emphasize weapons use, however, and some military orders have an interest in unarmed or lightly armed combat. After all, a true warrior strives to triumph in any circumstances. Martial Arts Charms can also be extremely useful in Combos with Melee Charms, so elite military orders sometimes practice supernatural martial arts.

In the Second Age, the Wyld Hunt is a military order operating within the religious context of the Immaculate Order and the political context of the Realm. The officer corps of the Imperial Army forms a military order of sorts, trained chiefly at the House of Bells (with a rival order consisting of those officers trained at Pasiap's Stair). The Realm is large enough to spawn smaller military orders too. These martial societies can also serve specialized functions such as guarding caravans for a specific Great House or hunting Wyld-born monsters that threaten allies in the Threshold. The myriad nations and provinces of the Threshold can generate any number of military orders themselves.

Military orders of the Realm enjoy a great advantage over those in the Threshold because of the Realm's large population of Terrestrial Exalted. Every member of an order can be Exalted (though many orders include cadres of un-Exalted noncommissioned officers and support troops). The Celestial Exalted are simply too few and too scattered to populate an entire military order, but a group of Exalted could lead an order of mortals. Some extraordinary circumstance might permit an order of God-Blooded warriors: for instance, a troop of warriors

all sired by a randy god-king. If a military order gains some way to imbue its troops with the power to wield Essence, it can train mortal recruits with no further need for gods or Exalted. The Exalted leaders of an order of Essence-channeling warriors had best take extra care for their troops' loyalty, however, or they might suffer a replay of the Usurpation.

POLICE

City guards, border patrols and other light military groups charged with maintaining order study martial arts. Like the criminals, bandits and insurrectionists they oppose, they often lack the heavy weapons and armor of the regular military. This condition arises because they rely on mobility or just because the threats they face seldom justify the expense.

City guards have a special reason for studying martial arts and using martial arts weapons. They need to arrest their social betters without causing serious harm. When the son of a local lord or magnate gets drunk and disturbs the peace—armed—it's not a good idea to kill him. City guards, therefore, tend to carry bashing-damage weapons such as truncheons or tonfas (see p. 156), clinch enhancing weapons such as fighting chains or disarming weapons such as sais to make sure they don't kill someone whose family or friends could order them slain in retaliation. The Realm's police force, popularly called the Black Helms, faces this quandary. Special units of the Black Helms, called the Imperial Force, include Dragon-Blooded members—even Immaculate monks. (See **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. I—The Blessed Isle**, pp. 62-65 for more information on the Black Helms and the Imperial Force.)

Outside the Realm proper, city guards or border scouts probably won't be Exalted, though their leaders might be. An outcaste Dragon-Blood might well become commander of a satrapy's palace guard. Just like other groups, a police-like force could gain the means to enlighten sufficiently skilled and talented members. A character might also Exalt from among a city guard or the like. As in every Age, law-enforcement agencies in the Time of Tumult are often called to heroism with little reward beyond the knowledge that they've saved a life or kept the peace for another day.

THE SILVER KHATRI

As the legions of the Realm retreat, leaving the further Threshold unguarded against attacks from shadowlands, the Wyld and mundane evildoers, other groups try to take their place. The Silver Khatri is one of the more successful. This order of rustic warriors is small and operates in a limited area of the Threshold, but each time a khatri slays a Wyld-beast or destroys a bandit company, the group's reputation for courage, honor and martial prowess grows. Increasing numbers of young men and women who want to defend their homes seek training from the khatri.

Several centuries ago, a few Lunars led a horde of barbarians against the young Realm. The Scarlet Empress's legions defeated the barbarians and slew the Lunars, but the surviving marauders were allowed to retreat into the highland vales



of a small, mountainous province they had already overrun. The Empress had far greater threats to deal with and greater conquests to attempt. The invaders settled down, became farmers and stock-raisers and interbred with the people they had conquered. The province became Vasperdon, one of countless little countries at the edge of the civilized world. Barbarians and beastmen still dwell in the great forest on the far side of the mountains.

When Vasperdon warriors with remarkable fighting skills traveled through the neighboring lands, seeking glory through heroic exploits, the Empress paid little attention. On one hand, the swirling marks on their bodies and their “Silver Way” code of honor marked the warriors as followers of the Lunar Anathema. On the other hand, these “khatris”—an archaic word for elite warriors—fought the same threats to peace and order as the legions. The Immaculate Order saw heretics. The Great Houses saw relief for the always-overstrained imperial defense budget. The elders of the Houses prevailed, and the Empress did not order a purge.

Although some governments consider the Silver Khattris the first wave of an invasion, these warriors seem apolitical thus far. They fight for honor and Luna. Their code enjoins them to defend the weak who ask for their help, to respect leaders who do their duty and to show unfailing courage. Thanks to their willingness to take recruits from any country, their ranks have doubled since the Empress disappeared. Many provinces near Vasperdon now hold brand-new dojos. More strangely, the Silver Khattris are recruiting from the forest tribes. Some khatri teams now include beastmen and other strange folk, though they all follow the Silver Way.

Fully trained Silver Khattris practice Terrestrial martial arts, though never styles with an elemental aspect (which would conflict with their service to Luna). Many of them fight in teams using the Crimson Pentacle Blade style, though they eschew the peculiar garb of other practitioners (see pp. 63–69). Recruits who sufficiently develop their mundane fighting skills learn to channel Essence through the Essence-River Channeling procedure, powered by consecrated coffers of Wyld force. As part of a khatri's initiation, her arms and torso are tattooed with silver swirls. Khattris who seek the apex of their fighting arts journey to Vasperdon, where grand masters called Plenilunes operate the order's founding dojos.

As quite a few people suspect, the Plenilunes are Lunar Exalted. Not all of Luna's Chosen want to stamp civilization back into savagery. In the confederation of cantons that form Vasperdon, these Lunars (and their silent partners in the tiny Silver Faction of the Sidereals) see a third way between the unending, chaotic struggle of barbarian tribes and the centralized, autocratic civilization of the Realm. The Plenilunes want the Realm to fall, but they want it to fall the right way... with the Silver Khattris already in place to begin a new order. Most members of the Silver Pact think the khatri experiment is foolish idealism at best, a betrayal of principle at worst, but even some critics find it convenient to pose as Silver Khattris when they must move through civilized lands.

DUELING CLUBS

Throughout much of the “civilized” world, the upper classes fight duels over insults and affronts to reputation—or just for sport and competition for status. In a duel, the goal is usually not to kill an opponent. (That results only from the most grievous insults or as a stratagem for an expert duelist to murder his enemies.) The true point of a duel is to show that you could have killed your opponent or to show your own willingness to risk death rather than accept dishonor. Losing a duel means no loss of face if you fight well. Showing cowardice by refusing a duel always does.

Expert dueling demands skill to prevent accidental death as well as to secure victory. Therefore, duels usually involve some form of martial art rather than all-out melee combat. For the un-Exalted, typical dueling arts include boxing, wrestling and swordplay with a light blade (though a few wealthy duelists prefer flame pieces at dawn). The Exalted and other Essence-wielders have wider and more spectacular options, if they accept the necessary training.

Since highborn folk regularly encounter each other at the dojos where they learn and practice their dueling techniques, these dojos become social centers as well, and the students form an exclusive club. These dueling clubs jealously restrict their membership to people of sufficiently high social class. Applicants might need to gain the approval of the existing members as well. High membership fees are a given. The club's dojo probably includes baths, masseurs, musicians and whatever other entertainment and amenity the members desire.

In the Realm, the most exclusive dueling clubs cater to the Dynasty alone. Patricians and outcastes have their own clubs, but of course, only clubs with Dragon-Blooded members teach supernatural martial arts. Many dojos pride themselves on teaching some special Terrestrial martial art unknown to the rest. Personal disputes can lead to a dojo's schism, however, and the competition between such dojos is especially fierce. Some dojos also become popular enough to franchise themselves through several cities.

Out in the Threshold, large and rich cities such as the Lap and Nexus support dueling clubs as well, though the smaller populations of Dragon-Blooded naturally limit their practice of supernatural fighting styles. Great Forks, with its uniquely high population of gods and elementals living in close proximity to mortals, boasts the only dueling club with an exclusively spiritual membership... or at least the only one outside Yu-Shan.

THE THREE-EDGED SWORD

Many dojos in the Realm teach swordplay, but few enjoy a higher reputation than the trio that some people call the Three-Edged Sword. The three sifus who run the dojos are themselves some of the greatest living swordmasters of the Dragon-Blooded, and although they are very old, their mastery of Essence keeps them as hale as they were in their prime. In their youth, they formed a sworn brotherhood that slew several Anathema and countless Wyld-beasts and barbarians. After they jointly created the Even Blade Style, however, the three



suffered a falling-out and established their own dojos. The rivalry between the three carries over to their students. The Realm's connoisseurs of the blade know that every significant martial arts tournament will include a few Even Blade fencers determined to prove their dojo's superiority, and that their sifu is the only true master of the sword.

THE SCHOOL OF MASTER AZURE CRANE

Know when to defend, but feel when to strike. The heart knows of more than life and death.

—Azure Crane

Azure Crane, a famous Air-aspected outcaste, strikes most who meet her as strangely gentle and unthreatening for a woman who has taken so many lives. The soft-voiced sifu keeps her dojo in the heart of a major Realm city. Her teaching of the Even Blade Style emphasizes awareness and flexibility of the body and the self. Azure Crane and her five junior sifus often launch surprise attacks against unwary students, however, and some inflict real damage that cripples the victim for weeks or months. Relaxing in Azure Crane's unprepossessing presence is a mistake her students make only once.

Fighting one follower of Azure Crane is like fighting two or more fencers of other styles. Her disciples use their scabbards as auxiliary weapons and wield both with dazzling speed.

THE SCHOOL OF MASTER LORD CHAOWIN REGISTROPHE, FIRST OF HEAVEN'S CHOSEN

What is your blade for, slicing vegetables? I have no time for this pathetic display. Cut through my armor and through my flesh, or drop your sword and show me your neck!

—Master Lord Chaowin Registrophe, First of Heaven's Chosen

By numbers of students, at least, the dojo of Master Lord Chaowin Registrophe, First of Heaven's Chosen, dominates the Even Blade Style. Students of the other schools say he dominates only through his outsized ego. Master Lord Chaowin Registrophe, First of Heaven's Chosen, locates his school inside an enormous statue of himself that he carved with his own two hands. Handsome and extraordinarily charming, the 400-year-old Dragon-Blood assiduously spreads the word of his prowess whenever and wherever he can, calling himself the most wise and powerful martial artist in Creation. His variant of the Even Blade Style is indeed fearsome. The Master Lord's disciples strive to finish a fight quickly and decisively with tremendous slashes. Many students who have fought in tournaments have severed their opponents' limbs.

Master Lord Chaowin Registrophe, First of Heaven's Chosen, relegates most of the actual teaching to his most powerful apprentices (and often sleeps with the most attractive). Now and then, he drops in on his classes to deliver overblown maxims. Every student receives one lesson from the master himself once a month, however—an amazing and often terrifying experience.

THE SCHOOL OF MASTER ZU RAT TE

Oh, don't look now... Not that it would have mattered if you had.

—Zu Rat Te

Once, in not-so-distant memory, there was a dojo led by Master Zu Rat Te, whose students thrilled when they were granted his slight, quiet smile and would have fainted with sheer happiness for a single word of praise. Those same students can now be found around the world, fighting in tournaments for glory—or for any cause they think he would approve of. They laud his discretion, dry humor and utter patience with anyone who truly wished to learn... and his quiet scorn for pretenders and the pompous, which made him less than popular in some Dynastic circles. They claim that he was the greatest mentor and the best man to have ever lived, and they dedicate all their victories to his name.

Master Zu Rat Te recently left his dojo without explanation. Some disciples say that Master Zu Rat Te, when last sighted, was traveling with a single student. Others think he is looking for one, a single prodigy to whom he can pass his legacy before his death.

HIDDEN CULTURES

What with secret techniques, martial masters posing as ordinary people, elusive conspiracies and the general scarcity of people who can channel Essence, finding anything in the Martial Arts World can be difficult. Is it any wonder that some martial artists wonder if, somewhere in Creation, the secrets aren't secret? A place where supernatural fighting arts are available to all?

Traveler's tales and old legends speak of cultures where many (if not all) people are great warriors—perhaps even supernaturally great. Of course, these tribes, villages, lost cities and hidden monasteries are all far away and hard to find. They'd have to be, or people would know their secrets already. A dedicated martial artist just might be able to trace a legend to its source, though, and discover combat techniques unknown to the rest of Creation.

Some tales speak of apparently ordinary villages where everyone is a martial arts master. More often, though, the hidden culture of martial artists is stranger and more remote. The most common stories divide into two groups. One sort of legend tells of remote, uncivilized tribes who nevertheless have devised powerful fighting arts through their constant struggle against nature and their neighbors. The other sort of tale describes highly civilized, secret cultures that preserve supernatural martial arts along with other esoteric lore. Now and then, a story includes both elements, such as a ruined, lost city whose people regressed to barbarism but retain elder secrets of magic and the martial arts.

BARBARIAN TRIBES

People who live by hunting and gathering face constant danger from beasts and other tribes. Of necessity, they



become good fighters. Some of them become better than good if supernatural ancestry, Wyld contagion or Exaltation enable them to channel Essence. Although barbarians generally lack the refined notions of combat taught in the dojos of civilization, their warriors can pursue their own spiritual disciplines, especially if a god or Lunar leads the tribe. Therefore, the greatest barbarian warriors may practice supernatural martial arts.

Whole tribes of Celestial Exalts just aren't possible. Only the most amazing circumstances could enable a Terrestrial Exalted family to survive in barbaric isolation—which still means it could happen once in a while. Heroic mortal or God-Blooded characters are more plausible. A Lunar Exalt, however, makes a likely sifu for barbaric martial artists. A tribe might even become known to the Martial Arts World for possessing a powerful, exotic fighting art. A character could Exalt among such a tribe, or an Exalt might seek out the tribe to learn its special fighting skills.

THE SHRAKKOWL TRIBE

The Shrakkowl are a tribe of forest-dwelling catmen. In the Northeast or Northwest, they could be cougar-folk or descended from snow leopards. In the South, they could be jaguarmen. Whatever feline supplied the animal half of their heritage, the Shrakkowl are a lithe, strong and graceful folk who excel at both hunting and personal combat. Although they live far from civilization, tales of the cat-folk's speed, agility and fighting skill have reached the Threshold.

Anyone who seeks the Shrakkowl must travel far beyond the Threshold, with all the danger that entails. Shrakkowl territory is a Bordermarch, with Middlemarch areas nearby. Simply finding the catmen isn't easy because the Wyld is vast and the Shrakkowl prefer not to be seen... until they pounce. The first sight an explorer probably has of a Shrakkowl is when nets drop from overhead and a dozen cat-warriors leap down to level spears at him. The beastmen tie up intruders, however, and take them back to their village before killing them. Meeting a stranger is such a rare event that they want to ask their shaman what it portends. The shaman's considered judgment is usually that it portends dinner.

A visitor can gain the tribe's trust, however, by challenging one of its warriors to single combat. (Screaming and spitting in his face will suffice.) If you win, you're an honorary member of the tribe, and the defeated warrior becomes your vassal. Lose but fight bravely and to the best of your ability (the Shrakkowl can tell), and you can surrender. You have proven you are a fellow predator rather than prey, so their instincts demand they accept your submission. Once again, you are an honorary Shrakkowl but subordinate to the warrior who defeated you.

As a member of the tribe, you can learn their fighting art. The Shrakkowl practice the Paragon of Animals variant of a martial art known as the Terrible Ascent-Driven Beast Style, which they say encompasses all the strengths of the creatures living in their forest. The training is exhausting

and dangerous, since the cat-folk do not tolerate any hint of weakness. Only the strong survive against the terrors of the Wyld.

A visitor who does not already channel Essence can also gain this power. The Shrakkowl train from childhood to withstand the Wyld, with the help of various talismans. On the nights of the full moon, when the Wyld tide surges and turns their territory into a Middlemarch, they dance all night in ecstasy. When a Shrakkowl reaches adulthood, she puts aside her talismans on these nights to challenge the Wyld with her own will and the spiritual disciplines taught by her elders. Success means that when the sun next dawns, the Shrakkowl perceives Essence and can learn to command it. Young Shrakkowl who fail severely enough to suffer serious mutation are slain if they do not flee. The same goes for any guest who fails the frenzied initiation.

Shrakkowl ways are harsh but matched by immense courage and personal honor. If an Exalt turns victory in battle to oath-sworn friendship, a Shrakkowl will follow his lead to the Threshold, the Imperial City or the deepest pit of Malfeas.

MYSTIC ENCLAVES

Throughout Creation, legends speak of lost cities swathed in the jungle or built in remote oases, hidden valleys high in rugged mountains, mysterious islands far from the shipping lanes or even subterranean kingdoms in giant caves. These small and secret cultures possess mystic power and lore the rest of the world has forgotten—perhaps including rare martial arts.

The Second Age of Man provides ample justification for secret enclaves. During the Great Contagion and the subsequent Fair Folk invasion, the Wyld swallowed much of the former civilized world. Any number of communities might survive, protected from the Wyld by powerful, ancient magic and martial prowess. The denizens might believe the rest of civilization has fallen to the Wyld. Before that, the Solar Purge gave plenty of Exalts a reason to hide: not just Solars and Lunars hoping to escape their overthrow, but Sidereals who fled their fellows or Terrestrials who remained loyal to their masters. The resulting chaos among the divine hierarchies could have resulted in rebellious gods or elementals leading their worshipers into hiding. Unknown millennia before that, the Exalted warred against the Primordials, their servants and inhuman races now barely known even in myth. Who knows what people, spirits or... things... yet lurk in dark, forgotten corners of the world, nursing ancient fears and ancient grudges?

Whoever populates a mystic enclave, some of them channel Essence. Celestial Exalted rulers might know Celestial or even Sideréal martial arts. A Dragon-Blooded family can practice Terrestrial or maybe even Celestial fighting arts. The enclave might know some way to confer Essence-channeling upon mortals, expanding the potential cadre of supernatural martial artists. Alternatively, an enclave could also include



an unusually high proportion of God-Blooded if a god or elemental rules it.

Finding a mystic enclave usually requires a dangerous quest, unless a character was born there and somehow escaped (or was exiled) to the wider world. (In the latter case, the character faces a difficult and dangerous search if she ever tries to return.) A few old legends or traveler's tales might offer clues to the enclave's location and the mystic secrets it guards. Once characters reach the enclave, however, they might need to battle the martial artists from whom they hope to learn. The leaders might attack visitors out of fear or arrogant contempt. Dreams of conquest might grow when the leaders learn how weak and chaotic the rest of Creation has become. Members of a circle who find the last surviving Solar from the First Age, awesomely powerful and barking mad, could find themselves fighting to save all Creation from slavery. On the other hand, a truly Utopian enclave probably shuns contact with outsiders, both to protect itself from the wicked world and to protect Creation from irresponsible use of its power and knowledge. Characters who visit the enclave might doom it by accident (or on purpose). Or perhaps they have to defend it against other intruders, such as Abyssals or agents of the Realm, who want to destroy or exploit it.

IORANE, THE CITY IN THE SEA

A century ago or more, a mighty gale blew a ship 1,000 leagues southwest of the Wavecrest Archipelago. Five months later, half the crew returned in a crude boat of whalebone and seaweed. As they raved from sunstroke and thirst, their

rescuers heard of a city rising directly from the sea, of the mad god who ruled it and of the Fair Folk who besieged it. The place was called Iorane, the City of Pinnacles, believed lost to the Wyld in the Great Contagion.

No one paid much attention. Sailors who stray into Wyld-zones encounter many strange things.

Yet, Iorane is no dream-city. Its shining spires once surmounted an island as large as any in the West. When the Scarlet Empress sent her ships to find what survived in the West, they never found the island, and it was forgotten.

The island sank under waves of chaos, but some peaks remained above the water—and the spires of mountain-built Iorane. The other peaks are now islands of madness where the Fair Folk dwell, but Iorane survives through the power of its god. Shaloy of the Shining Rod was once a minor god of surveyors and property lines. Now, he draws his line around Iorane to keep out the Wyld. Exactly 4,237 mortals live under Shaloy's protection in Iorane. The press of his responsibility makes Shaloy strict, and he judges that the sea-washed spires can sustain no more lives. No births are allowed until someone else dies... all too common an event, as fishermen are lost at sea or captured by the Fair Folk.

Since Shaloy can keep only the Wyld itself at bay, the people must defend themselves from Fair Folk incursions. Shaloy taught them the fighting art of the Golden Janissary Style (see pp. 48-50), however, so the Fair Folk now fear to attack Iorane except under cover of night or storm. The warriors of Iorane receive divine power from Shaloy either through his direct gift or as his God-Blooded descendants. Shaloy himself



knows a more potent fighting style, the Celestial Art of Relentless Persuasion (see *The Books of Sorcery*, Vol. IV—*The Roll of Glorious Divinity I: Gods & Elementals*).

Explorers face peril in Iorane. Shaloy loathes the Dragon-Blooded (who ruled Iorane in the Shogunate Era and made him bow before them). He would not like Solar or other Exalted visitors much better. Shaloy will not surrender Iorane to any Prince of the Earth without a fight, and centuries of battling Fair Folk deceptions leave him paranoid by any standard.

Anyone who can overcome Shaloy or somehow gain his trust wins a great prize, though. The god of Iorane remembers his sunken island in obsessive detail. He remembers every palace, fane and manufactory razed by the Dragon-Blooded usurpers... and which secret subcellars they never found. Admittedly, everything is under 100 feet or more of water... but that is no great problem to the Exalted, is it?

THE PLACE OF THE EXALTED

Since the Usurpation, the Dragon-Blooded have dominated the Martial Arts World. Only they and the gods seemed to possess the spiritual power needed to master supernatural martial arts. Mortals who somehow learned to channel Essence simply could not develop the same power as the Dragon-Blooded or learn supernatural fighting styles as quickly.

That easy supremacy now faces challenges on many fronts. Martial artists face turmoil in their idiosyncratic subculture as mighty warriors continue to surface to upset the Terrestrials' long-uncontested dominance.

SIDEREALS

The Chosen of the Maidens encouraged the illusion of Dragon-Blooded dominance. Collectively, the Sidereals know most of the martial arts in Creation. Newly Exalted Sidereals receive intensive training in supernatural martial arts, so it's a rare Sidereal who doesn't know at least one powerful fighting style. The Maidens' Chosen feel sure they have kept a monopoly on Sidereal martial arts, and they believe that most of the Celestial arts from the First Age were known only to themselves as well. Creation forgot the Sidereals and their esoteric powers, just as the Sidereals wanted.

In truth, however, the Bronze Faction Sidereals were the secret masters of the Martial Arts World through their influence in the Immaculate Order. They invented the Immaculate martial arts and guided the Wyld Hunt.

The return of the Solars gives the Gold Faction a chance to become secret players as well. They now teach Celestial and Terrestrial martial arts to their dupes in the Cult of the Illuminated. The prospect of such training is one of the lures used by the organization to recruit newly Exalted Solars.

The Sidereals don't have to work through factions and organizational cutouts, though. Many Sidereals use their martial arts as demon-hunters, as warriors against the Fair Folk and Underworld, and as assorted arrangers of destiny. If one of the Maidens' Chosen decides that a plot to de-

fend Creation (or advance some other goal) requires that an Exalt or enlightened mortal learn a particular martial art, the Sidereal can create a false identity as a sifu who knows that very art. The Sidereals create exceptionally good false identities, complete with bogus histories, which students are not likely to penetrate. As the Time of Tumult roils, however, a few Sidereals wonder if they must declare themselves openly, for who else could possibly marshal all of Creation's warriors?

SOLARS

The newly Exalted Solars have not yet achieved their full power or established a recognized place in the Martial Arts World. Most of Creation knows the Anathema are resurgent, but most people don't know what, exactly, they can do. Neither do the Solars themselves.

Some of the Sun's Chosen remember martial arts from their previous incarnations. Mortal and Dragon-Blooded martial artists face fighting styles unknown in Creation for more than 1,000 years. Most of them find it a painful experience, but Dragon-Blooded masters of Terrestrial arts can still defeat newly Exalted Solars. If Solar martial artists reconstruct their fighting arts in full and learn other combat Charms besides, the Dragon-Blooded will lose their dominance. Even the Immaculate Order could be surpassed in time.

Because Solars are widely scattered through Creation, a single martial artist's deeds can determine how wide sections of the Martial Arts World feel about the Solars. If a Solar champion humiliates or kills the local heroes—the Dragon-Bloods or enlightened mortals the local people consider heroes, anyway—other martial artists will probably think the old scare-stories about the Anathema are true. If the Solar performs selfless deeds, shows grace in victory over other martial artists and teaches what she can to other fighters, even some Dynasts will reconsider old prejudices. After all, the Martial Arts World awards its greatest honor to powerful sifus who train powerful students. A Solar who can teach Celestial martial arts qualifies. (Of course, teaching Celestial arts to Terrestrial Exalted would require knowledge of the enlightening methods described earlier in this chapter.)

ABYSSALS

In the Martial Arts World, fighters and sifus know that new warriors of terrible and growing power have appeared. Creation's greatest martial artists will be needed to defeat these dread Anathema of death. Already, Abyssal martial artists have challenged and slain many champions and sifus. Only Immaculate monks seem able to fight the deathknights on their own level. At least some of the Deathlords know they can reduce the number of Exalted martial artists who oppose them by preemptively killing the fighters best qualified to teach. Even mortal martial artists are not exempt. One enlightened mortal cannot defeat a deathknight, but a dozen of them might—and they can fight the Deathlords' lesser minions well enough. Abyssal martial artists know



how to exploit the customs of the Martial Arts World. Some even have a degree of Face from their notoriety. Yet, hatred grows throughout the Realm and Threshold for the disrespect they've shown to revered masters. Anyone who can challenge and kill one of these deathknight martial artists stands to win great honor.

This presents some difficulty for Abyssals who were martial artists before their Black Exaltation and still respect the subculture's customs. The Deathlords permit few emotional weaknesses in their servants, but an Abyssal who casually slaughters villages might still balk at facing down his old sifu. Such moments of honor happen all too rarely, though, and would be difficult to arrange.

An Abyssal who tried to become a sifu himself could find students, though. Some martial artists are very bad people who wouldn't mind learning from Anathema. Worst of all, a Deathlord who established his own dojos could start training future Abyssals, making them powerful warriors even before a Black Exaltation becomes available. (Such a plan might have already begun, in fact. See "The Angry Ghosts," on p. 31.)

LUNARS

For more than 1,000 years, the Chosen of Luna preserved a number of Celestial martial arts independently of the Sidereals and their Immaculate proxies. The frightened people of civilization think of the Lunar Anathema as wild, ravaging horrors, but some Lunars prefer more precise forms of combat—especially if they need to act undercover in civilized lands. Supernatural martial arts also offer Lunars many powers that their own Charms simply cannot duplicate. The Full Moon Caste has the greatest natural facility for supernatural martial arts, but No Moons and Changing Moons learn them too.

Every fighter who studies the history of the Martial Arts World knows tales of mysterious warriors who used strange and uncanny Charms. At least some of these were Lunar Exalts. As far as anyone knows, no Chosen of Luna ever taught a martial art to Dragon-Blooded students or founded a dojo in a civilized region. They taught Terrestrial martial arts to enlightened human barbarians and beastmen, though. Legends of the Martial Arts World tell of brave warriors who ventured into the Wyld and returned knowing a novel martial art. Barbarian leaders who attack the Threshold as bandits have also displayed unfamiliar martial arts. Even the Sidereals cannot guess the extent of this barbaric martial arts tradition or how much contact Lunar martial artists have with the rest of the Martial Arts World.

As the Time of Tumult builds, many Lunars believe the time approaches when they will return to civilization in force. Soon, all of Creation will discover what supernatural fighting arts the Lunars remember from the First Age or have created on their own. Most Lunars expect to come as conquering destroyers at the head of barbarian armies. A few wonder if their plans and expectations must change—just like everyone else in the Martial Arts World. At the very least, tales of

powerful new warriors entice Lunar martial artists with the promise of exciting new challenges.

TERRESTRIALS

A large proportion of Dynasts learn a supernatural martial art at some point in their long lives. Many outcaste Terrestrials learn martial arts too, in the Realm and beyond. Some of them become powerful masters of multiple martial arts. For over a millennium, the most famous sifus in Creation have all been Dragon-Blooded—and of course, the monks of the Immaculate Order surpassed everyone else.

Now, however, fear and uncertainty spreads among Dragon-Blooded martial artists. Just how powerful are the new martial artists of whom rumor speaks? Are they really devilish Anathema? Some of these mysterious warriors perform the feats Dragon-Blooded martial artists admire in their fellows. Others spit on the etiquette of the Martial Arts World. The most dedicated martial artists want to challenge these "Solars" and "deathknights" and find out for themselves. Some fear the Immaculate Order no longer claims sole possession of the greatest combat secrets. Others hope the same thing... at least if the new combat styles can be taught.

The Immaculate Order remains committed to the destruction of all those it labels Anathema. Solars who seek training in supernatural martial arts and don't remember them from a First Age incarnation, however, might have to deal with the Dragon-Blooded. Fortunately, Creation holds many Dragon-Blooded sifus who have no connection to the Immaculates. Even though they cannot learn Celestial martial arts themselves, these sifus might preserve ancient instructional texts and memory crystals from the First Age. Solars can try to wrest these long-neglected secrets from their keepers, at the cost of battling the sifus and their students. Sneakier Solars could try impersonating Dragon-Blooded students to gain access to a dojo's ancient sutras, though they won't fool a sifu for long. A Solar could even try to convince the sifu to accept Anathema students.

...AND MORTALS

What of the enlightened mortals who form such an important part of the Martial Arts World? They, too, know their subculture is changing along with the rest of Creation. They hear tales of heroic or villainous deeds and wonder if these powerful new martial artists are human or divine, and if their power can be taught. Not every martial artist philosophically accepts the historic dominance of the Dragon-Blooded.

Many martial artists also fear Creation's powerful new warriors. Whatever course an enlightened mortal chooses, at least one faction among the Exalted would oppose him. Barbarians from the Wyld, the dead walking farther from their shadowlands and Realm legions left masterless add to the perils roaming the land. Whether bandit chief or masterless swordsman, assassin or priest, enlightened mortals redouble their training for the contests they know must come. They intend to do their sifus proud, and if they fall, they will fall fighting.





CHAPTER TWO

TERRESTRIAL MARTIAL ARTS

Terrestrial martial arts, the Roots of the Perfected Lotus, are Creation's most widely practiced supernatural fighting styles. Through the millennia, myriad Dragon-Bloods have practiced these arts and invented more of them. Many styles were lost in time as their proponents died in wars and cataclysms, while other styles simply went out of fashion. Who knows what instructional texts and memory crystals for lost martial arts await discovery in ancient archives, temples and tombs?

Terrestrial styles might seem weak compared to their Celestial and Sidereal counterparts, but they are mighty when compared to merely mortal skills. They also provide the Dragon-Blooded with spiritual discipline and mystic insight into themselves and their world—benefits that practitioners value almost as much as combat prowess. Gifted mortals who learn Terrestrial styles feel like they have grasped the lightning of divinity itself... until they meet a real Exalted master.

Styles from the Roots of the Perfected Lotus also tend to be simple and direct. They grant an enlightened understanding of Essence but apply that insight to otherwise conventional combat. A Terrestrial martial artist can display superhuman strength, speed, stealth, marksmanship, horsemanship or other skills. A few of these martial arts touch on more sublime concepts such as destiny or holy defense of Creation, but most of them stay firmly grounded in material phenomena and material goals.

These fighting styles also tend to be specialized. While Terrestrial styles such as the Five-Dragon Style (see **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**, pp. 189-191) supply basic, all-purpose combat prowess, many Terrestrial styles are designed for people with particular skills, needs or backgrounds. All the various elementally aspected styles, for instance, were created by and for the Dragon-Blooded to exploit their own elemental affinities. Other styles focus on particular weapons or combat techniques.



This chapter begins with new additions to the **Terrestrial Hero Style** described in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**.

The **Falling Blossom Style** trains practitioners as bodyguards ready to protect another person, even unto death.

The **First Pulse Style** was developed on the mean streets instead of in some mystic dojo.

Golden Janissary Style practitioners call on holy fire to banish creatures from beyond Creation's bounds.

The **Ill Lily Style** augments a Wood Aspect's toxic affinities.

The **Jade Mountain Style** embodies the power of Earth in a martial art that emphasizes crushing strength and indestructible endurance.

Night Breeze Style is an art of silence, invisibility and subtlety—a counterpoint to the stormy fury of the Air Dragon Style.

The **Orgiastic Fugitive Style** turns debauchery into a weapon and a tool for enlightenment... of a sort.

Seafaring Hero Style is just the thing for ship-born swashbucklers.

The **White Veil Style** emphasizes stealth, deception and poison for its conspiratorial practitioners.

The last section describes three styles distinguished by unusual Charm trees that attempt to encompass Creation's five elements in one Terrestrial martial art:

The **Crimson Pentacle Blade Style** employs staffs, spears or other polearms, but its greatest strength lies in coordinated combat between practitioners—including multi-character Combos.

The **Even Blade Style** teaches Exalted swordplay and is much favored in the Realm. Its creators recently discovered that it includes more Charms than they thought.

The **Fivefold Shadow Hand Style** is a system of mystic defenses and devotions activated by special gestures. In many ways, it's really five interlocking styles in one.

TERRESTRIAL HERO STYLE

The basics of the Terrestrial Hero Style of martial arts appear in Chapter Six of **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**. It is a common, widely practiced style that comes naturally to any Terrestrial Exalt, from the most rigidly trained Immaculate monk to the most far-flung outcaste brawler. While it's not the most powerful Terrestrial fighting style, it is the most versatile and adaptable. A Dragon-Blood need only study its basics and apply them in combat to be able to modify and add to the style as necessity dictates.

This particular branch of the Terrestrial Hero Style deals primarily with wrestling, grappling and taking direct, hands-on control of a fight. These Charms allow a martial artist to strip an opponent of weapons and make her fight hand-to-hand on the martial artist's own terms. They allow her to restrain, hold and crush an opponent. The martial

artist can even grapple several opponents at once as easily as he would with one. These techniques are not necessarily geared toward inflicting carnage on the battlefield, but in a one-on-one (or even several-on-one) fight where honor and pride are on the line more than survival, they work very well indeed. Terrestrial heroes such as the legendary House of Bells martial arts instructor Tepet Yasal have used these Charms to devastating effect.

The following Charms are available to any Terrestrial Exalt regardless of what style she practices. Other Exalted martial artists cannot learn these Charms, regardless of the style they pursue, unless they are Eclipse Caste Solars or Moonshadow Caste Abyssals. These Charms are always considered Water Aspect Charms regardless of whatever other martial arts style the Dragon-Blood using them might study.

Weapons and Armor: Terrestrial Hero Style is an unarmed style, but it may be practiced while wearing armor.

DISARMING STRIKE PRANA

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Become the Hammer (**Dragon-Blooded**, p. 169)

This Charm adds two automatic successes to any attempt to disarm an opponent in hand-to-hand combat (effectively negating the normal -2 external penalty). It also imposes a -2 internal penalty on the victim's roll to maintain her grip on the weapon. This Charm does not allow the martial artist to take or break the weapon. If the weapon is knocked loose, it flies one yard away per success by which the victim's player failed to succeed on her roll. The martial artist chooses in which direction the weapon goes. With a stunt, he can even choose how the weapon lands (such as sticking horizontally out of a wooden wall) or aim for a specific point (such as an open window). Even with a stunt, though, the disarming character cannot cause the loose weapon to do more than startle or distract another character (i.e., he cannot use it to inflict damage).

BONDS OF UNBREAKABLE ICE TECHNIQUE

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious, Touch

Duration: (Essence) actions

Prerequisite Charms: Riptide Method (**Dragon-Blooded**, p. 192)

The character uses frigid bonds of Essence to maintain a grappling hold on her opponent. The character attempts a hold attack on her opponent in a clinch normally and uses this Charm. If the attack succeeds, the character can then let go and act normally at the beginning of her next action. Her opponent, however, remains held and inactive as if by the attacker for an additional number of actions equal to



the attacker's Essence score. The attacker cannot crush or throw her victim using this Charm.

The victim can attempt to break free normally, as if the attacker were maintaining the hold. The victim's player reflexively rolls ([Strength or Dexterity] + Martial Arts) on each action and compares his successes to the attacker's initial grapple roll. If the victim's player scores more successes on a single roll (not cumulatively), the victim breaks free but does not assert control of the grapple, obviously. Even if the opponent cannot break free, the Charm's grip automatically expires and releases him in a few actions.

The Terrestrial hero can use this Charm to immobilize multiple opponents one after the other, and she can enhance the clinch by placing this Charm in a Combo.

CRUSHING GLACIER PRANA

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious, Touch

Duration: (Essence) actions

Prerequisite Charms: Bonds of Unbreakable Ice Technique

The character can now maintain a crushing clinch after he ceases to touch his opponent. The character attempts a normal clinch attack and uses this Charm. If the clinch attack succeeds, the attacker can let go and act normally again on his next action after inflicting his damage. The victim continues to be crushed by icy waves of Essence for an additional number of actions equal to the attacker's Es-

sence score. This damage is equal to the damage the attacker inflicted on the action when he activated this Charm. The victim can attempt to break free normally, as if the attacker were maintaining the clinch. To do so, the victim's player reflexively rolls ([Strength or Dexterity] + Martial Arts) on each action and compares her successes to the attacker's initial grapple roll. If the victim's player scores more successes on a single roll (not cumulatively), the victim breaks free but does not assert control of the grapple. Even if the opponent cannot break free, she is automatically freed once the duration of this Charm expires.

SMASHING TIDAL WAVE TECHNIQUE

Cost: 3m + (3m per additional target), 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Supplemental

Keywords: Obvious

Duration: (Martial Arts) actions

Prerequisite Charms: Crushing Glacier Prana

With this Charm, the character can hold a number of targets equal to her permanent Essence without her player splitting her dice pool. In addition, this attack can be made at a range of (Essence x 5) yards. The opponents can be standing together or separately. As long as they are in range, the attacker's player rolls normally for her character to attempt to place each of them in a hold, rendering them inactive. The player rolls each hold attempt separately with her full dice pool, but doing so is still only one action altogether—not one action per victim.

Any victim of this Charm can attempt to break free normally, though doing so does not give the victim control of the grapple. Unless any of them break free, all opponents are held for a number of actions equal to the character's Martial Arts score. Once the duration of this Charm ends, all opponents are automatically freed. The attacker must maintain the holds as if she were maintaining normal holds. Taking any other non-reflexive action automatically frees everyone affected by this Charm.

SLIPPERY ESCAPE METHOD

Cost: 1m per 2 dice; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Drowning Embrace (Dragon-Blooded, p. 192)

With this Charm, the character can escape from being grappled by literally flowing through the arms of his opponent. For each mote of Essence he spends on this Charm, the player adds two dice to the reflexive ([Strength or Dexterity] + Martial Arts) roll for his character to escape from clinches and holds. In addition, the player can also add this same bonus to any Larceny roll made to escape from bonds or for any Athletics roll made to squeeze through tight spaces. The character cannot spend more motes on this Charm than he has dots of permanent Essence.

SWIFT STREAM PRANA

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 3;

Type: Reflexive (Step 2)

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Slippery Escape Method

A Dragon-Blood can use this Charm whenever her player makes a reflexive roll for the character to escape from a clinch or hold. She can also use it for a reflexive roll intended to help her escape any sort of bonds. Having done so, the character can act normally in her action with no penalty to dice pools, regardless of whether the roll succeeds or not. That is, she is not considered inactive despite being bound or grappled as her body flows and twists in ways no mere mortal can imitate.

OTHER STYLES

These martial arts styles come from throughout Creation. A style might be more popular in one part of Creation than it is in others, but Storytellers should have little trouble placing practitioners anywhere a series requires.

FALLING BLOSSOM STYLE

Martial artists who practice the Falling Blossom Style find their ultimate worth in service to others. Some practitioners guard the children of Dynastic masters. Others protect religious leaders or heads of state. Some Falling Blossoms wander the

world seeking the one person their intuition tells them must live at all costs. The Cult of the Illuminated trains heroic mortal zealots or the occasional Dragon-Blooded convert to protect newly Exalted Lawgivers. No matter who the martial artist protects, he directs his every action in combat to ensuring that person's safety, regardless of the cost to the Falling Blossom himself. Falling Blossom Style has an air aspect, so Dragon-Bloods aspected to Water or Air do not pay elemental surcharges for its Charms.

Weapons and Armor: Swords and knives count as unarmed attacks for the purpose of Falling Blossom Style, but this fighting art is incompatible with the use of armor.

Complementary Abilities: The same techniques of footwork and mobility that enable a martial artist to avoid damage also enable her to interpose herself between an attack and its intended target. To learn the Falling Blossom Style, a character must already possess at least two dots in Dodge.

LIVING SHIELD TECHNIQUE

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 2, Essence 1;

Type: Reflexive (Step 2)

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The primary technique Falling Blossom martial artists master is that of defending the body of their charge. A practitioner can take arrows and sword blows that were meant for the other person or knock him away from such attacks.

The martial artist spends one mote to reflexively interpose herself between another person and his attackers as long as the character is within leaping distance. Per the normal rules, leaping distance is equal to (Strength + Athletics) yards straight up or double that horizontally, incurring a -1 DV penalty in combat. When the martial artist interposes himself thus, the attack that was intended for the other person must now contend with the martial artist's Parry or Dodge DV. The use of Parry DV is self-explanatory, but using Dodge DV represents physically maneuvering the other person out of harm's way. Attacks that overcome the martial artist's DV hit the martial artist instead of her charge.

This Charm serves to defend only a single person, and the martial artist must declare who she intends to protect at the beginning of combat. Once she does so, the character can defend only that person for the remainder of the scene.

UNDEFENDED ASSAULT METHOD

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

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: One action

Prerequisite Charms: Living Shield Technique

When a warrior fears to die, her fear undermines her concentration. If she hesitates, death will surely find her. When a warrior does not fear death, her recklessness leaves her overexposed and makes her sloppy. A warrior ensures victory only by refusing even to consider whether she could



live or die. A Falling Blossom martial artist's devotion to her charge leads her to this assurance.

When a martial artist activates this Charm, the result of her player's Join Battle roll increases by a number of automatic successes equal to the character's Martial Arts score, since fear does not make her hesitate. In addition, all attacks made during her first action gain one automatic success, as she retains her focus in defense of her charge. The martial artist may not make an active defense with any part of her action, however, so her DVs drop to 0 for the remainder of the action. The martial artist may still benefit from defenses purchased from Charms or persistent effects such as Five-Dragon Blocking Technique or Fivefold Bulwark Stance. Without them, however, the martial artist is vulnerable. This Charm must be activated before the character takes her Join Battle action.

DUAL SCARLET BLOSSOM TECHNIQUE

Cost: (1m and 1lhl) per die; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Living Shield Technique

This technique exemplifies the principle of the Falling Blossom Style: The martial artist is ready to give his life to defend his charge. When he activates this Charm, the martial artist pays one mote and suffers one lethal health level of damage for every die of raw damage he wishes to convert into an automatic health level of damage inflicted upon his target. This damage is an effect of the Charm and cannot be bypassed or neutralized by Charms or other effects that reduce damage without negating the effect. This Charm must be activated after the martial artist's player has rolled for his attack but before he has rolled damage.

This Charm also presumes combat against an opponent who actively fights back: It's useless for surprise attacks or other attacks on unarmed or unresisting targets. In effect, the martial artist grants his opponent a counterattack that automatically succeeds. Dual Scarlet Blossom Technique cannot be used in circumstances where such a counterattack is not possible.

FALLING BLOSSOM FORM

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

Type: Simple (Speed 3)

Keywords: Form-type

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Undefended Assault Method, Dual Scarlet Blossom Technique

The character focuses the whole of her being on her charge, surrendering herself to the ideal of that person's victory. For the rest of the scene, the character inflicts lethal damage with her unarmed attacks. Any successful attacks made with a knife convert one die of the attack's final damage to an automatic success. This damage conversion does not apply to attacks made with swords or fists.

The character may also substitute her Conviction for her Valor for any rolls made to resist effects based on fear or intimidation for the remainder of the scene, as her devotion to her charge burns away mundane fear and distraction. In fact, the Falling Blossom's devotion is such that she can continue to act after she has been incapacitated. If bashing damage caused the incapacitation, the martial artist simply ignores her incapacitated state. If lethal damage caused the incapacitation, the character will die in number of actions equal to her Stamina as her Dying "health levels" fill up. Nonetheless, she continues to act until she actually drops dead. The character suffers from the normal wound penalties the damage has caused, however (-4 for Incapacitated).

Any character who is killed while using this Form-type Charm in righteous defense of her charge leaves behind no ghost, and no hungry ghost inhabits her corpse. Her purpose in this incarnation fulfilled, she progresses to the next. Should a necromantic effect attempt to kill the martial artist and make her into a ghost, however, the martial artist's player makes an Essence roll against a difficulty equal to the necromancer's Essence. If the roll succeeds, the martial artist's soul is reborn immediately. Otherwise, she becomes a ghost as dictated by the necromantic effect.

PURITY OF PURPOSE ATTACK

Cost: 3m, 1wp, 1xp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 2;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Falling Blossom Form

Learning this Charm shows that the martial artist has learned to dedicate his very soul to battle and service to another. With it, the Falling Blossom makes an unarmed attack (or an attack with a sword or a knife). His player rolls the attack as normal. As long as the attack roll yields even a single success, his attack strikes its target. Should the difficulty of the attack be more than 1 or should the target's DV reduce the successes to 0, the attack still inflicts its base damage. Only a perfect defense can stop this attack.

The Storyteller should note every experience point spent on the activation of this Charm. Every three points spent purchases a point of the special Destiny Background for the martial artist (see p. 151), though the nature of that destiny is up to the Storyteller. As a general guide, the destiny should provide an opportunity for the martial artist to die in a manner that proves his faithful dedication and leaves him well remembered as an example of virtuous devotion to his charge.

STRENGTH OF FAITH MEDITATION

Cost: (1m per die), 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 3;

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Falling Blossom Form

By channeling the power of her faith through meditation and quick exercises, the character rises above discomforts and pains that would otherwise slow her down. Each mote a Falling Blossom spends on this Charm negates one point of penalty caused by pain or disability of her body, such as wound penalties or Crippling effects, for the scene. This Charm does not negate penalties brought on by outside factors, such as environmental penalties to mobility or visibility.

VERSE OF THE MARTYR

Cost: 15m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One day

Prerequisite Charms: Purity of Purpose Attack, Strength of Faith Meditation

The ultimate expression of this martial style's ethic is the death of the practitioner in service to his charge. It is, of course, better to survive to serve another day, but that ideal is not always attainable. If a Falling Blossom must die so his charge can live, this Charm helps the martial artist guide the hand of fate just enough to do so under his chosen circumstances.

This Charm requires preparation. The martial artist meditates and writes a heartbreaking haiku that tells of his readiness to die for his cause. The Loom of Fate itself accepts the doomed martial artist's proposition and realigns events so that his death is honorable—but also gives him a chance to defeat the enemies of his charge. If his enemies hide, he

will find them. If they set a trap, he will evade it. Heaven itself will bring them together for a final confrontation.

Further, any time during the rest of that day that the character channels a Virtue for any roll that helps him toward his destiny, his player gains a number of automatic successes to his roll equal to the channeled Virtue, rather than simply adding dice.

Although it is considered no downside to the Falling Blossom, using this Charm means that the martial artist's death is assured before the rise of the sun on the next day—often in a manner suggested by his haiku. Should the character somehow cheat death, however—regardless of whether that was his intent—his destiny snarls in the Loom of Fate. The weavers in the Loom must painstakingly pick the snarl apart and reweave all the threads around it, and they are never pleased to have this inconvenience thrust upon them. Holding the trouble against the martial artist, they weave for him a long and ugly future in which he is destined to fail at any important task he undertakes... especially any attempt at suicide. In fact, from that point forward, he gains five dots of the Destiny Background to ensure that very thing. As a final insult, the failed master can never use the Charms of the Falling Blossom Style again.

FIRST PULSE STYLE

Not every martial artist is a calm, temperate master who considers his art exercise and philosophy. Not all of them discover combat secrets from the animal world or while meditating on a mountain. Some of them live in the





urban wilderness. They just get into fight after fight and figure out a useful trick or two after someone gives them a hand out of the garbage and a beefsteak for their black eye. If the street fighter is Exalted, these “tricks” can be Charms, which eventually distill into a martial art.

According to legend, First Pulse Style began with the infamous Nexus pit fighter known by the stage name Blood Tiger. Rumors attributed his skill in the arena to Immaculate training that he received before fleeing one of the temples; Blood Tiger attributed his skill to growing up on the streets and killing his first man years before he Exalted. After his controversial retirement in RY 701, Blood Tiger disappeared. Over the next several years, some Dragon-Blooded prone to street fighting and brawling began to display battle techniques strangely reminiscent of the missing champion. Some suggest that Seven and Sixty Techniques of Deadly Breath, a manual of formalized informal combat that circulated during that time, was authored by him.

Today, warriors can learn First Pulse Style at any time and place. Masters of the style naturally frequent the streets and alleys of the Threshold’s cities. When they see a promising, self-trained brawler, they induct him into the mysteries of the style. Training comes in fits and bursts. After the first few days of lessons, the teacher disappears and returns to her normal habits. The student must impress her, or another master of the style, with her fighting techniques again to learn more.

First Pulse techniques are all about fast reaction and spur-of-the-moment beatings. If you wait more than one heartbeat before attacking, they say, you’ve already lost. Air-aspected Dragon-Bloods have the sudden impulses and quick wits beneficial to practicing this style. They pay no elemental surcharge when using the Charms of this style.

Weapons and Armor: A student learns to treat anything and everything within reach as a well-made weapon. Therefore, all improvised weapons are this style’s form weapons. Consider a weapon “improvised” if it has a maximum Accuracy of -3 and a maximum Rate of 2 and, more importantly, if the character picks it up on the spur of the moment. The style may also be used with the cestus or the iron boot (or their artifact equivalents).

Some First Pulse Stylists enjoy especially dirty infighting and arm themselves with axe-bladed shoes or thumb-mounted blades for eye-gouging. Axe-bladed shoes make kicks inflict lethal damage. Using eye-gougers requires the wearer to take control of a clinch. Getting into position to use the thumb-blades applies a -2 external penalty to the clinch attack or the opposed grappling check. When successful, the attacker may choose to inflict one level of lethal damage in lieu of any other harm, blinding the target in one eye (usually permanently), in a natural effect with the Crippling keyword. Many street fighters believe that Blood Tiger invented these weapons himself, however unlikely that might be. Warriors who fight in this style don’t wear armor—it takes too much forethought to put on—though they could use these Charms in light armor should they be wearing it.

LIGHTNING MENTAL ARMAMENT

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 1;

Type: Reflexive (Step 2)

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

When living on the streets, it’s wise to stay in a combative mindset. This Charm allows a character to react with blinding speed to a surprise attack or ambush—a tactic most street brawlers know only too well. Apply half of the character’s normal DVs to unexpected attacks, and add four dice to the subsequent Join Battle action.

STUBBORN MONKEY HESITATION

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Canny street fighters often choose to get the drop on their enemies, especially in situations where they know they are going to come to blows. The character shifts from an apparently comfortable stance into the memory-blurring speed of combat in a startling instant. Using this Charm triggers a Join Battle action from everyone nearby, except for those who distinctly choose not to get involved, but the character’s great speed means he attacks on tick 0. The player doesn’t have to roll. The other players roll to see how fast their characters react to the sudden outbreak of violence. If some other character starts the fight, the player merely adds a number of dice equal to his Essence to his character’s Join Battle roll.

HUNTER BAGS THE DEER

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

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Once in combat, any urchin knows that it’s better to give than to receive. Characters who master this Charm learn how to use an opponent’s preparation to strike against him. When the martial artist is in range of a valid target, she may invoke this Charm and attack that target one tick earlier than her previous action’s Speed should allow. (Doing so effectively reduces the Speed of her previous action by one.) Such speed must come from somewhere, though, so the Charm adds one to the Speed of the attack or flurry she takes using this Charm.

Example: The Dragon-Blooded martial artist Alley Thunder is participating in an all-out street brawl with a gang of thugs. The nearest thug to him is some distance away down the street, however, so the player decides Alley Thunder should perform a Dash action before he can throw his first punch. The Speed of a Dash action is 3, and the Speed of throwing a punch is 5. Thunder takes his Dash action (which puts his first victim in



range as a valid target) then activates the Charm. As a result, he can throw his first punch on this third tick, rather than waiting for the fourth tick. Throwing the punch under these conditions takes six ticks instead of the standard five, however.

Additionally, the character's DV does not refresh after the action she takes using this Charm, creating a weakness that others might exploit. (In the example, Alley Thunder's DVs refresh after his Dash action, but they do not refresh after the subsequent attack. They refresh after the action he takes after the attack.) Even though the player technically has the character activate Hunter Bags the Deer before the action that the Charm affects, the use of the Charm counts as her Charm use for the action so affected. (Naturally, this restriction does not apply to Dragon-Blooded characters, since the Charm is reflexive.) A character cannot use this Charm more than once between consecutive actions.

BIRD-OF-PARADISE WHISTLES IN THE NORTH

Cost: 3m or 5m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2;

Type: Reflexive (Step 9)

Keywords: Combo-OK, Counterattack

Duration: Two actions

Prerequisite Charms: Stubborn Monkey Hesitation, Hunter Bags the Deer

One of the best things a back-alley warrior can do when attacked from surprise is to whip the attacker out of hiding, especially when she can toss him into a circle of her friends. When someone successfully hits a First Pulse practitioner with an unexpected attack, she may activate this Charm as the attacker inflicts damage. She gets an automatic clinch counterattack with her full ([Strength or Dexterity] + Martial Arts) dice pool. If successful, the martial artist automatically breaks the hold by throwing him either to the ground (prone) or across a distance equal to her Strength in yards in any direction. (See "Grappling" on p. 157 of *Exalted*.) Her aggressor also suffers a -2 internal penalty to any attempts to return to hiding for the martial artist's next two actions.

By spending two additional motes, the First Pulse Stylist may instead strike back with a deadly blow as soon as she feels a violent touch, contusing organs or cracking bones. She might be a little high-strung, but she'll have the reputation she wants. Rather than a clinch and throw, the martial artist applies a counterattack at her full dice pool against her aggressor. If the character would inflict bashing damage with this counterattack, she instead inflicts lethal. If her weaponry (or another Charm) allows her to strike with lethal force, she adds +3L to the blow's raw damage. She does not gain the counter-stealth benefits when using this version of the Charm, which is known as Kicking the Black Wolfhound.

As usual for counterattacks, either form of this Charm reduces the character's DVs by one for the rest of her action.

POISONED RAT MOVES WITHOUT PRIDE

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Lightning Mental Armament, Stubborn Monkey Hesitation

It is always an advantage to throw your opponent off guard. Slow reactions in a deadly conflict show a lack of focus, but making someone else react slowly—that's skill. When the character hits a person with a Martial Arts attack while using this Charm, his target's player rolls (Wits + Awareness) against a difficulty equal to the character's Martial Arts rating. If the roll fails, the martial artist's attack delays his target's next action by a single tick, effectively increasing the Speed of her present action by one. Used cleverly, this technique can provide valuable gaps in opponents' defenses.

FIRST PULSE FORM

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

Type: Simple (Speed 3, -2 DV)

Keywords: Form-type

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Bird-of-Paradise Whistles in the North, Poisoned Rat Moves Without Pride

First Pulse Style prizes action and despises hesitation. If the character manages to activate this Form-type Charm and still be the first to attack in a fight, his first attack's roll gains two automatic successes to hit and inflicts piercing damage. Whether or not he gets this edge, the character reduces the Speed of his attacks and any flurries that consist entirely of attacks by one, to a minimum of 4, for the rest of the scene. He also gains a two-die bonus to all attacks, but the Guard action becomes a -1 DV action for him.

INTRODUCTION TO THE STONE PRINCE

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Crippling

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: First Pulse Form

Brawlers don't spar in dojos, and they don't meet on fields of honor. They track down their enemies in the streets and give them lasting gifts of pain, or they are tracked down themselves. It might seem like a despicable and undesirable life, but for some, nothing else is living. Street fighters don't always want to give their opponents more than a couple of weeks' discomfort, but some unpleasant souls out there take things more personally and require lifelong lessons.

This Charm can supplement a normal Martial Arts strike, a crush attack in a clinch or an opposed grappling check. If the attack successfully knocks the character's target prone (either through knockdown or by throwing the opponent to the ground), the character immediately brings a stone-hard



foot down on a brittle piece of her target's anatomy. She inflicts (Strength + Essence) dice of lethal damage, and if her target suffers at least one level of damage, she has crippled him.

What part of the body the character cripples depends on her whim and how much damage she inflicts. With one level of damage, she may crush and maim a hand or foot. Two levels of damage allow her to irreparably shatter an arm or leg. Three or more let her mangle the target's spine. She may always opt to inflict a lesser punishment. Those who use this Charm as a punishment (for wayward gang members, for instance) often match an injury to an indiscretion. Fighters who are just watching out for their own backs go for maximum damage. This sort of damage causes an appropriate penalty to actions with the injured limb, generally a -2 penalty to relevant physical actions. (See **Exalted** p. 152 for more ideas and rules on disabling injuries.)

FLEETING WINGS OF DUST

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

Type: Simple (Speed 4, -2 DV)

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Three actions

Prerequisite Charms: First Pulse Form

No one ever said life was fair. Whether he picks it up or kicks it up, the character sends Essence-charged dirt, sand, dust or grime into the eyes of his opponent. Count only half of the target's Dodge DV against this attack (it cannot be parried). On a successful assault, the filth completely blinds the target temporarily, forcing a -4 internal penalty on him for his next three actions. Some martial artists use this Charm to provide an opportunity to get in some unseen blows. Others use the chance to escape or conceal themselves.

TITAN OF THE STREETS

Cost: 2m, 1wp, 1lhl; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Introduction to the Stone Prince, Fleeting Wings of Dust

A master of First Pulse Style knows the streets. She has lived on them and slept on them, eaten off them, breathed them. The streets are her domain, and she is equally at home on the back streets of the Imperial City, in the oldest and worst districts of Nexus or surrounded by the celestial slums of Yu-Shan. All such places are alike, in spirit if not appearance, and the master has taken the thousand hard lessons she learned there and internalized them.

Activating this Charm, the character adds one to her Strength, Dexterity and Stamina for the duration of the scene. Her Wits score increases by three. She appears at least a foot taller, menacing, rough, deadly. Her hands drip blood—her blood and that of every tough she has made bleed during her period as a student of this style—and it flicks everywhere with her blows and parries. When people

suffer knockback from her attacks, they travel twice as far, and it is the same when she throws them. She adds two yards to her Move and Dash actions and moves with the speed of death on the streets. While this Charm is active, First Pulse Form can reduce attack Speeds to a minimum of 3.

GOLDEN JANISSARY STYLE

Warriors across Creation use Golden Janissary Style to combat creatures of darkness. When shades grow unruly and when the dead march, students of this art array themselves against the Underworld. Should the Yozi Cecelyne taste the sandy shores of the South and spew forth her demon children, the Golden Janissaries are ready. Several schools in each direction dedicate themselves to the ancient style, and each school has a master who demands equal devotion to the martial lifestyle.

As shadowlands bloom in all lands without discrimination, the master instructors of Golden Janissary Style now recruit aggressively. They reduce their students' access to the outside world, the better to focus their minds and accelerate their training. Walks through the shadowlands and dreamstones of trips to Malfeas sensitize warriors to the presence and the methods of their many enemies. They study the construction and weaknesses of many undead monstrosities and similarly learn the natures and bans of myriad demonspawn. The Golden Janissary schools combine such study with an unrelenting practice of martial forms, maneuvers and tactics that make them formidable obstacles for the enemies of Creation. But so few Dragon-Bloods out in the Threshold choose the Golden Janissary training...

This style has even fewer adherents in regions where the Immaculate Order has a powerful grip. Monastic warriors of the Order often resent the intrusion of a secular school in the war against fell creatures. Where the Order has little influence, martial artists of this style work with the Immaculates or, more likely, conflict with them. Such conflicts rarely end well for the secular warriors, since their style concentrates on fighting the unnatural instead of Creation's proper denizens. Some Golden Janissary attacks also manifest a golden fire the Immaculates find... suspicious.

Fire-aspected Dragon-Blooded, as well as Water Aspects, can wield the Charms of this style without paying a mote surcharge.

Weapons and Armor: Golden Janissary Style treats spears and dire lances as form weapons. The style can be used while wearing light armor or no armor.

CLEANSING FLAME STRIKE

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 2, Essence 2;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Holy

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

When a warrior knows she strikes her blow for honor and the advancement of Creation, no abomination can

withstand her cutting blows. Any unarmed attack supplemented by this Charm automatically inflicts lethal damage. Against creatures of darkness, it also adds +2L to the raw damage. (See **Exalted**, p. 192, for more information about “Creatures of Darkness.”)

ROTTEN LEAF ARRESTED

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Holy

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

No foe foreign to Creation can stand before the might of a Golden Janissary. Blows supplemented by this Charm clearly have the martial artist’s full strength behind them. The player of any creature of darkness struck with this attack must roll to prevent that creature’s knockdown. If the attack inflicts enough raw damage to cause knockdown normally, the roll’s difficulty increases by two.

Against any target, the attack need only inflict a number of levels of damage equal to the target’s (Stamina – 1) to make the creature risk becoming stunned. The difficulty to resist being stunned is equal to either the attacker’s Essence or (the damage inflicted – the target’s Stamina)—whichever is higher.

WHERE IS DOOM INQUISITION

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

Keywords: Holy, Touch

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Cleansing Flame Strike, Rotten Leaf Arrested

Defenders of Creation must have some method for discerning who is and who is not a foe. After all, the techniques of a Golden Janissary have little effect against creatures born in the light. Their training gives them the knowledge necessary to sense the flow of Essence through a body and know whether that creature belongs in Creation.

Once activated, this Charm allows the martial artist to detect at a touch whether or not her special combat skills will affect a given target (i.e., whether a target is a creature of darkness). Merely touching a creature is enough to make a judgment, though an attack of some kind is necessary when the target tries not to be touched (almost always during battle). Against creatures using appropriate supernatural deception, the character adds her Essence in dice to the (Perception + Investigation) roll to oppose that effect. The martial artist must touch the target with an unarmed strike (not a weapon—even a form weapon) in order to use this Charm.

GOLDEN JANISSARY FORM

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

Keywords: Form-type, Holy

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Where Is Doom Inquisition

A martial artist who practices the Golden Janissary Style moves with billowing, sweeping cuts and blows like a spreading blaze, always toward the fuel of his enemy. Although his attacks look somewhat wild, his actions are actually executed with enviable precision and skill, making him no easier to evade.

For the Charm’s duration, the janissary’s player treats rolls of 10 on a damage die as two damage successes against creatures of darkness. Additionally, the warrior can spend one mote reflexively in Step 7 of attack resolution to reduce the damage from any attack against him by two dice, to a minimum of one. Using this technique against creatures of darkness reduces the damage by five dice instead, to a minimum damage of zero.

LIGHT-ON-DARK SHIELD

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

Keywords: Combo-OK, Holy

Duration: (Martial Arts) actions

Prerequisite Charms: Golden Janissary Form

Shadow grows weak when it enters the light. Warriors using this Charm summon their inner light and use it to protect themselves from their strange enemies. Once activated, Light-on-Dark Shield adds the martial artist’s Essence to his Parry DV and his bashing and lethal soaks against attacks from creatures of darkness. Against other foes, his Parry DV and soak values increase by only one.

At his option, the martial artist can spend a point of Willpower to share this protection with his allies. A halo of shimmering, fiery light forms around the warrior and leaps to his companions, making the Charm Obvious. He can aid no more than (Essence + 1) friends, and each one the warrior wishes to shield costs an additional two motes.

PARALYZING COMBUSTION IMBUEMENT

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-Ok, Crippling, Holy, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Golden Janissary Form

Fire and light banish many creatures of darkness. How much greater their suffering if the fire comes from within them? By supplementing a Martial Arts attack with a powerful surge of Essence, a Golden Janissary sets the chakras in her enemy burning with spiritual fire.

The attack does not need to inflict any damage past the target’s soak, but it is more effective when it does. Bursts of fiery, golden light erupt from various points on the body of a creature struck by this attack, one flare each tick, with a sound like the ringing of golden bells. Characters trying to locate a victim of this Charm add two dice to all relevant attempts. Creatures of darkness under this effect also suffer a -1 internal penalty to all actions, plus an additional point of penalty for each health level of damage the attack inflicts. No Golden Janissary can impose



a greater penalty than her Essence rating. Additional uses of this Charm against an affected target (by either the same martial artist or separate ones) do not increase the dice pool bonuses to locate that target or the frequency of the bursts of golden light that emanate from the target. The penalties inflicted on creatures of darkness are not cumulative either. Penalties are based on the supplemented attack that inflicted the most damage. They last until the end of the scene or until the associated wounds all heal, whichever comes first.

Example: Jade-and-Silver Austrech uses this Charm to supplement an attack that inflicts one level of damage and causes a -2 penalty. A later use of the Charm on the same target that inflicts no damage has no additional effect. If that use had inflicted two levels of damage, the victim would then suffer a -3 penalty for the duration.

Creatures of darkness who suffer a penalty from this Charm that is greater than their Essence suffer an equal penalty to the Speed of their Move and Dash actions.

LONE SPARK LIGHTS THE CONFLAGRATION

Cost: 3m + (1m per additional target), 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Simple (Speed 6)

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Holy, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Light-on-Dark Shield, Paralyzing Combustion Imbuement

Surrounded by evil and darkness, masters of the Golden Janissary Style use this pinnacle technique to blast fields clean of their enemies and let light once again shine on the ground. With a massive blow of his hand or spear, the warrior's weapon flares for a brief moment with brilliant, golden-white flame. In all eyes, including that of Heaven, the afterimage floats on the victim for a long moment before the target creature—and creatures near it—bursts into purifying flame.

The white-flaming fist or spearhead strike sears any opponent, adding +3L to the attack's raw damage. When used against a creature of darkness, it inflicts +6L instead of +3L. On the next tick, the creature of darkness bursts into flame and suffers a number of dice of aggravated damage equal to the martial artist's Essence, which ignores armor. At the same moment, all creatures of darkness with the same affiliation (i.e., the Underworld, Malfeas, Fair Folk or whatever) within (Essence x 3) yards find themselves at the center of similar pyres. These flames are ghostly and transparent and inflict no damage unless the Exalt chooses, at that moment, to spend one mote for each bonfire he wishes to endow with his holy power. On that action, immolated creatures suffer the same damage as the original creature.

True fires inflict damage once more on the martial artist's next action and then dim into false flames. The ghostly bonfires disappear one action after that.

ILL LILY STYLE

Like the poison made from the rare Scarlet Caldera Lily, this martial-arts style rarely kills its foes directly. It serves instead to weaken them, striking from many different angles to keep its victims on their feet while wearing them down from within and without. Its toxic associations give the style a bad reputation, though. People tend to assume that students of this fighting art are as shifty and dishonorable as any poisoner. Actually, teachers of the Ill Lily Style advocate facing foes directly... while hitting them from the side.

Although known in the East, the influential Dragon-Blooded of Lookshy frown upon the Ill Lily Style, and they sometimes show their disapproval with gunzsha. The schools that teach the style in the Scavenger Lands operate mostly in secret or are actually criminal. Ill Lily Style is more common in the South, where some sand-buried tubers can be pressed to release an effective paralytic, and where the Scarlet Caldera Lily itself grows.

Wood Aspects share an elemental association with this style, so neither they nor Water Aspects pay an elemental surcharge when using Charms from this style.

Weapons and Armor: Exalts studying this style learn how to use any sort of small wooden weapon as a part of the style. Some use lengths of rough, unplanned wood, while others prefer to use wooden practice swords for their tools. For the purpose of traits, treat wooden weapons as clubs. As long as they are made completely from wood, all of these weapons serve as form weapons for Ill Lily Style. Artifact batons may be used with this style if they contain no magical material other than green jade. Students of this style may also throw these batons with the Martial Arts Ability. This style is compatible with armor.

FALSE-SHELL EMOLLIENT ATTACK

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

ype: Simple (Speed 4)

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Varies

Prerequisite Charms: None

Some plants produce a lotion that can soothe and soften the skin. Wood-aspected martial artists imitate that in this Charm, using their Essence to smooth the path their blows take through their opponents' armor.

Each mote spent on this Charm reduces the effectiveness of a foe's armor by one bashing soak; two motes remove one point of lethal soak. The Exalt can spend no more motes on this Charm than he has dots in Martial Arts. In order for this Charm to take effect, the martial artist must first land a successful attack to lubricate a path for his future blows to follow. This initial attack inflicts no damage. Otherwise, for each success by which he surpassed his target's DV, he gains the benefits of this Charm against that opponent for one action.

Only the Exalt who uses this Charm benefits from its effects. The softening Essence-trail is available only to the martial artist who creates it.

VEINS OF WOOD

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-Basic

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: False-Shell Emollient Attack

With this Charm, poison can be made to flow through wood as easily as through blood. By touching a single dose of a plant-based toxin to her wooden weapon, the Exalt enables herself to transfer that poison to another through a blow from the stick. The poison becomes transferable by contact, even if that is not normally possible.

If the martial artist successfully strikes a living creature with the tainted weapon, the target suffers the effects of the poison. The attack must either inflict damage or be a called shot (see **Exalted**, p. 158) to dramatically scrape the target's skin without inflicting damage. Doing so effectively discharges the poison. To use the stick or club as a conduit for this toxin (or another) again, she must expend another dose on the stick. Since the poison need only touch the weapon, doing so requires nothing more than a -1 DV miscellaneous action when in combat.

This Charm works using only plant-based toxins that normally take effect through ingestion, contact or direct injection to the bloodstream. Toxins must be fully prepared before application to the cudgel. The Charm cannot employ a poison that must be used in a special way (such as marijuana, which must be burned and smoked).

A Wood-aspected Dragon-Blooded has an advantage in this respect. By activating her anima and holding her weapon in bare hands, she can keep her natural toxin constantly flowing into the weapon. If she so chooses, however, she can subdue her anima long enough to place another appropriate poison of her choice on the weapon.

Should the martial artist lose hold of her weapon and not regain it on her next action, this Charm expires.

ATTRACTIVE FLOOR-GREASING POSTURE

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

Type: Reflexive (Step 2)

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

By appearing vulnerable, the Exalt lures his opponent into overextending herself. When attacked, the martial artist activates this Charm and tries to dodge or parry the blow. If the attack fails, then the martial artist has maneuvered himself into a position to drive a strike home on his next action. His opponent suffers a cumulative -1 penalty from her DV for each mote the Exalt spent (up to half the



character's Martial Arts, rounded up), but only against the character who used the Charm and only if the martial artist uses his next action to attack her.

STEM, BRANCH AND LOG APPROACH

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The martial artist can hurl twigs with concussive force and nimbly swing logs to crush her enemies. When an Exalt supplements an attack with this Charm, she can use any wooden object that she can lift as an effective weapon. It must be light enough that she can lift it, and there is no guarantee the weapon will survive the attack—flimsy sticks tend to pierce the skin and break, while overlarge weapons rarely have the structural integrity to withstand a solid blow. Any raw damage the weapon inflicts also affects the weapon itself, and in equal measure.

Unorthodox weapons used with this Charm—as most are—take on the effective statistics of a wooden club and can be used in melee or ranged combat as normal. At Essence 3 or higher, the Exalt can spend one extra mote to add +2 to the weapon's Accuracy.

"Weapons" bound to other objects—a heavy plank in a large gate or a tree growing from the ground—are not automatically ripped from their moorings by this Charm. Even if the martial artist can perform such a feat of strength, she must spend an action to do so.

ILL LILY FORM

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

Keywords: Form-type

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Veins of Wood; Attractive Floor-Greasing Posture; Stem, Branch and Log Approach

Placing one foot behind him and one palm above his head, open to the sky, the Exalt assumes the Ill Lily Form. His actions are deliberate but fluid, like grass or leaves in a soft breeze.

For the rest of the scene, the martial artist adds his Essence to his bashing soak and half his Essence to any Martial Arts attacks performed unarmed or with the style's form weapons. Additionally, he may spend a mote and a miscellaneous action (-1 DV) to touch one dose of a plant-based toxin and empower it, increasing its Toxicity by an amount equal to his Essence.

If the poison is already absorbed into the Exalt's wooden weapon through use of Veins of Wood, increasing its potency is a reflexive action instead. Similarly, a Wood Aspect's enhancing his natural toxin is reflexive and lasts until either he discharges it once or the scene ends.

CAPABILITY-ENHANCING POTION MEDITATION

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

Type: Reflexive (Varies)

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: (Essence) actions

Prerequisite Charms: Ill Lily Form

An Exalt's anima flares and her eyes flash green when she invokes this Charm. Calling upon the Wood Essence of life to swell her strength, she focuses her might to enhance the effectiveness of her Charms.

Any Charms the Exalt uses while the Capability-Enhancing Potion Meditation is active, whether in a Combo with this Charm or not, double their mote-expenditure limits, if they have one. Note that this does not allow an Exalt to exceed the normal legal limit of dice from Charms. Being able to spend double the motes on Essence Overwhelming is not equivalent to being able to use double the dice.

WORLD-FOCUS ATTUNEMENT

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Simple (-0 DV)

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Capability-Enhancing Potion Meditation

The martial artist's body shines with a halo of energy as his anima flares around him, tinged with a vibrant, lively green. A Wood Aspect's anima banner flares at the 16+ mote level, inflicting one die of lethal damage to anyone in contact with him, and he gains the benefit of his anima power until his next action ends.

Sending his awareness to mingle with the Wood Essence of his surroundings, the Exalt takes control of a nearby (otherwise inanimate) plant and directs it to attack on his behalf. The target of this attack must be within (Essence x 5) yards and must be no more than five yards from a plant capable of executing this attack. Since the attack does not come from the martial artist, but from a plant of his choosing, the victim of the assault has no opportunity to dodge or parry—it is an unexpected attack. Even those who have fought a master of Ill Lily Style before cannot necessarily discern whence the attack will come. Only Charms (or other magical effects) that defeat surprise or that can be used against unexpected attacks offer any protection (unless there really is only one possible source, such as a lone potted palm inside a building, and it isn't the first attack made with this Charm against a target).

At the Storyteller's discretion, some kinds of vegetation can receive bonuses to certain attacks. Vines are excellent grapplers, for instance, while most trees perform excellent hard strikes. Otherwise, the attacks are exactly as though the martial artist grappled barehanded or struck with a wooden baton. Grappled victims must use an action to free themselves from the still-animate plant after the normal five ticks of helplessness.

For a moment, the Exalt also gains a glimpse into all living Essence within his range. He instantly knows where every living thing is, whether hiding or not (unless concealed by Essence), and their general state of health and temperament. Knowing where a person is hiding nearby does not necessarily let the martial artist see her, however, and if the other person moves to hide somewhere else, the martial artist loses his advantage.

Most Exalts who master this style use World-Focus Attunement as a superior meditative technique. They typically become remarkable gardeners as well as martial artists.

JADE MOUNTAIN STYLE

The Imperial Mountain is the center of the Realm, the elemental pole that signifies stability and holds Creation together. Jade Mountain Style captures that stability and inner strength to create a martial art with which one can stand strong against any assault.

Although the “feel” of Jade Mountain Style somewhat resembles Earth Dragon Style (see **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**, pp. 201-205), this secular style is less powerful than the Immaculate art. Some monks interpret the Immaculate Texts to suggest that Jade Mountain Style is a false path to emulating Pasiap, so few schools on the Blessed Isle teach it. Jade Mountain practitioners are more commonly found among the Dragon-Blooded of Lookshy and other outcastes.

Earth-aspected Dragon-Bloods may practice this style’s Charms without paying an elemental surcharge of Essence. Additionally, the Charms of Jade Mountain Style function only while the practitioner is in a stable position. Practitioners prefer to stand on solid ground, but any tenable position will do. If the martial artist is easily upset—swimming, standing on a small raft, flying, jumping, balancing on bamboo or the like—he may not activate or use these Charms.

Weapons and Armor: Jade Mountain Style considers clubs, hammers, maces, sledges and goremauls form weapons, and it may be practiced in armor.

Complementary Abilities: Characters require no other Abilities to learn Jade Mountain Style, but practitioners often develop their Resistance to a remarkable degree.

BOULDER-CRUSHING GRASP

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Special

Prerequisite Charms: None

With a strength born of the mountain, the Exalt takes hold of a single opponent and inexorably crushes the life from him. When this Charm supplements a successful clinch attack or opposed clinch roll, all crushing damage inflicted by the martial artist becomes lethal. The damage she inflicts continues to be lethal until the clinch is broken.

Out of combat, a Jade Mountain Style practitioner can use this Charm to afflict his social foes with bone-grinding handshakes, adding one success to a relevant roll, if appropriate.

SLIDING GLACIER GRIP

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2;

Type: Reflexive (Step 10)

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Boulder-Crushing Grasp

The Exalt shifts his position and changes his grasp with his opponent, making sure that she cannot escape their deadly embrace. When the martial artist’s player loses an opposed clinch roll (i.e., the two characters are already in a clinch), his opponent still cannot break the hold. Held by his unavoidable grip, the opponent must either crush him for damage or hold him peacefully.

PILLAR OF MARBLE STANCE

Cost: 1+m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive (Step 10)

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

By letting her Essence flow into the ground, the Exalt anchors herself. So strong is her connection to the earth beneath her, she cannot be moved. For one mote, she may ignore any single, non-magical effect that would incur knockdown, knockback or otherwise move her.

If a Charm or other magic inflicts such an effect, the martial artist must spend motes equal to the attacker’s Essence, and this Charm does not function if that attacker has a greater permanent Essence than the character.

FORTRESS OF ONE

Cost: 3m per 1L/1B; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2;

Type: Simple (-2 DV)

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Obvious, Stackable

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Pillar of Marble Stance

After stomping both feet firmly into the ground beneath him, the martial artist’s actions slow as his skin visibly hardens and takes on the aspect of stone. For every three motes spent, the Exalt adds one to both his bashing and lethal soak and ignores fatigue penalties for the rest of the scene. There is no limit on how many motes he may spend on a single activation of this Charm.

Martial artists practicing this technique, which is deliberately slow, suffer a -2 Dodge DV penalty without appropriate magic. This Charm ends immediately if the Exalt completely breaks contact with the earth or moves more than a yard from his original position. For this reason, Jade Mountain Style practitioners use Pillar of Marble Stance to resist knockback and other such effects.



JADE MOUNTAIN FORM

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 3; **Type:** Simple

Keywords: Form-type, Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Sliding Glacier Grip, Fortress of One

The earth around the master of Jade Mountain Style shivers, as she briefly falls to one knee and touches her head to the ground. Rising from the meditative position, she reveals the great strength and might of the mountain within her—this Charm adds almost a foot to her height and 100 pounds to her weight.

More stunning are the plates of stone that rip themselves from the earth around her. They lock into place around the martial artist's body, giving her an external musculature to use in battle. The transformation from Exalt to stone juggernaut adds an amount equal to her Essence to her Strength and Stamina. It also allows her to soak lethal with her full (and improved) Stamina and parry lethal attacks unarmed without a stunt.

Although it is powerful, the mountain is neither agile nor quick. Jade Mountain Form reduces an Exalt's Dexterity (and corresponding movement rate) by one dot.

Should the martial artist lose contact with the earth for more than one whole action, the Charm ends.

That is, a Jade Mountain practitioner can leap from the ground on her action, but as long as

she lands before or on her next action, she maintains the Charm. If someone grapples her and lifts her from the ground for five ticks, she must take control of the grapple in the next action and escape to the ground, or Jade Mountain Form ends.

PASIAP STILL STANDS

Cost: 1m per 2B or 1L; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

Type: Reflexive (Step 8)

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Jade Mountain Form

When struck by a weapon, the master of Jade Mountain Style can transfer the wound directly through his body into the ground beneath his feet. By tensing the muscles leading from the point of harm to his legs, and from his legs to his feet, supplemented by Essence, he channels the impact or cut from the blow into the earth. A white flash of Essence traces out the wound's path to the ground.

For every mote spent, the Exalt can redirect two dice of bashing damage or one of lethal, before the dice are rolled. He can reduce damage to zero dice if he spends enough Essence. If not, any damage left over affects him normally. Damage shunted to the ground inflicts one level of bashing or lethal (as appropriate) on the ground for each die

affected by the Charm. In fields or on stone floors, this has little effect beyond superficial damage as the stone cracks and soft earth tears and craters.

The damage can become significantly more



inconvenient for the martial artist if the floor breaks in locations such as a ledge, an iced-over lake or a wooden second story.

FALLING ROCKSLIDE ONSLAUGHT

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Pasiap Still Stands

Most Jade Mountain martial artists have considerable weight, but even the slight ones learn how to apply their mass with tremendous leverage. Just like the avalanche, the Exalt can trap her opponent beneath her weight and weary him until he succumbs.

This Charm supplements a clinch attack or an opposed clinch roll and doubles the Exalt's raw damage before soak. If the crushing inflicts more damage than the victim's (current) Stamina, the victim temporarily loses one point of Stamina. Victims reduced to zero Stamina by this Charm fall unconscious. Lost Stamina returns at a rate of one dot per scene.

NIGHT BREEZE STYLE

The Night Breeze Style is a lesser brother of the Air Dragon Style practiced by Immaculate monks (see **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**, pp. 197-201). It might also have drawn inspiration from the long-forgotten Ebon Shadow Style (see pp. 91-94). Practitioners of the Night Breeze Style focus on secrecy, subtlety and silence more than their Immaculate cousins do. Where the Immaculates channel the fury of the storm, Night Breeze Style practitioners emphasize air's invisibility and the silent manner in which it infiltrates the most secure room.

Exalted Dynasts value this style for its benefit in their politically minded (and occasionally assassination-minded) society. Night Breeze practitioners tend to keep their skills secret, as knowing that one's companion has the skills of an accomplished assassin can color one's perceptions of that individual. In some locations, such as Lookshy, this style is explicitly forbidden.

Air-aspected Dragon-Bloods do not pay a one-mote elemental surcharge when practicing this style.

Weapons and Armor: Night Breeze Charms treat all lightweight, thrown weapons such as chakrams, shuriken, knives, slings, kamas and sickles as form weapons, but throwing needles are most popular because they are so easy to hide. In addition, style Charms that are not, themselves, attacks (such as Leaf on the Breeze Rhythm) can be used while making any sort of attack. This style cannot be used while wearing armor.

Complementary Abilities: Anyone who wants to learn Night Breeze Style must already possess at least two dots in Thrown.

CROSSWIND OFFENSE

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The martial artist calls upon the winds to aid any thrown attack. By throwing a weapon at just the right angle into the breeze he creates, the Exalt causes the attack to spin back at his target obliquely, reducing the efficacy of shields and cover.

Each mote spent on this Charm eliminates one point of external penalty caused by cover or shields. The Exalt cannot spend more motes on this Charm than there are points of external penalties from those sources.

SHEPHERD THE LEAF

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Night Breeze Style practitioner understands how her opponent will react to her attacks. In this way, she guides her target directly into her next attack. Any flurry the Exalt supplements with this Charm doubles the onslaught penalty its target suffers, allowing her to set up victims for devastating final attacks.

LEAF ON THE BREEZE RHYTHM

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: (Martial Arts) actions

Prerequisite Charms: Crosswind Offense, Shepherd the Leaf

Students of the Night Breeze school have some measure of mastery over the art of concealment. This Charm allows the Exalt to spin and weave in combat like a wind-tossed leaf, moving so unpredictably as to escape his opponents' views.

For the Charm's duration, the Exalt can attempt to reestablish surprise (as described in **Exalted**, p. 156) even if there are no places to hide or aids to concealment. If the martial artist could normally reestablish surprise, he adds one die to all attempts.

NIGHT BREEZE FORM

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

Type: Simple (Speed 4)

Keywords: Form-type, Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Leaf on the Breeze Rhythm

Night Breeze Form is a light-footed method that helps a martial artist flow from here to there, seeming barely to touch the ground. More than that, a darkness settles around the martial artist, making it harder for her enemies to see her and easier for her to move securely.

From a distance on a bright day, the magical shadows around the Exalt—which extend outward for (Essence x 3) yards—make her easy to notice, if not to see directly. Up close or at night, it is only an advantage. The darkness combines with the form's quiet steps to add the Exalt's Martial Arts to all Stealth rolls. The zone of shadow counts as poor visibility, equal to a moonless night in clear terrain (see **Exalted**, p. 135).

KATABATIC LEAP DEFENSE

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

Type: Reflexive (Step 2)

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Until next action

Prerequisite Charms: Night Breeze Form

Just as the cold wind sweeps out from above the warmer, rising air, the master of Night Breeze Style flows beneath and away from oncoming ranged attacks. As part of a dodge, the Exalt leaps backward a distance of up to (Martial Arts) yards. By spending additional Essence, she can leap farther. Each additional mote adds a number of yards equal to her Martial Arts to her leap. She cannot leap farther than (her Essence x Martial Arts) yards. If this movement takes the martial artist out of her attacker's current range increment (not necessarily completely out of range), the attack automatically misses.

This Charm does not affect perfect attacks or ranged attacks that suffer no penalties for range.

THOUSAND-HAILSTONE MORNING

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

Type: Simple (Speed 5)

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Night Breeze Form

Taking up as many weapons as he can hold, the Exalt hurls all of them with a single motion. The storm of objects hurtles toward a single victim, who has an all-or-nothing chance to evade the attack. These objects may be anything, but most Night Breeze Stylists prefer to use their signature throwing needles, which are more accurate than random objects and easier to conceal in great numbers. (Yet, for this Charm only, the character can throw any small object, even if it isn't a proper weapon, as long as it weighs no more than a knife.)

The character can throw a number of objects equal to his Martial Arts, and his player applies a single attack roll to the entire collection. The victim may dodge them all as a single attack, but the hail of attacks is harder to parry. Apply onslaught penalties if the target elects to parry, subtracting one from her Parry DV for the second object, two for the third, and so on. Each weapon that hits inflicts its base damage only.

WIND NEEDLE TRAINING

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

Type: Simple (Speed 5)

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Instant



Prerequisite Charms: Katabatic Leap Defense, Thousand-Hailstone Morning

The Exalt lightly flicks his hand, and his weapon hurtles toward his foe. Just before it strikes, the weapon dissolves into a swirling vortex of air that insinuates itself into the joints and cracks of the target's armor. As it works its way toward the victim's tender flesh, it re-coalesces.

This Charm makes any thrown-weapon attack piercing. Thrown attacks made with weapons that already inflict piercing damage instead evade armor altogether. Night Breeze practitioners use this Charm almost exclusively to let their throwing needles evade Hardness.

ORGIASTIC FUGITIVE STYLE

Some supernatural martial arts demand ascetic discipline and meditative calm to refine and direct one's Essence. This is not one of them. Instead of being for staunch opponents of lust, gluttony, wrath and other important pastimes, this style is for those who indulge. Masters of this style use it to explore the depths of those most happy habits, wielding vices as weapons. The fugitive in the style's name is not running from a celebration that tempts him; he has just left one that successfully did.

Those who learn this style do so under the influence of a multitude of mind-altering substances and meditative sex. Because of the understanding a warrior must have for fermentations of the grape and grains, the refinements of various plants and how two or more human bodies can intertwine, and the way these things can affect the body, Wood-aspected Dragon-Blooded take naturally to this style. They do not pay a mote surcharge when using these Charms.

Weapons and Armor: Practitioners of this style fight equally well with hookahs, opium pipes, ale bottles, heavy glasses and their harmonious fists. Treat any weapon they use as clubs or sticks for the purposes of statistics, depending on their heft, as form weapons. Martial artists cannot wear armor with the Charms of this style.

CLARITY-OF-MIND MOMENT

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

Type: Reflexive (Step 1 or 2)

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Despite the tangle that rice wine and hashish can inflict upon his mind, the martial artist manages to correctly interpret the situation and react in an appropriate fashion. Whether his drunken fist needs to find a nose or his dilated pupils tell him when to duck, the character is not as hindered as his pleasantly induced state would normally make him. For one action, he may ignore all internal penalties deriving from drugs or sexual exhaustion. The penalties still count for any Charm that utilizes them (such as Saturnalia Memoriam Kick), but they do not detract from the character's dice pools.

SATURNALIA MEMORIAM KICK

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 1;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Having attended a pleasant party, there is joy in that memory, and there is strength in joy. Anyone who has tried to take a doll from a child or a bottle from an alley wino can attest to that. In the right mindset, a stiff drink or a good drug can bring those memories vividly to mind.

As long as the dissolute character takes a shot of hard liquor or hit of the various other drugs as the first action in a flurry (diceless, -1 DV), she may supplement any attacks in the flurry with this Charm. Doing so lends joy to her blows, adding to her raw damage her Martial Arts score plus the penalty associated with the drug she just took. (Marijuana inflicts a -2 penalty on a character who uses it, for instance. Therefore, using the first action in a flurry to suck down a lungful of marijuana smoke, adds a two-die bonus—plus dice equal to her Martial Arts—to the raw damage of the attacks in the flurry.) Students of this style haven't yet figured out how to perform this same technique using the joys of sex (maybe a coordinated attack of some sort...), but that hasn't stopped them from trying.

ORGIASTIC FUGITIVE FORM

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple

Keywords: Form-type

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Clarity-of-Mind Moment, Saturnalia Memoriam Kick

Dedicated revelers know how to pace themselves. They begin overindulging when they rise one morning and, careful to balance out the alcohol with the marijuana and qat and both of those with aerobic and/or marathon sex, can sometimes prevent the party from ending for at least a fortnight. Moderation is the key to successful overindulgence.

Reflexively, but no more than once per action, the character can use his overly drugged state to fuel his martial prowess, at the same time aiding in his effort to moderate his indulgences with other activities. For a scene after activating the Orgiastic Fugitive Form, he can reduce his total internal penalties from overindulgence by one and add one automatic success to any action or defense. The player chooses which of the character's many internal penalties he reduces by one.

Additionally, as long as the character suffers internal penalties from at least three separate indulgences, he can selectively reduce the penalty from any one of them to a minimum of -1 internal penalty. The penalties are still there (and can still be used by Charms that rely on those penalties), but they don't apply negatively to his actions.

Strictly speaking, the Orgiastic Fugitive Form applies only to combat actions. At the Storyteller's option, however,



players can use this Charm as justification for a stunt involving any action: giving a speech in the Deliberative, deciphering code, figuring out a First Age artifact... The character's fizzing brain makes intuitive leaps denied to the sober, or trailing euphoria from a fantastic party gives him the nerve and verve to take greater chances for better results.

DRUNKEN MONK LOSES HIS SASH

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

Type: Extra Action

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Orgiastic Fugitive Form

Personal boundaries shiver and fall after dedicated carousing, and it is not uncommon for a party's escapees to forget that others aren't quite as relaxed. Uninhibited touching is the order of the day until the recipients point out that it is unwelcome. And sometimes even then. Activating this Charm, the character may make two clinches simultaneously, rather than having to seize two victims on consecutive actions. Each suffers a -5 multiple-action penalty, but the character may reduce the penalty of each separately, to a minimum of -2, for each point of penalty she suffers due to indulgence.

TWO-FISTED MERRYMAKER

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

Type: Extra Action

Keywords: Combo-Basic

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Drunken Monk Loses His Sash

Some partygoers are so very enthusiastic. Each and every vice seems attractive and pleasing, and it is all they can do to focus on enjoying one at a time. Others train themselves to surpass that necessity, chewing hashish while sipping a single malt and inhaling the ambient smoke that leaks from the hookahs. The reveling community values the skill to savor each delight separately when taken together.

Activating this Charm gives the martial artist the ability to enjoy his combat the same way he enjoys his other vices—all at once. He may attempt a flurry of as many actions as he has points of internal penalty. The first suffers only a -1 penalty, the next -2, and so on. He does not suffer any penalties from overindulgence on these actions, which must either be attacks or attempts to indulge further in available vices.

I WASN'T THERE UNDERSTANDING

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2;

Type: Reflexive (Step 10)

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Orgiastic Fugitive Style

Despite the many influences slowing her thought, dulling her senses and scrambling the many, often urgent,

messages her arms and legs send to her brain, the reveler knows exactly where she is and what she's doing. Or so she insists.

The character's assailants, clear-headed and willing to let her walk into their blows, somehow miss her. Once they do, the weight and expectation they put behind the attack carries them forward and beyond her. On a successful dodge, the character may invoke this Charm to cause her attacker to take his full Move action past her (even if he has already moved this action). The character's simple explanation for this error in judgment is that she simply wasn't where her attacker thought she was. Clearly.

DRUNKEN MONK FINDS HIS SANDAL

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 2;

Type: Reflexive (Step 2)

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Drunken Monk Loses His Sash, I Wasn't There Understanding

Fate smiles on children and fools, and the fortunate reveler has aspects of both. The way he stumbles and bumbles around, evaluating walls as privies and pondering the hidden natures of everyday things, he should be a simple target. Unfortunately for his opponents, this uncoordinated nature protects him as he stops without warning or bends over to look at an interesting bug. Activating this Charm adds half the character's total penalties from indulgence to his Dodge DV against a single attack.

UNHEALTHY MIASMA STANCE

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

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Obvious, Poison

Duration: (Essence) actions

Prerequisite Charms: Two-Fisted Merrymaker, Drunken Monk Finds His Sandal

After years and years of marathon orgies, the character might find that she can make her friends dizzy, sick or even high just by standing near them. Whether that's an accomplishment or a disgrace, the skillful martial artist finds a way to use anything to her advantage. Using her intimate understanding of the substances involved, she guides her Essence in capturing, refining and expelling the drugs and fatigue poisons in her body into a cloud of strongly drugged and bluish air that hovers about her for several long, dizzying seconds. Assuming the Unhealthy Miasma Stance, the character purges her body of up to (Martial Arts) indulgence penalties, from indulgences of her player's choice. For the Charm's duration, anyone within two yards of her suffers these penalties instead. Each action a character takes within that influence, his player must make a (Stamina + Resistance) roll at a difficulty equal to the character's Essence, or he suffers them for the rest of the scene. Actions that require close, extended contact with the Exalt (such as clinches) increase this difficulty by one.

SEAFARING HERO STYLE

A few martial schools of the West teach this style. Students learn their enlightenment onboard ship. They seek the ability to roll with the ocean and react as fluidly as the water that buoys their ships. Seafaring Hero Style features rolling dodges, long flying kicks and entangling techniques. Since its genesis, the style has spread to Essence-channeling sailors throughout the seas of Creation. It is not difficult to find a practitioner among the Realm's navy, especially in the Water Fleet and in the V'neef-dominated merchant marine. Large non-imperial fleets, merchant or military, pay well for masters of this art. This style is a Water-aspected one.

Weapons and Armor: Seafaring Hero Style treats chain and rope weapons as form weapons. Practitioners may also use slashing swords or short swords or their artifact versions. Hitting someone with a rope would normally do nothing more than abrade and annoy him, but Seafaring Heroes can easily improvise weighted ropes or rope darts using marlinespikes, ballast stones and other shipboard paraphernalia. Fighters practicing this style may not wear anything heavier than light armor.

Complementary Abilities: Few martial artists learn this style who don't spend a lot of time on the ocean. As a result, many of them have at least a few dots in Sail, although this is not required. Those rare students of the art who learn this style on dry land practice it on an unbalanced two-wheeled cart that emulates the swaying of a ship at sea. The style's Charms may be used in any place, but they suffer a -1 internal penalty when practiced anywhere but aboard a ship at sea.

DOLDRUMS-INDUCED TEMPO

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

All sailors know the danger of getting caught in the doldrums. Experienced sailors fear pirates less than sitting on the sea with no wind, or brief puffs from random directions, because it mixes boredom with bad company and dwindling supplies. Eventually, men go mad from entrapment on the becalmed sea. The martial artist using this Charm has meditated upon that experience, and she knows how to use its madness as a weapon. Her steps are unexpected, and her blows come from surprising quarters, making it more difficult to defend against the character's attack. Her target suffers a -2 penalty to his DV against this attack (-1 if he has three or more dots in Sail). Should the attack connect, it throws the target off balance and degrades his ability to move in his own defense. He then suffers the same penalty against all attacks in that tick. The attacker may not take a Move action in the same tick she uses this Charm.

SEA SPIDER PLUNGE

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 1; **Type:** Simple

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Skipping above the black depths, nothing can drown the sea spiders of the Coral Archipelago. They dance on the waves and pierce that blue veil only to kill their prey. After a shipwreck, clever islanders watch the spiders, waiting for their strong mandibles to catch and drag up the dead. Having learned the first mysteries of the style, a student can drag foes from the ship that carries him with the same mastery. Activating this Charm, the character "dips" into a battle on decks from above. As a single action, the character sweeps downward on a rope and makes a clinch attack against one target. He completes the motion by swinging back up into the rigging, generally with his victim. This action has a -2 DV penalty and allows the character to exceed the normal movement limits of the Move action.

STUCK RUDDER INFLECTION

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 1;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: (Essence) actions

Prerequisite Charms: None

The rudder is half a ship's will, and it must be kept in good repair. Should it become warped or damaged, the crew loses control over how the ship moves. With some practice, students of this style learn how to inflict this same problem on others. The character supplements a clinch attack or an opposed grappling check with this Charm. If the attack succeeds, he must immediately release his opponent. For the duration of the Charm, the target can move in one only direction dictated by the martial artist. This direction must be absolute to the environment ("toward the aft, toward that door, that way"), not relative to the character ("away from me"). Targets may choose instead not to move at all.

SEAFARING HERO FORM

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple

Keywords: Form-type

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Doldrums-Induced Tempo, Sea Spider Plunge, Stuck Rudder Inflection

True Seafaring Heroes are greater than any mere storm or rolling deck. While on a ship, the martial artist ignores up to (Martial Arts) dice worth of penalty due to environmental factors. She also knows how to roll with attacks, much as a well-tended ship rolls over the waves of lesser storms. By voluntarily reducing her DV by one against a single attack, she can reduce the raw damage she suffers by three dice. She may not reduce her DV by an amount greater than her Essence.

FULL-STROKED RAMMING KICK

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Seafaring Hero Form

Just as the ship that uses the most slaves for its ramming scuttles the most enemy ships, the warrior who strikes with the greatest speed lays his enemies low. The character moves up to (Dexterity + 6) yards before this attack, at least half of which he spends flying through the air with his foot extended. When he connects, he adds a number of dice equal to his Martial Arts to his raw damage and one die to his minimum damage. If his opponent successfully dodges, the hero must spend his next tick moving the same distance past his target. Attacking in this manner by swinging from the rigging adds another die to damage and increases the difficulty to resist knockdown to 4.

WAVE-RIDING NAVY-BREAKER

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2;
Type: Simple (Speed 3)

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Stackable

Duration: Until next action

Prerequisite Charms: Seafaring Hero Form

Waves grow strong over time as the winds build them up. Over hundreds of leagues, they change from mere ripples to behemoths ready to tear ships to shreds. The most brilliant captains learn how to ride such waves, traveling incredibly quickly and getting the drop on their waterborne foes. The character emulates both the wave and the ship by building up her strength to unleash a massive blow on her target.

When the character invokes this Charm, her player rolls (Strength + Martial Arts). Each success adds one to the raw damage of the attack the martial artist makes on her next action. Perceptive opponents might notice her marshaling her inner strength and collecting herself for a blow. Instead of attacking, a martial artist may use this Charm again and accumulate even more raw damage. Each subsequent use of this Charm subtracts two dice from the (Strength + Martial Arts) pool, and the character may not use this Charm when it provides zero dice. If her next action is not an attack or invoking this Charm, the Seafaring Hero loses its benefit.

TERRIBLE SAIL-RENDING ASSAULT

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Crippling



Duration: (Martial Arts) actions

Prerequisite Charms: Seafaring Hero Form

In ship-to-ship combat, one of the most effective tactics is to target an opponent's sails, rendering her ship dead in the water until her crew can repair the damage. While inflicting damage on an enemy with a Martial Arts attack, the Exalt makes sure that he retains the maneuverability advantage. Each health level of damage inflicted with this Charm reduces a target's Move and Dash actions by two yards, to a minimum of zero. Characters with a Move action of zero yards suffer a -2 internal penalty to their Dodge DVs.

SAIL-FURLING INVULNERABILITY

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

Type: Reflexive (Step 2)

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Full-Stroke Ramming Kick, Wave-Riding Navy-Breaker, Terrible Sail-Rending Assault

Sailors know no fury worse than the wind of a storm, which can topple a ship or tear its mast straight off. The best proof against such danger is to drop all sails, reducing the wind's grip as much as possible. Martial artists apply the same technique to their defenses. Dropping her arms to her sides and presenting as small a target as possible, blue-black winds of Essence howl past and around the character, causing attacks against her to miss. This Charm supplies a perfect defense against dodgeable ranged attacks that are not enhanced by stunts or Charms, and it adds three to the character's Dodge DV in any case. The Charm also grants this Dodge DV bonus against Melee and Martial Arts attacks.

WHITE VEIL STYLE

There is no White Veil Society. It is not cunningly concealed among the apparently carefree Dragon-Blooded socialites of the Realm, its satrapies and Lookshy. No one would suggest that its members have a political agenda within and beyond the Scarlet Empire. Nor would anyone believe, should it be whispered, that the White Veil Society collects vast sums of money and favors in order to further the goals that it doesn't have. Moreover, an organization that does not exist certainly cannot have the influence or talent pool to develop its own subtle, social martial arts style.

White Veil Style does not combine common, everyday movements with potent manipulations of chakras and Essence lines in a devastating and nearly invisible manner. It isn't one of the White Veil Society's many sources of secret power. It never sees use at the recitals, dinners and orgies of the Dynasts. People do not die from it, occasionally silently and occasionally screaming, days or weeks after not encountering it.

Students who are not learning this elementally neutral style do not believe in secrecy and the universal

application of stealth. They do not train by walking on the unbroken eggshell of the dove, by holding complete conversational debates while making high-precision strikes or by meditating on the meaning of the poisons and diseases that they wield.

Weapons and Armor: If martial artists did practice White Veil Style, they would treat the hand-needle and the garrote (both described in the Appendix) as form weapons. If anyone practiced this style, he would wear no armor while doing so.

Complementary Abilities: A practitioner of the White Veil Style requires at least two dots in Socialize and another two dots in Larceny, Presence or Stealth. Most members of the White Veil Society find this a remarkably easy requirement.

BIRDSONG OVER BLADES

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: (Martial Arts) actions

Prerequisite Charms: None

Even the most lovely singing bird cannot be heard over the sound of practice blades and training armor ringing off each other in the practice yard. In part, this is because the bird is small and its song quiet. In part, it is because the warriors-to-be are just not listening. Attacks made while this Charm is active can directly pierce or touch the Essence in the target's chakras, enabling the attack to have adverse effects even while they inflict no damage. For the duration of Birdsong Over Blades, the character may choose to inflict no actual health levels of damage with any of his individual Martial Arts attacks—but the target can still suffer wound penalties and supernatural effects, including poisons, contamination and the powers available through certain Charms. Some effects use the number of health levels lost to determine their extent, and for such purposes, the damage done is zero. Targets of attacks made to cause no damage do not know that they have been affected by other effects.

ALEHOUSE MEMORY STANCE

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: (Martial Arts) actions

Prerequisite Charms: None

Appearing relaxed and comfortable, the character gives every indication that she wants nothing more than to sit back with her companions and shoot the breeze. She makes those around her comfortable and unsuspecting in return. Should the character suddenly make an attack in the midst of the festivities, she does not suffer the +2 difficulty to make her attack unexpected. This Charm has no effect once hostilities have been recognized.



OWL CLUTCHES AT THE NIGHT

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2;

Type: Reflexive (Step 4)

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Birdsong Over Blades, Alehouse Memory Stance

When the silent-winged owl dives into the field and rises from the attack with claws empty, it becomes invisible in the darkness of night as if it had never appeared. Similarly, a character with this Charm may retract his claws as if he never bared them. Owl Clutches at the Night replaces reroll Charms and cannot be used in concert with one. The martial artist may invoke it after seeing the quality of his attack in Step 3 of attack resolution but before comparing it to his target's DVs. His player rolls (Wits + Martial Arts) at a difficulty of (target's Perception + 1). If successful, attack resolution ends immediately. It is as if he never attacked, though observers with a Perception greater than the number of successes rolled know he tried something... odd.

WHITE VEIL FORM

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

Keywords: Form-type

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Owl Clutches at the Night

Assuming this form is a matter of looking completely at ease. When using this form, there is nothing wrong,

nothing hidden, and the character can hold up her end of a conversation even in battle. Such an unconcerned mien disconcerts foes in battle, taking one die from their dice pools when they try to attack her. The martial artist may also add a number of dice equal to her Essence to her Stealth attempts to reestablish surprise by sacrificing an equal number of dice from any attacks that benefit from that surprise. Bystanders hesitate when they see or hear the disparity between the victim, fighting for his life, and the character, whose speech and posture indicate a friendly altercation or test bout. Any attempts to Join Battle in response to seeing the fight suffer a -1 external penalty unless the individual witness has also mastered White Veil Form.

BLINDED BY LAUGHTER

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: White Veil Form

In the best situations, a master of this Charm can eliminate the danger of retaliation—or even awareness. This Charm supplements an unexpected attack. As long as the character's relevant Stealth attempts for an unexpected attack (see *Exalted*, p. 155) successfully prevent anyone from making Join Battle rolls and his attack inflicts no damage (or otherwise does not capture the target's attention), no one is aware of it, even after the fact.

THE DRAGON DIES IN BED

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-OK, Poison

Duration: (Essence) actions

Prerequisite Charms: White Veil Form

For some, a quiet, unassuming death is a kindness. For others, it's a shame. Either way, this Charm gives them the chance to experience it. The character focuses Essence on the tip of her finger or in her concealed needle. She twists the Essence into a supernatural taint and lets it guide her subtle touch to the perfect place for unnoticed injection. This taint affects whomever the character successfully attacks next, as long as she does so before the Charm ends.

The Dragon Dies in Bed creates a poison with the following traits: Damage (Essence x 4)/minute, Toxicity (Essence)L, Tolerance -/-, Penalty -0. As a supernatural poison, it has a few additional qualities. It does not take effect immediately, and the player of someone subjected to it makes no immediate Resistance roll. Instead, it settles into the target's body and waits an unknown period of time (at least one week, no more than three) before it begins to tear the victim apart from the inside. Until then, it is undetectable without supernatural means. It also never begins to kill until the victim is asleep in bed. Most never feel it, and never wake up.

Characters using this Charm can influence the poison's timing and deadliness. A (Wits + Medicine) roll, difficulty 2, allows the character to choose exactly when (from one to three weeks) the poison activates. Alternatively, a similar roll makes sure that it will not kill. Instead, the poison becomes dormant once the victim suffers his first wound in the Incapacitated level. It then kicks back in any time that health level heals, trying to keep the victim unconscious. The White Veil Stylist can inflict both these effects with a difficulty 3 roll.

THE DRAGON DIES SCREAMING

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-OK, Sickness

Duration: (Essence) actions

Prerequisite Charms: White Veil Form

This Charm resembles The Dragon Dies in Bed, except it imbues the victim with a Sickness effect rather than poisoning him. If the martial artist can strike his target within the time limit, he infects her with a Second Circle spiritual disease (see p. 154 in the Appendix) with these traits:

Virulence: (attacker's Essence)

Incubation Period: (target's Essence) days

Diagnosis: 3 **Difficulty to Treat (Mundane/Magical):** 3/1

Morbidity: 5 **Treated Morbidity:** 3

During the incubation period, the victim feels just a little bit off, maybe the result of a poor night's rest or a bit of bad food (or the epic equivalent for an Exalt). She suffers a -1 penalty to all actions. Once that period ends, the victim's condition worsens rapidly, so the victim's player must roll

(Stamina + Resistance) for every hour the disease is active. On a failure, the victim suffers one level of unsoakable bashing damage and a penalty of -3 on all actions. (The morbidity roll is not an action.) The target of this sickness must succeed at three consecutive checks before she defeats it entirely. Exalted always use the Treated Morbidity difficulty. Dying of this illness is extraordinarily painful.

Characters who use this Charm or The Dragon Dies in Bed often taint their needle with mundane delayed-action poisons to soften the target before the final blow.

THE DRAGON SUCCUMBS

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-OK, Crippling

Duration: (Essence) actions

Prerequisite Charms: Blinded by Laughter, The Dragon Dies in Bed, The Dragon Dies Screaming

This Charm functions somewhat like the two previous Charms: The martial artist sets the deadly Essence on her finger or needle, then must use it within the next few actions for it to take effect. When she hits someone with this attack, the Essence she injects into her target's body and the chakras she triggers force his body to ignore any poisons and diseases that are currently in his system. The body ceases to consider them threats, so it cannot react to them strongly, instead letting them run their course almost unhindered.

To be sure that this Charm works, the character's player makes a (Dexterity + Martial Arts) roll at a difficulty of her target's Stamina. If she succeeds, the target's player subtracts an amount equal to the attacker's Essence from any rolls to withstand any poisons or diseases currently residing in the target's body. Obviously, a practitioner of this style will use this Charm after introducing other poisons and contaminants into the victim's body.

PAN-ELEMENTAL STYLES

Each of these three styles attempts, in some way, to encompass all five of Creation's elements. This makes them unusually complicated as Terrestrial styles go, with a greater number of Charms. Perhaps it's no coincidence that each style is unusual in other ways, as well.

CRIMSON PENTACLE BLADE STYLE

The Crimson Pentacle Blade Style relies on the efficiency, power and versatility of formation fighting. The style remains effective in single combat, but it focuses on the choreography of multiple combatants (preferably sworn brotherhoods) to achieve ultimate victory. The diva-practitioners of this style are called "speardancers," and for all their vanity and narcissism, their art is as exotic and alluring as it is deadly.

No one knows anymore who invented the Crimson Pentacle Blade Style. It certainly dates back at least to the Shogunate period. The style is particularly well known in the southern Realm, though schools can be found anywhere





in the Threshold. The details of a speardancer's costume (or lack of it) reliably show what dojo taught her the art. Speardancers of every school dress and accouter themselves to show off their lithe, powerful bodies.

Crimson Pentacle Blade Style lacks an elemental aspect. Any Terrestrial Exalt can practice it, with no elemental surcharge. On the other hand, most of the style's Charms require weapons or shields to use.

Weapons and Armor: This flashy, flamboyant martial art combines the speed and reach of polearms with the defensive capabilities of shields. The variety of form weapons ranges from simple staves to artifact polearms such as dire lances or daikalbars (see p. 159). Speardancers wear no armor. They rely on their grace, their weapons, their shields and their Charms to defend them from harm.

Complementary Abilities: Because of this style's strong emphasis on weapons and shields, practitioners must possess at least two dots in Melee. Crimson Pentacle Blade fighters often learn Melee Charms.

GRACEFUL TORTOISE TECHNIQUE

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 1; **Type:** Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

Rather than armor or even thick clothing, speardancers rely on their shields to deflect arrows or turn aside weapon strikes. Using this Charm, the speardancer incorporates his shield effortlessly into his deadly blade dance—even a shield that would otherwise be too large

FIVE DIRECTION POSTURES

Each of the five fundamental postures that make up this style is associated with one of the five directions. Although each practitioner learns every posture, the martial artist must choose a primary direction upon learning the Crimson Pentacle Blade Form Charm. Aspects of that posture flavor her approach to her martial art from that point forward. The dominant schools also choose adornment to show a practitioner's favored direction. One school's practitioners might wear a colored sash to indicate their favored direction; another school might ordain an elaborate hairstyle, body paint and clothing for each direction's specialists.

When a character uses the style's Form-type Charm, she gains certain posture bonuses to use as specialties. These bonuses do not hinder the character's ability to develop other specialties (such as specialties in her preferred weapon type), but posture specialties and others the character possesses cannot add a total bonus greater than +3 to a single roll. The maximum posture bonus cannot exceed the normal (Attribute + Ability) limit by which a character raises a dice pool.

Furthermore, while Crimson Pentacle martial artists prefer certain weapons based on their direction posture of choice, they can perform the fighting maneuvers of this style with any sort of polearm.

EASTERN TRUE SPEAR POSTURE

Martial artists who favor this posture make excellent formation captains and designers of protocols. They prefer the spear, and their players receive a +1 bonus to all Martial Arts rolls when these Exalts perform in a formation protocol (per the Charm of that name).

NORTHERN ICE BLOSSOM POSTURE

Northern Ice Blossoms are formidable assassins and duelists. Their minimalist approach to speardancing expresses itself through devastating sweeps with their weapons. Those who use this posture prefer the poleaxe or similar polearms and receive a +1 bonus to their Martial Arts pools in a duel or one-on-one fight.

WESTERN SHIELD POSTURE

The martial artist of the Western Shield Posture uses a shield and a range of fluid erratic maneuvers to make himself almost impossible to hit. Western sages favor large studded war clubs and sledges, and they gain a +1 bonus to DV when using their large, ornately decorated shields.

SOUTHERN SCYTHE POSTURE

Martial artists who favor this posture have a reputation (deserved or not) for being loud, jovial and acrobatic. They prefer scythes or other similar polearms, and they receive a +1 bonus whenever their characters use their martial skills as part of a (Charisma + Martial Arts) roll to intimidate their foes or inspire their allies on the battlefield.

CENTRAL NOBLE HONOR BLADE POSTURE

Noble Blades favor straight double-edged polearms and lances, and they adhere to an unassailable code of conduct. They receive a +1 bonus to DV when they stand alone and engage multiple opponents on at least two sides.

or cumbersome to use. After activating the Charm, the martial artist does not suffer any mobility penalty for using his shield for one scene. He may use a long spear or poleaxe one-handed as long as he uses a buckler or target shield on his other arm.

SPEARDANCER CONCENTRATION

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

ype: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Graceful Tortoise Technique

While using this Charm, the martial artist's familiarity with the extra reach her weapon provides allows her to strike first in hand-to-hand combat. Upon activating this Charm, the martial artist adds a number of extra successes equal to her Essence to the result of her Join Battle roll. When characters attack each other on the same tick, a speardancer who uses this Charm resolves her attack first. (If her opponent also uses a Charm that lets him act first, the characters remain tied.)

CRIMSON PENTACLE BLADE FORM

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

Type: Simple (Speed 3)

Keywords: Form-type

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Speardancer Concentration

To master this Form-type Charm, the martial artist has trained his muscles to supple perfection, and he can easily perform graceful leaps and impressive acrobatic feats on any sort of terrain—from a muddy battlefield to a rocking ship's deck to the desert's scorching sand. The martial artist can also deliver great, sweeping attacks with unerring precision while doing so. When this Charm is activated, the martial artist's player may add the Exalt's Essence score to all Martial Arts rolls for the rest of the scene. Also, add the martial artist's Essence score to her Athletics Ability for purposes of determining how easily she keeps her balance in a situation of unstable footing. That is, add (Athletics + Essence) and compare that value to the situation's instability rating. Should the instability rating of the situation exceed that value, the player must still make a (Dexterity + Athletics) roll for the character to maintain her balance. (See "Unstable Footing" on p. 155 of *Exalted*.) The player does not add the character's Essence to that pool as extra dice: She adds the character's Essence to the result of the roll as extra successes.

Finally, when a character using this Charm acts as a group's commander in order to coordinate the group's attack against an opponent, the character gains a number of extra successes equal to her Essence on the required (Charisma + War) roll. (See "Coordinating Attacks" on p. 144 of *Exalted*.)

EASTERN ROOT PROTOCOL

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

Type: Reflexive (Step 2)

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Crimson Pentacle Blade Form

The first thing one learns in the Eastern posture is how to move together in a group and use a shield effectively to protect the whole formation. With this Charm, a troupe or sworn brotherhood of speardancers bands together to protect one another with each other's shields, moving them in an intertwining pattern choreographed to cover one another and keep the shields out of each other's way. At least two martial artists must be in the formation to gain the benefit of this Charm. Each participant gains a flat +1 bonus to her DV against ranged and close-combat attacks, no matter how many participants use the Charm.

The movements of this formation are such that the moving shields can protect one person without a shield for every shield-bearing individual in the formation (meaning only half the formation need carry shields in order to protect the entire formation). No one who does not know the Eastern Root Protocol may benefit from this formation, however, and all members of the formation must stay within the space permitted by the Five Directions Formation Protocol. Should even one move too far away, the effect of the Charm ends.

FIVE DIRECTIONS FORMATION PROTOCOL

Cost: Varies; **Mins:** Varies; **Type:** Varies

Keywords: Obvious

Duration: Varies

Prerequisite Charms: Eastern Root Protocol

The five fundamental beams that make up the Crimson Pentacle work together to complete the whole. If one beam is out of place or absent, the pentacle cannot exist. Such is the underlying theme of the protocols that speardancers practice as they study the Crimson Pentacle Blade Style. A single speardancer is fearsome, but when a troupe of like-trained dancers works together, it can accomplish what no dancer alone could do. Working together, usually under the leadership of a martial artist who has adopted the Eastern True Spear Posture, speardancers create specialized offensive and defensive routines known as protocols. The Five Directions Formation Protocol is the catchall "Charm" that allows speardancers to create and participate in these routines.

Protocols are not proper Charms themselves, but rather Combos assembled by a troupe of speardancers and shared equally among its members. That is, a protocol takes individual Charms from separate characters and forges those Charms into a single Combo that each member of the troupe who contributed a Charm can use when the entire troupe works together. Like regular Combos, protocols must be named and have a signature appearance that distinguishes them to those who have seen them before. Protocols for a



troupe are assembled just as normal Combos are for a single character. (The rules for doing so appear on pp. 244-245 of *Exalted*.) Since the component Charms come from separate characters, though, certain costs must be divided when the protocol is both designed and used.

The total experience point cost for developing a protocol is the same as it would be for a single character developing a Combo, namely the sum of the minimum Ability values of the component Charms. The time and the arduous training it takes to develop the protocol is the same for the team as it would be for a single Exalt developing the Charms into a Combo. When the team develops the protocol, each member pays a number of experience points equal to the minimum Ability value of the Charm(s) she contributed to the protocol. (If the players design a protocol that they want their characters to share at character creation, each player need spend only one bonus point per Charm her character contributed to the protocol.) These development costs cannot be bartered or split up any other way among the characters.

When the protocol is activated, the costs are divided more evenly among the troupe members. First of all, every member must spend a single point of Willpower in order to use the protocol. This Willpower cost is above and beyond any other cost associated with the protocol's component Charms. As with a regular Combo, the cost to activate a protocol is equal to the total cost of every component Charm, payable in full up front. The total Essence cost for

using a protocol is divided as evenly as possible between all members of the troupe, regardless of how much any single component Charm costs to activate. The character with the highest Essence score pays the remainder motes. (If two characters' scores are tied, use the character with the highest [Dexterity + Martial Arts] total.) If one or more of the component Charms has a variable Essence cost, calculate the required total using the minimum possible Essence cost of the variable-cost Charm. The character who contributed that Charm to the protocol may then pay extra motes of Essence to increase that Charm's effects. (This increased effect applies to every member of the troupe, though, not just the contributing character.) This division of motes is only a guideline, however. If the players want to divide the Essence cost up differently based on their current circumstances, they can do so.

If one of the component Charms in the protocol requires an activation roll of some variety, the player of the character who contributed the Charm makes the appropriate roll. This roll enjoys a one-die bonus for every person performing the protocol, including the character whose player is making the roll.

Every Exalt in the formation must know the Five Directions Formation Protocol Charm in order to be able to contribute to or participate in the protocol. Every member in the formation must also add at least one Charm to the protocol. No single character in the formation needs to know all of the component Charms, though. Nor must every



character who is part of a speardancer troupe contribute to the development of a new protocol. Only those speardancers who contribute may participate in that protocol, however. The protocol cannot include Form-type Charms, and no more than one Form-type Charm can be used by all the participants for the protocol's duration. (Since participants most likely all use the Crimson Pentacle Blade Form, this restriction seldom becomes onerous.)

Speardancers who wish to activate and participate in a protocol must be within the same 10-yard-radius area when the protocol is activated. Every member of the formation must be present as well, and they must all be conscious, mobile and able to take reflexive actions.

For the formation to act together, every member's player rolls Join Battle normally. Even if the protocol isn't used at the start of a fight, this roll is needed to see how quickly the characters can join and activate the Combo. The speardancers must all wait until the last character is ready before they simultaneously take their actions and gain the benefits of the Combo. (This placement on the reaction count can change if a Charm that boosts movement speed is part of the protocol.)

One member, usually the leader, then attempts to activate the protocol as a reflexive action immediately after the Join Battle roll. When this character does so, the rest of the formation's members instantly recognize his intent and must reflexively decide whether to participate. Speardancers who must wait for slower teammates to "catch up" are considered to be taking a Guard action until everyone is ready to begin the Combo. Only if all members of the protocol decide to participate does the protocol actually activate. Otherwise, the protocol does not engage, and the characters are free to act as they wish individually. If all troupe members do agree and they can pay the activation cost, each participating member enjoys for one action the use of the protocol Combo created from their disparate Charms.

Characters participating in a protocol need not apply their actions to the same target, but they are not prevented from doing so. Should the characters choose to attack the same target and use a custom protocol to do so, their attacks are not inherently considered to be coordinated.

Only Exalts of the same type may combine their Charms into protocols using Five Directions Formation Protocol. Terrestrials can blend their Charms with other Terrestrials to form protocols, Solars can blend Charms with other Solars, and so on. What's more, Exalts who are not Terrestrials must pay double the experience costs to develop these protocol Combos. Eclipse Castes and Moonshadow Castes can violate these rules, but only if they spent the extra time (and experience points) to learn all the Charms in the Crimson Pentacle Blade Style, and any other Charms they place in a Combo as if they were the same kind of Exalt as their partners in the protocol. For instance, if a Quicksilver Falcon learned this style's Charms as a Terrestrial Exalt, he could participate in protocols with Dragon-Blooded characters.

He could not form protocols with Lunars, Sidereals or even other Solar characters—because as far as other speardancers are concerned, he is a Terrestrial Exalt.

NORTHERN LOTUS PETAL

DISCERNMENT MEDITATION

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Crimson Pentacle Blade Form

A speardancer who adopts the Northern posture is as beautiful and graceful in moments of stillness as her Southern compatriots are in thrashing revel. With a cold, reptilian economy of energy, the Northern-posture speardancer cuts through the wasteful excess of her enemy's defenses. When the Exalt invokes this Charm, her target suffers a DV penalty equal to the martial artist's Essence against the martial artist's attack. Other attacks that happen to occur on that same tick are unaffected.

SPRINTING STAG DEFENSE

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

Type: Reflexive (Step 2)

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Northern Lotus Petal Discernment Meditation

As a stag's leaping grace and power keeps the majestic animal safe from the wolves, the martial artist's acrobatic skills aid in his defense. For every action in which he keeps moving in an acrobatic fashion—bounding over obstacles, tumbling past opponents, using his spear haft to vault, and so on—his player may make a reflexive (Dexterity + Martial Arts) roll. Successes on this roll add to the character's DV for that action. Truly impressive acrobatic feats can accrue stunt bonuses as normal, but those bonuses do not apply to the aforementioned reflexive (Dexterity + Martial Arts) roll. If the character is using the Crimson Pentacle Blade Form Charm while using this Charm, however, the form's Martial Arts bonus does apply to that aforementioned roll.

WESTERN SHIELD CRUSH COUNTERATTACK

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

Type: Reflexive (Step 9)

Keywords: Combo-OK, Counterattack

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Crimson Pentacle Blade Form

If the martial artist's opponent makes an unsuccessful attack, the martial artist makes a reflexive counterattack with her shield, knocking her foe to the ground. The speardancer's player rolls her character's (Dexterity + Martial Arts) reflexively. The martial artist's target can defend against this action normally, but he cannot use a counterattack of his own against this counterattack. If the martial artist's roll succeeds, her target



crashes to the dirt and must fight prone (suffering a -2 internal penalty) until he takes an action to get back to his feet. If the speardancer scores more successes than her target's (Strength + Essence) total, the target is knocked flat and winded and prone. The target suffers a -2 internal penalty for fighting prone and another -2 internal penalty for being stunned. Even worse, the target's player must make a reflexive (Wits + weapon-related Ability) roll and score as many successes as the martial artist has dots of Essence. If this roll fails, the character is disarmed (and winded and prone).

Make the reflexive roll before applying the penalties. The martial artist may attempt as many Western Shield Crush Counterattacks from one action to the next as she can afford to pay for, one counterattack per attack upon her. As usual, however, a character cannot use this Charm in response to any counterattack Charm.

BLESSING OF JEWEL VAMBRACES AND MANTLE

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Western Shield Crush Counterattack

With this Charm, the Exalt centers himself and concentrates, willing shining Essence to surround his arms, shoulders and upper back. When this Essence settles on the martial artist's body, it materializes and takes on the Charm's eponymous appearance, appropriate to the Exalt's elemental aspect. For example, a Fire-aspected martial artist might adorn himself with rubies and garnets held together in a latticework of shining obsidian, while a Water-aspect speardancer might create a covering of seashells and pearls. Regardless, the Exalt who invokes this Charm adds his Essence to his bashing and lethal soaks for the scene. The effect of this Charm is not armor per se, more like a form of natural soak, so it doesn't conflict with the armor prohibition for this style.

GLORIOUS SOUTHERN HARBINGER OF WAR AND FURY

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 3;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Emotion, Obvious, Social, Stackable

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Crimson Pentacle Blade Form

As the martial artist adopts the Southern posture, she uses her vigorous, dramatic sweeps and slashes in a ritualized kata that stokes the fires of bravery in others' hearts. As the Exalt invokes this Charm, a banner of pure Essence erupts from the head of her weapon. The banner's edge glitters with precious gems and tapers away in a six-foot-long pendant. High Realm kanji encouraging fearlessness and honor scintillate along its length, and tassels of fiery Essence line the banner's inner curve. Once invoked, this pendant lasts for the entire scene or until the Exalt who invoked it wishes otherwise.

The display uses the character's (Charisma + Martial Arts) at difficulty 1, plus one more for every three targets she wishes to affect. Bonuses from the Crimson Pentacle Blade Form Charm and from being a student of the Southern Scythe Posture apply to this roll as normal. If the roll succeeds, the Exalt stirs the crowd into a battle fury, and all those so inspired are gifted with a temporary +1 boost to Valor for the scene. This Charm is also stackable, but only if it is invoked by separate speardancers in the same scene. The vision of an entire troupe of speardancers performing an intertwining kata, each waving their banners in unison, could tempt even the most fearful, beaten-down rabble to take up arms and go to war for a cause they now consider righteous.

FURIOUS BATTLE SCYTHE

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

Keywords: Obvious

Duration: Until next action

Prerequisite Charms: Glorious Southern Harbinger of War and Fury

When a martial artist has invoked the prerequisite Charm, he may choose to invoke the Furious Battle Scythe as well. The flashing pendant created by the Glorious Southern Harbinger of War and Fury Charm crystallizes into the fearsome blade of a magnificent scythe. Using this Charm while wielding a polearm grants +1 to Accuracy, +5 to Damage and +1 to Rate, and it imposes a Parry DV penalty of -1. Characters cannot activate this Charm unless they have already activated the prerequisite Charm in the same scene.

RETRIBUTION OF HONORABLE

GUARDIANSHIP ATTITUDE

Cost: 3m, 1wp + 1m per attack; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3; **Type:** Extra Action

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Crimson Pentacle Blade Form

When one is committed to a battle, there is no greater dishonor than to retreat before the outcome is decided. Even if all of her soldiers desert her and all of her comrades have been killed, a speardancer must not flee. Fortunately, a speardancer can hold a bridge or gate almost indefinitely with this Charm and also prevent anyone from escaping combat once they've engaged with her. The character spends Essence, and her player makes a reflexive (Dexterity + Martial Arts) roll for the Exalt to attack anyone who tries to flank or otherwise get around her. (She can reach anyone making such an attempt within a maximum distance equal to her Essence in yards.) She may also make such an attack if her opponent attempts to flee her presence once she has entered into hand-to-hand combat.

CALL-TO-THE-BLADE-OF-RIGHTEOUSNESS MANTRA

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Stackable

Duration: One day

Prerequisite Charms: Retribution of Honorable Guardianship Attitude

With this Charm, the Exalt fortifies his weapon toward some noble purpose. He spends a short, quiet period alone, ritually cleaning and sharpening his weapon, then he speaks aloud the task to which his weapon shall be used victoriously. (This task must be a specific one, such as, “Today, you and I shall finally destroy the Lunar Anathema whose barbarian horde razed our village.”)

For the next day, the martial artist may add his permanent Essence to the Damage of his weapon when he uses it in pursuit of his task. He can even stack as many tasks on a single weapon as he has Essence dots. The maximum Damage bonus awarded by this Charm to a single strike cannot exceed the character's Essence, however.

CENTRAL PILLAR ATTACK PATTERN MASTERY

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Extra Action

Keywords: Combo-Basic

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Eastern Root Protocol, Sprinting Stag Defense, Blessing of Jeweled Vambraces and Mantle, Call-to-the-Blade-of-Righteousness Mantra

With utmost mastery of her art, the speardancer becomes a living storm of death. His fluid, acrobatic style lets him position himself to maximize his weapon's usefulness against multiple foes. When he activates this Charm, the Exalt perceives a graceful, sweeping path that effortlessly connects a number of opponents equal to his permanent Essence. It is but a heartbeat's worth of effort to trace his weapon through this connection, striking every foe in one long stroke. The character's player makes a single (Dexterity + Martial Arts) roll—including appropriate bonuses from this style's Form-type Charm—for her to hit all targets at a -1 internal penalty for each target after the first (to a maximum of -3). Targets apply their DVs individually as normal. The martial artist counts the extra successes from his attack twice when adding them to his raw damage total, and he rolls damage separately against each target (based on how well their DVs defended them).

This Charm provides no special defense against or protection from coordinated attacks performed by multiple opponents. The Essence for this Charm must be spent before making the attack roll.

EVEN BLADE STYLE

The famous and popular Even Blade Style is known not just for its practitioners' subtlety, speed and awareness, but for the story of its founders. The Masters Azure Crane, Zu

Rat Te and Master Lord Chaowin Registrophe (self-styled First of Heaven's Chosen) are three of the most sought-after teachers in Creation. Young hopefuls travel hundreds of miles for the chance to study in one of their dojos. All three learned from the same sifu and once formed a sworn brotherhood that performed deeds of legend—but they split up almost 200 years ago and established separate dojos.

Rumor in the Martial Arts World says the masters now hate each other because they could not reconcile their differences about the style they designed together. (Spiteful former peers say they fell out in a three-way lover's tiff.) Each master certainly argued for one particular ending to the Even Blade Style. Their passion, skill and inability to agree resulted in something so rare that most masters thought it impossible: Each of them created their own, specific style, that yet began in the same way as the others'.

The three teachers' dissension also had wider ramifications than they realized, which was revealed when Resolute Brigada, a student of Azure Crane's, abandoned her teacher to study with Zu Rat Te. Brigada discovered, to her horror, that this gained her not Zu Rat Te's Even Blade variant, but an entirely new, fourth version of the style. Brigada did not set up her own school because she thought she had failed to follow Zu Rat Te's ideal path. To this day, she tells most would-be students that they should follow Zu Rat Te's teaching instead.

Despite their stylistic differences, all three masters (and their disciples who set up dojos of their own) use similar training methods. Students learn basic kicks, blocks, strikes and thrusts in the classroom as well as 20 elaborate katas using wooden practice blades. All three masters also enjoy assigning tasks that initially seem useless, arbitrary and impossible. Master Azure Crane insists that her best students be able to catch a buzzing fly between two toothpicks. Master Lord Chaowin Registrophe, First of Heaven's Chosen, sometimes starves his apprentices for days on end. The followers of Master Zu Rat Te commiserate about being asked to pull a specific straw from a bale of hay in one swift strike, without warning or preparation.

All three teachers also place a particular emphasis on ritualistic, meditative upkeep of one's sword. The blade, they constantly repeat, must be treated with loyalty and faith, respected as a close partner and loved as a friend. Since the style focuses so much on sword usage, some dojos also work hard on Melee Charms and encourage students to use them in Combos with the traditional Even Blade Charms. In those places, an apprentice is lauded more for coming up with an interesting and flexible new Combo than for actually mastering the style itself.

Even Blade Style is elementally neutral. It focuses on the blade, not any particular element.

Weapons and Armor: The Even Blade Style favors slashing swords. Indeed, sifus generally demand that their followers use one and will judge an unknown stylist by the quality of her blade. Master Azure Crane, in particular, does not even teach how to use the style with other weapons



or barehanded (though her assistants surreptitiously make sure her students know how anyway).

Characters may use this style while wearing armor, but only up to medium weight.

Complementary Abilities: Even Blade dojos teach conventional swordsmanship as well as the style's special techniques. To learn this martial art, a character must possess at least two dots in Melee.

DEATH BETWEEN HEARTBEATS

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 2, Essence 1;

Type: Reflexive (Step 1)

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Briefly standing very still, the martial artist tilts her head. Then, with a shout, she strikes suddenly, surprising her enemies. This Charm may be used when a character performs an attack action (but not a flurry) on a tick in which others also take actions: Her attack goes before any other actions on that tick. Her target uses the lower of his DVs from before his action or from after his action to defend against her, and the martial artist herself uses the higher of her DVs from before her action or after her action against all attacks on that tick.

If other characters use similar Charms to make their actions go first, then everyone involved acts simultaneously, as discussed on page 141 of **Exalted**.

BREATH AND ESSENCE CONTROL

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Death Between Heartbeats

Drawing breath carefully, constantly wary, the martial artist is always ready for battle. This Charm supplements a Join Battle action. Instead of his player rolling Join Battle, the character may spend three motes simply to have a number of successes on the roll equal to his Martial Arts. A character who fights barehanded may always use Breath and Essence Control normally, but if he uses a sword, then the martial artist may invoke this Charm only while it is sheathed. When he does the latter, the Charm allows him to ready his weapon as a reflexive action instead of a miscellaneous action.

CLOSE YOUR EYES AND LOOK

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2;

Type: Reflexive (Step 1)

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Breath and Essence Control

Concentrating hard, the martial artist blinks slowly, then whirls into action. A character can use the Charm as part of a normal attack, or reflexively to abort an already-begun Aim action. The martial artist focuses, spots a weakness and

attacks. If her target suffers penalties to his DV—whether onslaught, mobility or anything else—then those penalties double when the target defends against the martial artist.

Additionally, for the briefest moment, the character sees phantom trails of Essence hanging in the air around her foe and may trace their sources. The martial artist's player may ask the Storyteller a single effect-related question about her foe—regarding his Charms, enchanted weaponry, divine blessings, general defensive skill and so on—to which the Storyteller must supply an honest, if vague, response. Questions such as, “Is he using any soak Charms?”, “Why are those arrows glowing?” and “Is it even possible for me to hit this guy?” are appropriate. Inappropriate queries involve specific numbers, odds calculation or relative values.

Close Your Eyes and Look may be used only once per action.

EVEN BLADE FORM

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

Keywords: Form-type

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Close Your Eyes and Look

With a narrow glance left, right, then straight ahead, the martial artist extends his blade before him and watches a gleam chase down its edge. His mind calms, and his eyes darken; he is beyond distraction and imprecision.

For the rest of the scene, the character cannot be perturbed or confused by anything that would distract him at a crucial moment or disrupt his battle focus, even if it is a magical effect specifically designed for that purpose. Furthermore, due to the martial artist's lightning-swift cuts and supernatural exactitude, his DV refreshes one tick earlier than it should based on his action's Speed. (The effect excludes counterattacks.) The character cannot act again until the proper interval of ticks has elapsed, but his DV refreshes one tick early. Yet, even if he somehow achieves a Speed of 2 or lower, the Even Blade Form can never remove the associated DV penalty for an action on the tick directly after the martial artist performed it.

Example: Azure Crane's exquisite, mirror-bright blade has a Speed of 4. She performs a flurry on tick one, her sword moving in a brilliant blur as she slices at her opponent's arm, cuts open his leg and finishes with a casual, insulting flick across his cheek. On ticks two and three, her DV is reduced by three because of the three attacks, but her DV will be back to its original value on tick four, rather than on tick five when she acts again. If she obtained a magic blade of light and air with a Speed of 1, though, she would still take the DV penalty on tick two, even if she attacked again, because that is the tick directly after the tick on which she previously acted.

Although the Even Blade Form is intended partly to exalt the sword, it can be used perfectly well without one. If a character begins use of the Form-type Charm while wielding a sword, however, being disarmed or losing his blade instantly deactivates the Charm. The martial artist

will have to activate it again (taking six ticks and five motes of Essence) to gain its benefits.

FIERY GARDA FORCE ATTACK

Cost: 4m or 4m + 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Even Blade Form

With a sudden red flare around her hands, the martial artist brings all her strength to bear in one tightly focused strike. A successful attack deals piercing damage, but the Fiery Garda Force Attack has another aspect. If the martial artist's foe successfully parries the Charm-supplemented attack, then the character may reflexively spend a Willpower point to break the parrying weapon. The martial artist is not required to attempt this.

Artifacts cannot be broken in this way, but most normal weapons shatter or are sliced in half. A fine, exceptional or perfect weapon (as detailed on p. 365 of *Exalted*) may resist destruction. The owner's player may roll one, two or three dice, respectively, with success indicating that the weapon withstood the awful blow. The three great masters of the Even Blade Style teach their students that great quality ought to be admired and that the bearer of a great weapon should be respected. Oftentimes, practitioners will pull back and bow to such a foe respectfully before continuing the fight.

If a weapon is broken by means of Fiery Garda Force Attack, then the martial artist may continue the attack against its bearer. She loses three successes from her attack roll, but otherwise, it is resolved normally and as if the target had no Parry DV in the first place.

FLASHING ZEPHYR SPEED STANCE

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: One Flurry

Prerequisite Charms: Even Blade Form

A cerulean spark blazes in the martial artist's eyes, then flickers as she spins and strikes, spins and strikes again. She may spend four motes to supplement a flurry in which she makes only Martial Arts attacks. Its Speed drops by one (to a minimum of 3), her Rate increases by one, and each cut's Accuracy gains a +1 bonus as well.

FLOATING NYMPH GRACE EVASION

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

Type: Reflexive (Step 2)

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: One action

Prerequisite Charms: Even Blade Form

When a martial artist activates this Charm, she slips aside from her attackers to places they cannot reach: behind them, just beside them or even above them. For the remainder of her



action, she subtracts her Essence from all of her onslaught and coordinated attack penalties (though they cannot be reduced below zero). She may also use her full Parry DV against all attackers, even if she is completely surrounded.

GRUESOME WOOD KING REVELRY TECHNIQUE

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2;

Type: Reflexive (Step 10)

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: One action

Prerequisite Charms: Even Blade Form

A terrible light flares across the martial artist's face as he surveys the battle. Then, as he slices—with hands or blade—straight through his enemies, the blood that splashes so liberally upon him seems to seep into his skin, leaving only a greenish shadow to mark its passage. The character inflicts lethal damage even if barehanded, and for every health level the character inflicts until his next action, he regains a mote of Essence.

STUBBORN JOKUN DEFENSIVE POSTURE

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

Type: Reflexive (Step 2 or Step 8)

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: One action

Prerequisite Charms: Even Blade Form

The martial artist raises his gaze steadily, and his eyes glow softly. The blood seeping from his wounds shimmers a luminous white. Until the character takes his next action, he suffers no wound penalties, he adds his Martial Arts to his bashing soak and he adds half his Martial Arts (rounded up) to his lethal soak.

The martial artist cannot prevent himself from dying by using Stubborn Jokun Defensive Posture, but he may use it to act normally while Incapacitated or Dying, and may reactivate it on each action to continue to do so.

THE VARIANT OF MASTER AZURE CRANE

LOVING HEART STANCE

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

Type: Reflexive (Step 2)

Keywords: Combo-OK, Counterattack

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Fiery Garda Force Attack, Flashing Zephyr Speed Stance, Floating Nymph Grace Evasion, Gruesome Wood King Revelry Technique

The martial artist's hands flicker and come up holding both her blade and its sheath, crossed one over the other. For the remainder of the scene, the sheath is considered as hard as the blade it houses and can be used to parry (with the sword's own Defense value added to the pool). Once per enemy action, this gives the character a chance to bat aside her opponent's weapon and strike back: On successful parries, she may counterattack with her full Martial Arts dice pool.

FINISHING THE EVEN BLADE STYLE

As previously explained, the Even Blade Style has more than one ending. Through the Form-type Charm, however, every Even Blade variant works the same. Only once a practitioner starts learning the elemental-emulating Charms—Fiery Garda Force Attack, Flashing Zephyr Speed Stance, Floating Nymph Grace Evasion, Gruesome Wood King Revelry Technique and Stubborn Jokun Defensive Posture—does she shape the style she can eventually complete.

Each rendition of the style has two pinnacle Charms. The first Charm always requires four of the elemental-emulating Charms as prerequisites. Furthermore, once a student learns four of these Charms, she cannot learn the fifth. Therefore, mastering four of the elemental-emulating Charms effectively decides which pinnacle Charms a character can learn, whether or not she intended to follow that path. As a result, a student who attempts to pick up more than one Even Blade variant, or changes course from the first version she studied, may end up with something she did not expect, as she finds herself with a new combination of the four. This happened to Resolute Brigada.

Because no one has yet discovered the fifth and final version of the Even Blade Style, it has not been detailed here. Swordmasters who paid attention to Resolute Brigada's case and worked out its logical implications understand that an unknown variant is yet to be found. No one has acted on that information yet... Considering how many Even Blade Style martial artists enter tournaments of the sword—they even hold tournaments of their own—and the potential value of a new and unexpected tactic, it is only a matter of time before someone discovers the final version of the style. The discoverer can expect to gain Face (see p. 152) if she is willing to teach the new variant.

Two final points:

- Shortly before his disappearance, Master Zu Rat Te told his closest disciples that completing the Even Blade Style might unlock some greater power. If five masters, each possessing one variant, could fight side by side, they might discover some ultimate technique analogous to the shared Combos of the Crimson Pentacle Blade Style... maybe even a technique strong enough to defeat the mightiest Anathema.

- Everything known about the Even Blade Style comes from Terrestrial-level practitioners. The Chosen of Unconquered Sun might not necessarily be bound to only one version of the style.

Master Azure Crane discourages it, but this Charm may be used while unarmed. In this case the character can, again, counterattack once per enemy action as long as she success-

fully parries. Players should keep in mind that it is impossible to parry lethal damage barehanded without a stunt.

LOYAL DANCING LOVERS TECHNIQUE

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Loving Heart Stance

Pulling her hands apart, one with sword and one with its sheath, the martial artist sizes up her opponent, then flicks blade or sheath into the space directly before her. As long as the character's other hand wields the weapon or sheath, its mate will dance gracefully in midair in exquisite counterpoint.

Whichever item "dances," the martial artist has a choice each action how to use the sword and sheath. The character can attack with both sword and sheath, gaining an extra action. Alternatively, the character can attack with one item while the other deflects attacks upon her. In this case, the hovering weapon or sheath counters all penalties the martial artist may suffer for coordinated attacks or onslaughts, with a further +1 bonus to her Parry DV. The sheath inflicts damage equal to its blade, but that damage is bashing.

The martial artist may decide which is dancing—sword or sheath—at the beginning of each action. Targeting the weapon or sheath requires a normal Disarm roll against the martial artist. The sheath is considered to have a DV equal to the character's own, whereas the blade is not considered to be parrying.

At any time, as long as the martial artist holds one of the pair, she may reflexively call the sword or sheath to her other hand.

Loyal Dancing Lovers Technique may be used barehanded (though the suggestion one might do so is enough to put Master Azure Crane in a sarcastic mood for weeks). When activated without a weapon, it simply renders the martial artist ambidextrous.

THE VARIANT OF MASTER LORD CHAOWIN REGISTROPHE, FIRST OF HEAVEN'S CHOSEN

DEEP CUT

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Crippling, Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Fiery Garda Force Attack, Flashing Zephyr Speed Stance, Gruesome Wood King Revelry Technique, Stubborn Jokun Defensive Posture

Roaring, the martial artist rushes forward, her eyes ablaze with Essence. As long as she inflicts at least one health level of damage, her target is automatically crippled. If the total damage comes to three or more health levels, then the rel-

evant limb is completely removed. Even if Exalted, a target so injured has suffered a disabling wound (as described on p. 152 of **Exalted**), which will continue to inflict penalties until surgically or magically treated.

GRAVE CUT

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

Type: Reflexive (Step 8)

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Deep Cut

As her strike bites deep, the martial artist shouts in joyous rage and calls upon all her strength to force it still deeper. Then she turns her hand or blade to one side, wrenching it out in a shower of gore. After her attack has been resolved, the character may spend five motes to double her total post-roll damage.

THE VARIANT OF MASTER ZU RAT TE

STUMBLING INCONVENIENCE ATTACK

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Fiery Garda Force Attack, Flashing Zephyr Speed Stance, Floating Nymph Grace Evasion, Stubborn Jokun Defensive Posture

Completely imperturbable, the martial artist's expression hardly changes as his hand flashes out to smack his opponent. Supplemented with three motes, the character's attack inflicts bashing damage even if a sword or Charm is used, but if he hits, then he may choose where. His choice of target has the following effects:

- **Wrists:** Unless his opponent succeeds on a normal roll to avoid being disarmed, she cries out and drops her weapon like a disciplined child.

- **Face:** For a number of actions equal to the health levels inflicted by the attack, the target suffers an additional -1 wound penalty due to the viciously stinging, swelling welts across both cheeks.

- **Stomach:** The target doubles over and falls ignominiously prone unless her player succeeds on a (Stamina + Athletics) roll with an external penalty equal to the martial artist's Essence.

Use of this Charm does not require that a character's blade be drawn, even if he uses it. Players must succeed on a (Perception + Awareness) roll for their characters to see the strike coming, even if the martial artist stands directly in front of them and they watch him carefully. If the target fails this roll, then Stumbling Inconvenience Attack is treated as an unexpected attack (see **Exalted**, p. 155). If the target succeeds, and a fight has not already begun, she may roll Join Battle against the character as usual. When a character uses this Charm in the middle of a conflict,



the martial artist is not considered to be re-establishing surprise, so players rolling (Perception + Awareness) for their characters to spot the enhanced attack don't gain any relevant bonuses.

IMPOSSIBLE UNSEEN STRIKE

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Stumbling Inconvenience Attack

The scene is quiet. The martial artist faces his foe with his arms crossed indifferently. She insults him, and the observers turn to look at his reaction. There is none but a cool smile. Yet, when they look back at his opponent, she has collapsed, gurgling, to her knees.

Impossible Unseen Strike launches a single undetected attack. If the character wishes, he may unsheathe his sword, strike and sheathe it again, and his attack still goes unnoticed. Unless the target has a magical means of detecting unexpected attacks, this attack automatically counts as unexpected. Like Stumbling Inconvenience Attack, this Charm may be used in the midst of a battle that's already in progress, in which case it allows the character one undetected attack as his action.

THE VARIANT DISCOVERED BY RESOLUTE BRIGADA

CLUTCHING EAGLE TALON

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Flashing Zephyr Speed Stance, Floating Nymph Grace Evasion, Gruesome Wood King Revelry Technique, Stubborn Jokun Defensive Posture

As her foe comes forward, the character seizes his weapon and effortlessly twists it out of his grasp. All penalties to the martial artist's Parry DV are eliminated, and she may block lethal damage barehanded without a stunt. If she successfully parries an attack, then her opponent's player must roll against a disarm attempt as if she obtained successes on the roll equal to her Martial Arts. If her opponent is unarmed, then he finds the character has grabbed his wrist and pulled him into a grapple (see **Exalted**, p. 157).

The martial artist must have one hand free in order to use this Charm.

MANY RAPTORS STANCE

Cost: 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Clutching Eagle Talon

None can escape the character's grasping, clawlike hands. The martial artist can grapple as many people as she wants, as long as their combined Strength scores do not exceed her (Strength + Martial Arts). She also retains her DV even while she holds the clinch and can parry incoming attacks with one of the people she holds. In this case, the Defense rating of a person is considered to be +3, and if one is successfully used to block, then the damage from the attack should be rolled against him as if he had no DV. Furthermore, the character can parry lethal damage unarmed without a stunt and can drag her new charges about without effort. She does not have to roll to maintain any clinches unless she wishes to take a clinch action, such as breaking a hold or crushing an opponent. (Someone caught in the clinch may force a roll to maintain the clinch on his action by spending a Willpower point, but if he loses the contest, he's in the same position as before.) Players should keep in mind that characters who are grappling can only take clinch-related actions. This is still true for those using Many Raptors Stance, although they are also capable of initiating new clinch attacks.

FIVEFOLD SHADOW HAND STYLE

The Fivefold Shadow Hand Style is mainly practiced by criminal organizations such as its inventor, the Five Shade Association (see pp. 29-30). For centuries, its practitioners have brought eternal peace to "impossible to kill" targets—and eternal frustration to the law-enforcement officials trying to round them up. Through yoga-like meditation and a combination of arcane gestures and endlessly repeated katas, students learn to channel elemental Essences through their hands and chakras. At the root (or, as stylists like to call it, the palm) of these powers lies an understanding of quiet violence and the art of assassination. Unfolding outward from that, each finger of the shadow hand specializes in the tricks and traps of one of Creation's elements. The true power of the Fivefold Shadow Hand Style comes from mastering one's natural element, then decoding the secrets of the others to round out the discipline.

The Fivefold Shadow Hand Style is seldom taught by a single sifu. There is usually a group involved, since different practitioners favor different elements and, therefore, different training methods. In the Five Shade Association, each practitioner favors one element, either because of Terrestrial Exaltation or as part of a patron elemental's gift of Essence-manipulation. (Practitioners who wouldn't normally have a native element, such as Solars or the majority of mortal Essence-wielders, always find that they tend more toward one than the others. In such cases, the

player should choose whichever element she thinks best fits her character's personality and declare that the character's "aspect." If a character doesn't have an elemental aspect before learning this style, she will once she learns the Apprentice Gesture. That affinity will apply to learning other elementally aspected martial arts styles too.)

- Air-associated training usually involves elevation and silence. Although sifus use different methods, all agree on these points: If a trainee's feet touch the ground, she has failed, and when her exercises are done, even the most perceptive listeners should have heard nothing but the wind.

- Earth-aligned dojos are often built within hidden caves, where masked students strive to understand the subtlety of human postures and the power of anonymous unity. Each student must learn to identify her anonymous fellows' personalities and agendas despite their hidden faces. Just as importantly, they must recognize each other when they aren't garbed as assassins.

- A Shadow Hand martial artist aspected toward Fire trains to move in darkness and make swift, surprise attacks. His training involves fighting blindfolded and trying to slice squares of silk or small sticks into pieces before they fall to the ground.

- Water-aspected training often takes place in swamps and sewers. Students are expected to master their finer sensibilities and perform normally revolting tasks without flinching. A favorite test is for students to hold a handstand with their faces inches from stinking sludge while wearing white socks—the aim being for both socks to remain clean when the sifu returns.

- Wood-followers use trickery and misdirection. Sifus bid their charges to study particularly sly and elusive animals and imitate their postures and forms of movement. They also study the tricks of coloration, motion and stillness by which these creatures confuse their natural predators.

Practitioners refer to the elements not by their most widely used names, but by specific pseudonyms. Earth is generally called the Mountain; Air, the Breeze; Water, the Mist; Fire, the Smoke; and Wood, the Forgotten.

Sifus of the style note that certain elements associate with each other. The two katas of Smoke, for example, both include Breeze as a secondary element, whereas neither involves Mist. Breeze, they conjecture, is the natural ally of Smoke—Mist, its natural enemy. The elements seem to go in a cycle of destruction, with Smoke burning the Forgotten, which covers the Mountain, which blocks the Breeze, which dispels the Mist, which, again, drowns the Smoke. On the other hand, the Forgotten refreshes the Breeze, which fans the Smoke, which renews the Mountain, which channels the Mist, which feeds the Forgotten. These cycles reveal the flows and transformations of elemental Essence.

The advanced Charms for each element involve a degree of usurpation or assimilation of the next element in the creative cycle. Mist usurps the poisoning natural to Wood. The Mountain katas include the fluidity and



mutability of Water. Smoke takes on the darkness, secrecy and stasis of Earth. Breeze merges the intangibility of Air with the evanescence of Fire. The Forgotten completes the cycle by usurping the invisibility of Air.

The style's Charm tree has a peculiar structure. First, practitioners learn the Apprentice and Adept Gestures for their own element. Next, in no particular order, they can learn the style's Form-type Charm and two element katas. Each kata combines the character's personal elemental aspect (using the appropriate [Element] Adept Gesture as a prerequisite) with two other elements. Once the character knows these three Charms, she can learn the style's terminal Charm. Once she knows Fivefold Shadow Hand Form, she can then learn katas based on other elements. (The Adept Gesture prerequisites for the katas apply only to students of the listed elemental affinity. The Fivefold Shadow Hand Form prerequisite for students of a different affinity is not listed with the katas, so as to forestall confusion.) When the student learns two katas based on an element, she can use the Apprentice Gesture of that element as well. Nothing prevents a martial artist from learning the Apprentice Gesture of another element before then, except a desire to avoid wasted effort. (Sorry, but players don't get back the experience points they spend on Gesture Charms once the character reaches the point where she would gain them anyway.) A character aspected to one element must pay a one-mote surcharge to use Charms (or sub-forms of Charms) aspected to a different element, unless she's a Dragon-Blood aspected to Water.

Many of the advanced Charms have an aspect of illusion or deception. They are not obvious at the time (which would defeat the purpose of the illusion) but witnesses can figure out later that the assassin did something magical. An alert person might notice and remember the peculiar way the martial artist positioned his hands and watch for that gesture in the future.

Weapons and Armor: The Fivefold Shadow Hand Style as a whole lacks form weapons. Instead, followers of different elements use different form weapons: Smoke uses the short sword, the Forgotten uses the tonfa, the Mountain uses rope weapons, the Breeze uses the shuriken, and Mist uses the knife. When a martial artist learns a kata that traditionally belongs to another element [see the "The Share-(Element) Keyword" sidebar, p. 77], she also learns the usage of that element's favored weapon and can thenceforth use it with the style's Charms as well as the weapon of her favored element.

Most martial artists who use the Fivefold Shadow Hand Style don't bother to use weapons at all, though. Almost every Charm past (Element) Apprentice Gesture requires the martial artist to keep both hands together as long as she invokes it, and it's easier for practitioners who are trying to stay unnoticed to do so if they're not carrying obviously dangerous items. Those who do use and carry weapons, have probably mastered the Shadow Palm Invocation. In some

circles, merely carrying a weapon can lead some people to treat the character with the utmost respect, believing that she has learned the whole style.

Characters cannot use this style while wearing armor.

(ELEMENT) APPRENTICE GESTURE

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 2, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: One action

Prerequisite Charms: None

People who practice socially unsanctioned modes of achieving their ends (so to speak) often need to use unexpected routes and tactics. By folding a particular finger to center of her palm while invoking this Charm, a character can act freely in a given environment, depending on which element she favors:

- **Breeze:** Dancing through the air as swiftly and lightly as any zephyr (and holding her smallest finger against her palm), the martial artist does not need to take a miscellaneous action to jump. All jumps are considered an included part of her Move or Dash actions.

- **The Forgotten:** Thumb pressed to her palm, the martial artist can run without impediment through any area where movement is possible at all, even those that are densely and confusingly packed. She will not be accidentally hindered or restricted as she moves, even if she's rushing through a vine-riddled jungle or a confused crowd.

- **Mountain:** Not only does folding her middle finger down to her palm fail to hinder the character's climbing, it enhances it. She may add her Martial Arts to any climbing roll, as well as double the rate at which she climbs.

- **Mist:** Although her balance is not enhanced, folding her ring finger into her right palm allows the character to walk on any surface—solid or liquid—without taking damage, even if it would normally be too hot, abrasive or otherwise dangerous to do so.

- **Smoke:** While the character folds her index finger into her palm, she may ignore all environmental penalties caused by darkness if there is any light at all to see by—even if it is as faint as a single firefly.

A practitioner begins by knowing only the version of this Charm based on her aspect. When she learns two element katas for a different aspect, however, she can also use the form of Apprentice Gesture for that new element. A martial artist can also learn other versions of the Apprentice Gesture as separate Charms. A character can use only one version at a time.

(ELEMENT) ADEPT GESTURE

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

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Until broken

Prerequisite Charms: (Element) Apprentice Gesture

Practitioners of the Fivefold Shadow Hand Style believe that one special quality expresses the nature of each

element. The martial artist invokes that special quality by pressing the relevant fingers of both hands together. As long as he keeps those fingers touching, he may use his element's characteristic power:

- **Breeze:** Quiet as the air, the martial artist's passage stirs no noise at all as long as he keeps his two littlest fingers pressed together at the tips. While he is being stealthy, observers take an external penalty equal to one-half his Martial Arts (rounded up for Exalts, rounded down for heroic mortals) to any attempts to notice him. If the only sense with which they could detect him is hearing, the other characters receive a penalty equal to his entire Martial Arts score.

- **The Forgotten:** Fading into the background and making sure to be wherever highly visible activity is not, the martial artist touches one thumb to the other. Awareness rolls made to see him suffer an external penalty. If he is in an area with lots of clutter or distractions, such as a crowd or a forest, this penalty can be -1 or even -2 for especially dense areas. If he stands very still, the penalty is -1. The two penalties can stack.

- **Mist:** Concentrating to thin his blood, the martial artist touches his two ring fingers together. He may add his Martial Arts in successes to all his (Stamina + Resistance) rolls to withstand the effects of poison.

- **Mountain:** Middle fingers pressed together, the character focuses on unity with his fellows. He knows the intended actions of everyone within 10 yards who uses either the Mountain Adept Gesture or the Mountain Apprentice Gesture, as if everyone had spoken them aloud. The characters intuitively know each other's actions, and a group that's trained together has a good idea of the reasons behind them.

- **Smoke:** As long as his index fingers are together when Join Battle would normally be rolled, the character may ignore the roll and instead act on tick 0, no matter what anyone else's player rolls. This gesture does not protect the character against unexpected attacks.

A Fivefold Shadow Hand practitioner initially learns the Adept Gesture for his favored element. A character can also learn the Adept Gestures for other elements as separate Charms, if he knows the corresponding Apprentice Gesture. A character can use only one form of Adept Gesture at a time.

FIVEFOLD SHADOW HAND FORM

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

Keywords: Form-type, Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: (Element) Adept Gesture

Stretching her whole body and cracking each knuckle, the martial artist feels Essence flood her chakras. It concentrates warmly at each point, then spreads to gather softly in her palms before it radiates through her fingers to form two dark, pulsing motes at the tips. Her substance is more in tune with the elemental energies of Creation. As a result, not only can she perceive and interact with dematerialized

elementals, but they can perceive and interact with her. (The Charm does not let her sense other immaterial beings, such as gods, demons and ghosts.)

Empowered by the magic in her hands, her strikes inflict lethal damage. The martial artist may also add her Essence in dice to all her Martial Arts attacks and Stealth rolls.

NEW KEYWORD: SHARE-(ELEMENT)

A character who fully understands how to call her own element can begin to explore the others. Each kata Charm that comes after the Adept Gestures invokes a combination of three elements to achieve a new and greater effect. Characters first learn the two katas that list their own (Element) Adept Gesture as prerequisites. After that and the style's Form-type Charm, they can begin to learn new katas directly from martial artists who are aspected to other elements.

The Share-(Element) keyword indicates that a person aspected toward the element mentioned in the keyword can learn that Charm—but only if she learns from someone aspected to the kata's primary element. For instance, someone aspected toward Breeze can teach the Nothing but the Wind Charm to someone aspected toward Breeze, toward Forgotten or toward Smoke. This can lead either to cooperation or direct conflict between Fivefold Shadow Hand Style practitioners, as those with different patron elements either trade katas peacefully or wage small wars whose aim is to catch each other alive and force them to reveal their secrets.

NOTHING BUT THE WIND

(FORGOTTEN SMOKY BREEZE KATA)

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Illusion, Share-Forgotten, Share-Smoke

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Breeze Adept Gesture

So stealthy he's nearly invisible, the martial artist gently touches his littlest fingers to each other and touches the thumb and index finger of one hand to index and thumb (respectively) of the other hand, encouraging his foes' eyes and ears to sense only a passing breeze. As long as he keeps his fingers in that position, anyone with a (Perception + Essence) score that is not higher than the character's Martial Arts score fails to realize that he's not just a breath of air. Observers may also spend two Willpower to realize that there is not, in fact, a wind, but a martial artist in their midst, but they need some reason to suspect an intruder.

If the character is pointed out, or if he takes any non-movement actions while he is the wind, the illusion falls.

THE DISAPPEARING ASSASSIN

(FORGOTTEN MISTY BREEZE KATA)

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Illusion, Share-Forgotten, Share-Mist

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Breeze Adept Gesture

Accidentally spotted, the martial artist flicks her smallest fingers together then touches the thumb and ring finger of one hand to the ring finger and thumb (respectively) of the other hand, while ducking around a corner. Those who saw her are confused into believing they saw a cat, a falling leaf or nothing at all. If the character can escape all searchers' sight for five actions, then those who don't have a (Wits + Essence) score higher than her Martial Arts forget they ever saw her.

Forgotten Misty Breeze Kata can be used on a maximum number of targets equal to the character's Martial Arts. Any target may spend two Willpower to resist the Charm's effects. If a target is reminded of the particular person he saw, the illusion breaks. (The reminder must be specific and direct. For example, a guard might recall what he saw if his Dragon-Blooded superior says, "Don't you remember the masked girl who was standing right there a moment ago?" Without such a reminder, being told that he raised the alarm, or even spotting a shoe that the martial artist left behind, will only lead the confounded guard to further rationalizations.)

WHITE BREATH IN THE COLD

(SMOKY MOUNTAIN MIST KATA)

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Obvious, Share-Mountain, Share-Smoke

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Mist Adept Gesture

The character takes a deep breath, holding her ring fingers together and holding the middle and index fingers of one hand to the index and middle fingers (respectively) of the other. So doing, she focuses power carefully into her heart chakra and breathes out a fine, damp mist. For (her Essence x 10) yards, she creates an area of poor visibility (as detailed on p. 135 of **Exalted**) that lasts as long as she maintains her gesture.

Characters aspected to Smoke or the Mountain who learn this kata tend to breathe out clouds of white smoke or finely ground dust rather than mist.

THE FATAL KISS

(FORGOTTEN MOUNTAIN MIST KATA)

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Share-Forgotten, Share-Mountain, Touch

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Mist Adept Gesture





Deliberately keeping her ring fingers together while touching the thumb and middle of one hand against the middle finger and thumb (respectively) of the other, the martial artist carefully imbibes a poison... and waits. She may use any Charms she wishes, including Mist Adept Gesture, to resist its effects. Once she has done so, she concentrates on her sacral chakra and impregnates her own tissues with the venom. Thereafter, as long as she continues the Forgotten Mountain Mist Kata, all of her bodily fluids are toxic, and anyone who has contact with them will suffer the effects of the same poison the character took.

By the time the scene is over, the toxin has denatured, and the martial artist must take another dose if she wishes to continue using this Charm. If the poison would normally keep affecting her beyond the end of the scene, though, it still does so—she simply can't deliver it to others.

THE MYSTERIOUS DEATH

(SMOKY MOUNTAIN BREEZE KATA)

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Share-Breeze, Share-Mountain

Duration: Five actions

Prerequisite Charms: Smoke Adept Gesture

After she snaps her index fingers together and touches the middle and smallest fingers of one hand to the smallest and middle fingers (respectively) of the other hand, the martial artist's sudden strike leaves no evidence to betray her. After using the Smoky Mountain Breeze Kata, the character's next successful attack (using Martial Arts or anything else) within five actions inflicts the normal amount of pain and damage—but no wounds whatsoever, as the stability of Earth holds the victim's body together. No amount of examination will determine what hurt the target as long as the investigator works from the bodily evidence alone. Attempts to heal the target using mundane Medicine suffer a -2 external penalty because the healer can't find what's damaged.

THE UNEXPECTED DEATH

(SMOKY FORGOTTEN BREEZE KATA)

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Illusion, Share-Breeze, Share-Forgotten

Duration: Five actions

Prerequisite Charms: Smoke Adept Gesture

After holding his index fingers together and touching the littlest finger and thumb of one hand to the thumb and littlest finger (respectively) of the other, the martial artist leaps forward to deliver a deadly looking punch, kick or strike of his weapon... that misses! The inept assassin then flees. Yet, things are not what they seem.

The character's first successful attack within five actions after this Charm's invocation will not knock the target back or stun him. Any onlooker whose (Perception + Essence) score is lower than the attacker's Martial Arts sees the attacker miss. Only at the end of the scene will everyone (including the target himself) realize that he was hit. Even if the target should take wound penalties, the target will not suffer any of the required effects until then. Effectively, the damage is delayed until the end of the scene... or someone points out what really happened.

Observers who spend two Willpower, and the martial artist himself, realize the character struck a blow that should have inflicted damage. Once someone explicitly points this out, everyone else realizes this too and the damage manifests—which means that a victim can be dead yet keep walking and talking until someone points out that he was hit.

Since The Unexpected Death has a continuing effect, a martial artist can employ some other Charm as part of his actual attack on his target.

THE CAT DISGUISE

(MISTY FORGOTTEN BREEZE KATA)

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Illusion, Share-Breeze, Share-Mist

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Forgotten Adept Gesture

Those who practice the Fivefold Shadow Hand Style rightly pride themselves on their brilliant and unexpected disguises. With her thumbs, pressed firmly together and the ring finger and smallest finger of one hand touching the smallest and ring finger (respectively) of the other, the martial artist may remove any penalties she takes to Larceny disguise rolls for not having props or for disguising herself as something absurd. She cannot hide anything on her person while using this Charm, and the player must make the disguise roll as normal (see *Exalted*, p. 128). People whose players succeed on the normal disguise-penetrating check will not be fooled, and neither will anyone whose (Perception + Essence) is higher than the character's Martial Arts.

The Misty Forgotten Breeze Kata cannot mask the character as anything smaller than a cat or larger than a moose, but within those parameters, she can pretend to be anything from an animal to a coat rack. She cannot, however, become any specific thing—for example, her enemy's favorite pet or the Scarlet Empress's personal coat rack. Also, if anyone tries to interact with her in the capacity she has assumed—for example, petting her or putting his coat on her—then the martial artist must spend a Willpower point, or the illusion will fall.

The illusion automatically breaks if the character fails to maintain her gesture, or if someone points out that the coat rack is actually a person. It also fails if the character takes any actions that her chosen disguise



couldn't do. For instance, pets don't draw weapons (usually), and coat racks don't walk around. Observers may spend two Willpower to resist the illusion, if they have some reason to doubt it.

LAUGH AT THE ENEMY'S AIM

(FORGOTTEN MISTY MOUNTAIN KATA)

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Share-Mist, Share-Mountain

Duration: Five actions

Prerequisite Charms: Forgotten Adept Gesture

Thumbs come together and middle and smallest fingers of one hand touch the smallest and middle fingers (respectively) of the other as the martial artist dances back from her opponent. If her opponent "seems to" hit her within five actions while she is using this Charm, then it turns out that she was really just far too quick and clever to have actually been hit. Unless her opponent has a higher (Wits + Essence) than her Martial Arts, he actually hit something else.

The character does not pick the object that is confused for her, and it must be dramatically unimportant, mundane, moveable and at least a yard long. Suitable objects include chairs, logs, barrels or even watermelons with chopsticks for arms and legs. Cluttered places might give targets of this Charm an external penalty to their (Wits + Essence) total ranging from -1 to -3. In a forest at night, for instance, every shrub and tree-branch can look like an assassin poised to strike.

FOOLISH INATTENTIVENESS

(SMOKY BREEZE MOUNTAIN KATA)

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Illusion, Share-Breeze, Share-Smoke

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Mountain Adept Gesture

Adopting a posture of ease and disregard—and touching her middle fingers together while the index and smallest fingers of one hand touch the smallest and index fingers (respectively) of the other—the character directs the attention of her companions to a pretty sunset or a shocking new rumor, rather than what she doesn't want them to notice. As long as her hands remain in that position and none of those watching have a (Perception + Essence) greater than the character's Martial Arts, no one will consider the object or event she is attempting to obscure worth their attention. With this Charm, the martial artist may blithely carry a firedust bomb to a formal dinner in her satchel or show her lockpicks to the guards outside her cell. If she does, although observers can see the affected article, they won't feel threatened by it unless

either they spend two Willpower, the character uses the item to do something unfortunate to them, or its dangers are clearly pointed out.

THE NAMELESS ASSASSIN

(SMOKY MIST MOUNTAIN KATA)

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Obvious, Share-Mist, Share-Smoke

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Mountain Adept Gesture

Five Shade gangsters aligned to the Mountain favor a mustard-yellow wrap that thoroughly covers the face, but anyone who learns the Smoky Mist Mountain Kata may choose the anonymous uniform she adopts when she buys it. That uniform—with an identity-concealing mask and weapon to go with it—is banished Elsewhere. When the character holds her middle fingers together and touches the index and ring fingers of one hand to the ring and index fingers (respectively) of the other, her current clothing is sent Elsewhere and her uniform appears on her body in its place. Invoking this Charm again calls back her normal outfit just as quickly, and puts her unrecognizable clothing back where it came from. When Mountain-aspected assassins gather for a "job," apparent strangers are suddenly replaced by a tightly coordinated team of identically garbed martial artists.

SHADOW PALM INVOCATION

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

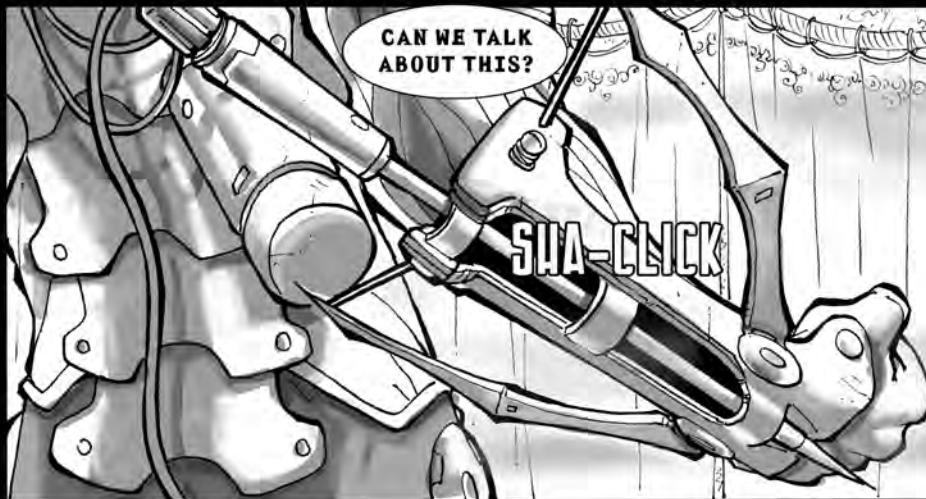
Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Fivefold Shadow Hand Form, both katas of the character's favored element

The Adept Gestures and katas of the Fivefold Shadow Hand Style are difficult to perform subtly or quickly. Moreover, having both hands occupied—whether briefly or for minutes at a time—can be a real problem for a martial artist. Calling the shadows of one hand's fingers to serve the function of the other, a character with the Shadow Palm Invocation simply folds the fingers she uses to invoke the elements down into the palm of one hand. All Charms of this style but the Form-type Charm are affected; each Charm becomes reflexive, and the character no longer has to maintain a gesture or employ both hands to use them.

Characters who know a lot about this style may specifically watch a practitioner to see if she is using its Charms, even in this difficult-to-spot way. In such a case, the martial artist's player should roll (Dexterity + Larceny), opposed by the watcher's (Perception + Investigation), if she wishes to conceal the fact that one of her hands is busy.





CHAPTER THREE

CELESTIAL MARTIAL ARTS

Where the Terrestrial martial arts often serve a specific, concrete purpose—down-and-dirty fighting, a series of locks and grapples, strong and direct blows and the like—Celestial styles strive toward something more philosophical. Many Exalted treat learning a Celestial martial art as a religious or spiritual transformation, as the techniques imparted give the warrior profound insight into and connection with a facet of Creation or Heaven. (Not that their practitioners don't also care about beating the tar out of their foes, mind you.) The Immaculate Order provides the definitive example for both aspects of Celestial fighting arts.

Celestial styles often seek to embody a chosen ideal. Some of them take inspiration from animals, such as the Snake and Tiger Styles. Others, such as the Dreaming Pearl Courtesan Style or Silver-Voiced Nightingale Style, seek transcendence and power from some activity not usually associated with combat. Still others, such as the Righteous Devil Style, focus on a single weapon as a tool for mastering Essence and studying the nature of combat.

Once mastered, a Celestial style provides the Exalt with an enlightened and idiosyncratic understanding of the style's subject. One master of Snake Style, for instance, might treat snakes as noble guests in her home or campsite, for they are her teachers; another hunts and kills them with the same cold, predatory skill that reptiles bring to bear against each other.

This chapter describes nine styles of Celestial martial arts:

It begins with additions to the **Solar Hero Style** described in **Exalted**.

The **Celestial Monkey Style** seeks a blend of impulse and serenity.

The **Dreaming Pearl Courtesan Style** combines seductive grace and beauty with subtle deadliness.

The **Ebon Shadow Style** enables its masters to bring secret, silent death in the night.

Laughing Wounds Style was invented by deathknights. Its practitioners find perverse pleasure in wounds and pain—their foes' or their own.

Mantis Style practitioners draw ferocious lessons from an insect predator.

Righteous Devil Style uses Essence to enhance flame weapons and call malefactors to a fatal confrontation.

Silver-Voiced Nightingale Style finds martial power in music and song.

Tiger Style practitioners display the ferocious and lethal power of the beast they emulate.

SOLAR HERO STYLE

These Charms are further extensions of the Solar Hero Style, which begins on p. 242 of *Exalted*. For Solars, these Charms are ordinary combat Charms, with a particular emphasis on standing tall to beat back lesser foes in glorious, heroic fashion. They uphold the ideal of the lone warrior whose deeds can change the course of epic battles.

For other *Exalted*, these Charms are considered optional parts of the Celestial martial art that the Solar Hero Style represents. It is up to the traditions of the martial arts school or the preference of the sifu (and the say-so of the Storyteller) whether learning these Charms is a requirement of completing one's training in this style.

Weapons and Armor: The form weapons for this style still include the mundane and artifact versions of the cestus, the fighting gauntlet, the khatar, the tiger claws and the pankrator's cestus, as well as any improvised weapon. The style remains compatible with the use of armor.

POUNDING HAMMER OF DEVASTATION TECHNIQUE

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Heaven Thunder Hammer (*Exalted*, p. 242)

The character concentrates vast amounts of Essence around her hands, inflicting terrible wounds with an unarmed attack. The character's blow inflicts lethal damage. When she uses it against a living target, this Charm adds a bonus to the raw damage of the attack equal to the attacking character's permanent Essence. This Charm is far more effective against inanimate targets, though. If the character attacks such a target while using this Charm, add a number of damage levels (not dice) equal to four times the attacking character's permanent Essence.

ADAMANTINE FISTS OF BATTLE

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 6;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Heaven Thunder Hammer, Hammer on Iron Technique (*Exalted*, p. 243)

Essence coalesces around the character's hands, suffusing them with great and lasting power. For the rest of the scene, the character adds





a number of levels (not dice) of damage equal to twice his permanent Essence to all Martial Arts attacks. When this Charm is performed, the character specifies whether these attacks inflict bashing or lethal damage. He can even choose to inflict bashing damage when wielding a weapon that would normally inflict lethal damage (for example, smashing an enemy across the temple with the hilt of a khatar).

INEVITABLE VICTORY MEDITATION

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

Type: Simple (DV -2)

Keywords: Combo-Basic

Duration: Until used

Prerequisite Charms: Fists of Iron Technique (Exalted, p. 242)

The Solar meditates for five minutes, sinking into a trancelike state of concentration to let her martial skill reach an instinctive level. Her player then rolls the character's (Wits + Martial Arts), adding a number of successes equal to the character's Essence. The Solar may spend a Willpower point on the roll, augment it with Charms or use any other appropriate normal method for improving the success of this roll, and the player carefully notes the number of successes she achieves. At some time later in the scene, the Solar may reflexively replace the results of any single Martial Arts roll with the successes the player rolled during the activation of this Charm. Doing so replaces the chosen roll in its entirety, and any bonuses that applied to the previous roll are lost. After this Charm has replaced a Martial Arts roll, the Charm expires, and the character must activate it again if she wants to reap its benefits again. A Solar may freely end the Charm before she uses its effects if her player rolls poorly upon activation and wants to try her luck again. While activating Inevitable Victory Meditation counts as the Solar's Charm use for the action, replacing the successes of a later roll does not. A Solar may wait for her opponent to roll for his defense before replacing the successes of her attack roll. A Solar cannot have more than one activation of this Charm ongoing at any given time.

IRREPRESSIBLE BRAVERY TACTIC

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

Type: Reflexive (Step 1)

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Thunderclap Rush Attack (Exalted, p. 190)

A master warrior has complete knowledge of his surroundings as a fight rages on. A Solar master of this technique instinctively uses everything around him to his advantage. Fighters with this Charm have a reputation for foolhardy bravery and dumb luck, for they make use of surprising and spectacular aspects of the fight, from props to scenery to their opponents' own weapons and attacks.

Any time a Solar gains bonus dice from a stunt, his player may spend three motes per stunt die to convert each stunt

die into an automatic success. (That is, if the Storyteller awards three stunt dice, the Solar's player can spend nine motes to turn all three dice into automatic successes.) To use this Charm, the Solar must make use of his surroundings or some ongoing aspect of the fight—such as by leveraging a soldier around into his comrades by the haft of his spear. He can also use this Charm when he performs a surprisingly brave or foolhardy act—such as leaping from the crow's nest of a ship to rain a thunderous elbow drop down onto a Child of Siakal in the water.

DANCING WITH STRIFE TECHNIQUE

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

Type: Reflexive (Step 5)

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Irrepressible Bravery Tactic

To achieve her true Solar greatness, a master warrior must challenge herself constantly against foes of at least equal greatness. Those who have mastered this Charm understand this principle, throwing themselves at more and more talented foes to feel the joy of battle. Anytime the Solar successfully defends herself from an attack that accumulated no fewer successes than either the Solar's Essence or 5 (whichever is higher), she may activate this Charm to gain a temporary Willpower point. That is, the Solar's Dodge or Parry DV (including any bonuses from weapons, shields or magical effects) must completely cancel out an attack roll of no fewer than the aforementioned number of successes. This Charm does not allow the Solar to gain more temporary Willpower than her permanent rating. Simply having the fortitude or the armor to absorb all the damage inflicted by an attack does not qualify as a successful defense for the purposes of activating this Charm.

SUPREMACY OF WAR METHOD

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Stackable

Duration: One scene (or until used)

Prerequisite Charms: Inevitable Victory Meditation, Dancing with Strife Technique

In war, in skirmish or in single combat, no single side of a conflict entirely determines its outcome. Ultimate victory depends not just on the victor's skill and power, but on his ability to read his opponent, to react to him and to manipulate him into a position of weakness. This Charm enhances that ability in a Solar warrior. Anytime an enemy takes a physical action against the Solar in combat, the Solar may reflexively activate this Charm in response. The Solar's player commits one mote per success that the character's opponent's player made on his attack roll. At any time during the scene, the Solar may "cash in" those committed motes to add one die per mote to any Martial Arts roll. Each die added reduces the Essence committed by one mote.



A Solar must choose to add dice to his roll before the player makes his roll. Activating this Charm counts as a Charm use for that action, but cashing in the committed motes later to gain the bonus dice doesn't.

A Solar may activate Supremacy of War Method multiple times in a scene to increase his total committed motes, but he may never have more motes committed to Supremacy of War Method than his (Wits + Martial Arts).

ASCENDANT BATTLE VISAGE

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Resistance 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Simple

Keywords: Obvious

Duration: One action

Prerequisite Charms: Supremacy of War Method, Bloodthirsty Sword-Dancer Spirit (**Exalted**, p. 208)

When the Solar martial artist activates this fantastic display of power, her anima flares to full totemic glory and she is reshaped, her body marked by her totem and the colors associated with her caste. (A Twilight Caste with the totem of the lion might gain a thick mane of dark hair, as well as sharp teeth and orange or black eyes.) In this temporary state of power, the Solar's player adds her character's Essence in automatic successes to any combat actions she makes—excluding damage rolls. The number of added successes cannot exceed the number of dice the player rolls. Extra dice received from Charms do not count toward this limit, but dice gained from channeling a Virtue do.

Once this Charm expires, the character may reflexively renew it (though doing so counts as her Charm activation for that subsequent action). Doing so costs her no Essence or Willpower, but the player must roll the character's highest Virtue on every action for which she extends the Charm. Each success increases her Limit by one. Should the Solar suffer Limit Break during the use of this Charm, she does not actually undergo the effects of the Limit Break (yet) but frenzies as per Bloodthirsty Sword-Dancer Spirit. Should this happen, the Ascendant Battle Visage's bonuses remain for the rest of the scene. The actual effects of the Limit Break, including the bonus to Willpower, begin after the scene ends.

OTHER STYLES

Some of these styles remain current among the Lunar and Sidereal Exalted. Others were rare or forgotten completely until the reemergence of the Solar Exalted. A few might have stranger provenance. In most cases, though, they can be as rare or as common among the Celestial Exalted as the Storyteller pleases.

CELESTIAL MONKEY STYLE

The monkey is sharp and clever, sagacious in his simple way. The nimble, quick-witted animal seldom worries about danger and never about failure. Should a snake or tiger come close, the monkey simply jumps to another tree. Should he fail to collect one sweet fruit or shiny trinket, why, there's

always another. To envious, ground-bound humans, the monkey seems to live with neither toil nor fear, carefree as the immortal gods.

These mortals obviously don't know about the laborious bureaucracy of Yu-Shan; many a god would envy a monkey's life as well. Nevertheless, some martial artists draw inspiration from the monkey's careless self-assurance as well as its agility. Students of the Celestial Monkey Style practice acrobatic katas and meditate on jokes and paradoxes. Much of their training centers on acting without conscious thought. Some sages see the impulsive monkey as a symbol of an unfocused, distracted mind but practitioners of this martial art see the monkey as a paragon of quick, flexible response. They all seek to achieve the monkey's happy self-confidence and wide-eyed joy at the world. Those who do so earn the nickname Blissful Sages and become some of the most talented and unsinkable martial artists roaming free across Creation.

Blissful Sages don't spare much respect for anyone or anything, including themselves. They avoid strong passions that could channel their attention too narrowly. As a result, no Blissful Sage has any Virtue rated higher than 3. A higher rating indicates a degree of obsession that an enemy could exploit or that could distract a practitioner from complete awareness of the world. No character with a Virtue rated 4 or higher can learn this style, and if a Blissful Sage raises one of his Virtues higher than 3, he can no longer use the style's Charms.

Weapons and Armor: This martial art is an unarmed style only, and characters cannot use this style while wearing armor. Only masters of this style can escape these prohibitions. (See the Charm Celestial Godbody Understanding for details.)

Complementary Skills: Celestial Monkey practitioners do not need specific ratings in other Abilities to learn this martial art. That said, they often develop great skill at Dodge and Athletics for agility, Awareness for comprehensive observation of their surroundings and Integrity for a self-possessed mind that evades outside influences.

MONKEY TAIL DISTRACTION STRIKE

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 2, Essence 1; **Type:** Simple

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Exalt can move from a perfectly relaxed pose to strike her opponent unexpectedly, ambushing him despite being in full view. The Charm can be used only before combat starts. When the martial artist activates this Charm and makes a Martial Arts attack, her opponent's player attempts a reflexive (Perception + Awareness) roll with a difficulty equal to the martial artist's permanent Essence. If this roll fails, the Exalt's opponent cannot apply his Dodge or Parry DV to this attack without the use of reflexive surprise-mitigating Charms. If the roll succeeds, the martial artist's attack roll is subject to the victim's Dodge or Parry DV. Only after the attack granted by



this Charm is complete does combat begin, at which point the player of every character involved rolls Join Battle. The Speed of the surprise attack granted by this Charm is not taken into account for the purposes of determining when on the reaction count the martial artist's next action occurs. The result of her Join Battle roll determines her position on the reaction count normally.

FLOWING MIRROR OF OPPOSITION TECHNIQUE

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 2, Essence 1;

Type: Reflexive (Step 1 or 2)

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Monkey Tail Distraction Strike

This Charm makes its user frustratingly hard to attack. The Exalt engages his opponent and dances around her like a monkey, moving alternately too close for proper leverage and tantalizingly out of reach in no predictable pattern. This ridiculous capering subtracts two from the Accuracy modifier of the opponent's attack. The Blissful Sage can also attack more quickly, adding his Essence to his Join Battle dice pool at the start of combat and subtracting one tick from the Speed of his attack.

BODY OF WAR MEDITATION

Cost: 4m or 6m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Obvious, Stackable

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Exalt practices a meditative prana for about 20 minutes, channeling powerful Essence. Doing so suffuses her muscles with fluid suppleness, and her bones and skin are fortified with power and flexibility. For the rest of the scene, faint pulses of golden Essence radiate from the martial artist's core chakras in time with her heartbeat, running down her arms and legs and up to the crown chakra in the center of her forehead. The Exalt's caste mark also becomes visible. For every four motes of Essence the martial artist spends, add one temporary dot to her Strength or Stamina; or for every six motes of Essence, add one temporary dot to her Dexterity. Body of War Meditation can be used more than once for the same scene, but it cannot be used once the character enters combat. The effects are cumulative, and the Exalt's Attributes can be raised thus above trait maximums. The character cannot raise any of her Physical Attributes by more dots than she has permanent Essence, however.

WITHERING PAW STRIKE

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-OK, Touch

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Body of War Meditation

With this Charm, the martial artist attacks his opponent's weapon arm in an attempt to disarm him. The Exalt's player rolls

a (Dexterity + Martial Arts) attack at a difficulty of 1, disregarding the standard -2 penalty for attempts to disarm. The target's DV applies as if the attack were a normal one, but the DV suffers a penalty equal to the attacker's permanent Essence.

If the attacker succeeds, the target's player must attempt a reflexive roll of (Wits + the weapon's pertinent Ability) per the normal rules. If she fails this roll, her weapon is flung a number of yards equal to the martial artist's extra successes. The weapon flies off in a direction of the martial artist's choosing, or the Exalt may take it for himself and pass it to someone else if she pleases.

CELESTIAL MONKEY FORM

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

Type: Simple (Speed 3)

Keywords: Form-type

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Flowing Mirror of Opposition, Withering Paw Strike

The state of careless confidence to which disciples of this style aspire is known as the "Selfless Mind." Practitioners divorce themselves from emotions or other distractions that would undermine their confidence or make them doubt their chances of success or chosen course of action. Celestial Monkey Form is the perfect expression of that ability.

The martial artist centers herself and spends the motes necessary to fuel the Charm. Her body relaxes as she releases her mind from the expectations of society and her own inner turmoil between emotion and intellect. Free for the time being, the martial artist smiles blissfully. For the rest of the scene, the Exalt does not need to make Virtue tests. Gibbering bands of demon-soldiers will not intimidate her on the battlefield, nor will the feeble pawings of elderly invalids distract her from pursuing her adversary. She also becomes immune to all forms of natural mental influence for the scene, regardless of how compatible such influence might be with her Motivation. Attempts to levy unnatural mental influence suffer a +1 external penalty (where applicable), and the martial artist does not gain Limit from using Willpower to resist.

WALKING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF TEN THOUSAND THINGS

Cost: 10m, 1wp, 2xp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene (with Permanent aspects; see below)

Prerequisite Charms: Celestial Monkey Form

By meditating on every aspect of the natural world around them, Blissful Sages can understand the manifold ways Essence flows through Creation. By emulating the phenomena on which they meditate (by walking in the footsteps of ten thousand things), these martial artists guide Creation's Essence to flow through them in the same manifold ways. In so doing, these learned masters perfect their martial skills and make themselves unassailable.



To use this Charm, a martial artist must first size up his opponent, either by fighting him, watching him demonstrate his style or watching him fight someone else. Studying an opponent in this way requires one full scene of observation. After that fight or period of observation is over, the martial artist then meditates on his opponent for a period of one hour, internalizing the lessons he learned in his observation.

Henceforth, whenever the martial artist faces that particular opponent, his player rolls (Perception + Martial Arts) with a difficulty equal to that opponent's Martial Arts score. If the roll succeeds, the Blissful Sage adds any successes above that difficulty to his own Martial Arts attacks against that opponent for one scene. If the opponent learns a new martial arts style, however, the Blissful Sage loses this advantage until he spends another scene observing the opponent's new combat techniques and uses this Charm again.

FOUR HALO GOLDEN MONKEY PALM

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Walking in the Footsteps of Ten Thousand Things

Essence flows through all things, and supernatural martial arts provide a way to channel and direct this energy. Just as Essence concentrates in certain geographical nexus

points known as demesnes, so too do similar nexus points exist in the body. Blissful Sages pay special attention to four of these chakras, which they call the Gates of Virtue. Celestial Monkey practitioners believe each gate is attuned to one of the Divine Virtues: the Crown of Temperance (head), the Chalice of Compassion (sternum), the Throne of Conviction (stomach) and the Root of Valor (groin). When the martial artist invokes this Charm in combat, she sees glowing rings encircle these gates on her opponent, each of which glows with an intensity proportional to the strength of the corresponding Virtue.

These rings provide more than knowledge about a foe's personality. The martial artist need only attempt an attack against one of these gates at a +3 external difficulty penalty, rolling damage as usual. If any damage exceeds the target's soak, the target suffers an additional amount of lethal damage equal to the Virtue whose chakra was struck.

Example: The Blissful Sage Liu Fi toys with a very frustrated deathknight who just wants Liu Fi to succumb to the bleak inevitable. Liu Fi opens his mind and perceives the deathknight's four Gates of Virtue, discovering that his opponent is tightly centered around his Throne of Conviction. Liu Fi lands a reverse elbow-strike in the deathknight's gut, inflicting one level of bashing damage over his opponent's soak. The deathknight has a Conviction of 5, however, so he suffers five additional levels of lethal damage. As the deathknight drops to his knees clutching his midsection (thankful he wasn't more brave than sure), Liu Fi takes the opportunity to excuse himself.



FOUR HALO GOLDEN MONKEY REALIGNMENT

Cost: 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Four Halo Golden Monkey Palm

This Charm enables a Blissful Sage to manipulate her own Gates of Virtue, moving these nexus points within her frame. Doing so creates glowing, spherical fields of Essence around her body wherever she moves the gates, with a radius equal to the length of his forearm. This realignment causes no disturbance within the martial artist, but those who witness him using this Charm see glittering coronas (colored like the Exalt's anima banner) flare around the Exalt's extremities.

The martial artist can use these haloes of Essence to parry any incoming attack, hand-to-hand or ranged, using her full (Dexterity + Martial Arts) total as her Defense Value for the scene (not dividing the value by two, per her normal Parry DV). She does not need to move to do so either. The character only needs to be aware of the attacks and have enough Essence and Willpower to activate the Charm.

CELESTIAL GODBODY UNDERSTANDING

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

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Four Halo Golden Monkey Realignment

Blissful masters of this martial art transcend its limits through their perfected consciousness of how Essence flows through the world and themselves. After buying this Charm, the martial artist treats all attacks made using the Martial Arts Ability as unarmed attacks, even if he uses a weapon—including all the Charms of this style. Wearing armor no longer hinders the character from performing the Charms of this martial art, either. If it matters, any Strength, Dexterity or Martial Arts minimums for the character's weapons are halved (round up), so the Blissful Sage can wield weapons that seem like they should be too heavy for her. (This also helps the character if Charms, drugs or poisons reduce her Attributes below the listed minimums.)

DREAMING PEARL COURTESAN STYLE

Martial artists who learn the Dreaming Pearl Courtesan Style become consummate performers with charisma and grace to spare, and they can be as elusive as dreams. They wield desires like swords, and the masters can become things out of nightmare. The style emphasizes finesse and subtle manipulation rather than brute power, and it might have inspired the White Veil Style. (That Terrestrial martial art is much weaker, though.)

Weapons and Armor: Charms in the Dreaming Pearl Courtesan Style treat attacks made with a whip, weighted rope or rope dart as unarmed attacks. (See the Appendix, pp. 156-157, for the game statistics of rope weapons.) Sashes, capes and ball gown trains can be given the properties of

weighted ropes through the judicious addition of lead weights concealed in the layers of fabric. Directly examining such items to determine if they are weapons requires a (Perception + Investigation) roll. Doing so while simply looking at the character over requires a (Perception + Awareness) roll, difficulty 3, instead. War fans are also form weapons for the Dreaming Pearl Courtesan Style.

Several Charms of this style also enable practitioners to attack using the long, flowing sleeves of their robes or ordinary gown trains, cloaks or sashes, without any preparation. Others permit attacks using ordinary paper fans and similar props. In such cases the martial artist empowers these “weapons” with her Essence. All the damage comes from the Charm.

Characters cannot use this style while wearing armor.

Complementary Skills: A prospective Dreaming Pearl Courtesan must have at least two dots in Performance, Presence or Socialize before she can learn this style.

DEMURE CARP FEINT

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 2, Essence 1;

Type: Reflexive (Step 2)

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: One action

Prerequisite Charms: None

The character opens a fan, twirling it and waving it in a distracting way. (This does not need to be a war fan as long as it is used only for distraction.) The Exalt's movements become as graceful and unpredictable as cherry blossoms in a gust of wind. While using this Charm, the Exalt adds either her Essence or +2 (whichever is greater) to her DVs.

PEARLESCENT FILIGREE DEFENSE

Cost: 1m per 1L/2B soak; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 1;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Exalt channels her Essence into his robes, making his clothing and accouterments take on an iridescent sheen as shimmering golden motes of Essence waft and rise from him. Each mote spent adds one to the character's lethal soak and two to the character's bashing soak. (This bonus does not count as armor, but as a form of natural soak.) The character cannot spend more motes of Essence to fuel this Charm than he has dots of Essence.

LETHAL PAPER FAN ATTACK

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Obvious, Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

In the hands of a martial artist using this Charm, a delicate paper fan can be infused with Essence that makes it cut like a razor. The character treats all paper fans (or other similar props such as brushes or mirrors) as wind-fire wheels.

She treats all sashes, long hems, sleeves and so on as seven-section staves. The damage these weapons inflict is lethal, though their appearance does not change.

In addition, if the character uses an actual war fan or other accouterment that has been properly constructed for use in the martial arts, the character may enhance the weapon's Speed, Accuracy, Damage or Defense by an amount equal to her Essence. (Pick any one value upon activating the Charm.) If the player picks Speed, a value equal to the character's Essence is subtracted from the weapon's Speed rating. The result of doing so can be no less than 1, however. Sashes, cloak-hems and other clothing turned into weighted ropes and then enhanced by this Charm deal less damage than they would if empowered by the Charm alone—but the character can wield them with much greater Speed, Accuracy or Defense.

DREAMING PEARL COURTESAN FORM

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

Type: Simple (Speed 3)

Keywords: Form-type, Obvious, Social

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Demure Carp Feint, Pearlescent Filigree Defense, Lethal Paper Fan Attack

The sensual martial artist's props and robes take on a life of their own, enhancing and complementing her movements. At her command, her fans open and swirl enticingly about her body like butterflies. Her sashes tease and coil around her like a lover's hands, and her flowing sleeves and robes writhe and twist at her whim. The Exalt does not have to physically manipulate these props in order to create this effect.

The martial artist controls one prop per dot of Essence she has (deciding which props to animate when she activates the Charm). For example, an Exalt with an Essence score of 4 could control one fan, one sash, one of her flowing sleeves and the hem of her cloak, or she could control four fans at once. If the martial artist wishes to add or change a prop, she must drop the present invocation of this Charm and reactivate it.

Objects the martial artist wishes to command must be in her possession, and she cannot make an attack with these props unless she is manually controlling them. To attack with them yet still leave her hands free requires her to use the Flurry of August Leaves Concentration Charm. While her character uses this Charm, the Exalt's player adds her character's Martial Arts score to all Presence and Socialize rolls, including those required for social combat and the activation of Charms.

FLURRY OF AUGUST LEAVES CONCENTRATION

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

Type: Simple (DV -2)

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Dreaming Pearl Courtesan Form

The martial artist with this Charm casts her fans or sashes into the air, making them swoop and slash out at an

opponent before obediently returning to her. If she activates this Charm while using the Dreaming Pearl Courtesan Form, the martial artist can have as many props as that Charm allows make multiple attacks against one target. This Charm allows the martial artist to strike a target up to (Martial Arts x 5) yards away.

The Exalt's player rolls a single normal Martial Arts attack, regardless of how many weapons the character controls. Successes from the roll, penalized by the target's DV, apply to all weapons simultaneously, and the damage is calculated normally as if she had performed the attack manually. The opponent does suffer an onslaught penalty to his DV for being attacked by multiple props, but each prop applies its damage separately.

Botched attacks can result in broken or lost props, if not injury to the martial artist who cast them. Also, this Charm can be used only on props that can be separated from the Exalt's body. (She can't lash out at a target 25 yards away with the hem of her ball gown, for instance, unless she's wearing one damn long train.)

RESPLENDENT SASH GRAPPLE TECHNIQUE

Cost: 3m per action; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 2;

Type: Reflexive (Step 9)

Keywords: Counterattack, Obvious

Duration: Varies

Prerequisite Charms: Flurry of August Leaves Concentration

The Exalt's flowing sashes, hems, sleeves or what have you act with an uncanny dexterity to grapple opponents and their weapons. After successfully dodging or otherwise negating an enemy's attack, the Exalt's player may make a reflexive (Dexterity + Martial Arts) roll to have his character's cloak or flowing sleeves snare her opponent's attacking weapon or appendage.

In order to make a successful retaliatory grapple, the martial artist must score as many successes as his opponent did on her attack. The defender may evade this attack only with Charms or as part of a flurry on her same action. (An opponent is unlikely to call for such a flurry unless she has already seen the Dreaming Pearl Courtesan use this Charm in a previous action, however.) If the martial artist's opponent uses a weapon and the martial artist scores three more successes than his opponent's relevant weapon Ability, the martial artist may disarm the target rather than clinching her.

After successfully clinching his enemy, the martial artist's player attempts a resisted roll of (Dexterity + Martial Arts) against the opponent's (Strength + [Melee or Martial Arts]). The normal grappling rules still apply. If the Exalt uses the Dreaming Pearl Courtesan Form when activating this Charm, he may attempt as many of these reflexive grapples with animated sashes or trailing robe hems as that Charm allows him to animate. If the martial artist grapples his opponent with a prop animated by that Form-type Charm, turning the tables on the grapple in the subsequent resisted roll does not grant the opponent any control over the martial artist.



Instead, she'll just be left holding a limp sash or a ripped-off piece of a loose sleeve. The cost of this Charm must be spent for each reflexive grapple the Exalt attempts.

VINDICTIVE CONCUBINE'S

PILLOW BOOK UNDERSTANDING

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 2;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Dreaming Pearl Courtesan Form

An uncomfortable truth written down by a vindictive concubine can wound a person more deeply than any weapon. It slips past his defenses and cuts him where it can deal the most damage. As is true in social situations, so also in the martial arts.

Even the heaviest of superheavy plate armor has thin seams where the pieces join. A skilled craftsman will minimize the width of these seams so that no blade or arrowhead can pierce them, but even such seams are chasms to the Dreaming Pearl Courtesan who employs paper and silk—thinner than even the sharpest blade. Upon activating this Charm, the Exalt negates an amount of her opponent's armor soak equal to her (Essence + Martial Arts) as her unconventional weapons capitalize on the armor's nigh-invisible chinks. This effect does not affect the armor's Hardness value or negate her target's natural soak or any bonuses gained through the use of Charms.

FRAGRANT PETAL FASCINATION KATA

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Compulsion, Obvious

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Flurry of August Leaves Concentration

As the Exalt performs the sultry, languid moves of this Charm, ethereal music whispers in the air, and flower petals flow from her sleeves and the folds of her robes to swirl around her. The martial artist's player rolls (Charisma + Martial Arts), and the players of all those within a number of yards equal to the Exalt's Essence must compare the result to their characters' Dodge MDV. Those whose MDVs do not negate the successes on the martial artist's player's roll find their characters transfixed in place, enraptured by the beauty of the kata and perfume of the petals. Even those in range of this Charm who are not entranced experience a hallucinogenic vertigo, suffering an internal penalty equal to the Exalt's Essence to all dice pools.

Targets who are entranced believe whatever the Exalt tells them. The Exalt can issue commands to those enraptured and expect them to be followed, regardless of the victim's Intimacies or Motivation. (The victim safely ignores suicidal orders.) This Charm does not affect characters with a higher permanent Essence than the martial artist, though. If the Exalt halts her kata for any reason, or if the scene ends, the

fascination slowly wears off. In ongoing combat, the effects linger for a number of actions equal to the martial artist's Essence. During this waning period, the victims suffer an internal penalty equal to the Exalt's Essence to all dice pools. Enraptured victims retain vague memories of what they did under the effects of this Charm and suffer a strange melancholy afterward, imposing a -1 internal penalty to Conviction rolls for a number of days equal to the Exalt's Essence.

SEVEN STORMS ESCAPE PRANA

Cost: 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Simple (DV -2)

Keywords: Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Fragrant Petal Fascination Kata

The martial artist centers himself, breathing in ambient Essence. When he exhales, sweet tendrils of pastel fumes escape his lips, and eerie electricity prickles the hair on the back of bystanders' necks. The Exalt's clothes and hair whip around him, and he becomes a vortex of swirling light and vapor. That vortex disappears in a flash, only to reappear a distance of (Martial Arts x 5) yards away, where the Exalt emerges.

INVOKING THE CHIMERA'S COILS

Cost: 15m, 1wp + 1wp to end the Charm; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Simple

Keywords: Obvious

Duration: Varies

Prerequisite Charms: Resplendent Sash Grapple Technique, Vindictive Concubine's Pillow Book Understanding, Seven Storms Escape Prana

Masters of this style achieve a perfect waking and lucid union of timeless dream and finite self. With this Charm, the martial artist opens herself to Creation's collective dreaming consciousness and assumes the form of the fell and beautiful Chimera. Swirling light shines down upon the Exalt. Her clothes and accouterments merge with her body as her form extends to five times her normal height. Her neck grows up to four feet in length and supports a delicate and golden-beaked foal's head. Four sets of spiraling gazelle's horns adorn her head, reshaping themselves like tendrils of smoke. Many eyes line either side of her narrow snout and continue down her back—ranging from the size of small pearls to the size of goose eggs. They alternately blaze like sapphires in the noonday sun and blink demurely.

Gold-veined pearl scales cover the Exalt's entire form, providing an additional 6L/12B armor. Instead of arms or legs, the martial artist floats just above the ground on a pair of four-foot-wide carp fins for every dot of Essence she has. These fins enable her to hover in or swim through the air with serpentine grace at 45 miles per hour. (These fins also provide a +3 bonus to Damage.) While using this Charm, the Exalt cannot be surprised or lied to, as secrets echo on the wind for her alone and others' intentions play out like uncoiling prayer strips in her mind's eye. Also, the Exalt can

perform a number of actions per “actual” action equal to her Essence. (Each “actual” action taken thus is Speed 6.) These granted actions are full extra actions, not parts of a flurry, though any of them can also be subdivided into a flurry. This Charm is incompatible with other extra-action Charms.

This Charm lasts for as long as the Exalt wishes, and she must spend a point of temporary Willpower to end it. Invoking it is risky, however. A martial artist who learns this Charm comes dangerously close to the Blossom of the Perfected Lotus, without necessarily the wisdom to control such esoteric forces. The Exalt thrills to an ecstatic bliss in this form, and many who have done so forgot they were once mortal. For every additional scene her character remains in this form, the player must make a Willpower roll with a cumulative +1 difficulty modifier. If she fails this roll at any time, the character disappears in a blinding flash of pearlescent light, never to be seen again except in fragmentary, half-remembered dreams.

EBON SHADOW STYLE

The Sidereal archives in Yu-Shan say a Night Caste Solar called Ebon Shadow’s Graceful Daughter—Shadow’s Grace for short—brought this martial art to Creation. Shadow’s Grace did not quite believe she deserved the power the Unconquered Sun gave her. She had not fought in the Primordial War, inheriting her power instead when a greater hero fell in that conflict’s final battle. Life as a spy and assas-

sin, maintaining the peace of the fledgling Old Realm, did not suit her; she thought the Eclipse Caste better suited her temperament. She prayed daily, begging the Unconquered Sun to change either her caste or her spirit. He knew better and ignored her pleas: The needs of peace do not match those of war. He wanted an assassin who would not enjoy her job too much.

Yet, someone heard the prayers of Shadow’s Grace. One Calibration, she rose from prayer to find a mighty figure before her: four-armed like the Unconquered Sun, but glittering in shades of darkness. Five Days Darkness, the first shadow cast by the Unconquered Sun, offered to teach her a regimen of exercises and meditations that would resolve her doubts and make her truly the Queen of Night. In return, she would share his teachings with other Exalted. She would also swear on her soul to perform one service in each incarnation at her divine sifu’s request without question. So desperate was Shadow’s Grace

to quiet the turmoil within her heart that she accepted the dark god’s terms. She absorbed her sifu’s teachings before the end of that very Calibration and took the name by which she is remembered in Heaven.

The archives say Shadow’s Grace became a paragon of her caste who taught evildoers to jump at shadows and gave restitution to their victims. Her service to Five Days Darkness is not known. She died before the Usurpation, trying to kill a mad Solar tyrant. The Sidereals are fairly sure the Solar who inherited her Exaltation perished in the Usurpation. Now, her





Exaltation is free from the Jade Prison, but its current host is unknown. Where is the inheritor of Shadow's Grace? And what will Five Days Darkness demand of her?

Weapons and Armor: Characters who practice the Ebon Shadow style may use fighting chains or sais (and their artifact equivalents) freely with all Charms in the tree. The style is incompatible with the use of armor.

IMAGE OF DEATH TECHNIQUE

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

Type: Simple (DV -3)

Keywords: Illusion

Duration: One day

Prerequisite Charms: None

Withdrawing her Essence deep into her body, the character drops to the ground and temporarily appears to be dead. A careful examination and a successful (Perception + Medicine) roll, difficulty 3, is necessary to determine that the character is actually still alive. The martial artist using this Charm can hold her breath 10 times as long as normal, and she does not need to eat or drink—handy if she's hiding from enemies at the bottom of a river or wants them to think they killed her. Although the character's senses of hearing, touch and smell function normally, she cannot see or move. She can act normally the action after she chooses to end this Charm.

WALL CLIMBING TECHNIQUE

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: One action

Prerequisite Charms: Image of Death Technique

The character using this Charm can move or dash along walls, ropes, hanging chains and other vertical surfaces as easily as he can walk along a floor. Using this Charm, the character can climb a surface simply by running up it, without halving his base movement rate. In his next action, the character must either activate the Charm again, remain where he is (if he's made it to a ledge or suitable hand- and footholds) or attempt to leap or climb down normally.

DISTRACTING FINGER-GESTURE ATTACK

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

Type: Reflexive (Step 1)

Keywords: Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Wall Climbing Technique

The Ebon Shadow martial artist makes a complex, Essence-charged sign with her fingers, and the twisting lines of shadowy Essence distract and slow one selected opponent. The sign takes only an instant to make at the beginning of the action. The target character's next action is delayed for a number of ticks equal to the martial artist's Martial Arts score, incidentally preventing his DV from refreshing until then. When the target's next action comes, he cannot

perform a flurry but may still use Combos and reflexive and extra action Charms normally. He can perform a Guard action as usual.

EBON SHADOW FORM

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

Type: Simple (Speed 5)

Keywords: Form-type, Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Distracting Finger-Gesture Attack

Although the Exalt's body does not become indistinct or drink in light like a true shadow, he still moves with the eerie speed and grace of a candle-wavering silhouette. While using this Charm, the character adds his Martial Arts score to his Join Battle dice pool. He also adds a value equal to his Essence to his Stealth score and his Dodge DV. When the character makes a Martial Arts attack (with hands, feet, sais or fighting chains), he can inflict either bashing or lethal damage at will. If a character using this Charm is killed before the duration expires, his body dissipates into thick black smoke. He leaves no ghost, and his physical remains provide no evidence of his identity (though his gear might).

SEVEN POINTS OF WEAKNESS STRIKE

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Ebon Shadow Form

The character's Essence guides her attack to the weakest point in her target's armor. Subtract the character's Martial Arts rating from the targeted armor's relevant soak (based on what type of damage the character inflicts) before calculating the attack's final damage. This Charm does not affect the armor's Hardness, a target's intrinsic soak or defense granted by Charms.

Seven Points of Weakness Strike provides no benefit against a target who does not wear any armor. After all, a weak point in a suit of armor would not be in the same region of a target's body, which makes the angle of approach and attack completely different.

LIMB-IMMOBILIZING METHOD

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

Keywords: Combo-OK, Crippling, Touch

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Seven Points of Weakness Strike

With the slightest touch, like a shadow falling on bare skin, the martial artist immobilizes one of his target's limbs. The character need simply touch an unsuspecting foe, though his attempt to do so can be blocked or dodged as normal. The attacker chooses which limb to paralyze—not necessarily the one he touched—and the chosen limb is immobilized for the rest of the scene. See **Exalted**, p. 152 for the effects on a character who lacks a full set of functioning limbs. Since most people don't keep a crutch handy, the player of

a target with a paralyzed leg must also attempt a reflexive (Dexterity + Athletics) roll for her character to maintain her balance every time that character is struck. Characters with both legs immobilized must generally perform stunts to attack or even guard. Immobilizing an arm keeps the target from using that arm to attack—which can be devastating if the victim is an archer.

This attack has no effect against the undead, automata or other beings that have no vital functions to obstruct.

PARALYZING TOUCH ATTACK

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Crippling, Touch

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Limb-Immobilizing Method

With this Charm, a character can stun or incapacitate a target with a precise strike to one of five vital nerve clusters. To do so, the character lightly taps the target on one of several possible nerve points, using a jolt of her own Essence to disrupt the Essence flowing through the spot and confuse the target's nerves. This (Dexterity + Martial Arts) attack inflicts no damage, but the Exalt's player rolls a number of dice equal to her character's (Martial Arts + the number of extra successes she made on the attack) against a difficulty equal to the target's Essence. Each extra success the player rolls above the difficulty reduces the target's Dexterity by one dot for the scene. If the target's Dexterity drops to 0, he is paralyzed.

The effect of this Charm can be mitigated if the player of a character with Medicine and Martial Arts at 3 or higher succeeds at a (Wits + Martial Arts) roll, difficulty 3, to restore the proper flow of Essence through the victim's body. Removing paralysis is a simple action (Speed 6), and the target can move normally on his next action. With a successful (Wits + Stealth) roll, difficulty 1, this touch can be disguised as an amiable nudge or unintentional jostling in a crowd. This attack cannot be used against the undead, automata or other beings that lack vital centers.

ELUSIVE FLICKER EVASION

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

Type: Reflexive (Step 2)

Keywords: None

Duration: One action

Prerequisite Charms: Ebon Shadow Form

One could more easily weigh smoke than strike a character who uses this Charm. Until the martial artist's next action, add his Essence to his Dodge DV. The Ebon Shadow Stylist need not even be in combat when he activates this Charm. For instance, he may use the Charm to dodge the poisoned darts of an automatic trap in the tomb of his First Age incarnation. Should the character use this Charm outside combat, all dodge attempts—including those involving Charms whose effects continue from previous actions—gain additional bonus dice equal to her Essence

for one action (which can raise the total bonus above the standard maximums). If some internal or external penalty would normally reduce the character's Dodge pool or DV to 0, using this Charm reflexively provides a base value equal to the character's Essence.

BLOW-CONCEALING GESTURE TECHNIQUE

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Elusive Flicker Evasion

The character makes an arcane silent-communication gesture once used by teams of Night Caste scouts on long-range patrols in the First Age and infuses the gesture with Essence. In so doing, she renders her opponent unable to notice or react to an attack she makes. The opponent cannot apply either of his DVs against the character's blow without the use of reflexive Charms that enhance DV. The target's player may attempt a reflexive (Wits + Awareness) when the target is attacked—the difficulty equals the attacker's Essence. If the roll succeeds, the opponent may use any reflexive Charms or abilities he possesses to counter the attack. If the roll fails, the opponent may use only Charms that specifically state they work on attacks of which the character is unaware. Blow-Concealing Gesture Technique is particularly effective in a Combo with other attack Charms, since the victim doesn't notice the attacker's flaring anima (though people nearby probably will).

SHADOW-BODY STYLE

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Blow-Concealing Gesture Technique

With this Charm, the character takes on the true form of a shadow. The character becomes tenebrous and indistinct, a form of tangible darkness. His flattened body slides through any space wide enough for him to fit his fingers through. Identifying the character while he uses this Charm is extremely difficult. His physical features and clothing give no clues, but the outlines of distinctive gear might give him away. If his anima banner activates, only his caste mark shines. Even his fully iconic anima banner seems shapeless and dark.

When using this Charm, the Exalt adds his permanent Essence to both his bashing and lethal soaks. Shadow-Body Style does not stack with any other Charms that increase the character's natural soak and have durations longer than instant. This Charm allows a character to see as easily in total darkness as in light, though he must actually use his eyes to see. That is, he cannot see through smoke, murky water or the like just because it also happens to be dark where he is.



SHADOW-STEPPING MOTION

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Paralyzing Touch Attack, Shadow-Body Style

By using this Charm, the martial artist slides into one shadow and almost instantly emerges from another shadow near her destination. The Exalt must have a shadow to step into, and she must have somehow seen her destination before. She emerges in the nearest unobserved shadow near her intended destination one action after she slips away. That destination cannot be more than a number of miles away equal to her Essence. If there are no unobserved shadows within 100 yards of that location, the Charm fails. (The Essence and Willpower are still spent, though.)

Generally, this Charm cannot penetrate the manse of a sorcerer, a god's sanctum or any other such forbidden place. If a place is warded to block teleportation, it stops this Charm from working. Most of the time, if the Charm does not work due to environmental factors or sorcerous warding, the Exalt simply fails to descend into the inky blackness of the entry shadow that she chose. Should an Exalt attempt to use this

Charm and fail during Calibration, however, she sinks into a shadow and emerges alone within the Labyrinth instead.

LAUGHING WOUNDS STYLE

The Deathlord called the Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears invented the Laughing Wounds Style for her deathknight slaves. Its practitioners tend to make very specifically aimed attacks, always intending to cause more torment than physical harm. Abyssal students of the martial art regularly endure terrifying agony—sometimes self-inflicted—to truly internalize the philosophy of the style. They must face their fears and pleasures until their hearts cannot be touched. If a student particularly cares for anyone, her sifu mandates that she watch him without flinching as he is tortured for hours or days on end... or even that she torture him herself. Students learn that pain is their only steadfast love. They ought not only to love it in return, but teach it to others, and teach it well.

Laughing Wounds Style has proven so useful to the Lover Clad in the Raiment of Tears and to her followers that they have traded it to other Deathlords and Abyssals in exchange for other rare styles, favors or small concessions. It has become something approaching popular (for an admittedly small audience). Even a few Celestial Exalts—including a Sidereal researcher from the Convention on the Deathlords, which tries to watch all new developments in that area—have learned the Laughing Wounds Style from the servants of Oblivion, though most are too ashamed to admit it.



Weapons and Armor: Abyssals who know the Laughing Wounds Style can fight unarmed, but most prefer to wield exquisite whips or slender soulsteel fighting chains granted by their Deathlord masters. Necromantically inclined students can even learn a spell to extrude a whip from their own blood, and these Exalts sometimes slash their own wrists before a battle in order to do so.

Characters cannot use this style while wearing armor. Small, strategically placed bits of metal and leather are quite all right, though. Indeed, dedicated practitioners sometimes wear nothing else.

SENSUOUS TORMENT

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 2, Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: None

The martial artist thrills to the torment that her pitiful enemies fear. This Charm may be activated whenever the character takes damage. For every health level she suffers so gladly, she regains a number of motes equal to her Essence (or half that number, if the damage is bashing).

KISS OF THE WHIP

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2;
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Stackable
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Sensuous Torment

With a predatory smile, the martial artist lashes her foe with vicious exactitude, making him cry out in shocked agony. On a successful attack, the character may add an extra -1 to her target's wound penalty for the rest of the scene. Kiss of the Whip can be used more than once per target, but the cumulative addition to wound penalty can never rise above an amount equal to the martial artist's Martial Arts score. Therefore, an Abyssal with Martial Arts 5 whose target was at a -2 wound penalty already could not inflict a greater total wound penalty than -7.

Because she is accustomed to her own methods, the character cannot use this Charm on herself.

LAUGHING WOUNDS FORM

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Form-type, Obvious
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Kiss of the Whip

Even as blood runs down his skin, the Abyssal laughs savagely, whirling undaunted through the battle like a scarlet-streaked demon. When he is injured, his wound penalty is reversed. Instead of subtracting, it adds a number of dice equal to the penalty to every combat-related roll his player attempts, to a maximum bonus equal to his Essence score. Even Virtue bonuses are affected, so the player adds those same bonus dice to the number of dice he receives when he

channels Willpower through his Conviction, Temperance and Valor. (He must subtract them from any Compassion bonuses, though.) The Laughing Wounds Style martial artist also adds his Martial Arts to his raw bashing damage.

INSTRUCTIVE PUNISHMENT METHOD

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 3;
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Compulsion
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Laughing Wounds Form

The proper application of pain swiftly teaches weaklings how to serve. The martial artist spends three motes and gives an order while she attacks. If the attack succeeds, compare the target's Dodge MDV to his total wound penalty (including any penalties inflicted by Kiss of the Whip). If the target's total wound penalty exceeds his Dodge MDV, then he must obey the command unless he spends a Willpower point. Furthermore, his new master may set a signal to her authority—cracking her whip, for example. If the target succumbed to the martial artist's first application of Instructive Punishment Method, and she later gives that signal to him again, then he must act upon the earlier instruction once more.

People the Abyssal has enslaved cannot resist her without suffering certain consequences. As long as a target obeyed the first order, he must expend two Willpower points to resist any subsequent applications of the same command. If he does resist, he suffers a number of health levels of bashing damage equal to the martial artist's Essence for his defiance. (The target character need pay this price only once per scene, however, even if he disobeys the martial artist more than once. As with all unnatural mental influences, an Exalt gains one point of Limit for resisting.) Once the victim goes against his owner's will a number of times equal to said owner's Appearance, he overcomes that particular use of Instructive Punishment Method.

A person can have a maximum of five commands implanted in him at once, but subsequent uses of Instructive Punishment Method may overlap to extend a given command's duration.

BRAND OF OBEDIENCE

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;
Type: Simple
Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious, Servitude
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: Instructive Punishment Method

The martial artist truly owns his pathetic disciples and can mark them as his if he deems them worthy. The Laughing Wounds Style martial artist can spend four motes and one Willpower to initiate a normal attack that, if successful, inflicts only one health level of damage. The damage is aggravated, however, and the heat of the wound rises to the skin in a glowing black brand. This brand does not disappear until the target completely heals the damage, and the damage cannot begin to heal until the Abyssal releases the Essence committed to this Charm.



As the character beats his servant, the player rolls (Appearance + Martial Arts + Essence) against the target's Dodge MDV. If he succeeds, the target is considered to be under a Servitude effect with regard to him (as detailed on p. 179 of **Exalted**). Until the brand vanishes, she is his willing thrall.

If the target wants to go against the martial artist's will, she must expend three Willpower points each time. Otherwise, the victim cannot break the character's hold unless he tries to make her oppose something she truly cares for. If the Abyssal orders her to go against an Intimacy or Motivation, the victim may spend one Willpower to force a reroll of the original (Appearance + Martial Arts + Essence) roll, with her Dodge MDV modified for the Intimacy or Motivation as per **Exalted**, p. 172. On a failure, the Brand of Obedience ceases to function. Even if the martial artist succeeds, his hold over his thrall breaks if the target can force the reroll three times in one scene.

INSATIABLE SLAVE STAMINA

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 2;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-Basic

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Laughing Wounds Form

Grinning as black bruises darken her skin, the martial artist has a greater appetite for pain than she expects even from her slaves. She cannot be brought to Incapacitated with bashing damage, and any bashing damage sustained after she takes her last -4 health level does not roll over into lethal—indeed, it does not register at all. She can, however, still use Sensuous Torment to gain Essence from the pain.

ECSTATIC TENACITY

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

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Insatiable Slave Stamina

The most terrible wounds mean less than nothing to the Abyssal. He only laughs as blood is ripped from his flesh and comes forward hungrily for more. Whenever he would normally take damage, the martial artist can spend four motes for the player to roll (Stamina + Martial Arts), adding the character's Essence in automatic successes but suffering an external penalty equal to the number of health levels the character suffered in the attack. If the roll succeeds, the physical wound remains but the Abyssal has taken no actual damage. (The "faux" injury remains until the end of the scene, when it heals.)

RAPTURE IN CHAINS

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Emotion

Duration: Varies

Prerequisite Charms: Laughing Wounds Form

People restrained by the martial artist find themselves unwilling to break free. The character may apply this Charm to any clinch attack. If the character succeeds, then—as long as she maintains the mote commitment—her target no longer truly wants to free himself from her grip. The target must spend one Willpower just for his player to attempt the roll to gain control of the clinch, and the roll takes the Abyssal's Appearance as an internal penalty. If the target intends to use control of the clinch to do anything other than break free—such as crush the Abyssal or hold her helpless—then he need not spend Willpower or take the penalty.

GROVELING PENITENCE PRANA

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Crippling

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Rapture in Chains

Daring to oppose a master of the Laughing Wounds Style is like begging for humiliation. On a successful attack, the Abyssal may spend four motes to force her enemy's immediate submission. The target's player rolls (Stamina + Integrity) with an external penalty of the Abyssal's Martial Arts. If the roll fails, the target falls to his knees and cannot move from that spot unless the martial artist releases him. She can stalk around him, chiding, mocking and beating him as she wishes. Since her victim can't stand or shift his legs, he cannot use his Dodge DV at all. Any physical action he manages to take suffers a -2 external penalty, and his Parry DV decreases by two. The target may spend a Willpower point for a (Stamina + Integrity) reroll, but if he fails again, he remains at the martial artist's mercy.

RAVISHING THE UNWORTHY HEART

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Brand of Obedience, Ecstatic Tenacity, Groveling Penitence Prana

Shaping her lips into a kiss, the martial artist leans forward and strokes her foe's chest. Then, with a grinning snarl, she plunges her hand through his ribs and rips out his heart. Ravishing the Unworthy Heart enables the character to attempt a normal Martial Arts attack. The attack deals lethal damage, and if it inflicts at least one level of damage, the Charm allows the player to roll (Strength + Martial Arts) with an external penalty of half the target's (Stamina + Resistance + Essence – wound penalties). Success on this roll indicates that the Abyssal holds her victim's life in her palm. She may use her power to further abuse him, or she may put his heart back in his chest. In that case, the gaping hole heals over instantly, leaving a dark scar in the shape of her personal brand.

While holding her wretched enemy's heart, the martial artist may use any Charms of this style upon him reflex-



ively and as if her victim had no Defense Value (physical or mental). She may also simply crush his heart, in which case she can use a miscellaneous action to inflict—not roll, inflict—a number of health levels of lethal damage equal to (her Strength x 2). This damage goes straight through the heart to the target and can only be soaked with his natural lethal soak. Once the victim dies, his heart has been entirely destroyed.

The master may have total control over her slave, but her power comes with a measure of responsibility. As long as the character has not either destroyed her target's heart or replaced it in his chest, she must keep the Essence committed to this Charm.

MANTIS STYLE

The deceptive and deadly mantis combines patience with haste. She seems remote, though approachable in her stillness. Her small, precise movements seem too small to warn of any danger. When her prey comes too close, however, the mantis strikes with incredible speed and savage strength. Martial artists who emulate the mantis use small, irregular steps forward, back and side to side to break their opponent's rhythm while holding their hands poised, giving no clue when they intend to strike. When the opponent momentarily moves too close and off balance, the Mantis stylist traps him in a dread embrace. Mantis Style includes lightning-fast chops and punches, but its greatest strength lies in blocking attacks and disarming or disabling a foe without killing him. There's plenty of time to slay a helpless foe, if that becomes necessary...

Mantis Style is exceedingly ancient. It certainly dates back to the first Celestial Exalted and the war against the Primordials. The wisest of the Sidereal Exalted and the gods (except for perhaps the Maiden of Secrets) do not know who invented it.

Weapons and Armor: A Mantis combatant can use any martial arts weapon with this style, but it is most commonly practiced either unarmed or with a seven-section staff or serpent-sting staff. Wearing any sort of armor blocks the use of Mantis Style.

LEAPING MANTIS TECHNIQUE

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 2, Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

When the character leaps up or toward her opponent, add her Martial Arts score to her Join Battle dice pool, as well as to the maximum number of yards she can leap. This Charm must be activated before the character's player rolls her Join Battle action, and (as normal) the character can jump only once per action. At any time in a fight, the character may add her Martial Arts in yards to her Move.

IRON-ARM BLOCK

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

Type: Reflexive (Step 2)

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Leaping Mantis Technique

The character takes the defensive stance of a mantis: his arms forward, his elbows bent and stiff-fingered hands bent again. From this position, he can add his Martial Arts score to his Parry DV for one action, either unarmed or with a martial arts weapon. He can also parry attacks that would inflict lethal damage while he's unarmed.

MANTIS FORM

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2;

Type: Simple (Speed 3)

Keywords: Form-type

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Iron-Arm Block

The character adopts the stance of a mantis, keeping her legs bent and her center of gravity low as she watches her enemy with an unfeeling disregard. In this posture, she adds her Martial Arts score to her Join Battle dice pool and to her bashing and lethal soak. She may parry lethal attacks without having to rely on a stunt. As long as she wields a martial arts weapon or fights barehanded, she does not suffer onslaught penalties to her DV when another character uses a flurry to attack her. (She still suffers the penalties for coordinated attacks, though.) The character's unarmed Martial Arts attacks also inflict lethal damage.

GRASPING CLAW METHOD

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

Type: Simple (Speed 4, DV -2)

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Mantis Form

The character can snatch weapons from an opponent's hands in combat. The character using this Charm adds her Martial Arts score to any attempt to disarm an opponent in hand-to-hand combat (both mitigating the normal penalty for disarming and adding bonus dice to the attempt).

GRASPING MANTIS DEFENSE

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

Type: Reflexive (Step 6)

Keywords: Combo-OK, Counterattack

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Grasping Claw Method

When a foe successfully attacks the Mantis martial artist (i.e., her Dodge or Parry DV does not remove enough successes from the attack roll), the martial artist may activate this Charm and immediately attempt to parry the attack with her (Dexterity + Martial Arts) pool. That is, her player rolls this pool and compares the number of successes to the total number

of successes her opponent's attack roll garnered. If this active parry's roll results in an equal or greater number of successes than the attack roll did, the attack inflicts no damage and the character's opponent is trapped in a hold. Use the character's net success as the extra successes on the hold attempt.

JOINT-LOCKING TECHNIQUE

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

Type: Reflexive (Step 1)

Keywords: Touch

Duration: One action or hold

Prerequisite Charms: Mantis Form

If the character locks someone in a hold and activates this Charm, the hold is extremely difficult to break. With this Charm, the martial artist's player adds a number of automatic successes equal to his Essence to the [(Strength or Dexterity) + Martial Arts] roll to control the clinch and maintain the hold. The Charm does not increase damage from a crush attack.

JOINT-DISABLING ATTACK

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

Keywords: Combo-OK, Crippling, Touch

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Joint-Locking Technique

In grappling combat, the martial artist's player makes her normal attack and damage rolls for the character to twist one of her target's limbs painfully out of alignment. The attack inflicts

no damage, but for every health level the attack would have inflicted, the target's player suffers a -1 penalty to all rolls and to the target's Parry DV for the remainder of the scene as the character's joints grind together or forcibly dislocate.

FLYING MANTIS KICK

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Mantis Form

The Exalt lashes out with a tremendous flying kick, traveling as far through the air as he could with a normal jump and kicking as part the same action without splitting his dice pool. If the attack succeeds, his extra attack successes count double for the purposes of determining damage.

CRUSHING CLAW TECHNIQUE

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Touch

Duration: Varies

Prerequisite Charms: Mantis Form

When the character executes a crushing attack in a clinch, the attack inflicts lethal damage equal to the aggressor's (Strength + Martial Arts + extra successes on the clinch roll), rather than bashing damage equal to (Strength + the extra successes).



UNFOLDING RETRIBUTION STANCE

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

Type: Reflexive (Step 9)

Keywords: Combo-OK, Counterattack

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Grasping Mantis Defense, Joint-Disabling Attack, Flying Mantis Kick, Crushing Claw Technique

When the character activates this Charm, he can launch an immediate Martial Arts counterattack against anyone who attacks him, using his full (Dexterity + Martial Arts) dice pool. The Unfolding Retribution Stance doesn't forestall an opponent's attack, but it might make an opponent think twice before attacking again. A character cannot use the Unfolding Retribution Stance in response to any other counterattack Charms.

RIGHTEOUS DEVIL STYLE

The Solar martial artist who originally developed this style in the First Age gave it no name. He rarely spoke to anyone who was not a member of his circle or one of his students, preferring to let his flame weapons talk for him. Those fearsome weapons levied harsh judgment on the wicked for centuries, offering no explanations and no mercy. And for every depraved abomination the Solar's flames scoured from Creation, the Unconquered Sun granted him more power. Mortals and Exalted alike knew well enough of his deeds to respect and fear the Nameless Solar. To the wicked, he was the Pitiless Devil, who measured their lives on the unforgiving Azure Abacus. To the innocent, he was the Blind Exemplar, whose eyes could not see the just. To his few select students, he was the Righteous Master, who could not rest while evil dwelled within Creation. Only the members of his original circle ever knew his real name, and he destroyed them every one when they fell from the path of righteousness.

The martial art this paragon developed vanished entirely from Creation at the time of the Usurpation. When the Nameless Solar realized what horrors most of his Solar compatriots had become, he gathered all of his students together at his obsidian temple manse, in Far Southern deserts since claimed by the Wyld. There, he passed judgment on the entirety of his fallen Solar ilk and expressed it by exterminating all of his students. When none remained, he destroyed himself in one last conflagration of firedust and burning Essence.

Only in the most recent years have any of his students been reborn. Some of them remember the discipline required to wield their master's purifying flame. Some of them also remember the awful holocaust their master visited upon them. Was he righteous or mad? They cannot say.

The few who remember the Nameless Solar's martial art teach it or practice it in solitude now, like the taciturn master they now remember only as the Righteous Devil. As for the soul and Exaltation of that master... both remain unaccounted for in both Creation and in the Underworld, and even the wisest in Yu-Shan do not know their fates.

Weapons and Armor: The Charms of this style can be used only with firewands or other flame-discharge weapons. Armor does not hinder the practice of this style, though some Devils believe their righteousness is all the protection they need.

Complementary Abilities: An Exalt must possess at least two dots of Archery before he can learn this martial art. Most practitioners keep their Archery rating at least as high as their Martial Arts (if only so they can Combo the style's Charms with powerful Archery Charms).

KISS OF THE SUN CONCENTRATION

Cost: 1m to 3m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 2, Essence 2;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The character extends her senses to feel the flow of Essence that connects her weapon to her target. That fine line of possibility between the Righteous Devil and her target flares up invisibly in anticipation of the martial artist's shot firing true. For each mote of Essence spent, the player may reduce the number of ticks it takes to complete an Aim action, though she may not reduce that action's Speed to less than 1 (see *Exalted*, p. 142). If the Exalt covers targets with successive Aim actions, the player must pay the mote cost anew for each successive action whose Speed she wishes to reduce.

If the player spends three motes to activate this Charm, she gets a slightly different effect. She still takes an Aim action, but when she does, the flare-up of Essence that connects her weapon to its target actually burns the target. This burn consumes none of the weapon's firedust ammunition, nor does it require the character actually to discharge the weapon. The effect inflicts no damage on a target other than to mark him with a black circle no larger than half an inch in diameter. With a called shot, the character can use this effect to disarm an opponent by burning his exposed fingers or to ignite a highly flammable substance (such as exposed firedust). Doing so requires a (Dexterity + Martial Arts) roll as normal, with an internal penalty commensurate with the complexity of the called shot. (See p. 158 of *Exalted* for the rules on called shots.) The roll does benefit from the bonus dice gained from the Aim action, though, as well as any appropriate stunt dice. If the player spends three motes to use the Charm for this purpose, the Aim action takes its full three ticks. If she spends only one or two motes, all she does is decrease the amount of time it takes to complete the Aim action.

BLOSSOM OF INEVITABLE DEMISE TECHNIQUE

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Kiss of the Sun Concentration

This Charm increases the damage the Righteous Devil's weapon can inflict. The character draws a breath



and concentrates before firing his weapon. When he does, the stream of flame expands to twice its normal girth, dramatically flaring out from its center in a spiral of fiery Essence. The Essence-augmented blast doubles the raw damage of a successful Martial Arts attack using a firewand or similar weapon.

LIGHTNING DRAW STANCE

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

Type: Reflexive (Step 1)

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Kiss of the Sun Concentration

With this Charm, the martial artist need not have her weapon in hand before Join Battle is rolled to use it. Vibrant bands of crackling Essence coalesce about her forearms, and the Exalt readies her firewand and fires it all in the same action (without suffering the -1 DV penalty normally associated with readying a weapon). Aside from the surprise factor this Charm allows, it also enables the character to attack more quickly, adding one extra automatic success to her Join Battle roll per dot of Essence she has. On successive actions, however, the character must take an action to reload a single-shot firewand after every shot. If the character wants to draw a firedust weapon after combat has begun, the Charm enables her to draw and fire in a single action, without the DV penalty for readying a weapon.

BLESSING OF RIGHTEOUS SOLAR SPARK

MEDITATION

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

Keywords: Combo-OK, Holy, Obvious

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Blossom of Inevitable Demise Technique

With this Charm, the Solar Exalted meditates and invokes a blessing on his weapon. When he finishes, flames of brilliant Essence writhe along the barrel of his firewand or similar weapon, covering it in intricate golden filigree. The player spends two motes of Essence for the character to invoke the blessing, and these motes are committed until the Exalt fires the weapon, releasing the charge (at which point, the filigree vanishes). Add the character's permanent Essence to the base damage of the prepared weapon when it is next fired.

If the character uses this Charm against creatures of darkness (see the Charm Concept box on p. 192 of **Exalted**), the weapon deals aggravated damage. If the Exalt using this Charm also invokes Blossom of Inevitable Demise Technique, the bonus dice are added after the damage has been doubled. The dice increase gained with Blessing of Righteous Solar Spark Meditation cannot be doubled with any other Charm that doubles base damage.

If the martial artist has multiple firewands, such as a matched pair of plasma tongue repeaters, this Charm works on only one at a time. Blessing a weapon in combat takes

two actions (Speed 6 for each). Finally, if the Solar using a "blessed" firewand activates a Charm that allows him to make multiple attacks, the bonus damage must be divided evenly among her targets.

CLOUD OF EBON DEVILS

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2;

Type: Reflexive (Step 10)

Keywords: Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Lightning Draw Stance

Firewands are prized and powerful weapons, but most flame weapons fire only a single shot. For a Solar with this Charm, however, a firewand becomes a much more efficient and terrible weapon in battle.

After the character attacks with her weapon, the player may spend one mote for the character and attempt a reflexive (Wits + Martial Arts) roll, difficulty 2. If the roll succeeds, the character's hands move in a blur, trailing faint clouds of black firedust in the air around her, as she reloads her weapon and brings it to bear before her next action. The Exalt still suffers the -1 DV penalty for reloading. If the roll fails, the character still suffers the penalty but does not load the weapon correctly. A botch means the trails of black firedust ignite around the martial artist's upper torso. An appropriate stunt can also allow another character to target and ignite the "ebon devils" surrounding a Righteous Devil. Either way, the igniting firedust inflicts the weapon's base damage to the character, but only if the martial artist fails or botches the reloading roll. If she loads her weapon properly, she does not leave enough firedust floating in the air for an enemy to do her harm.

RIGHTEOUS DEVIL FORM

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

Type: Simple (Speed 3)

Keywords: Compulsion, Form-type, Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Blessing of Righteous Solar Spark Meditation, Cloud of Ebon Devils

Creation itself seems to hold its breath when the martial artist cloaks himself in the majestic and terrible stillness of the Righteous Devil Form. He exerts an inescapable gravity and a withering unease that sends the innocent scurrying away and calls the unjust to reap the consequences of their deeds. When a Righteous Devil activates this Charm, all extras who lay eyes on him move swiftly for cover, pulling other innocent bystanders along with them and bolting doors or windows behind them.

At the same time, the martial artist can compel chosen people to confront him. The compulsion has a radius equal to (the Righteous Devil's Essence x 10) yards and is an unnatural mental influence. Even spending Willpower points won't hold it at bay for long. The martial artist's target must spend one Willpower each action to resist the Righteous Devil's dreadful gravity. Otherwise, the target must walk out and confront

the Righteous Devil face to face. The effect ends for the rest of the scene once a target makes eye contact and spends one subsequent action in combat or parley with the Exalt. The Righteous Devil can designate as many opponents as he has dots of Essence as “targets” for this Charm’s purposes, but he must do so the moment he activates the Charm.

PHOENIX FLIES ON GOLDEN WINGS ATTACK

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Righteous Devil Form

The Righteous Devil extends her weapon’s range with this Charm. A halo of gold and cobalt Essence rings the tip of the firewand’s barrel, and six golden wings spiral out of the halo to speed the tongue of flame to its target. The player spends only one mote of Essence, and the normal range of the Exalt’s firewand (or other flame weapon) doubles.

AZURE ABACUS MEDITATION

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Emotion, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Phoenix Flies on Golden Wings Attack

The martial artist uses this Charm to perceive the ebb and flow of Essence permeating the world around him. When he does so, he could close his eyes and still attack, for he need not see his target to strike it. His weapon and his enemy are one. His caste mark flares, and several notched rings of silver-blue light spin around his target. These rings vary in width, numbering between three and nine and rotating around the target at odd angles.

Both the martial artist and his target perceive this vision of silvery rings, known as the Azure Abacus. Its image remains in the Righteous Devil’s mind’s eye even if he closes his eyes. The display is also as visible to onlookers as is the Righteous Devil’s anima banner (based on how much peripheral Essence the Exalt has spent up to that point). Modern Righteous Devils know the pattern of rings bears some arcane significance, but its meaning has been lost to time.

When a martial artist who invokes this Charm fires his weapon, his shot zeroes in on his target, not as a stream of fire, but as a brilliant comet of fiery Essence. As the fireball closes in, the rings of the Abacus align themselves a moment before the martial artist’s attack hits. As long as the target stays within the firing range of the martial artist’s weapon, the attack cannot miss. Even if the target moves, the attack cannot be dodged by any means and can be parried only if the target has Charms that enable him to parry insubstantial attacks.

In the eternal moment just before the Exalt’s attack strikes the middle of the Abacus, time slows from the target’s

perspective. He hears a harmonious chorus of disembodied voices, gaining in volume as the azure rings align. These voices recount the target’s wrongdoings and praise the Righteous Devil for taking this necessary action to resolve the soul’s accounting. A subjected target suffers the effect of an unnatural persuasion at that point. His player must spend a point of Willpower for the character to do anything other than stare or scream as the chorus reaches its crescendo and the fiery bolt strikes. Should a target die as a result of this attack, his soul’s accounting is resolved for this lifetime, and he proceeds immediately to his next incarnation, with no chance of becoming a ghost.

TWIN SALAMANDER FIST

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

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Righteous Devil Form

Once she achieves this Charm, the Exalt can use a firewand or similar weapon in either hand without the off-hand penalty. She may, for instance, use a one-handed flame weapon (such as a flame piece) in each hand simultaneously, though the player must use a flurry as normal for the character to attack with both weapons on the same action.

DANCE OF THE HOWLING MAGMA SPRITES

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

Type: Extra Action

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Twin Salamander Fist

When a martial artist who knows this Charm fires his weapon, the bolt of flame emerges from the barrel and explodes into a howling winged creature that spirals hungrily toward its target. The player rolls for the martial artist to hit his first target: If the roll succeeds, he may immediately attempt a second roll for the magma sprite to hit the same target again or leap to a new target. The Exalt may have the magma sprite make as many attacks in one action as he has dots of Essence, and each magma sprite inflicts the base damage of the martial artist’s weapon.

PHANTOM FLAMEBOLT PRANA

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Righteous Devil Form

The low availability of firedust—especially outside the deserts of the Far South—along with the delicate upkeep the weapons require, make firewands costly to use very often. When invoking this Charm, though, the Righteous Devil enflames her inner reservoir of Essence like bellows stoking a furnace. With each breath, she channels Essence through her weapon, firing bolts of gossamer golden flame rather



than needing firedust. As long as she has Essence to fuel her weapon, she need never again worry about running out of ammunition or spending miscellaneous actions to reload.

CARESS OF 1,000 HELLS

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Crippling, Obvious

Duration: Varies

Prerequisite Charms: Phantom Flamebolt
Prana

A Righteous Devil master innately understands the divine energy that binds all of Creation together. When invoking this Charm, he attunes himself to the ambient matrix of Essence, focusing and filtering these energies through his righteous will. Essence trails radiate around his caste mark as Celestial fire and lightning writhe about his head and shoulders. When the Exalt shoots, a cobalt-and-gold, Essence-enriched deluge of flame engulfs his target. Any flammable items around the target (within the Exalt's Essence in yards) are burned to ash. The attack deals aggravated damage. Then, the target is engulfed in flames for a number of subsequent actions equal to the martial artist's Essence—but these flames inflict merely lethal damage. For each action the target remains on fire, he suffers lethal damage equal to the unmodified base Damage of the martial artist's weapon (minus his lethal soak).

When the target suffers the aggravated damage, the target's player must then succeed on a reflexive (Stamina + Resistance) roll, difficulty 3. If he does, the target suffers an internal penalty equal to the attacker's Essence to all dice pools. If he doesn't, the target can do nothing but writhe on the ground in agony until the flames go out. The victim's player must attempt this roll for every action his character remains aflame during which he wants to continue acting, and the difficulty increases by one on each subsequent action.

SILVER-VOICED NIGHTINGALE STYLE

This weirdly musical martial art was invented late in the First Age by a Lunar Exalt with its eponymous songbird as her totem animal. The Silver-Voiced Nightingale Style expressed her belief in the power of voice and music. The style's training focused more on breath control, awe-inspiring war cries and fierce kiais than on chops and kicks. Meditation exercises included chanting single tones or syllables for long periods and eventually learning how to chant a chord using the natural overtones of the voice. Students also developed the keen perception needed to hear and understand the subtle resonance of Essence—not to mention sizing up their opponents. The best of the style's practitioners could spin their shouts into lyrics and their music into a force controlling mind and matter alike.

The original Silver-Voiced Nightingale believed that both harmony and dissonance were needed to describe





Creation and produce the most beautiful music. As a result, this style possesses two Charm sequences, each with its own Form-type Charm. The sequences intersect in two special Charms, and mastery of the style requires learning both the harmonious and dissonant forms. Focusing on one sequence over the other produces a spiritual imbalance that can become dangerous.

Even before the Usurpation, the Silver-Voiced Nightingale Style languished in obscurity. The first Nightingale was never sociable and left no written records behind her. She'd had few students. As a result, the already rare style became even rarer after her death, and most scholars of the martial arts thought it lost by the end of the Shogunate.

Some of the returning Solar Exalted, however, have clear enough memories to relearn it on their own, and one or two Lunars and Sidereals remain alive who picked it up long ago. Therefore, the voice of the Nightingale sings once more in the twilight of an Age.

Weapons and Armor: The Silver-Voiced Nightingale Style is not normally compatible with any weapons. The nightingale, after all, is not a naturally warlike creature. The Weapon-Tuning Resonance Charm, however, allows characters to harmonize with certain weapons, and practitioners of this style treat attacks using harmonic weapons as "unarmed."

Complementary Abilities: A character needs at least two dots of Performance before she can learn this style. Normally, a Silver-Voiced Nightingale weaves her Charms into song. A character with a harmonized weapon can also manifest the Charms through this special instrument. Creative, advanced students (with Performance 4 or greater) can adapt their kiais for any sound—clapping, whistling, banging on debris—at a -2 internal penalty on the roll for each Charm. In short, this style doesn't always look or sound even remotely the same when different people use it. If the martial artist is totally silenced in every way, though—if a sorcerer, for example, hushes the whole area with a spell—then the style's Charms cannot be used.

Wearing armor forbids the use of Silver-Voiced Nightingale Style, unless the martial artist has used Weapon-Tuning Resonance to make his armor a musical instrument.

INSPIRING BATTLE HYMN

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 2, Essence 1;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Emotion, War

Duration: One action

Prerequisite Charms: None

The martial artist's voice rises in a song of triumph, and in response, her allies take heart and fight more fiercely. For each action in which the Silver-Voiced Nightingale spends two motes, she and all allies within (Essence x 5) yards receive a one-die bonus to attacks and +1 MDV. Rolls to coordinate attacks take a +2 bonus. If the martial artist is part of a mass combat unit of Magnitude 1 or 2, her battle-hymn confers a +1 bonus to Attack and Morale ratings for the unit's action. The martial artist can perform any sort of

combat action while using this Charm, as long as it doesn't use any Ability except Martial Arts.

If a character with this Charm has not learned the Charm Terrifying Battle Shriek, then she suffers a -1 penalty to the number of bonus dice she receives for channeling Willpower through her Valor and Conviction. This penalty stacks with other Virtue penalties imposed by Charms of this style and is in effect regardless of whether the character is actually using the Charm.

VOCAL CHARMS

Silver-Voiced Nightingale Charms are not quite obvious when they exert mental influences. People hear the character sing, but they might not realize her song is magical. Players of unprepared observers roll (Perception + [Martial Arts or Craft (Air)]), difficulty 4, for their characters to recognize the unnatural mental influence.

TERRIFYING BATTLE SHRIEK

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 2, Essence 1;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Emotion, War

Duration: One action

Prerequisite Charms: None

The martial artist's voice rises in a howl that promises horrible death to her foes. For every action in which the Silver-Voiced Nightingale spends two motes, her player rolls (Perception + Martial Arts) and compares the result to the Dodge MDV of every foe within (Essence x 5) yards. Each foe whose MDV does not surpass the roll's successes incurs a -1 internal penalty on all actions he initiates during the martial artist's action, and he adds one tick to the Speed of his action from the fear-induced hesitation. In mass combat, this Charm can impose a -1 internal penalty and -1 Morale on an opposing unit of up to Magnitude 2. The martial artist can perform any sort of combat action while using this Charm, as long as that action doesn't use any Ability except Martial Arts.

If a character with this Charm has not learned the Charm Inspiring Battle Hymn, then he suffers a -1 penalty to the number of bonus dice he receives for channeling Willpower through his Compassion and Temperance. This penalty stacks with other Virtue penalties imposed by Charms of this style and is in effect regardless of whether the character is actually using the Charm.

HARMONY IN OPPOSITION STANCE

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

Keywords: Combo-Basic

Duration: Varies

Prerequisite Charms: Inspiring Battle Hymn, Terrifying Battle Shriek



When a Silver-Voiced Nightingale uses this Charm, she moves in perfect counterpoint to her opponent. A brief kata and several sharp notes allow her to sound him out, using a (Perception + Martial Arts) roll with a difficulty equal to his Essence. For every success on this roll (to a limit equal to her own Essence score), the martial artist may reduce his Dodge or Parry DV against her attacks by one and add one to her own Dodge or Parry DV against him. The DV adjustments last as long as the martial artist continues to fight this opponent and no one else.

The martial artist also hears snatches of sounds that matter to her foe: his lover's name, perhaps; for an introspective literary man, his favorite poem; or, for a loyal general, a snatch of his country's national anthem. From these clues, the martial artist can determine one of her enemy's Intimacies per scene, if she can keep the Charm's effect running for five actions.

HAUNTING HEART-RENDING MELODY

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-OK, Emotion

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Inspiring Battle Hymn

The Nightingale sings a cascade of notes to arouse an emotion of his choice while focusing his will and Essence on his target, who must be within (Essence x 10) yards. The martial artist's player rolls (Charisma + Martial Arts). If the result exceeds the target's Dodge MDV, the target feels whatever emotion the Silver-Voiced Nightingale wishes her to feel about anything or anyone he chooses that is present at the time. Thereafter, the emotion returns every time the target sees that thing again. (Intimacies, Virtues and Motivations may reduce the target's Dodge MDV for this purpose, as detailed on p. 172 of *Exalted*.)

Spending a Willpower point enables the target to fight past this unnatural mental influence for a scene. If the target does so three times, she breaks the Charm's influence.

If a character with this Charm has not learned the Charm Voice of the Night Bird, then he suffers a -1 penalty to the number of bonus dice he receives for channeling Willpower through his Valor and Conviction. This penalty stacks with other Virtue penalties imposed by Charms of this style and is in effect regardless of whether the character is actually using the Charm.

VOICE OF THE NIGHT BIRD

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Terrifying Battle Shriek

The martial artist draws a deep breath as he takes the stance for an attack, then shouts a violent kiai. The force of his call strikes the enemy like a punch. By spending three

motes, the Nightingale can make any Martial Arts attack sonic. He can launch it against anyone within (Martial Arts x 10) yards, and his player uses (Perception + Martial Arts) for its attack roll. Charisma replaces Strength for its base damage. The battle cry's damage is normally bashing, but it can be increased or made lethal with a weapon or appropriate Charm (such as Weeping Nightingale Form). The Nightingale could even attempt to shout a weapon from an enemy's hand or knock her off her feet. Doing the former acts as a ranged attempt to disarm a target (per the rules on p. 158 of *Exalted*), incurring the standard -4 penalty. Doing the latter follows the knockdown rules on p. 153 of *Exalted*. (If the Charm-supplemented attack attempts to deliberately cause knockdown, its Accuracy suffers the standard -2 penalty, as well as a -4 penalty since the attack is ranged.) Voice of the Night Bird cannot be parried without a stunt or a Charm, though it can be dodged.

If a character with this Charm has not learned the Charm Haunting Heart-Rending Melody, then he suffers a -1 penalty to the number of bonus dice he receives for channeling Willpower through his Compassion and Temperance. This penalty stacks with other Virtue penalties imposed by Charms of this style and is in effect regardless of whether the character is actually using the Charm.

HEARTSONG MEDITATION

Cost: 5m + 1m per action, 1wp, 3xp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple

Keywords: Stackable

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Haunting Heart-Rending Melody, Voice of the Night Bird

This Charm enables a Silver-Voiced Nightingale to form an enduring mystic link to one of the people to whom he has formed an Intimacy. The martial artist and his Intimacy must be together and agree to the link. Forming the link costs one Willpower and three experience points from both persons, and five motes from the Exalt.

Henceforth, the martial artist can check on the other person's condition and activities by singing and spending one mote. This action is a reflexive one. The player rolls (Charisma + Martial Arts). Gaining a general sense of the other person's physical and emotional state is difficulty 1. Receiving knowledge of the character's current activities is difficulty 2. Gaining a clear vision of the other character, as if the martial artist were standing next to her, is difficulty 4. (Gaining a higher-difficulty connection grants the lower-difficulty information automatically.) Should the martial artist's player's roll gain four or more successes, the martial artist and the object of his Intimacy can converse, as long as they do so by singing. At any level of contact, however, the Intimacy can open the link both ways to gain an equal sense of the martial artist's condition. If the Intimacy also can channel Essence, she can initiate the link (and her player makes the roll to find the depth of contact). Maintaining

the link costs one mote per action, and either character can pay the cost.

Furthermore, when the characters have a two-way link, either one can send Willpower to the other. A character can transfer only one Willpower point per action, and neither party can possess more Willpower points than his normal maximum.

If either character ceases to treat the other as an Intimacy, the link between them breaks forever. The experience points committed to it are lost. The Charm is stackable in that the character can form mystic links to more than one Intimacy.

EXALTED: THE MUSICAL!

Ancient epics such as the Iliad were not just recited, they were chanted or sung. In modern anime or wuxia, characters might unexpectedly burst into song. Silver-Voiced Nightingale Style combines the martial traditions of kiais and war cries with an homage to musical epics. Storytellers may grant stunt dice or an extra experience point to players who come up with an actual song to sing that has some relevance to their character's actions, at least while the character uses Silver-Voiced Nightingale Charms.

DULCET NIGHTINGALE FORM

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

Keywords: Emotion, Form-Type

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Haunting Heart-Rending Melody

Standing straight and pitching her voice to reach all of her listeners, the Nightingale's song rings out with exquisite clarity. So moved are her opponents by its beauty that, as long as they can hear her and are within (her Essence x 10) yards of her, their attacks against her suffer an internal penalty equal to (her Martial Arts – foe's Temperance). Moreover, if a foe acts on a tick during which the martial artist is guarding, he finds the loveliness of the Nightingale's song so disarming that he cannot attack her without spending a Willpower point.

These are active effects. They persist as long as the character sings. A character can stop singing, however, without deactivating the form. Should she start singing again before the scene ends, the effects come back into play without requiring the character to spend more Essence.

If a character with this Charm has not learned the Weeping Nightingale Form, she suffers a -1 penalty to the number of bonus dice she receives for channeling Willpower through her Valor and Conviction. This penalty stacks with other Virtue penalties imposed by Charms of this style and is in effect regardless of whether the character is actually using the Charm. Characters who know both forms cannot use both at the same time.

WEeping NIGHTINGALE FORM

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

Keywords: Form-type

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Voice of the Night Bird

When a Nightingale sobs, those who hear it cannot help but be affected by the bitterness of her tears. The discordance of the Weeping Nightingale's song is so bleak and brutal that her listeners want to clap their hands over their ears. Even if they don't, they are so dismayed and distracted by it that, as long as they are within (her Essence x 10) yards of her, they take an external penalty equal to her Essence on all Perception rolls.

Furthermore, the martial artist's piercing tone vibrates horribly within the very bones of everyone within (her Essence x 10) yards of her. The character inflicts lethal damage with any Martial Arts attacks, including sonic ones. Particularly resonant objects in the area might break even if the character doesn't attack them.

These are active effects. They persist as long as the character sings. A character can stop singing, however, without deactivating the form. Should she start singing again before the scene ends, the effects come back into play without requiring the character to spend more Essence.

The martial artist also becomes impossible to attack from surprise. Any intent to do harm, to her or anyone else within (Essence x 10) yards of her, sounds as a dissonance in the music that plays in the character's head. This Charm provides a perfect defense against an attack's being unexpected, though not against the attack itself. A character using this form can allow an unexpected attack against someone else to remain unexpected if she does not warn the attack's intended victim.

If a character with this Charm has not learned the Dulcet Nightingale Form, she suffers a -1 penalty to the number of bonus dice she receives for channeling Willpower through her Compassion and Temperance. This penalty stacks with other Virtue penalties imposed by Charms of this style and is in effect regardless of whether the character is actually using the Charm. Characters who know both forms cannot use both at the same time.

WEAPON-TUNING RESONANCE

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

Keywords: Combo-Basic

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Dulcet Nightingale Form, Weeping Nightingale Form

A Silver-Voiced Nightingale's natural weapon is sound itself. But if song can be forged into a weapon, so can weapons produce sounds. This Charm allows the martial artist to bring a weapon into the chorus of her battle, making it compatible with Martial Arts attacks and Charms of this style.

For a wielder to "tune" a weapon using this Charm, it must be built or modified to have a harmonic quality. A character who knows this Charm knows the principles of

musical weaponry. Actually building the weapon requires three dots in Craft (Air) and two dots in a Craft related to the weapon in question. Two characters—a smith and a poet-warrior, for example—can work together to create a musical weapon.

It's difficult for such weapons to be naturally useful in battle. A silver blade beaten together from filigree-fine chimes, for example, is more decorative than deadly, even in the hands of a master swordsman. Unless it is tuned, harmonic weaponry takes at least a -1 penalty to Accuracy because it isn't optimized for combat. Some forms of armor can be tuned as well, such as a breastplate shaped to ring like steel drums, for instance. Harmonic armor has its lethal and bashing soak reduced by one point each.

Once a Nightingale spends a six-tick action committing four motes to her weapon, the above weaknesses disappear, and the weapon gains a +1 bonus to each of its traits. If the weapon in question is a bow, its range increases by 50 yards. (Any other ranged weapon gains 10 yards.) Harmonic armor gains one point of lethal and bashing soak above normal.

Although bell-toned swords and magical singing staves would seem to be the most obvious choices, some Nightingales have made others. A minor goddess of archery keeps the bow of one long-dead practitioner on display in Yu-Shan, its hollow, flute-toned arrows arrayed tastefully before it. The only limitation on what may be made into a harmonic weapon is that it must actually be a weapon. Violins or wind chimes, no matter how sharp, cannot be used with this Charm.

ARIA OF TRANQUILITY

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

Type: Reflexive (Step 2)

Keywords: Combo-OK, Emotion, Obvious

Duration: One action

Prerequisite Charms: Dulcet Nightingale Form

Beginning softly in a minor key, the Nightingale's voice calms every listener whose Dodge MDV is lower than his (Charisma + Martial Arts). Soldiers drop their weapons, and vicious beasts sink to their haunches and bow their heads. Everyone can still act, but they have no desire to attack anyone, or even to speak cruelly. Most will placidly go about their business, speaking little so they can hear the music better.

Characters lulled by the serene aria can spend a Willpower point to take any offensive action, but they cannot wholly shake off its effects. Such actions suffer an internal penalty of the affected character's own (Compassion + Temperance). Someone who is entirely fixed on violence can eventually break through the effect, though. If, in one scene, a character spends more Willpower points to take offensive action than the Nightingale's Martial Arts score, then she becomes immune to this Charm for the rest of the scene.

If a character with this Charm has not learned the Charm Resounding Songbird's Cry, she suffers a -1 penalty to the number of bonus dice she receives for channeling Willpower through her Valor and Conviction. This penalty stacks with other Virtue penalties imposed by Charms of this style and is in effect regardless of whether the character is actually using the Charm.



RESOUNDING SONGBIRD'S CRY

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 3;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Weeping Nightingale Form

Throwing his head back and closing his eyes, the Silver-Voiced Nightingale shrieks an awful cry. Glass and crystal shatters spectacularly, as metal warps and blood pours from people's ears. The martial artist makes one attack using his (Perception + Martial Arts), with a base bashing damage of his Charisma. The attack strikes everyone within (Martial Arts x 10) yards, except the martial artist himself, and it cannot be dodged or parried without a stunt or a Charm. The attack cannot be aimed. The Nightingale cannot choose to spare anyone but himself. Bonuses from a Nightingale's harmonic weapon may apply to this attack (though the damage remains bashing unless it is augmented by a relevant Charm), as can any damage bonuses from Weeping Nightingale Form, should the character be using it.

If a character with this Charm has not learned the Charm Aria of Tranquility, she suffers a -1 penalty to the number of bonus dice she receives for channeling Willpower through her Compassion and Temperance. This penalty stacks with other Virtue penalties imposed by Charms of this style and is in effect regardless of whether the character is actually using the Charm.

IMPENDING SILENCE

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Emotion, Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Aria of Tranquility, Resounding Songbird's Cry

At the end of the world, there will be no sound at all. With a slicing gesture, sealing her lips closed, the Silver-Voiced Nightingale cuts off all the sounds around her, drawing forth a small part of the terrible silence to come.

For everyone within (Martial Arts x 10) yards of the martial artist, the world becomes utterly silent. They feel isolated, surrounded by strangers and unable to comprehend the despair that has descended upon them. Some sink to their knees; some cry helplessly. They remain inactive until the end of the scene.

A threat of imminent lethal damage can break the will-less despondency, as can touching an affected person and saying his name, but even these measures cannot enable the freed person to hear anything until he leaves the area around the martial artist. Spending more Willpower points than the Nightingale's Martial Arts score also lets a character defeat the emotional effect. Note, however, that characters normally spend just one Willpower point per action, and the character cannot take other actions until he spends all the necessary points. Characters with a higher Dodge MDV than the Nightingale's Martial Arts can act before then, but they still must spend a

Willpower point for every action they take until they spend enough points to overcome the effect entirely.

At the Storyteller's discretion, extras or un-Exalted mortal characters who suffer Impending Silence for its duration may be traumatized enough to suffer long-term mental effects such as catatonia or recurring nightmares.

Although it feels totally silent, the area is not actually hushed. People simply cannot perceive sound. Therefore, the Silver-Voiced Nightingale may use all Charms of this style with impunity. Other practitioners of the style may use Charms from this style as well, as long as they have freed themselves from the emotional effects of this Charm.

TIGER STYLE

The tiger has little need for cunning strategy. He can hide and stalk his victim, but the moment he spots weakness, he leaps, roaring, to kill. Sheer, ferocious power brings victory to the tiger.

Martial artists who emulate the tiger rely on swift, lethal attacks. They often share the tiger's fierce confidence of victory as well. No foe is too powerful to tear down. No defense is so perfect that it lasts forever. In the end, the tiger's strength and speed must triumph. Tiger Style martial artists can become arrogant, impatient or casually cruel from their certainty that they can simply defeat anyone who stands in their way.

Like many supernatural martial arts inspired by animals, Tiger Style is old beyond memory. It remains popular among the Lunar Exalted.

Weapons and Armor: Characters who practice this style may use tiger claws or razor claws freely (considering them unarmed Martial Arts attacks) with all of its Charms. This style is incompatible with the use of armor.

CRIMSON LEAPING CAT TECHNIQUE

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: One action

Prerequisite Charms: None

The character moves with the speed and agility of a leaping tiger. With this Charm active, add the character's Martial Arts score to her Dexterity for purposes of determining how far she can move, dash or jump in a single action.

STRIKING FURY CLAWS ATTACK

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Crimson Leaping Cat Technique

The character's Essence infuses his hands with the power of a tiger's deadly claws. His blows inflict lethal damage even if he isn't wearing tiger claws. If he is using tiger claws, add a number of damage dice equal to the character's Essence to his raw damage for the attack.



TIGER FORM

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2;

Type: Simple (Speed 3)

Keywords: Form-type

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Striking Fury Claws Attack

The character adopts the power and attitude of a raging tiger—crouching, quivering with barely restrained tension, ready to pounce. While using the Tiger Form, add the character's Martial Arts score to her raw damage when making Martial Arts attacks barehanded or while wearing tiger claws. The martial artist also adds her permanent Essence to her bashing and lethal soak totals. The character's Martial Arts attacks automatically inflict lethal damage in the form of bloody lacerations even if she isn't wearing tiger claws, and the character suffers no penalties for fighting while prone.

RAGING TIGER POUNCE

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: One action

Prerequisite Charms: Tiger Form

With the ferocious grace of a tiger leaping onto its doomed prey, the character uses his Essence to guide his attacks. If the player rolls a successful attack, the martial artist automatically knocks his opponent down. Only Charms or similar magical effects specifically designed to maintain a target character's balance can prevent the victim from falling.

SPINE-SHATTERING BITE

Cost: 3m + (1m per die); **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 3;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Raging Tiger Pounce

The character's Essence hardens her hands so they cause massive and deadly wounds. The character's unarmed punch attacks inflict a minimum of four levels of lethal damage (whether she uses tiger claws or not). For each additional mote of Essence spent, the character adds one die to a single attack, up to a limit of her [(Dexterity + Martial Arts) x 2]. The attacker's hands can even claw through wooden or iron-bound doors and deeply score stone in a single blow.

STALKING CAT MOVEMENT MEDITATION

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Tiger Form

This Charm enhances a Tiger martial artist's ability to sneak up on his opponent. For every two motes of Essence spent activating the Charm, the character's player may add one die to all Stealth and Awareness rolls involved in the ambush. The

effects remain until the character ambushes his target (or the target detects him). The character cannot spend more motes to increase his dice pool than he has points of permanent Essence. This Charm works only when a character actually sneaks up on an opponent. The character gains no bonuses if he tries to sneak away from danger like a mouse. The Charm also does not enhance Stealth for any other purpose (such as sneaking up to pick someone's pocket or evading a patrol of Black Helms).

LEAP FROM CLOAKING SHADOWS ATTACK

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Stalking Cat Movement Meditation

When an Exalt uses this Charm, her prey's fate is all but sealed. When the martial artist attacks a target who is not aware of her presence, the character ignores half of the target's lethal or bashing soak. The target's surprise must be total, however. The Charm doesn't work if the target knows the attacker's location or is aware of an impending attack. A target's successful use of the Surprise Anticipation Method completely negates the effects of this Charm.

CELESTIAL TIGER HIDE

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 2;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Tiger Form

The character infuses his body with the toughness of a tiger's hide, which manifests as jagged stripes of Essence across his skin. The character adds his Martial Arts score to his bashing and lethal soak for the rest of the scene. The Charm has no effect on aggravated damage.

ANGRY PREDATOR FRENZY STYLE

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Extra Action

Keywords: Counterattack, Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Spine-Shattering Bite, Leap from Cloaking Shadows Attack, Celestial Tiger Hide

As the snarling roar of an ethereal tiger echoes in the air, the character lashes out in a frenzy of deadly blows. A character using this Charm makes two Martial Arts attacks every action (with no multiple-action penalty). In addition, the character may immediately attempt a Martial Arts counterattack whenever she is successfully attacked. The martial artist's player adds the extra successes from the attacker's roll as bonus dice of raw damage to the character's own counterattack. This Charm cannot be used to retaliate against any other counterattack Charm. The character's attacks and counterattacks inflict lethal damage even if the martial artist does not wear tiger claws. A character who uses Angry Predator Style cannot use any other extra action Charms while this Charm remains active.





CHAPTER FOUR

SIDEREAL MARTIAL ARTS

Creation is more than what composes it. While Celestial martial arts take an aspect of the world or Heaven and seek to emulate its nature, the Sidereal martial arts transcend that limited understanding. Each Sidereal style offers its own enlightenment about the nature of Creation. Rather than acting as a facet of Creation, the designer of a Sidereal martial art integrates Creation as a facet of the style.

The Sidereal elders began developing these transcendent martial arts in the First Age, and their motives were not entirely philosophical. In pursuing the utmost secrets both of combat and Essence, they found power along with enlightenment. Each Sidereal art explores one of the fundamental principles shoring up reality. Their advanced Charms suggest the powers of things from beyond Creation, such as the reality-blurring fantasy of the Fair Folk, the destructive rot of the Demon Princes or the all-devouring hunger of Oblivion.

Because Sidereal martial arts are so powerful, they remain secret. Such power could inspire jealousy... or fear. Not only do the Sidereals continue to investigate the meaning of these martial arts styles, they refuse to teach these abilities to other

Exalted. This is not to say that some few Celestial Exalted have not found tutors over the millennia—just that they're rare and perhaps became targets of Sidereal vengeance.

This chapter describes seven martial arts from the Blossom of the Perfected Lotus—seven mystic lenses for viewing Creation and, perhaps, moving beyond it.

The **Border of Kaleidoscopic Logic Style** attacks identity and perception of reality.

The **Charcoal March of Spiders Style** enables practitioners to ensnare, transform and devour their foes.

The **Citrine Poxes of Contagion Style** grants mastery of disease: of the body, of the spirit and of Essence itself.

The **Obsidian Shards of Infinity Style** holds a mirror to Creation and breaks it.

The **Prismatic Arrangement of Creation Style** controls the flows of Essence itself for attack and defense.

The **Quicksilver Hand of Dreams Style** turns battles into nightmares.

The **Scarlet-Patterned Battlefield Style** grants command of motion and conflict.

CHARM CONCEPT: SIDEREAL SUTRAS

Each Sidereal style has a “student” and an “elder” sutra. Only the Chosen of Fate (or Eclipse and Moonshadow Caste Exalted who learn the Charms as a Sidereal) can sufficiently master Sidereal styles that they can use these sutras. A martial artist learns the student sutra upon learning the style’s Form-type Charm and the elder sutra after completing the entire style. Using either sutra requires the Sidereal to inscribe its text on a prayer strip in advance and then spend a Willpower point when he wants to use it. The prayer strip shines with a light characteristic of the style and rises to float beside the character for the scene. Invoking the student’s sutra reduces the cost of using Charms from that style by five motes per action. (In a Combo, subtract five motes from the total cost, not from the cost of using each Charm of the style that makes up the Combo.) The elder sutra reduces that cost by 10 motes and one Willpower per action. Elder sutras cannot reduce the Willpower cost of using Charms from that style below zero, and neither sutra can bring the total Essence cost of the style’s Charms below one mote in a given action.

Elder sutras trump student sutras. The two effects cannot be combined, but one may simultaneously use the sutras for two or more distinct styles.

BORDER OF KALEIDOSCOPIC LOGIC STYLE

Few practice this deliciously vengeful style. Indeed, few have ever heard of it. Outside of the Sidereal community itself, everyone who has witnessed this highly advanced secret art has been broken so thoroughly that they cannot express their knowledge to those around them. Or to themselves.

Sidereal masters of this style use their understanding of how actions and situations influence perceptions of the world. By affecting what a person perceives with these secret techniques, these rare warriors can inflict terrible madness on their enemies. The Sidereals consider the Border of Kaleidoscopic Logic one of their most powerful martial arts styles, and younger Sidereals lack the experience or skill to learn it.

Weapons and Armor: Practitioners may not use this style’s Charms while wearing armor or wielding weapons. In truth, weapons are irrelevant for most of its Charms.

The Student’s Sutra of Understanding: Four maidens walked through the door...

LAST HEART ENCLOSURE

Cost: 20m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 6, Essence 6;

Type: Simple (Speed 5, DV -2)

Keywords: Combo-OK, Illusion, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

...to a room where each found her most favored foods.

Home is where the heart is, and many do not keep their hearts in safe enough places. Instead, just as a seductress abuses insecurities of the soul to take a man’s heart from his happy home, the martial artist can reshape her victims’ loyalties.

The Exalt must impress a target with the sheer significance of her mien and how it should feel to be recognized by such a person. Her image assaults a single target, whom the character must be able to see in detail, and her player rolls (Appearance + Martial Arts) against that target’s Dodge MDV to steal his secret heart. This social attack always aligns with the target’s Temperance, reducing his MDV by two if his Temperance is greater than 2.

If she chooses, the martial artist may first instigate a clinch attack against her target. She does not move, instead ensnaring her target with invisible strands of tangible attention. The strong-willed are more easily snared by this grapple. If the martial artist accumulates fewer successes than her target has dots of Willpower, add one automatic success. Once the martial artist successfully clinches her target, her player makes





future opposed grapple rolls (with the same condition for an automatic success) reflexively on her action, allowing her to focus on other things. When she loses control of the grapple, by choice or otherwise, her player makes the (Appearance + Martial Arts) roll to steal her opponent's secret heart. For each action (including the first) that she maintained the grapple, she adds one automatic success to the roll.

Overcoming the victim's mental defenses makes the target believe he is a part of the character's solipsism. Certain that only the martial artist's awareness makes him real, the Charm's target tries to stay within the character's current awareness in order to remain real. "Being known by (the character)" becomes an additional Motivation for the victim, and he recovers Willpower only in the character's presence. When he is away from the martial artist or somehow sure that the character is not aware of him, the victim seeks to gain the character's attention through any means necessary. The only exception is when he believes the character will return to him, as when he waits in her bedchamber or some other frequented area.

The victim must spend two points of Willpower to shake this unnatural mental influence for a scene. Once he spends 20 temporary Willpower, he is free of the delusion forever. Any Charm or magical effect that could defeat this illusion effect has its Essence cost multiplied by the target's Temperance.

GAZING INTO THE VOID

Even among ancient Sidereal sifus, Border of Kaleidoscopic Logic is a rare style. Those few who know it also know why it is so rare: Its Charms are dangerous. Martial artists who master these Charms can use them to trap their enemies in phantasmal worlds or to decimate their memories. No one wants such a thing happening to himself, so the rare instructor who decides to teach this style is exceedingly picky about his students.

Still, the Exalted are not defenseless against the Border of Kaleidoscopic Logic Style. Solar Exalted have Charms such as Temptation-Resisting Stance to improve their MDVs, and Elusive Dream Defense and Transcendent Hero's Meditation can resist or shatter many of these effects with a few minutes' concentration. The Dragon-Blooded can defend themselves with Charms such as Oath of the Ten-Thousand Dragons or Granite Curtain of Serenity. One can cast off any Compulsion effect with Inviolable Dragon Spirit or use Purity of Mind Method to free others from theirs.

BIRTH OF THE PERFECT EGO JUGGERNAUT

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 6, Essence 6;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Illusion

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Also there was all they ever wanted.

Thin veils separate desire, belief and knowledge. This technique tears them away. With the slightest touch, the character dooms his foe (or sacrifices his friend) to a world without failure.

A mere brush with a finger realigns the victim's spiritual centers, or chakras. In combat, a normal (Dexterity + Martial Arts) attack must penetrate the target's defense but need not inflict any damage. If the attack succeeds, the world reshapes itself around the target's needs and desires. There is no immediate sensation, but a victim of this Charm knows with utmost certainty (as she takes her next rolled action) that she is fated to succeed. Most people would revel in such a feeling and glory in destiny's aid when completing their action. The target must specifically choose to deny fate, succeeding or failing the action under only her own power, in order to evade the Charm's effects. Otherwise, she forfeits her mental defense.

Should the target attempt to refuse this aid, the martial artist's player rolls his (Martial Arts + Essence) and adds a number of automatic successes equal to his Performance, comparing the result to the target's Dodge MDV. For some people, this unnatural mental influence may oppose a Virtue.

When the target accepts fate or succumbs to the character's mental onslaught, her player adds 10 successes to all her rolls for the next minute, making even her attempts at routine tasks epic. This bonus does not count toward the maximum number of successes or dice a character may gain from Charms. After one minute, the target receives one fewer free success, and she loses another for each minute that follows. The target is the only person who cannot become aware of this waning perfection. To her, her every act continues to outperform the gods. It does take time before the target's perception departs from reality. For several minutes, she really does clear the battlefield with sweeping blows, draw up brilliant architectural plans or wow society with her daring repartee. Thereafter, she does only as well as she normally can—maybe worse, since she's so out of touch—but her eyes see continued brilliance, perfect blows against her enemies, infinite strength and wisdom. She succeeds at her every aspiration with luck, grace and effort to spare.

The target's madness makes excuses for Creation's mistakes. If she tries to run without rest from Gethamane to Chiaroscuro, it is a great blowing storm, rife with mischievous spirits that slows her—not her rubbery legs. When guards force her from a ball where her atrocious dance and voice earned her a black mark, they are beaux escorting her to a private audience with the disguised marquis, and they refuse her entrance later with soft pleas that they cannot stand to weep so oft for beauty. The sheer cliff that she strikes thrice in order to shape it into a perfect palace appears so, but monsters or villains appear to destroy it.

Even using Charms or other magic to cure the psychological malady cannot always help the victim of this Charm. Returning to a world where you are not effortlessly perfect can break a person in ways no Charm can fix. Occasionally, a Sidereal must inflict this torture on a friend or ally, when he must achieve a very difficult task.

IMPERSONAL PERSONAL DENATURE STING

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 6, Essence 6;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Toys and games,

Being defeated by a true master of the martial arts can be an enlightening experience. Indeed, masters pride themselves on granting a learning experience. Attacks supplemented with this Charm inflict only bashing damage but double their raw damage. A victim who fills his Incapacitated level with bashing damage inflicted by this attack falls immediately unconscious, despite any efforts to remain awake. Extra bashing damage does not convert to lethal.

While unconscious, the character dreams of his encounter with the martial artist. He sees her approach and begin the conflict, and the final blow overwhelms him many, many times. He wakes up a changed man... for his Virtues have shifted.

Note the total of the target's Virtues, then reduce them all to 0. For each Virtue, roll one die and divide the roll result by two (rounding down). That number is the new Virtue rating. Add up the total of the new Virtue ratings.

- If the new total equals the target's old total, you're done.

- If the new total is less than the old total, roll a single die for each Virtue. If the die rolls a success, add one dot to the Virtue. On a failure, add nothing. On a botch, subtract one.

- If the new total is greater than the old total, roll a single die for each Virtue, but subtract one dot from the Virtue on a success and add one for a botch.

Continue until the target's total Virtues equal his old total. Virtues cannot drop to less than 0. If a Virtue rises above 5, ignore any roll that adds to it still further. The character may nevertheless end up with some Virtues above 5 and some at 0, making him potentially more and less than human—fanatic in some ways or unconcerned in others.

Alternatively, the character may shape her unconscious victim's Virtues herself. Doing so requires her to maintain continuous physical contact with him from the point when he loses consciousness until her next action. Without special effort, maintaining contact thus applies a -1 external penalty to the character's DVs due to limited mobility. The Charm takes on the Touch keyword. The martial artist may then move a number of dots of the victim's Virtues equal to her own Essence, but she must leave at least one dot in each Virtue and may raise none higher than 5.

Exalted affected by this Charm may have a new primary Virtue. In that case, change the character's Flaw to suit her new highest Virtue. Limit rating transfers as well. Raising a Virtue from 0 requires powerful magic or a potent quest. Some savants believe the Fair Folk have Virtues to trade.

KALEIDOSCOPIC DISRECOGNITION ATEMU

Cost: 10m, 2wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 6, Essence 7;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Compulsion, Illusion

Duration: (Target's Essence) actions

Prerequisite Charms: None

companions,

The ability to discern one person from another should stem from the person's soul, not her face. Appearance is a façade. The martial artist proves this when he activates this shattering attack. First, he moves so quickly he blurs into the background, traversing as much as (Essence x 50) yards in order to reach his target. As the Exalt strikes, he moves so quickly he appears to be in four places at once, though there is only one true attack. What's more, each version of himself looks completely different. The character may determine his brief appearance with complete control, as long as he appears human. The target's player rolls (Perception + [Ability relevant to defense]) against a difficulty equal to the martial artist's Dexterity to identify and react to the true attack. Failure means that the attack becomes unexpected.

If the blow connects (though it need not inflict damage), it disrupts the target's mind and Essence, though the damage builds slowly. A day after the attack, the target's mind begins to filter every person she perceives through her unbridled memory, replacing each random person's image with someone she previously encountered. These images are drawn from the inaccessible depths of a person's perfect memory. The roster includes everyone from old friends, parents and lovers to someone seen only once (at a distance, in a crowd). The stronger the memory of a person and emotional attachment to (or revulsion from) that person is, the more frequently his image takes another person's place. Smell and voice accompany the image. In cases where the target could never discern the person's personal scent or had never heard his voice, her mind makes something up. In large crowds, the target can see multiple images—sometimes at different ages—of the same person. Any first encounter with an individual is exempt. The first impression is always true, and a new person looks then like he or she does to everyone else. During this encounter, the person's image, voice and scent join myriad others in the victim's memory for eventual recycling.

Although no one except a completely new individual will ever look like himself again to the target of this Charm, the target has no chance to get used to her shopkeeper looking like her father and her lover looking like a total stranger of the other gender. Every time she sleeps, the images her mind associates with the various people she's seen reset. Going to bed beside a stranger, she might wake up next to her first sifu. Knocked out in a bar fight, she won't know who's friend or foe when she gets up.

Stress and weakness aggravates the issue. Whenever the Charm's target has seven points of temporary Willpower or less, her mind changes each person's image after each scene



instead of each day. Characters with permanent Willpower ratings of seven or less always suffer this level of confusion. With only four points of temporary Willpower remaining to her, the target's perception of people changes every time she looks away or blinks. She also has trouble telling whether someone is standing still or moving, and which way he is moving. Her player may roll (Perception + Integrity) at difficulty 2 in order to keep track of one person by location. At zero Willpower, people change as she watches, and they move or slide through her vision even when sitting still. The (Perception + Integrity) roll becomes difficulty 4. During combat, tracking a person is a DV -1 miscellaneous action. Failing the roll means the victim attacks the wrong person or, if there is only one opponent, she misses completely.

The target can force some constancy on her life for a short while. By spending one point of Willpower, she can force her mind not to change anyone's aspect for a full day, assuming she doesn't sleep or lose consciousness. For two points, she prevents one person's image from changing during her next period of unconsciousness; that person's appearance also remains constant until then. If she spends three points all at once, she perceives one person's true image until her perceptions next change. No amount of Willpower breaks this effect completely or permanently, but Charms such as Transcendent Hero's Meditation can defeat it. Multiply the Essence cost of Charms that cure this effect by the target's Conviction.

WORDS ARE NOT ENOUGH INFLICTION

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 6, Essence 7;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Impersonal Personal Denature Sting, Kaleidoscopic Disrecognition Atemi

tales of wonder,

Infants have great freedom of thought, but no basis for understanding. Adults have a lifetime of education and experience, but they are wrapped in their habits of thought. Tightest of these chains is language. The Primordials designed mortals to communicate and interact, and so mortals do, clipping the wings of their minds.

When invoking this Charm, the martial artist names a language family (see *Exalted*, p. 109) and evokes an image of that language's dominant god. God-images always have some features appropriate to the language's home. Forest-tongue dictates leaves, roots or other forms of life; High Realm must evince stone and regality. Anyone who speaks or understands that chosen language and can possibly see the image has her gaze drawn to it. They see the martial artist strike at this avatar of language with fist and Essence, and the image shatters into a thousand pieces.

The players of all who observe the event roll their characters' (Intelligence + [Integrity or Linguistics] + Essence) against a difficulty of the martial artist's Essence. If the roll fails, they lose one dot of Linguistics and all

ability to speak or comprehend that language. People who do not speak that language are not affected. An affected character can never again speak, write, read or understand that language. Remember that most characters speak only their native tongue fluently, and they know other learned languages imperfectly.

A character robbed of her only (or last, should this Charm be used multiple times) known language can never again learn any language. The victim can never raise her Linguistics above 0. The martial artist has ripped an ephemeral but permanent binding from her. The victim no longer understands any form of interpersonal communication, and her soul becomes free of the structure of words. No method of social or mental influence that depends on communication can affect her. She adds the higher of her Intelligence or Essence in dice to any action that involves creativity, invention, spatial reasoning, gut-level understanding, exerting one's will instead of one's flesh and other efforts potentially hindered by the constraints of language. Of course, she can never communicate her brilliance to others.

TWO SCORE MIRROR GLANCE

Cost: 20m, 2wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 6, Essence 7;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Illusion, Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Last Heart Enclosure, Birth of the Perfect Ego Juggernaut

tools for beauty,

The end is in the beginning. To use this Charm, a martial artist perfectly mirrors his own previous actions—but in reverse. His opponent realizes that time has now begun to flow backward, and she is doomed to live out into her past until life ends in the womb.

As long as the victim can see the martial artist, she can suffer the Charm's mental attack. The martial artist's player rolls (Martial Arts + Essence), adding a number of automatic successes equal to his Compassion. The Charm takes hold if the roll exceeds his target's Dodge MDV.

The target stops moving. For the next six ticks, she no longer perceives reality. Within her mind, she experiences her entire life backward, conscious of events but unable to change anything she did in the past. It happens in an instant, but to her, the experience lasts her entire lifetime. Her player may roll (Integrity + Willpower) against a difficulty of the character's (Martial Arts + Essence). Success breaks her out of the trance. Failure costs her one point of temporary Willpower as she experiences complete helplessness, but it reduces the difficulty of the (Integrity + Willpower) roll by one and allows her to roll again. This cycle continues until the victim breaks free of the entrapment or runs out of temporary Willpower, at which point she believes her existence ends with her first moment of sentience. The target suffers a number of levels of unsoakable bashing damage equal to her attacker's Essence and returns to reality, gasping for life and bereft of will.



Further, the trance displays the victim's past not only how she perceived it, but also as it truly was. When the two are different, they are thrown into stark relief. Whenever the victim re-experiences a portion of her life in which what she perceived was not real, she recognizes the illusion for what it was. If the illusion still afflicts her, it is cured when the trance ends. Because this aspect of Two Score Mirror Glance costs nothing to invoke once it is active, using it to break illusions from Birth of the Perfect Ego Juggernaut or Kaleidoscopic Disrecognition Atemi does not suffer increased mote cost.

Because subjects of this Charm experience every moment of their previous life as if it happened at normal speed (although backward), masters sometimes use this Charm to enlighten their pupils. Some Sidereals use it to recover lost memories of their past or as explorative meditation. Since breaking out of the trance sooner means the subject experiences less of her life, a master may forbid his disciples from exercising their wills during this sort of lesson.

FREEING THE FATHER FROM THE CHILD

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 6, Essence 7;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Birth of the Perfect Ego Juggernaut, Impersonal Personal Denature Sting
and release from obligation.

One has never learned enough, but the victim of this Charm will never learn again. When the character attacks

(with whatever Martial Arts attack she wants), her slashing knife hand looks bladed and devilishly sharp, and her victim appears to onlookers like a figure of shining threads. The attack inflicts lethal piercing damage. It reduces the effectiveness of mundane armor by five bashing and lethal soak and magical armor by two until it can be repaired. The Charm must inflict damage to take full effect, but each success on the damage roll also reduces the target's MDV by one against the following assault. The martial artist's player immediately rolls (Manipulation + Martial Arts + Essence) against the target's reduced MDV. Success imposes upon the target a permanent case of anterograde amnesia.

The victim remembers everything in his life until the point when the Charm affected him. Nothing that happens after the decisive attack sticks with him. He remembers the last five to 10 minutes. This is enough for the victim to make sense of a combat scene or a brief verbal exchange, but anything further in the past gets muddled. His memory is fuzzy enough that he does not react violently when he wakes up in a different location than he went to sleep, but he does need to meet people and learn events all over again. As time passes, he becomes more and more dissociated from reality. To the victim, it seems like everything's changed since just last night.

A target of this Charm may exert his will to keep some additional memories. He may spend one point of Willpower beforehand to retain everything that happens over the next hour or after-the-fact to remember the last scene. The victim may still spend experience to improve traits. Muscle memory





and trained reflexes still function, allowing him to increase physical skills. It is harder to learn a language or improve one's Lore, but it's possible with patience and Willpower.

Eliminating the problem does not allow the victim to regain lost memories—they are gone for good, barring use of Two Score Mirror Glance to experience that period all over again. Yet it does allow him to begin remembering what he experiences. Double the Essence cost of any Charm used to cure this mental condition.

BORDER OF KALEIDOSCOPIC LOGIC FORM

Cost: 20m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 7, Essence 7;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Form-type, Obvious, Shaping

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: One complete Celestial martial art (all Charms), Words Are Not Enough Infliction, Freeing the Father from the Child

So much for freedom.

Identity is a mere trick of Essence. Strands of fate weave through the Essence of Creation. They too are made of Essence, and this determines who and what a person is. The martial artist who uses the Border of Kaleidoscopic Logic Form unravels her own strands of fate and sends them out to snare other people and wrap them in her own pattern.

While this Charm is active, the character's Essence diffuses through others. She may attempt to mentally assault any sentient entity she touches as a reflexive action. Her player rolls (Manipulation + Martial Arts + Essence) and adds a number of automatic successes equal to her Presence against the target's Dodge MDV. When successful, the character asserts a total control effect upon the target. For the rest of the scene, she controls the character's body as if it were her own. She may move with it, attack with it, laugh or talk with it or simply leave it static. Her actions with this person's body use her own Attributes and Abilities, and the body takes on the character's posture and expression while it is under her influence.

Controlling another body in no way hinders the martial artist's control of her own body. In effect, she now has two bodies operating under a single mind, each taking separate actions. She may use her Charms or Combos through her victim's body, escaping the normal Charm-per-action limitations. Each body benefits from the Form-type Charm simultaneously. She may also tap into the Peripheral Essence pool of anyone whose body she commands, using it to fuel any Charms that body uses. Sidereal sutras benefit only those Charms used by the character's true body with her natural Essence pool. The owner of a suborned body may reflexively spend a point of Willpower to take control of the body for a single action. When controlling more than one body, the character's player may reflexively roll (Charisma + War) to coordinate the attacks of some or all her bodies (natural or not). All dice on this roll come up successes. A character may not ensnare more people in this way at one time than

she has dots of Essence, but she may release a body reflexively if she suddenly wishes to take over another.

RELIANT SOUL INFILTRATION

Cost: 12m, 1wp, 1xp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 7, Essence 8;

Type: Simple (Speed 3)

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Ten minutes

Prerequisite Charms: Border of Kaleidoscopic Logic Form

The Elder Sutra of Understanding: Everything is somewhere else.

Speaking her name twice and a secret name once, the martial artist creates a duplicate of her personality in the form of a glistening shard of anima that she draws from her mouth. It quickly disappears in her hands like a conjuror's trick. The next time she touches a sentient entity, which requires a (Dexterity + Martial Arts) attack in combat, she insinuates that replica of her mind into her target. Her identity surges along the flows of Essence to the target's soul, the seat of his self, where it attempts to take command. The martial artist maintains a tie between both identities, perceiving both her normal senses and an internal, purely mental sense of the struggle to dominate her target's body.

Upon touching her target, the martial artist immediately attempts an unnatural mental attack based on (Manipulation + Presence + Essence). She may supplement this attack with Excellencies as usual. Should she overcome the target's highest MDV, the character exerts a total control effect. She is free to command any actions from her victim for the next 10 minutes—usually the rest of the scene, but only 10 long ticks in social combat time. The martial artist is able to use her victim's body, Charms and other abilities with complete efficiency, but with her own Mental Attributes, knowledge-based Abilities, Virtues and Willpower. If the takeover fails, the character may make a number of additional reflexive attempts equal to her Presence on her following actions.

When the 10 minutes are up, the magic of the Charm fades. Essence no longer forces the body's owner into the backseat—but the Charm-created identity is self-aware. Its preservation instinct is as strong as that of the original character, and it will not go quietly. Both identities inside the victim's body make a single attack against the other's Dodge MDV. Either may utilize the body's inherent Charms. Whichever gains the most net successes wins control of the body; the losing identity is completely destroyed.

The martial artist might not wish her duplicate identity to live on, whether out of kindness to her victim or jealousy toward her identity. She may design it to fail at the moment of final conflict. If she does, the replica divides its Dodge MDV in half before applying Charms or stunts.

Whoever wins, this is when the martial artist's player loses control of the target body. If the body's original mind wins, the martial artist's influence is clearly over. Even if the character's replica wins, it is no longer connected to the martial artist's mind. Though the two identities have

identical histories, the different experiences each has from that point on quickly turn them into individuals. They likely share goals and morals—for a while—but the character's secondary personality changes rapidly, especially based on the qualities of the body it now inhabits. Mortal bodies make the mind more cautious and less carefree, while inhabiting an alien body makes the personality alien.

WITHOUT ASSUMPTION

Cost: 12m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 7, Essence 8; **Type:** Reflexive

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: (Martial Arts x 2) actions

Prerequisite Charms: Border of Kaleidoscopic Logic Form

Here, there is nothing.

The Sidereal imagines a place where he does not exist and has never existed. He invents the names of the people who live there. Donning a perfect expression of one of those names in his stance, he becomes a non-entity. For the Charm's duration, the martial artist is not a valid target for any effect or action. Others cannot recognize or remember him. Without Assumption does not replace the character's attacks with non-attacks; other entities may still target and affect these. Without Assumption also does not protect against Charms and natural "attacks" that affect anyone within an area: An avalanche, say, or the Citrine Poxes of Contagion Form, don't really target anyone. They just happen, and anyone unlucky enough to be in the area takes damage.

Example: An unnamed Sidereal martial artist uses Without Assumption and becomes a non-entity. For the Charm's duration, no one may specifically target her with attacks or Charms. When she attacks a Solar Exalt, he may recognize the assault and activate relevant defensive Charms. He may not use a counterattack, as that targets the Sidereal and not the attack (unless the "counterattack" takes the form of some sort of aura that automatically damages anyone who touches the Solar). Had the Solar a Charm that simultaneously increased DVs and offered a counterattack, he could benefit from the improved defense but not from the counterattack.

BEAUTY IS IN THE EYE

Cost: 20m, 2wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 7, Essence 8;

Type: Simple (Speed 8)

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Obvious, Shaping

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Reliant Soul Infiltration, Without Assumption

Why stay?

Humans have great power in them, gifts from their creators sadly contained and constrained by their silly little clay bodies. If they could open that flesh and step out, they could express a smidgen of their potential. Instead, they sit and bake in their prisons of mud, just waiting to be cracked open. This Charm blows breath on that small spark of power all creatures received from their Primordial makers and gives it enough fuel to blossom into a raging wildfire.





Activating this Charm, a portion of Creation opens around the Exalt, peeling outward from a single axis like an eye with the character as the pupil. It is a two-dimensional rift in a three-dimensional space, and it appears the same from all perspectives. It can be seen clearly up to 10 miles away. Closing, the character disappears with it.

She undergoes a transformation while nowhere, gaining the following benefits:

- Her Valor manifests itself in her living body, adding (Valor x 2) to the character's Strength and Charisma. Incidentally, this change doubles her stature.

- Temperance manifests itself by adding (Temperance x 2) to the character's Stamina and Wits. She also gains an elemental nature relevant to her location in Creation, as if she were made of wood, the sea, truly living rock or the like. Greater Temperance evokes this nature more strongly in the eyes of those who view her.

- Add the martial artist's (Conviction x 2) to her Intelligence and Manipulation and a like amount to her bashing and lethal soak. She takes on the aspect of the god or force that blessed her with power (usually one of the Maidens), and greater Conviction strengthens that in her appearance.

- Add (Compassion x 2) to the martial artist's Dexterity and Perception. She becomes both death and life at once. Anyone who looks at her sees his birth and demise and feels at once terrified and serene. Greater Compassion makes this facet more readily apparent.

- If her Appearance is 3 or more, it triples. If it is 2 or less, it drops to 0.

(These improvements do not count toward the limit of dice that may be added through Charms.)

- She is considered outside of fate. Certain effects that depend on manipulating the Loom of Fate cannot touch her.

- Moreover, her magnificent god-shape is an expression of the Primordials that created humanity. Bound as they are not to harm their creators, gods and elementals may not attack the character in any way. When she targets a god or elemental with a social attack, consider that attack to be in accord with the target's Motivation.

- The character's form is magnificent and beautiful, but too extreme and true for Creation. Others who look upon her terrible visage lose one point of temporary Willpower. Assume that people avert their gazes unless they attack her or are forced to look at her.

- The martial artist's attacks drain her opponents' Virtues. When she inflicts damage, she also strips a single dot of one Virtue (her choice) from her target. Each point of Virtue that she steals gives her motes of Essence equal to the target's Essence rating. Damaged Virtues "heal" at a rate of one dot per day. When the character takes a dot of Virtue, she also experiences accompanying memories and emotions from her target. She gains a cumulative -1 penalty to her MDVs against that target for the rest of the scene.

- The character's mind is not contained. What things she imagines seem real to others, though they are only weakly phantasmal. When she sweeps with her sword, a rain of steel flies toward her victim. As she parries, pillars of stone erupt from the ground to join in blocking the blow. Sometimes, even armies on the march or nightmare monsters flicker in and out of existence around her. These visions might add bonuses to intimidation rolls or be used in stunts.

On the martial artist's next action after invoking this Charm, she bursts through the veil of invention into the space she occupied before. Everything within 10 yards suffers five levels of aggravated damage, within 50 yards suffers 10L, and within 200 yards suffers 20B. When the Charm ends, the monstrous entity disappears in an instant, replaced with the character's normal form.

MEDITATIVE BATTLEFIELD ESCALATION

Cost: 15m, 2wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 8, Essence 8;

Type: Simple (Speed 3)

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Beauty is in the Eye

Go find everything.

Creation is a mundane place to do battle and one that does not allow for true expression of the warrior's soul. This Charm creates a separate realm. Some claim the character forges it in Elsewhere. Others insist that it exists only in the mind. Regardless, the character appears in a battlefield that is completely of his devising. Scale is usually unimaginably enormous. Range after range of mountains might contain dozens of Imperial Mountains each. The roots of a giant tree might separate several warring cities. The interior of a First Age mechanistic god could stand replete with economically competing nations and heroic god-machines. The battlefield might even lie inside an enormous human body that is failing due to disease. Anything is possible.

At the moment of this place's construction, the martial artist can include any or all people within his line of sight in his new world, at any level of selectivity. This is no invitation. Anyone the character desires in his pocket realm appears there and perceives it. What nature the sentient "inhabitants" take depends on the nature of the place. They might be the mountain ranges themselves or each a warring society amidst the tree's roots. In the technological world, they might become competing nations or heroes versus decay. In the ailing body, they could be fighting to save it or to kill it from within. No one is bound to stay on this battlefield. Each person subject to the Charm can spend three points of Willpower to escape the constructed place into the real world.

The martial artist designs how conflicts resolve in this place. He chooses one Virtue as the base of damaging an opponent's position. He likewise designates another Virtue as foundation for a defense. Most likely, the character makes choices based on his strengths. Each Virtue combines with an Ability to make an attack or a defense. These decisions



relate to how conflict materializes in the world. Attacking with (Conviction + Craft [Earth]) might describe one mountain range shifting over the course of eons, trying to engulf mountains of another range and claim them. (Conviction + Bureaucracy), in the same scenario, might represent a society of miners depleting another mountain's ores and depriving it of its Essence. (Temperance + Larceny) in the god-machine tricks an opposing nation into devoting its resources to an external expedition, weakening them. (Compassion + Medicine) drives internal parasites out of the ailing body, strengthening it. (Valor + Medicine) might incite the pathogens to deal more damage while an opponent's (Compassion + Socialize) strengthens the body's internal defenses into a powerful community to resist that attack. Any skill except Martial Arts can be used to attack or defend, as appropriate. The player of each person summoned to the battlefield distributes her Martial Arts dots among her Virtues as desired, with no limit. Defense is calculated as (Virtue + chosen Ability + Essence) divided by two, rounded up, for all involved. Specialties, if characters have any that apply, add to their Abilities for the purpose of both offense and defense. The chosen Ability can vary from one defense to the next.

All players of involved characters begin conflict by rolling (Essence + Martial Arts) as the Join Battle action. Attacks are Speed 4, Rate 3 and reduce one's DV by one each, and combatants may flurry as normal. Guard actions take three ticks. Characters may also aim and coordinate attacks, whose Speeds and DV penalties remain the same. Someone successfully attacked suffers one level of bashing damage and loses one point of temporary Willpower. A character drained of or without Willpower suffers lethal instead of bashing damage, and anyone rendered incapacitated fades from the made-up world. An aggressor may instead choose to attack one of an enemy's Virtues. Success reduces the targeted Virtue by one and allows the attacker to regain either one point of Willpower or four motes of Essence. Damaged Virtues return naturally at the rate of one per day (beginning after Meditative Battlefield Escalation ends). A person who suffers from a reduced Virtue may reclaim one dot (reflexively on her action) by submitting to an unnatural mental influence dictated by her choice among the attackers who harmed the Virtue.

- Reclaiming Compassion renders the target subject to a conditional Emotion effect named by the attacker. Default is abject fear when confronted with the attacker in the real world, but love of a certain country or unbridled rage at a specific creature or class are examples of other valid choices.

- Reclaiming Temperance renders the target subject to one short-term Compulsion effect. Default is to give the character who took the Virtue one item valuable to the target, but any task that takes no longer than one week to perform can be a valid command.

- Reclaiming Conviction renders the target subject to an Illusion effect about the target's self. Default is to believe

that the target has no martial skill whatsoever, but any effect that deals centrally with the character's ability, worth or nature is valid.

- Reclaiming Valor renders the target subject to a Servitude effect topical to the created world. There is no default. One might be dedication to the cause of careful mining, fighting to prevent general decay or healing the sick.

The martial artist has the following advantages in this environment: He can make a number of attacks per action equal to his Essence at full dice pools, at only -1 DV per two attacks (round down). He adds a number of dice equal to his Essence to all attacks. He may inflict lethal or aggravated damage instead of bashing at his pleasure.

Stunts are as flexible here as in the real world, if not more so, and they function in the same manner. Making an interesting attack garners one die, using the environment in a clever way earns two and wowing the other participants is worth three. They earn rewards of Essence or Willpower as normal.

Charms can be used here at normal cost. Excellencies add dice to attacks or defenses, but never more than the relevant Ability used. Combining more specialized Charms with this place's abstruse methods of conflict is only sometimes effective. If the effect makes sense in the context of the attack, such as using Wise-Eyed Courtier Method to convince a mining town to relocate to an opponent's range, apply a number of automatic successes to the attack equal to the Charm's minimum Essence requirement. In the rare event that a Charm makes perfect sense being used as normal, its effects may apply in full at the Storyteller's discretion.

Any person on the battlefield who has mastered this Charm may attempt once during the battle to alter the environment and its conditions. Her player rolls (Intelligence + Lore) as her action against the martial artist's DV based on the same pool plus Essence.

The character's personal battlefield collapses into nothing when he is defeated or he has no more opponents. At that moment, all participants return (sometimes unconscious) to the real world. No time has passed since the character first invoked Meditative Battlefield Escalation. Though vast numbers may initially be a part of this shared environment, players and the Storyteller should focus on resolving the actions and states of the principal actors. Extras are weak enough that they have little impact on the conflict, and most will spend the Willpower to escape such a strange and frightening world.

CHARCOAL MARCH OF SPIDERS STYLE

This particular style of Sidereal martial arts dates back to the early First Age; possibly back to the Primordial War itself. Its Charms provide many forms of attack, defense and movement—the usual benefits of a martial art, but made frighteningly strange and powerful. The advanced Charms of the style produce bizarre effects of ensnarement and transformation.



Charcoal March of Spiders Style uses the spider as a symbol to explore the cosmic principle of Consumption. A master of the style may consume life, Essence, the forms of existence and existence itself—and spin the power one consumes into new forms. At least some aspects of the style come from observing the enigmatic godlings called pattern spiders, created by the Primordial artificer Autochthon to tend the Loom of Fate. A master of the style gains a faint echo of Autochthon's own power to shape reality, consuming what is to produce what might be.

Weapons and Armor: Characters can use knives or seven-section staffs (and their artifact equivalents) as unarmed attacks for the purposes of this style. If a particular Charm allows a practitioner to create wires or threads, attacking with them is considered unarmed as well. Characters cannot use this style while wearing armor.

The Student's Sutra of Consumption: Once there was a small maiden...

UNNATURAL MANY-STEP STRIDE

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Simple (Speed 4)

Keywords: Combo-OK, Emotion, Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

...whose skill was great enough to climb a whirlwind over water.

The character scuttles along the unseen strands of fate woven throughout Creation, allowing him to take normal Move actions (or even to stand still) on thin air as easily as on the ground. He can also reflexively spend a mote of Essence to dematerialize between one action and the next, allowing him to become invisible and intangible. While he is under this Charm's influence, the Sidereal climbs on the strands using his hands and feet, with his elbows and knees turned outward like a spider's long legs. The eerie, alien grace of his movements both unsettles and horrifies other people who witness them. The player of a witness who doesn't have this Charm must succeed at a reflexive Valor roll on every action, lest the witness lose her action.

DANCE OF THE HUNGRY SPIDER

Cost: 8m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Reflexive (Step 1 or 2)

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Five actions

Prerequisite Charms: Unnatural Many-Step Stride

Arrows fell upon her, forcing her to descend.

The character moves in a sliding, shifting kata, her feet constantly moving and nearly impossible for the eye to track. Only the third of three separate, successful attempts made by the same character can sweep the martial artist, knock her down, clinch or hold her, or make a targeted attack against her lower body. These attempts may be separate actions, part of a flurry on the same action or a combination of the two. That is, a character

might try to sweep the Sidereal's legs in one simple action (and succeed), then duck into a spinning flurry on his next action and make four more attempts to sweep the Sidereal's legs. If at least two of those four attempts succeed, the character sweeps the Sidereal's legs out from under her. Sweep attempts need not be consecutive, but only the successful ones performed in the same combat count toward the necessary total.

While the character uses this Charm, she can glide almost effortlessly out of the way of a blow. Noticing an incoming physical attack allows her to slip away reflexively, moving up to (Dexterity x 2) yards (even if she has already moved or even dashed in this action). If the attack can still hit her at this range, the Charm increases any associated external range penalties by one success. Attacks that would need to hit her before she moves out of range (such as hand-to-hand attacks) suffer an external penalty equal to half the martial artist's Join Battle dice pool, rounded up. After the first attack, a hand-to-hand attacker would need to move into range again to hit her at all.

Similarly, the martial artist can scuttle forward up to (Dexterity x 2) yards (even after taking a Move action) to make any of her unarmed Martial Arts attacks. Attempts to parry such an attack suffer a Parry DV penalty equal to half the martial artist's Join Battle dice pool, rounded up, or a value equal to the martial artist's Essence (whichever is higher). Dodging such an attack is a little bit easier, such that Dodge DV penalties equal the lower of those two choices.

Although the rapid advance or retreat made possible by this Charm is reflexive, a character using it can either advance thus once or retreat thus once per action—not both.

MAW OF DRIPPING VENOM

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Stackable, Touch

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

But the Essence burning within her set the arrows afire.

The martial artist's fingers needle into the target's flesh, tainting the target's Essence such that her soul slowly dissolves from the inside. The martial artist's player rolls a normal Martial Arts attack, which inflicts its standard damage if it succeeds. The target then begins to hemorrhage Personal Essence, losing five motes every action, exactly as if she had spent them. This effect lasts for one action per damage die the martial artist's player rolled, and multiple applications of this effect stack. When the target runs out of Personal Essence, she collapses into a coma for a number of days equal to the attacker's Martial Arts score. When that many days elapse, the afflicted character awakes with only hazy recollections of what happened to knock her out. Any motes of Peripheral Essence she had when she lost consciousness have now been converted to Personal Essence, with any excess over her maximum Personal Essence simply bleeding away. The victim begins to regain Essence at her normal rate after she wakes up.

Given three (Speed 5, DV-2) actions of physical contact with a comatose target, a character with this Charm can suck out and devour the target's soul (even if he was not the one to inflict the condition in the first place). Doing so restores the devourer's temporary Essence to its normal maximum, regardless of how much Peripheral Essence the target had remaining. The target dies and fails to move on to the afterlife. If the martial artist consumes a Celestial Exalt, he still refills his temporary Essence but grows sick over the next three days. At that point, he spits out the consumed Celestial Essence, suffering six dice of lethal damage (which ignore armor and soak).

RAIN OF UNSEEN THREADS

Cost: 8m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Extra Action

Keywords: Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

She answered the arrows' flight with a storm of her own.

The character extrudes a number of fine threads of Essence equal to her permanent Essence. These threads are under her control, and manipulating them counts as an unarmed Martial Arts attack. Each thread can attempt one of the following maneuvers, at a range equal to (the martial artist's Essence x 10) yards.

- Lift and manipulate a single unattended weapon or object. Attacking with a weapon held by a thread relies on the martial artist's normal traits and counts as an unarmed Martial Arts attack. Parrying with such a weapon relies on the character's standard Parry DV, ignoring any bonus or penalty to Defense from the weapon.

- Pierce an opponent's skin, as a normal unarmed Martial Arts attack that inflicts lethal damage.

- Disarm, sweep or grapple an opponent. Doing so uses the character's full (Dexterity + Martial Arts) pool with none of the standard penalties for disarming.

The character can also take a physical action in the same tick without the player having to split her dice pool as in a flurry. Further, the character can take an action and still maintain a hold against a single opponent with her full (Strength + Martial Arts) pool without losing or splitting her action. She need only invoke this Charm on every subsequent action. Each thread can hold only a single limb, however, so a held character can still take actions with an unrestricted limb (within reason, or relying on a stunt). If the martial artist devotes multiple threads to holding an opponent, resolve the attack with a single roll.

Other players attempt reflexive (Perception + [Awareness or Martial Arts]) rolls, difficulty 4, for their characters to pick out the fine threads against the background. Otherwise, except for attacks with a visible weapon, targets do not see the attack and can use only those defenses that work on attacks of which the character is unaware. The threads are tangible and slightly reflective, though, so an opponent may use stunts to make them easier to spot or predict. Blowing pipe smoke in the air to look for how the threads disturb it or spraying ink to speckle the threads might reduce the difficulty by one or two.

Retreating into a field of tall grass could reduce the difficulty by two or three. Diving into a pool of water and forcing the martial artist to send the threads down after, especially if the target is a Water-aspected Dragon-Blood, could decrease the difficulty by three or even mitigate it altogether.

NEST OF LIVING STRANDS

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Simple (DV -2)

Keywords: Crippling, Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Rain of Unseen Threads

And the small maiden began

Hundreds of fine, transparent filaments of Essence launch from the character's hands, weaving around the surroundings and each other to entangle all opponents within (Essence x 10) yards. On each action, the Sidereal's player reflexively rolls (Dexterity + Martial Arts). Enemies inside the Charm's area of effect, or who enter that area before the character's next action, suffer a cumulative external penalty to their physical-action dice pools and Defense Values equal to half the number of successes the Sidereal's player rolled. These characters receive the same penalty to their natural movement rate in yards (subtracting half the result of the roll from the target's Dexterity in determining movement per tick). This penalty fades by one die, one point of DV and one yard per action that the victim spends outside the radius, as the threads come untangled.

These threads move with the martial artist, catching new opponents who enter the radius yet eerily bending out of the way of anyone he wishes to give passage. If the martial artist does not keep moving, the threads thicken and become more visible, first as glints of reflected light in the air, then a faint visual impression like cobweb and ultimately (after five minutes of stillness) an opaque morass of webbing around the martial artist. At this point, the web is as impassible as stone for those to whom the character hasn't offered passage. As a stunt, the Sidereal could use the congealed threads to build a bridge, a simple fortification or other structure.

CHARCOAL MARCH OF SPIDERS FORM

Cost: 12m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5; **Type:** Simple

Keywords: Form-type, Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: One complete Celestial martial art (all Charms), Dance of the Hungry Spider, Maw of Dripping Venom, Nest of Living Strands

to climb the waterspout again.

The character moves her hands with the deft, arachnid precision of a weaver, her fingers flicking like the limbs of a spider. With such grace and coordination, she may take three fully independent physical actions at a time. For instance, she might invoke a Guard action when attacked, then invoke a reflexive Charm while making an ordinary Martial Arts attack, then split her dice pool to use Maw of Dripping Venom against two nearby opponents.



Fully independent actions follow exactly the same rules as taking successive single actions, except that:

- Only one action actually elapses, which matters for some Charm effects and durations (and also means the sutra discount applies only once). The slowest of the three actions the character takes is the one that determines how many ticks must pass before she can take her next three actions.

- A character who has split her dice pools can interweave her multiple actions. For example, she can split her first action's dice pool to attack twice but take the second of her three independent actions between the first and second attack in the flurry. Split actions penalize a character's dice pools only in the independent set of actions she is splitting. That is, she subtracts a base penalty from every action in one independent set equal to the number of actions she takes in that set alone, not equal to the total number she takes in all sets combined.

- The character may move only once.
- Characters cannot also use extra action Charms or Combos containing those Charms when taking more than one independent action.

Also, if the character chooses to use this Charm on a given action, she cannot take any non-reflexive social or mental actions. The character does not have to use this ability on every action in a scene after she's invoked the Charm. If she would prefer to use an extra action Charm, use a Combo or take a social or mental action, she can do so (taking only a single action) then resume taking three independent actions per action thereafter.

Characters using this Charm automatically receive the benefits of the Unnatural Many-Step Stride and Dance of the Hungry Spider Charms in every action.

CANNIBALISTIC HERITAGE TECHNIQUE

Cost: 20m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 6, Essence 6;

Type: Reflexive (Step 5)

Keywords: Counterattack, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Charcoal March of Spiders Form

The Elder Sutra of Consumption: The maiden became a mother...

When someone successfully attacks a martial artist who knows this Charm, the martial artist may consume the power of the attack and respond with a devastating counterattack. Swirling his hands in a hypnotic pattern, the character creates a vortex of Essence that draws in and disrupts the physical substance of the attack. Striking this vortex (instead of the martial artist) immediately inflicts the martial artist's (Dexterity + Martial Arts) total in dice of unblockable, undodgeable lethal damage or shatters any normal weapon used against him. If this damage kills an unarmed attacker or destroys an armed attacker's weapon, the martial artist suffers no damage from the attack.

Using this Charm to defend against a ranged attack or an area affect (such as an explosion) offers no counterattack against the attacker or condition. Instead, it subtracts a number of successes from the attack's damage roll equal

to the martial artist's (Dexterity + Martial Arts). Any successes left over on the damage roll thereafter (if any) affect the target normally.

An attacker can use a perfect block or a perfect dodge to avoid the counterattack's damage, but doing so requires aborting the original attack (as technically it's the act of striking the vortex that inflicts the damage). Either way, the Exalt may make a number of unarmed counterattacks from within the safety of his vortex equal to his Martial Arts score, doubling their raw damage. He can use this Charm in response to a counterattack Charm such as Crimson Palm Counterstrike, but other counterattack Charms do not receive counterattacks against this Charm.

THUMBNAIL SPIDER MARCH

Cost: 12m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 6, Essence 6;

Type: Extra Action

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Cannibalistic Heritage Technique

...and to one child she said, "I have many things to show you."

A character using this Charm is as destructive to anything in her path as the swarming, hungry thumbnail spiders of the East. These tiny spiders sometimes migrate in the millions, devouring any creature in their way.

The Sidereal can move up to (her Essence x 10) yards and make three Martial Arts attacks with her full dice pool. Every opponent within a five-yard radius of her as she moves suffers the effects of each attack (applying Dodge or Parry DV to the attacks' totals as normal) as ghostly, evanescent images of the martial artist multiply and swarm all over the path of destruction. If the targets have defensive effects that hurt attackers—such as counterattacks—the attacker ignores these effects (much as a swarm of spiders ignores the loss of a single spider or two). These images disappear as quickly as they appear. The Exalt's attacks affect both material and immaterial targets, and the martial artist can launch these attacks against either type of target while she is dematerialized.

Characters using Thumbnail Spider March do not receive offensive benefits from activating reflexive movement Charms such as Dance of the Hungry Spider, but they do receive such Charms' defensive benefits.

JUMPING SPIDER STRIKE

Cost: 20m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 6, Essence 6;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Cannibalistic Heritage Technique

And to another, she said, "You may rest within my home, and eat; no need to fly."

People of the South tell stories of the idol Ma-Un-Enle and the great sand spiders who worship before it. Sometimes, Ma-Un-Enle speaks a name. In response, one of the spiders

bows on all its legs and walks away. It hides in the sand, waiting years or centuries, until the person whose name Ma-Un-Enle spoke comes near. The spider then leaps from the sand to strike.

A character using this Charm can both spring at any visible target—possibly miles away—and launch an unarmed attack as a single action. Against a person, this attack inflicts its damage normally, adding the martial artist's Essence as automatic successes on the damage roll. The target's player must also attempt a reflexive (Stamina + Resistance) roll against a difficulty equal to the Sidereal's Essence. If that roll fails, the force of the attack reduces the point of impact (normally the victim's head, but sometimes the heart) to a cloud of blood-fog and bone chips. The target has six ticks left, during which time the scattered particles are still bound into a loose cohesion by Essence that doesn't yet realize the character should be dead. Only the timely application of a magical effect that heals one or more health levels reasserts the cohesion of the scattered particles. Being healed thus leaves the character incapacitated, inactive and with one less dot of Stamina.

Treat attacks with this Charm against inanimate objects as feats of strength used to break them. The character's total for such feats equals an impressive (Essence x 5).

WATER SPIDER BITE

Cost: 20m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 6, Essence 6;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Crippling, Obvious, Touch

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Cannibalistic Heritage Technique

And to a third, she said, "How beautiful you are."

Far to the West, hand-sized green spiders scuttle along the underside of the ocean's surface as if it were a web. Their pinprick bite paralyzes fish, even sharks or whales, and the spiders burrow into the flesh of their prey as it sinks into the depths. They rise to the surface again days or years later, when they have eaten every piece of their kill.

One swift blow supplemented with this Charm can render an enemy similarly helpless so the Sidereal can devour him for his Essence. To do so, the martial artist attempts a normal unarmed attack. If that attack inflicts even one health level of damage, the martial artist also paralyzes her opponent's Essence such that the target cannot spend motes or regain Willpower or Essence. (This attack also physically paralyzes the target.) At the same time, the target no longer suffers from nor accumulates penalties from disease, poison, degenerative effects, hunger, thirst, fatigue, exhaustion, wounds, cold or heat. He is perfectly defended against such harm. He does not even need to breathe.

The victim can overcome this effect for a single action by spending a Willpower point, but his player must also succeed at a reflexive (Stamina + Occult) roll against a difficulty equal to the martial artist's Essence. (A character may use this Willpower point expenditure to channel a Virtue and gain bonus dice on the roll, depending on the circumstances.)



The victim must make a number of these expenditures and successful (Stamina + Occult) rolls equal to the attacker's Martial Arts score in order to completely free himself of the effects, but he need not do so on consecutive actions. Meanwhile, the martial artist can spend the victim's Essence motes as if they were Peripheral Essence. Doing so can invoke the target's anima banner, but only around the target. The Sidereal's anima banner is unaffected.

A character can use this Charm on a consenting subject—if the subject suffers from exhaustion, disease or other degenerative effects, for instance—allowing her to draw on that subject's Essence freely.

PATTERN SPIDER TOUCH

Cost: 20m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 6, Essence 6;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Obvious, Shaping, Touch

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Thumbnail Spider March, Jumping Spider Strike, Water Spider Bite

And as each heard her words and came to the center of her web...

Once, changes to the Loom of Fate could change anything in Creation. The pattern spiders, which tend the Loom, no longer permit swift and drastic changes, but that potential remains. With a successful unarmed attack, a character can use this Charm to fundamentally change his target, reweaving the structure of the target's existence. Doing so causes one of the following effects:

- Transforms the target into a beast, robbing him of her mind and shape.
- Transforms the target's flesh into one of the five elements: a breeze, a flame, a stone or statue, a pool of water or even a living tree. The target remains alive and aware, but unless she is an elemental of the relevant type, she can take no actions (though the martial artist could transform the target into an elemental).
- Grants the target a new life and identity as any sort of non-Primordial creature (other than an individual who already exists). The target instantly develops appropriate social relationships, seamlessly integrating into the life of any appropriate entities save creatures of the Wyld, beings outside the pattern of fate and spirits on or above the levels of the Five Maidens. (If the Sidereal uses this Charm to transform a person into a Lunar Exalt out in the Threshold, the local beastmen and barbarians "remember" the character as if she's lived her whole life among them, but Luna will not be fooled. Also, the character would gain no Charms beyond those she already possessed, though any Charms she has and her anima display will visually correspond to those appropriate to her new form.) These effects are permanent, and the victim forgets her old life.

• Unmakes the target utterly. In the unlikely (though not unprecedented) event that a targeted Primordial fails to use a perfect defense, that Primordial becomes a Neverborn. Any

other target instantly ceases to exist, in life and in the afterlife, as the strands of her Essence come apart and scatter.

The Shaping effect replaces the normal damage of the attack.

The reapplication of this Charm or extremely potent powers such as the Endowment spirit Charm can immediately return targets to their original form. Targets transformed into other people and back might have difficulty recovering their old memories, though. Nothing can remake the unmade, however, even transforming a second target into a replica of the unmade one.

This Charm does not affect tattooed Lunar Exalted, whose bodies reject external transformation. Neither can a martial artist use this Charm to affect a target under the direct protection of a Primordial, Yozi, Neverborn or Incarna (so for instance, nobody's unmaking any Deathlords unless their Neverborn masters are somehow distracted).

GRANDMOTHER SPIDER MASTERY

Cost: 20m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 6, Essence 7;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Obvious

Duration: One action

Prerequisite Charms: Pattern Spider Touch

...she ate them.

To master this style is to emulate the grandeur of Asna, the first of the pattern spiders. When the character strikes, she seems to divide into many onrushing warriors at once or spin endless invisible filaments of web, as with Rain of Unseen Threads. Either way, fighting such a character is like taking on an army of Asna's own young. Her attacks buffet the victim from all sides, as she surrounds and bewilders her foes.

When she uses this Charm, the martial artist seems to divide into solid, identical duplicates or simply move fast enough to appear to be in several places at once. So doing, she applies each unarmed Martial Arts attack she makes in one action against all visible opponents twice each, regardless of how far away from her they are when the action begins. Grandmother Spider Mastery is a simple Charm that cannot be used in a Combo. It gives no benefit to characters without access to fully independent actions. (That is, characters not already using Charcoal March of Spiders Form.)

CITRINE POXES OF CONTAGION STYLE

Long ago, the Exalted learned that not only do injuries disrupt the body's Essence, but disrupting a creature's Essence can induce injury. They also found the same is true of disease. Therefore, an attack on a person's Essence could make him sick. This great discovery made possible infectious martial arts that cause and cure disease. (See the Appendix, pp. 153-154, for a complete description of the rules for these martial arts and the diseases they induce.)

The Citrine Poxes of Contagion Style is not the only such infectious martial art, but it is probably the most powerful. The Sidereals invented this style in the First Age, and

it remains well known among them today. Relatively few of its Charms require extremely high Essence to master, which makes it a good choice for younger Sidereals.

Weapons and Armor: Charms of this style treat attacks with a staff, wrackstaff, seven-section staff, serpent-sting staff, hammer or goremaul as unarmed attacks if the character inflicts bashing damage with them. Such attacks are primarily intended to batter the target's Essence flows into warped, deleterious shapes rather than to inflict crushing damage. Characters cannot use the Charms of this style while wearing armor.

Complementary Abilities: Before a character can learn the Citrine Poxes of Contagion Style, she must possess at least three dots in Medicine, and greater expertise is desirable for some of the style's Charms.

The Student's Sutra of Decay: Once, there was a disease—but before that, there was a maiden...

FEVERISH ESSENCE DISCHARGE ATEM

Cost: 7m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Sickness, Touch

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

...whose lover's practices displeased the sun. The all-seeing sun could no longer sustain

The martial artist poisons the Essence at the core of her enemy's soul to inflict the White Sun Sickness. This Second Circle spiritual disease combines fever with episodes of painful prickling, like mosquito bites all over the victim's body, and hallucinations when under stress. However, it does not kill.

A victim of this infectious Martial Arts attack hallucinates and suffers from a fever of the soul. Each time he spends motes of Peripheral or Personal Essence on a Charm, the disease increases the Charm's cost by one mote. This effect is a cumulative one, so the second expenditure costs two extra motes, the third costs three and so on. Reduce the accumulated total by five in each day the victim spends no motes. The fever and hallucinations also reduce all of the victim's dice pools by a value equal to his own permanent Essence. Finally, the victim gains Limit at twice the normal rate for as long as he is infected—a coincidental interaction with the Great Curse, not something the Sidereals ever planned.

Virulence: (Essence) **Incubation:** Immediate
Diagnosis: 3 **Difficulty to Treat (Mundane/Magical):** 6/3
Morbidity: 6 **Treated Morbidity:** 1

DISJOINTED ESSENCE INFECTIOUS ATEM

Cost: 12m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Compulsion, Sickness, Touch

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

these practices, but with enraged disdain, darts forth such pestilent malignant beams...

Throwing off the enemy's guard with jerky, flitting feints, the character closes in and infects a victim's Essence with the spastic, divisive Drunken Moth Sickness, a Second Circle spiritual disease.

A victim of this sickness can't entirely control her own behavior. The disease inflicts a general-purpose Compulsion effect specified by the Sidereal—something along the lines of "embarrass yourself," "protect me" or "beat up your family." Treat this influence as an unnatural persuasion; the character can spend one Willpower point per action to resist its effects. On each subsequent action, the infected character may either use a simple Charm, use a Combo or spend at least half her non-reflexive actions serving the disease's purpose. (This last assumes that the character is using a flurry, and the "half" rounds up. If the character takes just one action, it must serve the compulsion.)

Fortunately, the disease forces her to take action only when an obvious way of fulfilling its purpose exists, either without using any Charms or using Charms already active. Otherwise, the character is free to act as she pleases. The Storyteller is the final arbiter of whether an opportunity exists to fulfill the inflicted compulsion.

The Drunken Moth Sickness occasionally infects a victim who eats something that contains a bound spirit. Treatment is the same as for the Charm-induced infection.

Virulence: (Essence) **Incubation:** Immediate
Diagnosis: 3 **Difficulty to Treat (Mundane/Magical):** 6/4
Morbidity: 6 **Treated Morbidity:** 1

CONVULSIVE DISPLACEMENT INFECTIOUS ATEM

Cost: 12m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Crippling, Obvious, Sickness, Touch

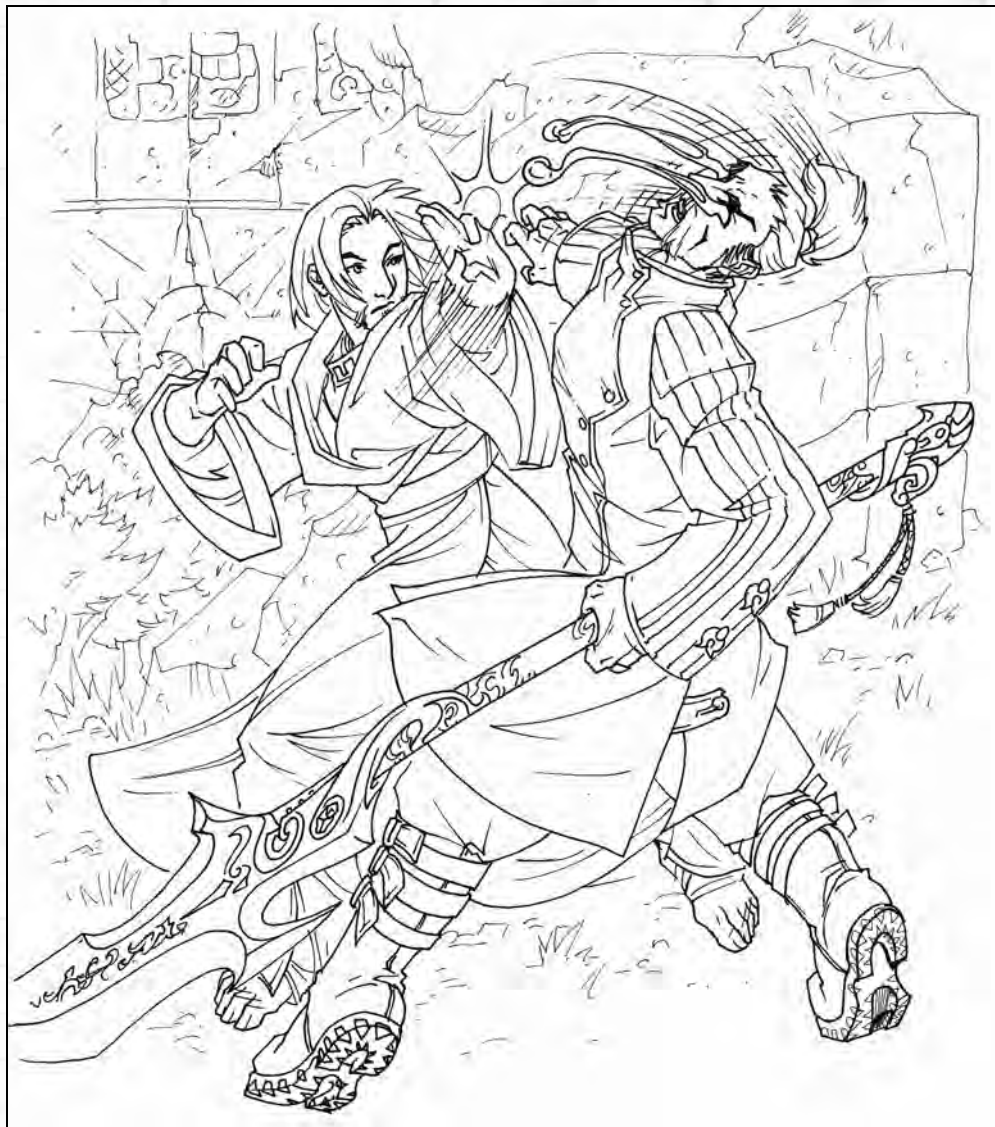
Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

as shed infection on air, earth and streams;

One precise strike disrupts the very cohesion of the victim's body and soul, shattering his Essence into the jagged fragments of the Broken-Tile Organ Condition.

A victim of this condition lacks the reliable solidity his peers take for granted. When he's struck in combat, parts of his body fall off or spurt out. Roll the victim's Stamina against a difficulty equal to the number of health levels lost in the attack. On a failure, a leg comes off, an eye pops out or some other similar event transpires. When he does lose a limb, though, he need simply stick it back on or have someone else do so for it to seamlessly reattach. Similarly, if he loses an internal organ, he can spend a simple action to swallow it for it to slide back into place. (He can even pop a dislocated eye back into its socket, though it's a good idea to at least wash it off first.) Individual organs remain alive, connected and under the victim's control when separated from the body, but the



ESSENCE- DISRUPTING

INFECTIOUS ATEMI

Cost: 12m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Sickness, Touch

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Feverish Essence Discharge Atemi, Disjointed Essence Infectious Atemi, Convulsive Displacement Infectious Atemi

whence this malady its birth received.

The character learns the 25 underlying principles of infection and may apply them in combination to inflict the First or Second Circle illness of his choosing on his opponent. Doing so requires a Martial Arts attack supplemented by this Charm.

Characters can develop their own First or Second Circle infections for use with Essence-Disrupting Infectious Atemi. This requires an

victim still suffers damage normally, due to the sheer physical trauma of, say, heaving up one of his kidneys.

If the Sidereal successfully infects someone with this disease using an infectious Martial Arts attack, the target automatically loses a limb or organ of the Sidereal's choice. The Sidereal can even attempt to catch the ejected body part with a reflexive (Dexterity + Athletics) action at her full dice pool.

Defensive Charms protect only such organs or limbs as they naturally apply to. By default, limited leverage reduces the dice pool for a severed limb's actions to 0 before the influence of Charms. Furthermore, most Charms simply do not function when employed by a severed organ. Appropriate stunts or outside assistance can give a victim's limb access to his full dice pool. Sidereal students trade stories about "mix-ups" between victims of this attack, but these are mere fables. No one else's body parts will reattach to another individual's body.

Virulence: (Essence) **Incubation:** Immediate
Diagnosis: 3 **Difficulty to Treat (Mundane/Magical):** 10/4
Morbidity: 10 **Treated Morbidity:** 1

(Intelligence + Medicine) roll, the difficulty of which equals the Magical Treatment Difficulty for the sickness. Reduce the difficulty of learning by one if another Sidereal Exalt teaches the character how to inflict the disease.

Normally, characters practice inflicting new spiritual infections before testing them in battle. Developing diseases extemporaneously imposes a +2 internal difficulty penalty. Doing so also requires Storyteller permission and a separate action from the blow that inflicts the disease.

PERFECT RECONSTRUCTION METHOD

Cost: 8m, 1wp, 1xp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;
Type: Simple

Keywords: Obvious, Touch

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

On him the dreadful lot did fall, who now was placed before the altar bound,

With this Charm, the character batters herself or another character into the perfect shape written at the core of the target's Essence. The Sidereal's player rolls (Dexterity + Martial Arts) against a difficulty equal to the target's Essence. Add the Sidereal's Medicine score in automatic successes. The target can dodge or parry normally, applying his DVs to the attack. If the Sidereal hits, though, her attack inflicts no damage. Instead, she achieves any or all of the following effects:

- The target heals all bashing damage.
- The target heals a number of levels of lethal damage equal to the Sidereal's Martial Arts score. Treat any aggravated damage levels as two lethal damage levels, and heal them first.
- Any Crippling effect imposed on an otherwise whole limb is immediately negated and healed.
- The target's player can immediately spend one experience point to heal one point of permanent trait loss. Doing so cannot raise a trait above the highest level at which it had been previously purchased before the loss occurred.
- Any Shaping effect that has locked the target into an undesired shape (such as Pattern Spider Touch) is undone.

After a successful application of this method, the target's player must succeed at a Temperance roll (difficulty 2), or the target falls unconscious in a moment of overwhelming ecstasy at the un-pain of the martial artist's attack.

The character can also use this method on herself. The Charm does not affect tattooed Lunar Exalted, who treat it as an external attempt to modify their shape.

SPIRIT AND BODY PURIFICATION TOUCH

Cost: 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Touch

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

his head with sacrificial garlands crowned,

A few gentle taps of the Sidereal's hands or feet upon a target's Essence (or his own) cleanses diseases or toxins. The Sidereal's player rolls (Dexterity + Martial Arts) against a difficulty of the target's Essence. Add the Sidereal's Medicine score in automatic successes. The target can dodge or parry normally, applying her DVs to the attack. If the Sidereal hits, though, his attack inflicts no damage. Instead, he achieves any or all of the following effects:

- Spiritual and physical diseases instantly flush from the target's system, causing her to fully recover from any Sickness effects they caused. The martial artist's player must roll (Intelligence + Medicine) against the Magical Treatment Difficulty to cure a Third Circle illness or against difficulty 5 to cure the Great Contagion with this Charm.
- All poisons and drugs (and Poison effects) leave the target's system, and all physical addictions are broken. (The Sidereal can't do anything about emotional cravings.)
- Any Possession Charm affecting the target is broken, and all lingering effects disappear.

- The Sidereal can transfer as many motes of his Essence to the target as he chooses.

- The Sidereal can transfer as many points of his temporary Willpower to the target as he chooses (though he cannot grant more points than the target's maximum).

- Curses upon the target are broken, although lost Attributes resulting from such curses are not recovered. This includes most Crippling or otherwise debilitating effects imposed by non-physical means.

- The character can erase any of the target's painful memories of which he is aware, though he leaves in contextual clues to those memories. Thereafter, the target may spend a Willpower point to hazily recall these memories for a scene.

INNER DRAGON UNBINDING

Cost: 12m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Reflexive (Step 1)

Keywords: Obvious

Duration: One action

Prerequisite Charms: Spirit and Body Purification Touch
his throat laid open to the lifted knife, but interceding Gaia spared his life,

This Charm instantly breaks any debilitating magical effects upon the character, save for those imposed by the limits of his own Charms. For instance, a Sidereal can use this Charm to remove the Crippling effects and DV penalties of the Charm Ox-Stunning Blow (**Exalted**, p. 243) from a victim who was just knocked senseless by that Charm. Yet, should that cured victim then use the Charm Leaping Dodge Method (**Exalted**, p. 227), he still suffers the -1 DV penalty for doing so, as that limit is imposed by one of his own Charms.

Also, until the character's next action, the players of other characters must succeed at a reflexive Essence roll with a difficulty equal to the Sidereal's Essence for their characters to affect the Sidereal with a Charm, spell or Charm-supplemented attack. The Exalt can invoke this Charm reflexively to impede a magical attack against her.

FLARE OF INVULNERABILITY METHOD

Cost: 10m per action after activation; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Simple

Keywords: Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Perfect Reconstruction Method, Spirit and Body Purification Touch

commands them in his stead a heifer slay, for the sun's rage was now removed away.

The martial artist's Essence blazes up within him, fortifying him against almost any conceivable form of physical damage. For the rest of the scene, he adds his Personal and Peripheral Essence at the time he activates this Charm to both his bashing and lethal soak. After doing so, he must burn through at least 10 motes of Essence each action (losing



any he does not spend). Doing so does not reduce his inflated soak. Further, no combination of effects can allow him to regain more than five Essence in a given action.

CITRINE POXES OF CONTAGION FORM

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Compulsion, Form-type, Obvious, Shaping, Sickness

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: One complete Celestial martial art (all Charms), Essence-Disrupting Infectious Atemi, Inner Dragon Unbinding, Flare of Invulnerability Method

From him the malady received its name.

As the character moves in a sinuous pattern of steps and gestures, a susurrant miasma like blood-tinged yellow fog emanates and rises above her, and the air out to a distance equal to (her Essence x 10) yards from the character weeps with contagion. Starting on her next action, everyone within that distance of the Exalt risks infection with the Yellow Poxes of Contagion itself, also called the Revel Outside the Sealing of the Gates. Inflicting this infection is considered an infectious Martial Arts attack. It does not require that the character strike her targets, but perfect blocks and perfect dodges still protect against the outpouring of disease. Players roll their characters' (Stamina + Resistance) against a difficulty of the Sidereal's Essence to resist this Third Circle disease—but they lose all dice from the pool before the application of Charms.

The flesh of the disease's victim twists and flows, melting while the sufferer remains yet alive. Yellow blisters rise on his skin. This effect inflicts one level of unsoakable aggravated damage per action of the victim, but it stops when aggravated damage fills the -0 and -1 wound tracks. Characters who can somehow protect themselves against Wyld influence can likewise protect themselves from this effect.

Victims of this disease must also fight the unnatural desire to dance to the rhythmic whispers with which this form fills the air. On any given action, a victim can simply relent to this compulsion and dance around an object or person chosen by the Storyteller at a distance of 10 yards. He can resist this unnatural mental influence for one action by spending a Willpower point, but fighting the unnatural inertia of his own body reduces his effective Dexterity to 0 for that action. The player can still attempt rolls for actions that require Dexterity, but he rolls only the Ability, and not the Attribute. The disease continues after the Form-type Charm ends, and sufferers continue dancing to a chant only they can hear.

Characters who use this form are immune to all Sickness and Poison effects, as if employing the Immunity to Everything Technique (see *Exalted*, p. 208).

Virulence: Special **Incubation:** Immediate

Diagnosis: 4 **Difficulty to Treat (Mundane/Magical):** 10/4 **Morbidity:** 10 **Treated Morbidity:** 1

SPIRITUAL PERFECTION

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

Type: Reflexive (Step 9)

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Citrine Poxes of Contagion Form

The Elder Sutra of Decay: Once, there was a crippled maiden...

For a single mote of Essence, a character with this Charm renders himself permanently immune to any Poison or Sickness effect to which he has been exposed or subjected. (The character must pay one mote for each such effect individually.) He can also spend a mote of Essence to halve the damage from a single attack—after the attacker's player rolls damage—or to reflexively protect himself from any disabling effect upon his body or mind. Spiritual Perfection is (appropriately) a perfect defense against such effects. The Sidereal must invoke the Charm once apiece for every such attack or effect he suffers. The character cannot cure disabilities that arise from factors outside his body, such as being unable to move because he's tied up in the back of a Nexus pulley car.

GENTLE TOUCH OF THE WICKED HAND

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 6, Essence 7;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Sickness, Touch

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Spiritual Perfection

...who told me this: "You shall know your enemies when they teach you to forget"

With this terrifying Charm, a Sidereal can use an infectious Martial Arts attack to contaminate a victim with arbitrary Third Circle illnesses.

Characters develop their own Third Circle illnesses for use with Gentle Touch of the Wicked Hand (just as they invent lesser diseases with Essence-Disrupting Infectious Atemi). Infection follows the ordinary rules for infectious Martial Arts attacks, save that it is intrinsically more difficult for a victim to resist a Third Circle infection. Creating such a blight requires an (Intelligence + Medicine) roll, and the Storyteller sets a difficulty between 5 and 10, based on the disease's effects. Reduce this difficulty by one if another Sidereal teaches the character how to inflict a certain disease.

Normally, characters practice inflicting new spiritual infections before testing them in battle. Developing diseases extemporaneously imposes a +2 internal difficulty penalty. Doing so also requires Storyteller permission and a separate action from the blow that inflicts the disease.

GLORIOUS SIDEREAL PROTECTION

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 6, Essence 7;

Type: Simple (Speed 5)

Keywords: Obvious, Stackable

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Spiritual Perfection

what is whole

The character learns to protect himself and others from even the most terrible attacks by manipulating a target's Essence. Under the effects of this Charm, the Sidereal's target (himself or another person) automatically converts any aggravated damage the attack inflicts to lethal damage, before soak. This protection stacks with other Charms that convert lethal to bashing damage, such as the Four Magical Materials Form, though it can't stack with itself. Characters who are under such a combination of effects convert all damage directly to bashing (and all before soak).

ESSENCE-SHATTERING TYPHOON

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 7, Essence 7; **Type:** Simple (DV -3)

Keywords: Obvious, Sickness

Duration: One action

Prerequisite Charms: Gentle Touch of the Wicked Hand, Glorious Sidereal Protection
and what is diseased."

The character pounds her fists against the Essence in the very air, shattering the currents of the world and casting a hail of broken Essence shards toward her foes. On the character's first action, the effects extend three yards beyond her fists. Anything in front of her suffers either 15 dice of aggravated damage or a Third Circle illness she has learned to inflict—whichever the Sidereal chooses. (Targets can resist the disease normally.) This attack is unblockable and undodgeable.

On each subsequent action in which the Exalt continuously performs this Charm (paying the 6m, 1wp cost on each new action), the effects stretch one mile further forward and a tenth of a mile further to each side. The Essence shards this Charm hurls forward do not penetrate solid obstacles (such as walls) until the action on which they either destroy such obstacles or find a route through them (such as a broken-out window or door). It does not extend behind the character or to her sides.

OBSIDIAN SHARDS OF INFINITY STYLE

Little groups of pattern spiders congregate near the patches of offate where this style has been used. They chitter to each other softly, appearing—as much as metal spiders with unblinking jade eyes can—to be disconcerted, slightly confused, even upset. They do not speak of any concerns they might have, and no spider has directly confronted a student of this style. In the company of a practitioner, the spiders show the same deference they would give any Sidereal Exalted—no more, no less. Yet, they leave his presence as soon as possible.

A practitioner of the Obsidian Shards of Infinity Style seems to understand something his opponents don't. A subtle, knowing look lies in his eyes, even when he seems to look at things that aren't there. Every move seems strange, slightly jerky. The logic behind his motions is impenetrable; his attacks, flatly impossible. When he divulges his philosophy, he speaks in nonsensical metaphors, and it is difficult for others to make heads or tails of it—even other masters of the style.

THE OBSIDIAN SHARDS OF INFINITY:

A PARABLE

In the time of cascading years lived a man named Ei Zou. Silent and dark, he spent his days pacing shadowed streets and silent corridors, seeking to refine his self-knowledge.

The day he understood that his shadow was watching him, Ei Zou merely watched it back. He chose to walk through bright places so he could clearly mark its boundaries, and he lit torches throughout his home to observe its fluctuations in the changing light.

His shadow remained much the same, and Ei Zou became perturbed. He watched it echoing his every gesture and knew that it mocked him. The question of why it chose to follow him, pretending that he and the light had created it, tormented him. But, though he hated his shadow for its subterfuge, he did not take action. Instead, Ei Zou settled back to contemplate his shadow with hostility. Knowing that it recognized his recognition, he waited for it to act.

During those long days, Ei Zou saw his shadow everywhere. Darkness did not banish it—brilliance concentrated and strengthened it. Ei Zou realized his shadow's mind was also behind his reflection, and he gazed intently at his face as it echoed in still water and in mirrors, searching the depths of its eyes for a clue to its identity. Watching every angle of it—spending hours learning the curve of a muscle or the shading of a strand of hair—Ei Zou built a perfect simulacrum in his mind's eye. With grim exactitude, he looked for a difference between it and his own image: This, he was sure, would tell him its weakness.

At last, when those years had fallen through to their end, Ei Zou drew out his shadow so it stood before him. No longer did it merely react, but leered at him in infuriating triumph. Do you concede? it asked him. Ei Zou responded with a strike that shattered its sneering mouth. I know you now, he told it, and broke it into five pieces, which faded away at his feet.

Now you are gone forever, he said, and stepped into its place.

Perhaps the Sidereal says there are many ways of seeing. Perhaps he says there is only one but it can be portrayed as many. Perhaps he merely says one can choose as one will and punctuates the statement with a perfect strike.

Weapons and Armor: For purposes of this style, paired sais, paired banec claws or multiple knives or punch daggers are treated as unarmed attacks. These weapons can be wielded in close combat or thrown with equal facility, using the Sidereal's Martial Arts as the relevant Ability, with one caveat: He must always use more than one. Should the martial artist

ever be reduced to a single weapon, he cannot use it with the Charms of this style until he gets another that matches it. Exalted who know this style keep their weapons brightly polished, for reasons that will become obvious.

Characters cannot use this style while wearing armor.

The Student's Sutra of Reflection: Once, there was a thoughtful maiden...

BLACK SHARDS FALL LIKE ICE

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

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

...who broke her mirror, and dropped the pieces to the ground.

With a shout, a step and a ringing clap, the martial artist calls forth a rain of sharpened glass. Her player rolls (Dexterity + Martial Arts) to target the attack. For an area (Essence x 5) yards in radius, obsidian fragments slice down, causing a base 15L piercing damage to everyone caught there. This area need not be centered on the Sidereal, (in fact it had better not be because the Charm grants no immunity to its own effects), but it cannot be farther away than (Essence x 25) yards.

The falling shards cannot be parried except by Charms that grant a perfect parry defense. The Sidereal's attack can be dodged, however, and a Charm that can remove the evading character from the Charm's area as he dodges—Leap-ing Dodge Method, for example—adds three to the character's Dodge DV since he spends less time in the deadly rain. Undodged successes from the attack roll add to the attack's damage as normal.

RIPPLE IN THE SILVERED GLASS

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Reflexive (Step 5)

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

She thought to repair it, but was arrested by the sight of the scattered shards,

When a foe attacks, the Sidereal brings his hands together, then parts them as if he were opening a pair of curtains. On a successful attack by a foe, this Charm posits an alternative, which then becomes true. The Sidereal may say that his attacker, instead, stumbled and fell at his feet or broke her weapon with her clumsiness. The martial artist must limit himself to a substitute that is possible, but almost anything can happen: For scope, consider the enemy to have botched her attack roll.





The target of this Charm may reflexively spend a Willpower point to feel unease as the new reality falls into place around her. Her player rolls (Wits + Awareness) with an internal penalty equal to the martial artist's (Essence + Martial Arts). With one success, the attacker didn't botch, but she still didn't hit. With three successes, she tears through the shifting fates and completes the attack at which she originally succeeded. If a mentally unstable or insane person is affected by Ripple in the Silvered Glass and spends the Willpower point, the internal penalty is equal to only the Sidereal's Martial Arts.

This Charm is a perfect defense that can apply against non-sentient things. In such cases, it works automatically. Furthermore, any action launched through a reflective surface at the martial artist—for example, someone scrying him in a forest pool—can be deflected with this Charm as well. The Sidereal automatically senses the attempt and can choose whether to use Ripple in the Silvered Glass against it.

REACHING THROUGH THE MIRROR

Cost: 8m per target; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

which showed so many visions of her face.

Gesturing at an opponent, the Sidereal calls that opponent's reflection to face her. Any reflective surfaces around the target, no matter how they are angled, show that person. For the rest of the scene, the martial artist can attack the reflection of her foe with even more facility than she could attack the foe himself. Attacks against the reflections are undodgeable, and the target takes a -2 external penalty to parry them. And, as the mirror breaks or the water ripples beneath the martial artist's hand, her enemy feels cracks lancing across his skin. The damage is lethal, and the target's soak is halved against that strike.

SHATTERING THE BALANCE

Cost: 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Compulsion, Sickness

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Black Shards Fall Like Ice, Ripple in the Silvered Glass, Reaching Through the Mirror

She put the pieces back together at all the wrong angles,

Catching his target's eye, the martial artist strikes her reflection—and the target's mind shatters into madness. She may be afflicted with multiple personalities, bedeviled by persistent hallucinations or made to suffer from any other terrible psychosis of which the Sidereal can think. The Sidereal's player rolls a normal Martial Arts attack, but instead of her target's DV, the roll must overcome his Dodge or Parry MDV, whichever is higher. Induced psychoses are considered both Compulsion and Sickness effects. Appropriate rituals or Charms may be effective against them, at the Storyteller's discretion.

With an appropriate delusion, the Sidereal may use this Charm to remove unnatural mental influences on the target, though only by replacing one with another. Treat the Charm's influence as total control, for purposes of opposing other total control effects.

Example: Ei Zou finds his wife beguiled by a Fair Folk noble, and she is in love. Feeling sad but compassionate, he kisses her forehead, activates Shattering the Balance and causes her to become severely paranoid. Terrified of everyone she used to trust, Ei Zou's wife turns away from the Fair One as her love degrades into suspicion and fear.

The Sidereal may use this Charm on himself and reflexively does so if he comes under an unnatural mental influence severe enough to usurp his will.

OBSIDIAN SHARDS OF INFINITY FORM

Cost: 10m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5; **Type:** Simple

Keywords: Form-type, Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Shattering the Balance

and was delighted at the image of herself.

Enemies cannot easily find the person behind the Obsidian Shards of Infinity practitioner's endless reflections. Any time a foe successfully strikes him, the martial artist can spend one mote and break into five shards, which disappear as he instantly and reflexively re-forms within a number of yards equal to his Essence. He has taken no damage, and his player may roll to surprise his enemy. (See **Exalted**, p. 155, regarding unexpected attacks.) If someone stands ready to attack the reappearing Sidereal before the next tick, that attack cannot be evaded through this Charm.

Moreover, if the character loses one of his daggers or sais—through a successful disarm, for example, or if it's thrown without retrieval—the Sidereal can retrieve it as long as he holds its mate. The Sidereal spends one mote and the distant weapon is revealed as a duplicate made of black glass, which shatters, and the original remains in the Sidereal's hand.

The Obsidian Shards of Infinity Form has a downside, though. For every action the Sidereal takes while using the form, the Storyteller secretly rolls one die. On a selected number (1 is appropriate), she lies about an opponent's actions or the results of the Sidereal's action. The lie must be something that actually could happen. (At that moment, the Sidereal unfortunately saw what might be, instead of what actually is.) The truth reveals itself on the character's next action.

THE MIRROR DOES NOT LIE

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5;

Type: Reflexive (Step 3)

Keywords: Combo-Basic

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Obsidian Shards of Infinity Form

The Elder Sutra of Reflection: The maiden wanted to show everyone how wonderful she looked,



Reflections don't just portray the world, they give back a new vision. After activating this Charm, the martial artist may deflect any attacks against her—including social attacks and mass combat attacks—as if she were bouncing a beam of light from a mirror. She can choose the attacker's new target as long as that target is not the attacker himself. To everyone who witnesses the event, it looks like that person was the target all along. Only the Sidereal and the attacker know his original intent.

Foes can slip through cracks in the Sidereal's mirror by using attacks that no observers see coming. The attack must truly be unseen by all watchers, not just the martial artist herself.

VANISHED WITHIN THE GLASS

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 6;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Touch

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: The Mirror Does Not Lie

but it seemed as though none could see it.

Who can resist looking in a mirror? The Sidereal shows his enemy her reflected image—and while the enemy looks, he throws her in. With a touch or a successful Martial Arts attack by the Sidereal, the target of this Charm vanishes. It seems to her that she walks through the world, tries to speak to others or pick things up, but nothing she does affects her surroundings. The only way to see her is to see her reflection. She appears in polished silver just as she would if she were actually in Creation, and any who see her there can hear her as well, but not directly affect her in any way. The martial artist himself can sense her normally, but he can't affect her either.

The Essence spent on this Charm is committed as long as the target remains trapped. If the Sidereal touches her insubstantial form and voluntarily releases that Essence, or if he dies, then she is freed.

DRAW FORTH ONE SHARD

Cost: 15m, 1wp + later expenditure; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 6; **Type:** Simple

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Obvious, Touch

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Obsidian Shards of Infinity Form

So she painted a self-portrait,

The martial artist pulls gently at the mirror she holds before her enemy, and the reflection of her foe suddenly stands beside him. A close observer, however, sees something different about the double—an edge to its smile, the slightest change in its movements. It's not the same person, they think—or, as the duplicates turn toward each other, is it?

To use this Charm, the Sidereal must touch either the target or any surface reflecting his image. The duplicate—the shard—has the traits, personal possessions and knowledge of the original, save that it does not itself have a reflection.

There is also one other, small change, which the martial artist cannot predict or control. This difference is rarely more significant than a change in a single trait's score.

Although the shard-person has its own consciousness and will, it is completely under the Sidereal's control. At will, the martial artist may see through its eyes or control its movements. If she should take any actions against it, she automatically succeeds. The duplicate lasts indefinitely. At the end of each week it exists, the Sidereal can maintain her control by spending one Willpower point per week that the shard has already existed. As soon as she fails to pay this cost, she loses control of the duplicate and never regains it.

The shard and original share a mystical bond. The reflection may use any of its parent's Charms, drawing from its parent's Essence pool to do so. (Duplicates of artifacts cannot draw on the power of the originals.) The Sidereal also selects one other aspect of the shard's connection to its original:

- A duplicate can share all physical pain with its original. Wounding one wounds the other, torturing one tortures the other, and so on. Killing one, however, does not kill the other.

- The shard and its original share emotions. If one weeps, the other weeps; if one falls in love, the other falls in love.

- A shard can learn everything its parent learns, and vice versa. Should experience points become relevant, both draw from the same pool, and the duplicate is not awarded its own. Training times remain the same, even if shard and original train at once.

- A shard mimics the actions of its original. If one runs, the other runs; if one is picked up and carried, the other is dragged along, even if they are a thousand miles apart.

- The shard dies with its original. Killing the shard, however, does nothing more than knock the original unconscious.

This Charm cannot duplicate artifacts rated higher than five dots, beings with an Essence score higher than the Sidereal's or possessions that were not on the target's person at the moment of duplication (so no duplicate manses). If the creating Sidereal dies, the shard still exists, freed of her influence. If the parent object of a reflection is destroyed or killed, then the double gains sole access to all the power of the original—but the differences between itself and the original remain, and the Sidereal loses all control over her newly empowered creation.

The martial artist may use Draw Forth One Shard on herself—but will rarely like what she calls. Sidereals have faced versions of themselves as they might have been, as they wanted to be or as they feared they might become—and few enjoyed the experience.

DRAW FORTH EVERY SHARD

Cost: 2m per duplicate, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 6, Essence 6; **Type:** Simple

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Obvious, Stackable

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Draw Forth One Shard

and portrait after portrait after that,



Gesturing to one side, then the other, the Sidereal's form multiplies as if reflected between mirrors. The doubles do not move in unison, but similarly. They all dedicate themselves to whatever the original is doing, be it crafting a daiklave, climbing a cliff or fighting an army.

Every reflection gains the benefits of the Obsidian Shards of Infinity Form. The martial artist may use his other Charms of this style through any of them, but he must pay a one-mote surcharge if he wishes to extend the effects to another duplicate. (For example, he may use Black Shards Fall Like Ice through one duplicate for 10 motes, then pay one mote for each additional double who uses it at the same time.) The duplicates cannot use Draw Forth Every Shard—only the Sidereal himself.

If more than one duplicate attacks the same person, they perform a coordinated attack (see **Exalted**, p. 144). The target suffers the maximum possible penalty for the number of attackers. The doubles always act on the same tick as the Sidereal.

Only the first use of this Charm in a scene costs Willpower. The martial artist may create a maximum number of duplicates at a time equal to (his Martial Arts x Essence), and they can venture only as far away as they can be perceived, either by their creator or by each other. None but the Sidereal himself has a reflection.

ECHOES OF INFINITY

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 6; Essence 7;

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Vanished Within the Glass, Draw Forth Every Shard

until she made everyone look at her

Mirrors opposed to mirrors seem endless. The Sidereal can activate this Charm in any place with at least a square yard's worth of total reflective surfaces or with distinct, easily heard echoes. As long as she has these reflections to work from, none of her Martial Arts Charms cost any Essence at all.

BREATHING ON THE BLACK MIRROR

Cost: 20m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 7, Essence 7;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Obvious, Shaping

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Echoes of Infinity

and they all believed her.

With a breath that lays a dark mist before him, the Sidereal steps back, then brings his palm forward in a strike that seems to craze the very air. This Charm may be used only during a climactic scene, when fate hangs heavy and the balance is easily tipped.

Time stops. The martial artist sees five reflections of the scene before him, each representing a possible conclusion to the scene. He must choose one by stepping into it:

- In one shard, he has won an immediate conflict, with difficulty. Ei Zou fought Ligier, the Green Sun, in its

human form until the blood of each splattered the demon lord's palace of brass—and in the end, the demon bowed his shining head in defeat.

- In one shard, he is offered great joy, but no other gain. Searching the brass palace of the Green Sun for his foe, Ei Zou found his wife—lost a thousand years before—confined within a vault. Unable to believe his fortune, he took her tenderly in his arms—and Ligier, in those long moments, escaped.

- In one shard, he has suffered a minor loss but gained a greater, long-term victory. Ei Zou knew he could not fight Ligier and his horde of demon minions—but the bargain he struck with the Green Sun gave him part of what he needed to extort a great secret from the Yozi Cecelyne.

- In one shard, he learns something that completely changes his opinion on an important matter. A chance comment by the Green Sun led Ei Zou to realize just how deep Kejak's treachery went. He knew he could no longer support the Bronze Faction campaign to eliminate the Solar Exalted. Abandoning his plan to fight the demon, Ei Zou strode from the brass palace and went straight to the Gold Faction.

- In one shard, he loses something dear to him, but one of his greatest enemies is killed or neutralized. Ei Zou saw himself weeping before the open gates of the Demon Prince Malfas. He had utterly broken his former nemesis, and crippled every one of its lower souls—but had been forced to sacrifice his own daughter to do it.

Though he will remember using Breathing on the Black Mirror, the Sidereal will not be able to recall the contents of any of the other shards once he has stepped into one. No one else will know that he influenced fate at all.

PRISMATIC ARRANGEMENT OF CREATION STYLE

Elder Sidereals often recommend that their younger colleagues learn the Prismatic Arrangement of Creation as their first Sidereal martial art. This fighting style requires relatively low proficiency with Martial Arts and Essence manipulation—for a Sidereal style, anyway—and provides an excellent blend of attack and defense. What's more, it provides a comprehensive understanding of Creation's most important substances, entities and modes of wielding Essence.

The most unusual aspect of the Prismatic Arrangement of Creation is its multiple Form-type Charms. A diverse array of initial Charms converges on four lesser forms. Once a practitioner masters these lesser forms, she can learn a greater form. Each lesser form offers significant benefits to a martial artist, while the greater form enhances the power of every other martial art the character knows.

Weapons and Armor: Characters cannot use the Charms of this style while wearing armor. Weapons cannot be used with most Prismatic Arrangement of Creation Charms (or are simply irrelevant), with a few significant exceptions noted for particular Charms.

The Student's Sutra of Essence: Once, there were maidens...

DEADLY STARMETAL OFFENSIVE (JI)

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

Type: Simple (Speed 3)

Keywords: Obvious, Shaping

Duration: Five actions

Prerequisite Charms: None

...and their names were JI and PENG and LU and ZHOU

The character infuses her fingernails with Essence, which hardens, sharpens and lengthens them into deadly weapons. Doing so also causing them to bend, influence and predict the path of fate like starmetal does. They allow for Speed 3, Accuracy +3, Damage +7L, Defense +4 and Rate 3 hand-to-hand attacks and can be used to parry lethal and ranged attacks without a stunt. Treat attacks and parries enhanced with this Charm as unarmed.

ORICHALCUM SHEATHING STANCE

(PENG)

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Es-

sence 4; **Type:** Reflexive (Step 1 or 2)

Keywords: Obvious

Duration: Five actions

Prerequisite Charms:

None

The martial artist quickly assumes a posture characteristic of the Unconquered Sun as he wraps his body in a sheath of golden Essence. This sheath interacts with the character's anima the way orichalcum responds to Solar Exalted. The character adds (12L/12B) to his soak. This bonus acts as armor in every respect, except that it doesn't interfere with the use of Martial Arts Charms. Attacks that ignore armor ignore this soak, though aggravated damage doesn't.

FLICKERING

MOONSILVER

APPROACH (LU)

Cost: 10m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Es-

sence 4; **Type:** Reflexive (Step 1)

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Five actions

Prerequisite Charms: None

The martial artist's twisting gestures and fluid footwork evoke the slippery, mutable ways that moonsilver shapes Essence. When the character uses this Charm, opponents

cannot precisely determine the Sidereal's location. Essence bends and flows like moonsilver around her, enabling her to make an unarmed Martial Arts attack against anyone within (her Essence x 5) yards. The target of such an attack subtracts the attacker's Martial Arts score from his DV.

FIVE JADE FURY (ZHOU)

Cost: 10m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Reflexive (Step 1)

Keywords: Knockback, Obvious

Duration: Five actions

Prerequisite Charms: None

The character's footwork evokes jade's elemental authority over the Essence of Creation.

Each pattern of steps offers a bonus that ap-

plies only to unarmed Martial Arts attacks.

The compassion and conviction of green

jade allows his attacks to

inflict bashing or lethal damage.

The grace of black jade allows him to supplement attack rolls with one

extra automatic success for every three

dice her player rolls (rounded up).

The reliability of white jade

supplements damage rolls

with one extra automatic

success for every three dice

rolled (rounded up). The swift,

unexpected force of blue jade

knocks opponents back

one yard for each level

of damage inflicted.

The fierce hunger of red jade adds three

dice to the character's Join Battle roll or

reduces the Speed of her attack by one tick

(to a minimum of 1). The character can apply

only one benefit per attack.

FOUR MAGICAL MATERIALS FORM (HOU TUI)

Cost: 15m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5;

Type: Simple (Speed 3)

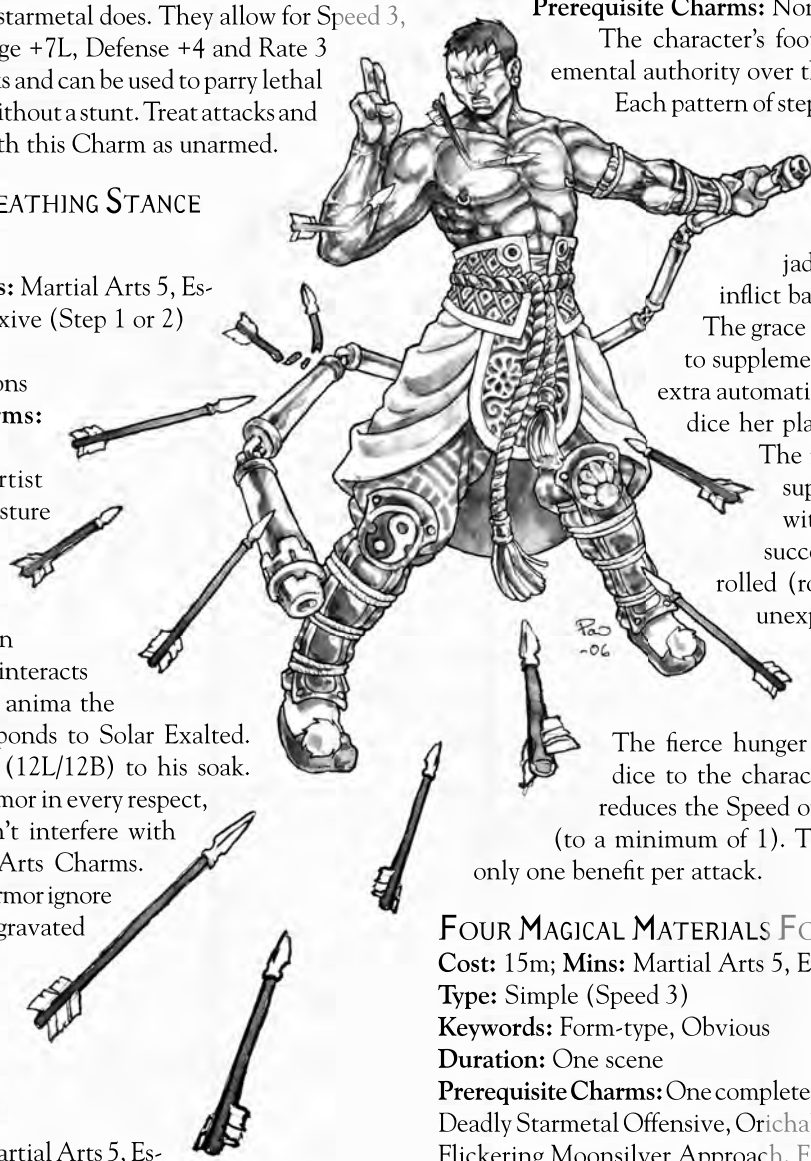
Keywords: Form-type, Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: One complete martial art (all Charms), Deadly Starmetal Offensive, Orichalcum Sheathing Stance, Flickering Moonsilver Approach, Five Jade Fury and HOU TUI

The character draws on the flows of Creation's interwoven fates—the raw power, progressive change and elemental stability that play out all around her. In so doing, she becomes like unto a living artifact.

When using this Charm, the character continuously receives the benefits of its four prerequisite Charms. In



addition, she becomes unbreakable like a magical artifact. That is, she automatically converts any lethal damage she receives to bashing damage (before soak), unless the attack could damage one of the five magical materials.

The youngest Sidereals wonder (though not where their elders can hear) if a fifth contributing Charm might exist, which allows a Sidereal to mimic the properties of soulsteel. If such a Charm has been (or were to be) developed, this form would theoretically allow the Sidereal to incorporate those benefits as well.

CHARM REDIRECTION TECHNIQUE (AN)

Cost: 7m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

and AN and CAI and LI and HUA JI

This Charm enables a Sidereal martial artist to catch, tangle and throw the Essence of other Charms as easily as she would trip an opponent and slam him to the ground. When someone uses a Charm against the Sidereal, or when someone within three yards uses a Charm at all, the martial artist's player rolls (Dexterity + Martial Arts) against a difficulty equal to the Charm-user's Essence. The Sidereal must activate this Charm before her opponent's player rolls his Charm's effect, if applicable.

Should Charm Redirection Technique succeed, the Sidereal learns a brief summary of the targeted Charm's effects. She can then choose a new target for the Charm or annul it entirely. The rules for annulling Charms are as follows:

- The targeted character must need to activate the Charm consciously. (Therefore, Charms that invoke themselves—such as Surprise Anticipation Method—are immune.)

- The target pays Essence for the Charm, but nothing happens. For simple or extra action Charms, the target cannot act until his next action. For supplemental Charms, he can still take the physical action, just without any Charm assistance.

- A target can immediately reuse an annulled reflexive Charm on the same action as long as he can still pay the activation cost.

- The annulled use of a Charm still counts as the target character's Charm use for that action. An Exalt cannot suffer an annulled reflexive Charm and then decide to attempt a different reflexive Charm on the same action.

The key rules for redirecting Charms are as follows:

- A Charm can be redirected only if the user could apply the Charm to a new target. For example, the Sidereal can redirect a Solar's use of Iron Raptor Technique against any target within (the Solar's Essence x 8) yards of the Solar. The redirection must also make sense. A Solar's impassioned words can accidentally seduce the wrong target, but Eye-Deceiving Camouflage cannot accidentally hide the wrong person.

- Redirecting the Charm does not change the variable effects. Base these effects on the original user's traits and mote expenditure.

- The victim whose Charm the Sidereal redirected pays for the Charm normally. For simple Charms, the use of the redirected Charm also represents his action.

- Redirecting a supplemental Charm also redirects the associated action, which uses the original user's dice pools.

- Reflexive Charms cannot be redirected.

- Redirecting extra action Charms redirects all possible associated actions to the new target (and to only one new target). If the extra action Charm does not allow the application of every roll to a single target, the character chooses as many actions as possible to redirect, and any remaining actions proceed normally. For example, if a Righteous Devil uses Dance of the Howling Magma Sprites to attack a Sidereal, the Sidereal could redirect the magma sprite to keep attacking the Righteous Devil's sidekick for a number of times equal to the Righteous Devil's Essence, so long as the Righteous Devil's player keeps rolling successful attacks. Yet, if the Sidereal tries to defend a group of people against an enemy Solar's Arrow Storm Technique, the Sidereal can redirect only the first arrow the Solar fires. The rest of the arrows under the Charm's influence still strike their subsequent intended targets.

Charm Redirection Technique cannot target Charms that were established in previous actions, nor can it target Combos. It does not work against sorcery or Martial Arts Form-type Charms—they cannot be redirected or annulled. While this Charm is supplemental, the only type of action it can supplement is a guard action. It can annul or redirect only one Charm per action.

SEQUENTIAL CHARM DISRUPTION (CAI)

Cost: 5m + cost of Charms affected, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Supplemental

Keywords: Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Charm Redirection Technique

This Charm extends the Charm Redirection Technique, such that the Sidereal can now:

- Annul the effects of pre-established Charms.

- Annul or redirect a Combo. If the Exalt can legally redirect all of the simple, supplemental and extra action Charms that make up the Combo, he can legally redirect the entire Combo as a single invocation of this Charm. Likewise, if he can legally annul all of the component Charms, she can annul the Combo. He chooses whether to annul or ignore the reflexive Charms in a Combo individually, as they are used.

To use this Charm, the character must be a target of the Charm or Charm-supplemented action, or he must come within three yards of the Charm's original user. The Sidereal's player then rolls (Dexterity + Martial Arts) against a difficulty equal to the Charm-user's Essence. When disrupting Combos, the Sidereal must invoke this Charm before the opponent's player rolls the Charms' effects.

Like the preceding Charm, this one can't affect Form-type Charms or sorcery. Similarly, while this Charm is supplemental, the only type of action it can supplement is



a Guard action. It can annul or redirect only one Combo or annul only one pre-established Charm per action.

SPELL-SHATTERING PALM (LI)

Cost: 12m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Reflexive (Step 5)

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The character launches a precise strike of Essence to knock apart the careful construction of a sorcery effect. Upon contact with such a construction, the martial artist activates this Charm and her player attempts a reflexive, unarmed (Dexterity + Martial Arts) attack. The difficulty equals the sorcerer's Essence plus the spell's circle. If the Sidereal succeeds, the spell shatters as if dispelled by an equal circle of countermagic (with the concomitant effects).

The Exalt can deal even more damage if someone actually casts a spell within her reach and her player succeeds on an unarmed Martial Arts attack roll. She can choose to shatter the spell as normal or cause the entire structure to unravel as if the sorcerer had botched a distraction roll. (See *Exalted*, p. 251 for more information.)

This Charm functions against necromancy as well as sorcery, but only if the Sidereal Exalted has had opportunity to study this black art of the Abyssal Exalted.

ASTROLOGY INTERRUPTION METHOD (HUA JI)

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Reflexive (Step 1)

Keywords: Obvious, Touch

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal martial artist combines her knowledge of destiny with her martial skill to disrupt the effects of Sidereal astrology by lightly striking the target in the five points where threads attach from the Loom of Fate. Doing so requires a reflexive, unarmed Martial Arts attack; the difficulty equals the (Essence + College) of the Sidereal who created the effect. A successful attack tears or snarls the magical weave of fate, ending the effect. Both the martial artist attacking the effect and the Sidereal who created it suffer one dot of Paradox, the special penalty Sidereals can face for astrological magic, and the event might trigger an inquiry by the Bureau of Destiny in Yu-Shan.

This Charm can also target the false identities called "resplendent destinies" that Sidereals use, even currently inactive ones lurking in the target's background. If the target has multiple effects active at once, the martial artist will have to attack them separately. Roll first for any active resplendent destiny, then any other effects, highest (Essence + College) first.

Resplendent destinies should not be confused with the Destiny Background described in the Appendix. Astrology Interruption Method does not affect true Destiny, and the Bureau of Destiny will certainly investigate such attempts.

SOUL FIRE SHAPER FORM (QIAN JING)

Cost: 15m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5;

Type: Simple (DV -3)

Keywords: Form-type, Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: One complete martial art (all Charms), Sequential Charm Disruption, Spell-Shattering Palm, Astrology Interruption Method
and QIAN JING

While using this Charm, the character increases her effective permanent Essence score to 10. This increase doesn't provide additional motes of temporary Essence, though it does increase her maximum temporary Essence. It doesn't allow her to purchase Charms, familiars or acquaintances she could not possess at her normal Essence, but for other purposes, treat her Essence as 10 for all effects.

In addition, the character can make one free use of Charm Redirection Technique, Sequential Charm Disruption, Astrology Interruption Method or Spell-Shattering Palm on every action. This allowance is part of the Charm's effect and does not count as the character's action or as the Charm for his action. Nor must he take a Guard action to engage in the free Charm use.

GOD WAYS (ZUO GU)

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Simple

Keywords: Obvious

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: None

and ZUO GU and YOU PAN

The character steps into an object or person, displacing its natural spirit. The Sidereal's player rolls (Charisma + Martial Arts) against a difficulty equal to his target's Essence. The target's player can make a simple Willpower roll, difficulty 2, each action—each action of the usurper's, that is—to regain control of her body. In the meantime, the Exalt's body dematerializes as it interweaves itself with the Essence of his target's form. He can move and take Martial Arts actions through the stolen identity, using the body's Strength, Dexterity or Stamina if they exceed his own. This Charm even imbues a stolen body with supernatural flexibility and mobility, such that a possessed table could run around or a possessed pine tree could throw its cones at passersby.

The character using this Charm cannot possess items made of soulsteel. He can possess objects of other magical materials only if he knows this style's Charm for emulating that magical material.

(TYPE) EXALT WAYS (YOU PAN)

Cost: 10m, 1hl; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Obvious, Touch

Duration: Five actions

Prerequisite Charms: None



The character strikes his crown, brow, throat, spine and abdomen chakras in that order, forcibly reshaping his Essence and altering how his anima interacts with the world. This “Charm” is actually a set of Charms, each of which allows the character to mimic the anima banner and anima effects of one other type and caste of Exalted for five full actions. For instance, a Sidereal could choose No Moon Lunar Ways, Zenith Solar Ways, Air-aspected Terrestrial Ways, or the ways of any other sort of Exalt, even other Sidereal castes. Each must be bought separately. The Sidereal must choose which Exalt Ways Charm he activates, and he cannot change his decision until the duration expires. This Charm temporarily replaces the Exalt’s anima banner, but it doesn’t change his caste mark or hinder his ability to make his Maiden’s Lesser Sign.

The character adds his Essence in automatic successes to one of the relevant caste’s favored Attributes or Abilities while this Charm operates. He can choose a new Attribute or Ability each time he invokes this Charm. Knowing Exalt Ways—even Eclipse Solar Ways or Moonshadow Abyssal Ways—does not allow a Sidereal to purchase otherwise forbidden Charms.

GAMES OF DIVINITY FORM (WU JI)

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Emotion, Form-type, Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: One complete martial art (all Charms), God Ways, one Exalt Ways Charm
and WU JI

No imperfect creature can truly emulate the complicated, perfect beauty of the spirit courts that manage all Creation, but this Form-type Charm comes close. While the character uses this Charm, enemies who want to harm her must have their players fail a Compassion roll. Subduing her or manipulating the martial artist is still allowed, though. People who witness the Games of Divinity Form become addicted, such that they crave to see it again for as long as they remember the Sidereal. Their players must succeed at Temperance rolls for their characters to refuse any reasonable opportunity to behold the Charm in use once again. Only a dreamstone addiction wipes away and prevents addiction, though witnessing the Charm does not curb or cure one’s dreamstone addiction.

DEMESNE EMULATION PRACTICE (KAO)

Cost: 20m, 1wp, 1hl; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None
and KAO

By manipulating the surrounding flows of Essence, the character makes himself a convergence point for Essence, which he channels into his blows. The Sidereal’s player

rolls (Dexterity + Martial Arts), unmodified by any other Charms. For the rest of the scene, each of the Exalt’s successful unarmed attacks inflicts an additional number of aggravated damage levels equal to the number of successes that (Dexterity + Martial Arts) roll garnered. This damage is soaked separately (if the victim has some means of soaking aggravated damage).

DEMESNE AND MANSE FORM (CHUNG TING)

Cost: 12m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5;

Type: Simple (DV -2)

Keywords: Form-type, Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: One complete Celestial martial art (all Charms), Demesne Emulation Practice
and CHUNG TING!

The character adopts a stately stance that allows her to properly channel and constrain the raw power that the prerequisite Charm feeds into her. This Essence coalesces around her caste mark into a hearthstone, which exists only while the character uses the form. The character receives that hearthstone’s benefits, as if it were properly set in a starmetal circlet (or the Exalt’s favored magical material, in the unlikely event that a Solar or Abyssal learns this Charm). The player and the Storyteller should work together to determine what those benefits are, developing a four- or five-dot hearthstone that reflects the character’s personality. Treat major changes to the character’s nature (or Motivation) as architectural alterations to a manse, adjusting the hearthstone’s abilities appropriately.

PRISMATIC ARRANGEMENT OF CREATION FORM (TAO)

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5;

Type: Simple (Speed 3)

Keywords: Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Four Magical Materials Form, Soul Fire Shaper Form, Games of Divinity Form, Demesne and Manse Form

The Elder Sutra of Essence: The last maiden’s name was TAO. These were their names, but they knew them not.

As she performs the steps and katas of this Charm, the character refracts infinitely into ambient flows of Essence, leaving her everywhere and nowhere, one with all of Creation. When she manifests again (on her next action), she is consummately aware of everything around her, reacting to intentions before they are formed, to actions before they are taken and to the battle as a whole as easily as to a single blow.

This Charm doubles the character’s Join Battle dice pool. When she and other characters act on the same tick, the Sidereal always acts first: This is a perfect effect, trumping other Charms that enable a character to act first, unless they also come from a Sidereal martial art. The Exalt is



aware of every attack against her and is immune to sensory penalties (which is a perfect effect). She can sense every supernatural effect, object and creature within (her Essence x 10) yards. Noticing something hidden requires a reflexive (Perception + Awareness) roll, adding the Sidereal's Essence in automatic successes.

What's more, a character using this form can also invoke any or all of its subsidiary forms, paying the normal Essence cost to do so. As long as this Charm is active, its subsidiary forms can coexist with it and with one another. The character can also invoke other Form-type Charms, but doing so limits her to two other forms. Other forms are but refracted frequencies of the unified brilliance of the transcendent Prismatic Arrangement of Creation Form.

While the martial artist uses the Prismatic Arrangement of Creation Form, the character can also use the favored weapons of any other martial arts style whose Form-type Charm she has concurrently active. Attacks with these weapons are treated as an unarmed attack for the purpose of all Martial Arts Charms. This allowance is a specific benefit of the Prismatic Arrangement of Creation Form, not a general rule. This effect does not extend to armor.

QUICKSILVER HAND OF DREAMS STYLE

The Sidereal establishment would love to know where the Quicksilver Hand of Dreams Style came from. No Sidereal, it seems, remembers inventing it, in this life or another. The few Sidereal Exalted who learn it keep quiet, for their fellows regard the style with unease. Who keeps teaching this style? they ask each other. How is it that such a powerful and

terrible thing is outside our control? Which would come as a surprise to the few Solar and Abyssal Exalted who don't realize they are learning Sidereal martial arts.

The Sidereals know this much: Quicksilver Hand of Dreams Style begins in dreams, and nowhere else. Sometimes, a student dreams of battles like exquisite dances. He fights beautiful opponents who slip away from him, laughing, then strike with the grace of a falling star. If the Exalt ignores these dreams, the dreams soon stop and never return. If the Exalt chooses to try to learn from these dream-battles, however, he can copy the techniques of his foes and find a sifu in his dreams to explain them. He wakes with his sifu forgotten—but after several nights of dreams, he knows these combat techniques and Charms in his waking life. The character must still pay each Charm's experience cost... but his training takes place when he sleeps.

Unlike other Sidereal martial arts, characters with relatively low Martial Arts and Essence can learn the early Charms for Quicksilver Hand of Dreams Style. At first, it seems like merely a rather odd Celestial martial art. As the character grows in power, so do the Charms, gradually revealing their Sidereal nature.

As the Exalt continues his training, the quality of his movements changes, though at first in ways only another martial artist could discern. Seeming clumsiness shifts suddenly into unearthly grace. He moves more slowly than his opponent expects, or flickers from stance to stance faster than the eye can follow. The student is not quite where his opponents expected him to be; his attacks break through the world itself, into the realm of dreams.



Once he internalizes the first four Charms, the character's dreams lead him to a teacher in the waking world who can continue his training. Whether he does so is his own choice. Either way, the dreams stop and slowly fade from memory, as dreams do. A character who learns the Ephemeral Presence Technique can no longer doubt this is not just a somewhat odd Celestial martial art. Celestial practitioners, however, are not likely to realize that Quicksilver Hand of Dreams Style is a Sidereal martial art until they find a sifu. A character needs a Sidereal sifu to learn the style's more advanced Charms—not to mention a considerably higher Essence and Martial Arts proficiency than when he began.

Weapons and Armor: The Quicksilver Hand of Dreams Style cannot be used with weapons, nor may the character wear armor while using its Charms. The Gossamer Understanding Charm removes these restrictions, but only insofar as the character may use armor and weapons crafted from dreams.

The Dreaming Student's Sutra: Once, there was a maiden who slept.

THE QUICKSILVER STAIRCASE

Cost: —; **Mins:** Martial Arts 2, Essence 2; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: None

Duration: Enlightening, Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

As she slept, she fought and loved and saw the world

The martial artist learns to take control of his inner self. He is now an entirely lucid dreamer and may remember his dreams perfectly (excepting those in which he learns this style). He also gains certain related benefits:

- The martial artist perceives the true nature of objects crafted from glamour or gossamer, the dream-stuffs of the Fair Folk. This does not intrinsically grant the power to see the reality behind glammers, but at least the character knows to try.

- The character can handle raw dream-stuff, such as dreams pulled out using Dream Ravager Hand, as if he held a physical object. Because other people can't normally hold

THE WAKING, DREAMING AND GOSSAMER LEVELS

The three second-tier Charms of the Quicksilver Hand of Dreams Style can be learned in any order, but the character requires a higher Martial Arts and Essence rating for each subsequent Charm. The first Charm (whether Peaceful Repose Touch, Fervent Night Phantasm or Dream Ravager Hand) requires only Martial Arts 3 and Essence 2. The next Charm of the trio requires Martial Arts 4 and Essence 3, and the third Charm requires Martial Arts 5 and Essence 4.

What's more, the Charms grow mightier as characters learn more of the set. Each Charm has three levels of power, the Waking, Dreaming and Gossamer Levels. When a character learns her first Charm of the three, she practices it only at the Waking Level, the weakest, for she is still almost entirely a creature of the waking world. Once a character learns a second Charm, she can practice both at the stronger Dreaming Level. When a character learns the third Charm, she can use all three at the Gossamer Level. When using these Charms, though, a character can voluntarily employ a weaker level.

As martial artists advance in the Quicksilver Hand of Dreams Style, however, they find it reshaping them. Not only do they gain an otherworldly aspect, but Creation starts to forget them. The forgetting begins once a character learns a Charm beyond The Quicksilver Staircase.

Every scene in which the martial artist uses a Quicksilver Hand of Dreams Charm, someone who knows her has a chance to forget her. The Storyteller picks someone at whim. The selected person's player must succeed on a (Wits + Essence) roll or forget the martial artist completely. He does not recall her name or anything about her, and he loses any Intimacies related to her (if any). He substitutes other people in memories whose loss would be noticed or makes some other excuse to himself that explains away her presence. Since something like this happens to Sidereal Exalted anyway, those few who know this style are rarely upset—but Solars and Abyssals might find it disturbing... and even Siderals aren't supposed to forget each other.

When a character uses a Charm at its Waking Level, the person who might forget the character must have known him for less than a scene. If a Charm is used at the Dreaming Level, a person who knew the martial artist for less than a month has a chance to forget her. Any Investigation rolls concerning actions the martial artist took during the scene take an external penalty of one, as casual observers' memories fade. A character who uses the Gossamer Level, or a more advanced Charm in the style, is so far outside Creation's compass that even her husband, daughter or best friend can forget her. Investigation rolls made to uncover what the character did during the scene of Charm use take an external penalty of three as even the physical evidence of his existence disappears. Moreover, the character has a 50% chance to lose one dot from a Background based on contact with other people. Influence, Allies and Reputation are good examples. She does not lose Backgrounds that have nothing to do with people, such as Familiar, Artifact or Manse, by using Quicksilver Hand of Dreams. (This roll, like the other character's roll to forget the martial artist, need be made only once per scene.)



dreams, however, he cannot hand one to someone else unless he places it in a dream catcher (see p. 141).

- The martial artist resists mental and physical warping from the Wyld. Treat all Wyld zones as one step closer to Creation. For example, the character resists the Deep Wyld as if it were only a Middlemarch.

PEACEFUL REPOSE TOUCH

Cost: 2m, 4m or 6m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3+, Essence 2+;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Compulsion, Touch

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: The Quicksilver Staircase
and none could awaken her.

The character knows how a person's Essence changes between waking and sleeping. He can use that knowledge to strike a person's Essence and force it into the waking or sleeping pattern. The character attempts a normal Martial Arts attack while spending Essence. If the martial artist wants, the attack doesn't have to inflict real damage, but the attack roll must succeed. The attack's magical effect takes place if the martial artist's (Martial Arts + Essence) surpasses the target's Dodge MDV. It doesn't matter if any physical damage penetrates the target's soak. How long the target's changed state lasts (as well as its Essence cost) depends on the character's mastery of this Charm:

Waking Level (2 motes): The target can be stunned through her next action. An unresisting subject can also be sent instantly to a normal sleep. This level also infallibly forces a sleeper to wake up, including someone put to sleep by this Charm, other Charms that induce sleep or spells.

Dreaming Level (4 motes): The attack forces the target to sleep deeply for 24 hours. The target can resist the compulsion by spending one Willpower per action, but doing so only delays the target's slumber. The target can still be awakened by shocks such as slapping or dunking her in cold water. Alternatively, the target becomes unable to sleep naturally for as many days as the attacker's successes.

Gossamer Level (6 motes): The target sleeps as long as the martial artist wants. Spending Willpower delays slumber but does not counter the effect. Someone who has a strong Intimacy to her can awaken the target. The martial artist can also set a condition for the target to wake up, such as physical harm or calling her name. The sleeper does not age or need to eat, excrete or breathe (though she does seem to breathe very slowly and shallowly). Alternatively, the target becomes unable to sleep again (until some set trigger removes the curse). Not only does this remove the target's ability to recover Willpower by sleeping, she will go mad after a number of days equal to her Willpower.

FERVENT NIGHT PHANTASM

Cost: 2m, 4m or 6m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3+, Essence 2+;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Illusion, Touch

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: The Quicksilver Staircase

For in her dreams, she had a lover who truly knew her,

As a student of this martial art learns the secrets of dreams, she can induce dreams in other people. A strike to the target's Essence—even one light enough to inflict no damage—plants a dream within her consciousness.

The character attempts a normal Martial Arts attack. If this attack succeeds, the character implants a dream, even if none of the attack's damage penetrates the target's soak. Indeed, the martial artist can attempt an attack that would not deal physical damage anyway. If the character's (Martial Arts + Essence) surpasses the target's Dodge MDV, the dream takes effect. At each level of power, the martial artist implants a more compelling vision.

Waking Level (2 motes): The dream remains latent until the next time the target sleeps. It is just a dream, with no physical or metaphysical consequences. The target vividly remembers the dream on waking, though, so the martial artist can use the dream as a medium to attempt a social attack upon the target, using whatever Abilities she possesses.

Dreaming Level (4 motes): The martial artist forces the character to dream while awake. The induced hallucination introduces one new entity into the target's perception. The new entity cannot include any sensation more overpowering than a brass band, but otherwise just about anything is possible. (One useful trick in combat is to create a hallucinatory double of yourself, so your opponent doesn't know which version to fight.) The martial artist can use this hallucination to mask real entities too. He could make a peasant's hovel look, feel and smell like a strangely immobile yeddim. He could also force the target to see an uncovered pit as solid ground or make the target see and hear his best friend as a menacing deathknight (though the martial artist can't alter the friend's words). The dream image lasts the rest of the scene. The target can resist the waking dream for one action by spending a Willpower point. Implanting a new hallucination cancels out the old one.

Gossamer Level (6 motes): The martial artist takes total control of the target's consciousness, for as long as she wants to keep it and can stay awake herself. She can add, subtract or change whatever perceptions she wants. She may hurl the target into a complete dream world with no connection to reality, or she may work subtly, deluding the character by changing just a few words heard by the character.

DREAM RAVAGER HAND

Cost: 2m, 4m or 6m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3+, Essence 2+;

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Combo-OK, Compulsion, Touch

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: The Quicksilver Staircase
though she did not see him.

As the martial artist's two hands sweep past his target's head, he catches her dreams or memories of dreams and pulls them forth visibly. The character attempts a normal Martial Arts attack and can pull out dreams if his (Martial Arts +

Essence) exceeds his target's Dodge MDV. The Martial Arts attack does not need to inflict damage (either because of the target's soak or the martial artist's restraint) for the dream theft to take place.

Waking Level (2 motes): The martial artist pulls out one of the target's dreams. On a sleeping person, this can be the dream she experiences at that moment; on a waking person, it is the memory of the person's most recent dream. Dream Ravager Hand can also pull out daydreams. The martial artist can hold the dream or place it in a dream catcher, if he has one. Losing a single dream is harmless and can even be useful, if the target wants to examine her own dreams with her waking consciousness. Unless the Exalt has a dream catcher handy, the dream vanishes back to its owner as soon as he lets it go.

Dreaming Level (4 motes): The martial artist doesn't just pull out a dream; he removes his target's capacity to dream, for as many days and nights as his player scored successes on the attack roll. The target can still sleep—but without dreams, she cannot recover Willpower by doing so. The martial artist needs a dream catcher to store the stolen capacity to dream, or the target's dreams fly back to her once the martial artist himself sleeps or is otherwise forced to stop holding the stolen dreams.

Gossamer Level (6 motes): The martial artist strips away the target's capacity to dream for as long as he wants to keep it, with no need for a dream catcher. Without the ability to dream, the target eventually goes mad, as with Peaceful Repose Touch, unless she receives dreams from another source (for instance, dreams granted nightly using Fervent Night Phantasm, or perhaps bought from the Fair Folk). For what it's worth, the Fair Folk cannot ravage or beguile a person who cannot dream.

DREAM CATCHER (ARTIFACT •)

Artifacts can be built to hold the elusive substance of dreams. Most take the form of shimmering orbs made from glass and blue jade, but they can use other magical materials or other shapes: delicate orichalcum nets within glass hoops, for example, or bags woven from fibers of glass and moonsilver. Characters need at least three dots each in Occult, Lore and Craft (Air) to construct such artifacts. Alternatively, a dream catcher can be crafted using the Gossamer Understanding Charm.

EPHEMERAL PRESENCE TECHNIQUE

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

Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Peaceful Repose Touch, Fervent Night Phantasm, Dream Ravager Hand

She searched and searched but could not find him.

No longer sure whether he is in the real world or wandering in dreams, the martial artist seems to have transcended mere physicality. In the clear light of everyday reality, it seems that he is not exactly where he appeared to be. As the world grows darker or more dubious, the character seems to be in more than one place at a time. Where people cannot see the world or there's no stable reality to see, it is obvious that he is everywhere.

Even if he can be seen with perfect clarity, the character may raise his Dodge DV by two while this Charm is active. The martial artist also raises his effective Dexterity by one for calculating movement rates.

In a Bordermarch or in conditions where his opponents suffer poor visibility, (see **Exalted**, p. 135) the bonus to the martial artist's Dodge DV equals his Essence rating. He adds his Essence to his Dexterity for calculating movement rates. The player may roll to reestablish surprise as if the character had cover. Anyone trying to find him on that action doubles any visibility penalty that applies to them at that time. The martial artist himself suffers no penalties to his perception because of the lighting or environment.

If a character is in a place where his enemies suffer no visibility, or in a Middlemarch, all dice pools to detect the martial artist are reduced to zero before the use of Charms or stunts. Even if a searcher gets a dice pool, she must double any visibility penalties. Searchers end the search prepared to swear that the martial artist is simply not there. If a foe does miraculously find him, her attack pool likewise drops to zero before the use of Charms and stunts, while the martial artist still adds his Essence to his DV. On the other hand, the martial artist ignores all environmental penalties to any action he takes. His player also adds his Essence to any Perception pool as automatic successes.

DREAMWALKER KATA

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Ephemeral Presence Technique

She questioned everyone in her dream.

Brushing her hand past a dreaming person's head with a gesture like unlocking a door, the martial artist opens a momentary, silver-shimmering portal into the world of his dreams and steps through. For the next scene, she is physically present in his dream. While inside, the martial artist can unobtrusively observe the dream as it plays out... or use Fervent Night Phantasm to take control, to whatever extent she chooses. She can interact with the sleeper's dream self as if they were both corporeal or create whatever fantasy or nightmare she wants. The target can fight back against whatever the martial artist does, but only using Charms or stunts and with every dice pool reduced to zero before Charm or stunt modifiers.



Nothing that happens in the dream is real, so the dream invader cannot cause any physical harm, but she can give the dreamer a very bad night—or a good one, or just a strange experience. At the Storyteller's option, an especially encouraging dream could grant the sleeping character a bonus on the Conviction roll to regain Willpower when he wakes, while an especially frightening or demoralizing dream could impose an internal penalty on the roll.

If the martial artist possesses one of the target's dreams, taken through Dream Ravager Hand, or the target is currently experiencing a dream implanted using Fervent Night Phantasm, the martial artist can enter the target's dreams without being physically present. She simply makes the kata in the air and steps through. When the scene ends and the character must depart the dream, however, she stands beside the sleeper instead of wherever she was before.

The dreamer will not naturally awaken while the martial artist influences his dreams, but some external event can wake him up. In that case, the martial artist suddenly appears beside her (probably quite surprised) target and spends one action stunned.

INESCAPABLE NIGHTMARE PURSUIT

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Ephemeral Presence Technique

No one escaped her queries.

When a martial artist activates this Charm, he must designate one person, within his sight at that time, as his target of pursuit. For the rest of the scene, the martial artist's movement rate is always one yard faster than his target's last action, as a subtle silver fire plays about him. It doesn't matter how the target moves: Move action, dashing, jumping, riding on a horse, transporting herself by spell... the martial artist always moves a little faster and can never be hid from or evaded.

What's more, no material barrier can stop the pursuit if the martial artist can pass it in one of his own movements. If he can dash through the width of a wall, he passes through it as insubstantial as a dream. Even the ocean or the air does not impede his progress: He can walk on water just a little faster than his target's ship or stalk along the clouds behind his target's aerial steed. No matter where the martial artist goes, however, he has time to move to safe footing before the Charm ends. The Charm's effect also ends if he actually catches his target.

Inescapable Nightmare Pursuit only works, however, if the martial artist's target is capable of dreaming. The effect will not work against, for example, an automaton or anyone who has had her dreams stolen with Dream Ravager Hand.

QUICKSILVER HAND OF DREAMS FORM

Cost: 15m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5; **Type:** Simple

Keywords: Form-type, Obvious, Shaping

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: One complete Celestial martial art (all Charms), Dreamwalker Kata, Inescapable Nightmare Pursuit

As time passed, she forgot him and did not know why she wept in her sleep.

The Exalt activates the Quicksilver Hand of Dreams Form through a weird, slow kata while the world around her seems to ripple like water. For the rest of the scene, the character receives the benefit of Ephemeral Presence Technique, and her surroundings are treated as poor visibility regardless of the illumination.

In addition, the martial artist can reflexively negate any attempt to affect him in any way, at least on that action. Whatever an opponent or environmental effect might seek to do to him—hurt him, restrain him, trap him, persuade him—melts away, and he is as he would have been if it had never happened.

The character can also make any action near-perfect: His player receives one success on any task the character attempts, no matter what internal or external penalties might naturally apply... including Defense Values. (Soak still applies, as it isn't a penalty.) The martial artist cannot do flat-out impossible things or automatically perform actions that require more than one success, but if a task is possible in principle, he can probably do it. For example, he couldn't save himself from falling off a cliff by flapping his arms—that's impossible without magic. He could, however, scamper up a collapsing cliff despite the external penalty of 5, and a (Dexterity + Athletics) pool of 3. He is as invincible as a lord of dreams.

A dramatic character, however, may effectively oppose the martial artist by exerting her own narrative potential on the dream the martial artist creates around himself. If an action or defense against the character is enhanced with Essence or a stunt, then the martial artist's player rolls (Essence) with an external penalty equal to the other person's Essence score. If the roll fails, the martial artist must resist the effect or play out the offensive action with only the basic effect of this Charm to aid him.

The character can live beyond reality. When he is killed, he may shift into the dreams of anyone within (his Essence x 10) yards (or further than that if he carries one of the person's dreams). Although all of his possessions are left behind, his body disappears entirely and will re-form—unharmful and alive—next to that person the next time the person dreams.

Finally, once an Exalt learns Quicksilver Hand of Dreams Form, he becomes more resistant to the Wyld. All Wyld zones are treated as two steps closer to Creation, so Middlemarches cannot mutate or affect the character—unless he deliberately allows them to do so.

GOSSAMER UNDERSTANDING

Cost: 10m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5; **Type:** Reflexive

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious, Shaping

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Quicksilver Hand of Dreams Form

The Dreaming Elder's Sutra: The maiden awakened into daylight, silver tear tracks on her cheeks,

Even the poorest, most sordid and colorless dream can be beautiful to the dreamer, and that beauty is more real than anything in Creation. The martial artist can make things from dreamstuff using Craft (Glamour), just like the Fair Folk do. Sadly, his work is more limited. The Fair Folk can create anything, even impossible or abstract things, but the martial artist is grounded in Creation, and what he makes must always be physical. He may forge swords, palaces, lovers—indeed, almost anything he could conceivably touch—but nothing else. Learning the Craft (Glamour) Ability is his own problem.

The martial artist works with gossamer, which is to dreams as glass is to sand. Dream Ravager Hand enables the character to collect raw dreams. This Charm converts the dreams to gossamer, and then to whatever object the character wants to create, using Craft (Glamour) in place of any other Craft that would normally be required. (Glamour is always considered the character's favored material.)

Just as a jeweler could not make a gold bracelet from wood, however, the martial artist must use the proper kind of dreams. Common and generic things—a sword, a dress—can be made from the dreams of any common individual, but the raw materials for esoteric creations—an artifact, a person's perfect lover, a crown more beautiful than the dawn—require a long and difficult search. Brilliant artists and especially passionate individuals tend to have higher-quality dreams. The dreams of magically powerful individuals aren't always of higher quality, but they often are.

Objects crafted by Gossamer Understanding follow the normal rules for creating that class of object. They are automatically excellent, but their excellence does not add to their Resources value for the purposes of creation rolls. Particularly large, complex, magical or beautiful things can have enormous difficulties—even up to 10—and require decades or centuries to complete without help or the use of other Charms.

The magical materials cannot be woven from gossamer; neither can artifacts rated higher than 3, an Exalted or enlightened Essence, or a living soul. The Exalted dream crafter can make sentient beings, even people that seem human in almost every way that matters, but they cannot have an Essence score greater than 1. The exotic materials for the creation of gossamer artifacts come in the form of rare and potent dreams. The character must seek out Fair Folk, demons or other powerful entities to secure the proper materials, and they certainly faces dubious bargains for the sake of his quest.





Gossamer Understanding is not compatible with Sidereal Craft Charms—they craft fate, not dreams—but it can be used with those of other Exalted.

Keep in mind that gossamer things are not well suited to existence in Creation. They age and decay far more swiftly than normal objects of their sort do. They seldom last as long as a decade even in the uncivilized edges of the world. On the Blessed Isle, they vanish in less than a year. In the Underworld, gossamer dissolves in mere days. The magic of the Exalted cannot further preserve such things, but Fair Folk magic might help.

A martial artist may use any gossamer weapons or armor he creates with all Charms of this style. The weapon must, however, be a Martial Arts weapon, and the armor's mobility or fatigue values cannot exceed 2.

CHIMERICAL ASCENSION

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Obvious, Shaping, Stackable

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Gossamer Understanding

and as she rose from her bed and blinked the last tears away,

The martial artist strikes the air and Creation breaks, letting the Wyld pour in. The area around her becomes otherworldly and peculiar—it is shaped into a Middlemarch, and players of any characters within (50 yards for every 10 motes spent on this Charm) must roll to avoid both mutation and addiction in the initial surge of the Wyld. The martial artist himself is immune. A martial artist who knows this Charm treats all Wyld zones as three steps closer to Creation (so only the pure, formless Wyld beyond Creation can affect him... unless he allows the Wyld to change him, of course). This Middlemarch lasts the rest of the scene. Then it fades to a Bordermarch for a number of days equal to the Exalt's Essence, before finally stabilizing as Creation once more—but still faintly tainted by the Wyld.

While in this zone, the character can use other Quicksilver Hand of Dreams Charms such as Ephemeral Presence Technique. She may also count her stunts as one level higher for every five motes she spends, to a maximum total stunt level of her Essence. Furthermore, if the Exalt has any gossamer equipment, it is empowered. For every five motes she spends, she gains +1 to the Accuracy, Damage, Defense and Rate of a weapon, or +1L/+1B for armor. Any living creatures made of glamour or gossamer fall under the martial artist's control—unless they are controlled by another, in which case the character's player attempts a resisted roll of his Essence versus the controller's Essence to seize command. Spending another five motes on this Charm allows the Exalt to roll another die and add it to her previous successes. A character cannot spend more motes on this Charm than (Martial Arts x 5).

Finally, when the martial artist crafts gossamer in her Middlemarch, she can make anything with a difficulty of 5 or less in a number of actions equal to that difficulty.

FANTASY

Cost: 20m, 2wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 7, Essence 7;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Obvious, Shaping

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Chimerical Ascension

she saw that her lover stood waiting.

The martial artist himself does not know whether his dreams are real, but it doesn't matter. For the rest of the scene, he is a lucid dreamer, and everything within (Essence x 10) yards is his dream. Therefore, he chooses what happens. The Exalt cannot force a genuinely impossible event in the context of the scene, nor an event without any apparent cause. For example, his enemies will not simply fall over dead for no reason. He must kill them or decide that they start arguing and kill each other or arrange for them to die in some other understandable way.

The Storyteller assigns a stunt value for the story the martial artist invents for the rest of the scene. The stunt value may be enhanced using Chimerical Ascension (almost anything's possible in the Wyld). All through the scene, anyone with an Essence pool who wishes to avoid being drawn into the character's dream narrative may spend a Willpower point to act against the Exalt's version of events. Any actions an unwilling character takes that contradict her vision have their dice pool reduced to zero before the use of Charms. Once the rebel character spends Willpower points equal to the story's stunt value, the fantasy melts away, leaving the martial artist standing bereft in the shreds of her dream.

Fantasy may be used only once per scene.

WHAT'S THE SECRET?

So, who invented the Quicksilver Hand of Dreams Style? And who imparts it to dreaming Exalts?

Your guess is as good as anyone's.

The world forgets practitioners of this style, just as people forget Sidereals they meet. The Sidereals don't like to think that maybe someone—or something—occludes itself from their memory and awesome investigative powers as effectively as they hide from mortals. They can't refute the possibility, though...

Creation also does not encompass all possibilities. The Primordials came before it. The Neverborn and Yozis made whole worlds out of their death and maiming. They cannot be dismissed out of hand as possible sources for any enigma.

Finally, the Fair Folk emerge from the same eternal chaos whence the Primordials came. Quicksilver Hand of Dreams Style emulates many feats of the Fair Folk. Could something from the Outer Chaos be reaching into Creation?

Only your Storyteller knows... if she thinks it matters. Not every question has an answer.

SCARLET PATTERNED BATTLEFIELD STYLE

Those who would study war and conflict must study patterns of movement. Soldiers are straightforward, moving always toward their destination, but they do not want to die. That fear can disrupt their pattern and end their chance of victory. Dragonlords march their troops obliquely, to surround and control a battlefield. Their weakness is fear for their command. Generals move everyone according to their strategy, retreating and advancing to fool opponents and close traps. Spending units like valuable jade, they buy their victories with care. And children move at their whim and throw away armies like toys, making them the most dangerous of all.

Scarlet Patterned Battlefield Style is one of the standard advanced secret styles, taught to ambitious and promising Sidereal Exalted. Although it is not of supreme power, it can be quite effective in the right hands. The Chosen of the Maiden of Battles particularly like it, for obvious reasons.

Weapons and Armor: This style may not be practiced in armor. It has no form weapons.

Complementary Abilities: An Exalt who wants to learn Scarlet Patterned Battlefield Style must first possess three dots in War.

Student's Sutra of Sacrifice: Once, there was a maiden...

UNASSAILABLE REBUFF POSITION

Cost: 7m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Simple (Speed 4)

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Knockback, Obvious

Duration: (Martial Arts x 2) actions

Prerequisite Charms: None

...who was very vain.

A soldier protects what is his to protect. By taking this stance on the battlefield, the character makes sure that the ground on which he stands remains inviolate. Should any foe approach, that foe is forced back in an instant. For the Charm's duration, the character may attack anyone who approaches within (Essence x 2) yards. These attacks take the form of pushing gestures. The martial artist never touches his enemies, but they feel the force of his Essence. For every yard by which a target has pierced this boundary, the character adds one die to his reflexive attack. Any target he successfully hits also suffers knockback, moving a number of yards per die of raw damage equal to his Strength. The character may not take Move or Dash actions while this Charm is active. He may end the Charm early, if he wishes.

IMPECCABLE PATTERNED DEPLOYMENT

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

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

She loved her mirror,

No amount of interference can keep a dedicated dragonlord from her goal. With an enemy ahead, she marches her troops left or right. When surrounded, she forms up to

pierce her enemies' ranks. While this Charm is active, the character demonstrates that flexibility and ingenuity to move as she likes.

As soon as the martial artist takes her first step in a Move or Dash action, she dematerializes. She retakes her material and visible form the moment she stops. This technique allows her to walk through obstacles as long as she does not stop inside them, including people, walls and war machines. Immaterial obstacles impede her. She is not automatically safe from attack, though. Since she becomes material and visible once she stops moving, most opponents can still move and target her with their attacks on the tick when she stops moving (as long as they can guess which way the character is going).

The martial artist can avoid reflexive attacks or damaging area effects, like that of Unassailable Rebuff Position. If she is never material while inside the affected area or the range for attacks, she is not a valid target for such efforts unless they can affect immaterial beings. Taking a Dash action, the character does not become material again until the Dash ends. Note that, without special Charms, material creatures and objects become invalid targets for an immaterial character.

While the character is immaterial, other immaterial objects and entities become valid targets for her attacks. Conversely, immaterial entities can attack the character. When two martial artists use this Charm at once, they may trade blows while both are immaterial or material, as desired.

GLANCE AND STRIDE

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

Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Impeccable Patterned Deployment and her mirror loved her back.

The character moves with the greatest speed, mimicking the nature for a general's influence to be everywhere. Aiding beleaguered soldiers one minute, leading troops to victory in the next, his feet cross dozens of yards at a step, as many or as little as he likes. As long as the character moves in a straight line (following the contours of the terrain), he can move as far as he can see. He does not naturally avoid obstacles or people. Spending an additional mote allows him to walk on air for a single tick, moving even to locations that are not accessible from the ground, though he must still have a straight-line path to that place.

WITHOUT STRATEGY ARRANGEMENT

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-Basic

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

Looking only at her mirror,

With perfect information, one could choose an optimal strategy. With no information, or random information, strategy becomes impossible. A martial artist who uses this

Charm does not always attack a foe's weakness or withdraw from loss. Instead, she follows a strategy of calculated randomness. Children, usually unwittingly, follow this tactic simply through their unique, uneducated-but-brilliant worldview. The Maidens protect children and fools, they say.

The character moves without any obvious tactical plan. She ducks low when others expect her to block high, and she weaves left as her opponents try to drive her backward. Her apparently random blocks and stances set her opponents completely off guard.

Each time the martial artist becomes aware of an attack upon her, her player rolls one die. Rolling no success indicates that her strategy gave her no special advantage in that situation. With one success, her opponent could not keep track of her, and her defense was well-suited to his confused attack—divide his attack successes in half before Step 5. Two successes indicate that the character's strategy perfectly countered his, nullifying his attack.

At the same time, the character's selection of actions completely optimizes her opportunities to strike. Because a foe never knows how the martial artist will attack next, he cannot choose his martial strategy to counter hers and is often blindsided by her blows. While this Charm is active, all the character's attacks are considered unexpected.

When opposed by another character using this Charm, both characters' attacks and defenses are resolved as if there were no special considerations.

FALLEN IVORY DEFENSE

Cost: 6m, 1lhl; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Obvious

Duration: Until released

Prerequisite Charms: Unassailable Rebuff Position, Glance and Stride, Without Strategy Arrangement
she missed the revolution

Sometimes, it is possible to protect a thing so well that it is never in any danger. This Charm provides that defense for one target of the character's choice. Any individual entity is a valid target for this Charm. When the martial artist prepares the Charm, he cuts his palm and declares whom he protects. The blood forms an oath and seeps into his palm like a scarlet tattoo. From that moment until he voluntarily ends the Charm, the martial artist can redirect every physical and magical assault on the target to himself instead. Be it an arrow in the night, an imperious and unnatural mental command or the mind-rending assault of a Fair One, the character's magic imposes himself and his Essence between the offender and his ward.

When danger looms, the character instantly becomes aware and has a choice. He may disappear from his current location in a burst of faint, starry light and instantly appear before his charge, taking whatever attack was meant for her. The character becomes the target of the attack and may defend as normal. Alternatively, he may send an effigy of Essence,





which appears as a silhouette image of himself between the aggressor (or the threat) and the target. The assault still targets his ward, but the Sidereal may activate any Charm or Combo to protect her as if the attack did target him. By spending three motes reflexively, the character may charge his Essence with more of himself before sending it to his friend's defense. The attack must hit him as if he had gone himself, but he doesn't need to find his way back to where he was before.

A character may commit himself to defend multiple individuals, but doing so tends to be draining. Students of this style hear legends that some masters find a way to apply this Charm to the defense of a place, nation or ideal, but they do not know how true that could be.

SCARLET PATTERNED BATTLEFIELD FORM

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Form-type, Obvious

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Fallen Ivory Defense
and lost her head.

Everything orders itself according to its nature. The family composes itself around the eldest relatives and the ancestors' shrines, while monasteries channel focus into meditation and reverence. The battlefield has two orders: one that represents maximum organization and one that contains maximum entropy—before and after the enemy is met.

The character embodies this duality and carries its touch in hers. After activating this Charm, she appears differently to different people. An observer with a greater Conviction or Temperance sees her stand tall as a perfect specimen of warrior discipline, walking and moving in flawless precision. A person who has greater Compassion or Valor watches as she slouches further than the human body should bend, to the point where several joints or vertebrae must be broken, and her actions look dangerously unfocused. Those rare people who balance two opposing Virtues see her as an impossible amalgam of mindlessly constructed body and ideal human, two contradictory states embodied in the same flesh. Each person who meets her eyes sees in one his ideal self, in the other himself destroyed. To those who see her ordered self, her attacks cannot be dodged, and she adds to her Parry DV a bonus equal to her Essence. Attacks against one who sees her entropic nature cannot be parried, and against his blows, she adds a bonus equal to her Essence to her Dodge DV. A person who sees both aspects can neither parry nor dodge her attacks. Appropriate perfect defenses can defeat these assaults, as usual.

Only with Essence perception can one see the faint auras of power glistening around the martial artist's hands. One shines with the blackness of perfect order, and the other with the pure ivory of disorder. Either one can kill. Either one can heal. When the Exalt touches someone, her hand either conflicts with or reinforces that person's internal nature. To inflict the Essence of order upon someone whose highest Virtue is either Compassion or Valor causes him levels of aggravated

damage equal to that Virtue. Touching entropy to someone whose highest Virtue is either Conviction or Temperance does likewise. Infusing a person instead with the Essence that is most like his highest-rated Virtue heals that many health levels, including aggravated damage. A character who has equally high Virtues that conflict suffers neither effect. These effects cannot be transferred through weapons.

Successfully touching a target with either hand accomplishes more than simply damaging or repairing him. Infusing a target with entropy prevents the target from channeling or otherwise benefiting from Conviction and Temperance for the rest of the scene. Likewise, the touch of order blocks the use of Compassion and Valor. The only exception is a character's primary Virtue, which cannot be subdued. When the character's attack would affect an Exalt's primary Virtue, the attempt adds one to that Exalt's Limit. A target gains Limit from this source only once per scene.

VICTORY OF THE CHEAT

Cost: 16m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 6;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-Basic, Obvious, War

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Scarlet Patterned Battlefield Form

Elder Sutra of Sacrifice: When the rookery falls

The placement of each legion, each wing and fang of troops can decide a battle. Placement determines which portions of the field each side controls and where a general can leverage additional force and how quickly. Intelligent arrangement is as important in small-scale combat, where putting two friends back-to-back can save the lives of both or surrounding an enemy force can be the key to killing it. This sort of placement must be done before a battle, because it is simply too difficult to change it effectively during the conflict.

Victory of the Cheat evades this principle. In the instant that the character activates the Charm, she may rearrange the people on the battlefield as she sees fit. No ostentatious effects herald the movement, but it is still obvious to all involved or watching—every person the character can see suddenly moves (or doesn't, as the Exalt desires) to any new location also within her line of sight.

Using this Charm in the midst of mass combat allows the character to reshape units to her whim. She can break large units up into units of smaller Magnitude or condense many units from the same army into units of greater Magnitude. Likewise, she can decide what formation they are in, from rabble to phalanx. Unless they know what's coming, neither choice is particularly useful for the troops thus re-ordered—a suddenly larger unit may not have enough relays to keep order, and other special characters might compete for command of the unit. A unit without the training (Drill rating) to maintain a more complex formation quickly falls into one less ordered. And trying to integrate soldiers from two separate armies into one massive unit simply results in two completely unordered units of enormous Magnitude that have the lowest Drill rating



of any of their soldiers and are considered engaged. Unless the character takes special care that soldiers remain near their known companions and under familiar commanders, most units' commanders will need to perform Rally actions in order to keep their troops together.

In combats on a smaller scale, the character can retrieve her friends from positions of disadvantage, flee at great speed, surround a foe or otherwise use this Charm to her advantage. Exalted and other Essence-wielders may resist this effect. If the Sidereal tries to move any person with an Essence greater than 1, the martial artist's player and target's player make a resisted roll of each character's permanent Essence. If the target's player rolls at least as many successes as the martial artist's player, the Charm does not affect that target.

SINGULAR ESCAPE STRATAGEM

Cost: 12m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 6;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-OK, Compulsion

Duration: Two actions

Prerequisite Charms: Scarlet Patterned Battlefield Form and the birds all fly away,

In some situations, danger and death threatens from all sides, and there is only one way to evade them. Princes escape murder by signing away their inheritances, and daughters escape unwanted betrothals by fleeing with their lovers. Sometimes, it's not actually the only way out, but it looks like it at the time. When the character activates this Charm, he launches an assault at his target. His attack seems so perfectly planned that his foe sees only one possible way to avoid its deadly consequences.

Activating this Charm, the character's player names an action that his target must take in order to escape his flawless maneuver. The victim instinctively knows what that action is. She knows that performing it on her next action may be the only way to avoid near-certain death. Any single action is valid—attack a certain target, flee, use a certain Combo, whatever—as long as the target can perform it on her next action. If the named action is an unacceptable order for the target (see **Exalted**, p. 180), like something suicidal, the target may spend a point of Willpower in order not to perform the action and not suffer the Charm's other effects. Naming an action that the target cannot perform is an impossible action, and the Charm then has no effect. Choosing to escape the maneuver means the target uses her next action as the martial artist's player dictated upon activating the Charm. The target of this Charm does not necessarily perform the action cleanly and willingly. Instead, by accepting the attack's escape, the target acts in some way that makes her next action equivalent to the declared action.

Even knowing that not performing the action could mean death, the target may choose not to take the "escape." Refusing the escape forces her to suffer the final effect of this Charm. A target who does not perform the required action leaves herself completely vulnerable to the character's planned

attack, which he takes on the action following his target's choice and may not be part of a flurry. The martial artist may choose to perform another action, aborting the Charm. The target cannot use any defense against the attack. The Sidereal can use any Martial Arts-based attack available to him, but it becomes a perfect attack that bypasses even perfect defenses (normally impossible—but the target was already offered a perfect defense and turned it down).

Example: The Sidereal Paan Uttara's exploration of the deathly city of Stygia has gone very wrong. His Abyssal foe, Augur of Sorrow's End, now fights him above the Mouth of Oblivion. Paan recognizes that Augur's mighty soulsteel shield protects him too well and that unless the Sidereal can eliminate that advantage, Augur will kill him. Using Singular Escape Stratagem, Paan maneuvers himself and Augur into the necessary position, and Paan's player declares that Augur must throw the shield into the Mouth of Oblivion. The key moment in that maneuvering comes on Augur's next action, when he chooses to throw the shield away. Had Augur decided to keep his shield, Paan's next action would have been quite painful for his target.

Descriptively, Augur of Sorrow's End becomes aware of the threat. Seeing the only way to escape Paan Uttara's closing trap, Augur unstraps his great shield and swings it at Paan like a huge door. At that moment, Paan needs only a small tap to send the shield spinning into the Void. It sounds much cooler than saying, "I throw the shield away," even though that is the equivalent action.

GREAT THINKER'S DEFENSE MANEUVER

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 6, Essence 6;

Type: Reflexive (Step 2)

Keywords: Combo-OK, Counterattack

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Victory of the Cheat, Singular Escape Stratagem

you cannot shoot them all down

A true master of strategy never places herself into a position where she can easily be struck. Only the most brilliant and ruthless tactics can hope to overwhelm her perfect defenses. Otherwise, she is invulnerable to lesser beings' assaults—she redirects or steps around a blow as easily as she masters the lesser techniques they practice.

With this Charm active, the martial artist gains a perfect defense against every attack that does not fit certain conditions. The character must be rendered unable to maneuver by surrounding foes, in which case the one attacker who benefits from an unexpected attack (see **Exalted**, p. 155) considers the martial artist a valid target. This attack is resolved normally for an unexpected attack. Charms or other effects that allow the character to be aware of or defend against unexpected attacks do not eliminate the attack's validity. Or, the Sidereal must be targeted by a coordinated attack that successfully coordinates a number of participants greater than or equal to her Essence. In that case, all attacks on her person are resolved normally. Opponents whose Essence is greater than or equal to the character's consider her a valid target as normal.

The great thinker is prepared for even the most disastrous situations and has a response. In either case, she receives automatic counterattacks at her full dice pool against all valid targets that attack her while benefiting from the above conditions.

THE EMPRESS LIVES FOR ALL

Cost: 16m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 6, Essence 6;

Type: Simple

Keywords: Combo-OK, Touch

Duration: Until released

Prerequisite Charms: Great Thinker's Defense Maneuver *unless you shoot only one.*

Kill one, and you defeat all. Secure surrender from the leader and the rest lose their fight. Humiliate a ringleader in order to decap all of her cronies. It's the nature of people to relate their welfare to that of another, to rise or fall with her good or ill fortune. This Charm just makes that decision for them.

Attacking someone with this Charm requires a simple (Dexterity + Martial Arts) attack, which merely has to hit—it inflicts no damage in any case. A successful strike instantly binds all of the target's friends, allies, minions and the like

within eyeshot or (Essence x 5) miles, whichever is further, to her state of being. Until the martial artist releases that bond, any attack on his target is also an attack on everyone now bound to her. Effectively, they all suffer any effect that the target suffers in Step 10 of attack resolution, including rolled damage, knockdown, stunning and the myriad enhancements that Charms can apply. Additionally, the target's general condition projects upon them any of the following conditions from which the target suffers: the inability to defend oneself due to grappling, poisons, sicknesses and further effects available through Charms. If an effect permits an opportunity to resist it in Step 10, however, as is the case for knockdown and several Charms, each recipient resists individually.

This Charm cannot directly kill anyone bound to the leader's fate. When damage transmitted by The Empress Lives for All would kill a person, that person is knocked unconscious instead. A person could still die through subsequent blood loss. Effects caused by Charms, such as magical poisons or sicknesses, can kill through their ongoing effect after transmission by the Empress Lives for All.







APPENDIX

This appendix provides a number of resources for martial artist characters. Players and Storytellers might find them useful in other ways too, but they possess special relevance for the martial arts styles in this book.

NEW BACKGROUNDS

Background traits represent how a character fits into the world at large. Martial artists can possess any of the Backgrounds normally open to **Exalted** characters, but two new Backgrounds especially relevant to martial artist characters are introduced here. The new Background of Face represents a character's status in the Martial Arts World. Destiny represents her place in history itself. In the Age of the Sorrows, a lone fighter can change the world, even without being one of the Chosen of the Gods.

DESTINY

Any person can change the world through great talent and hard work—but most people don't. Many fail when they try. Some

force of fate clings to people with this Background, however, to enmesh them in events that affect the lives of others. Yet this force is blind to good and evil. The tyrant who claws his way to power and turns a nation into one vast scream carries a destiny as mighty as the hero who leads the uprising against him. The force of destiny might work to keep a fated individual alive until she can fulfill her role, but it seldom grants happiness or contentment. If anything, powerful destinies tend to ruin lives as they drive their bearers to their fated ends.

Taking this Background indicates that a character has a specific fate in store, which the player and Storytellers should work together to create. (A brave player can leave the matter entirely in the Storyteller's hands, though, learning the character's destiny along with the character.) Astrologers can tell that a character has a destiny and give some idea of its strength, but a common horoscope won't say what the destiny is.

Players can roll the character's Destiny to create lucky breaks or coincidences. "Lucky" is a relative term, though. For instance, a person with destiny whose ship sank could be



rescued before he dies of exposure... or he could be “rescued” by pirates who then sell him into slavery. But even this rough treatment could send the character where he needs to go. The more successes a player rolls, the luckier (and more improbable) the coincidence will be.

A player can also add a number of dice equal to his Destiny to the pool for a critical task, such as figuring out how to operate a First Age device before the loathsome wriggles attack or throwing a knife to kill the courtier who knows the character’s treacherous schemes. The Background can even be added to the dice pool used to calculate a DV. Since a player can invoke Destiny only once per scene—and then only when the Storyteller agrees the task is critical to the character’s survival or advancing to her fate—this Background is usually not much good in open combat. In most cases, a player would be better off rolling for some lucky break to change the circumstances of a fight than to apply Destiny as a bonus to attack or defense for a single action.

Only mortals, God-Bloods and Terrestrial Exalted can take this Background. The higher sorts of Chosen make their own fates, and other people have destinies to interact with them. For most people, their destiny is set at birth. A few unusual circumstances, however, can grant characters a destiny in the course of play instead of during character creation.

Heroic mortal martial artists may possess destinies. In learning supernatural martial arts, they declare their intent—their need—to step beyond ordinary life and ordinary fates. Such a destiny can lead a martial artist to repeated encounters with the Exalted as opponents, allies or other important roles in their lives.

- You’ll live a life slightly greater than usual, perhaps as a local hero or villain or the sidekick to a more powerful figure. At some point, your actions will affect at least a town’s worth of people. Small coincidences happen in your life, such as meeting a person who gives you useful information.
- Your life can affect a province or small nation, and your deeds will be regional gossip for years to come. You know you’re luckier than most people, even if that luck is all bad.
- Your deeds influence a kingdom, for better or worse, and you’ll definitely win a place in chronicles or local legends. Unlikely coincidences often help or hinder you. People quickly see you don’t live an ordinary life. Some people stay close to you for that reason. Others stay away.
- Your choices affect a significant part of Creation for decades to come. You might found a kingdom or destroy one. It seems nothing can kill you or avert your destiny, even if you wish it would. Bad things often happen to people you love—usually when their deaths become more useful to your destiny than their lives. Your life is often entangled with other people who have prominent destinies.

•••••

One way or another, the fate of the world is in your hands. Your life is full of astounding luck and heartbreaking tragedy as your destiny relentlessly drives you toward your place in history. The Empress certainly had Destiny 5 (and it might not be over yet).

FACE

In the Martial Arts World, fighters seek fame as paragons of fighting prowess or of some ideal espoused by their school. A sifu might be famed for insightful training methods or generosity in accepting indigent pupils. A fighter who frequently competes in tournaments could be revered for good sportsmanship as well as his victories. Face represents how well a martial artist has become known to, and respected by, other martial artists.

Face does not necessarily represent a character’s raw power. In the Realm, for instance, everyone knows that Immaculate monks wield far greater power than other martial artists. Nevertheless, most Immaculates lack this Background because they are not famous as individuals. The powerful martial artists among the Lunar Exalted are also little known outside their own kind, giving them little face in the Martial Arts World.

Martial artist characters can begin play with Face if they were already known for their combat prowess as mortals, or if they studied under a famous sifu. Most of the time, however, characters gain Face in the course of play. They can also lose Face, of course, if they suffer humiliating defeats, show cowardice or otherwise bring dishonor upon themselves.

When two martial artists meet, compare their Face ratings and subtract the lower score from the higher. The player of the character with greater Face gets to add that number of bonus dice to all social rolls made against the opposing martial artist. Yet, Face applies only when both characters see themselves as part of the Martial Arts World and acknowledge the importance of their reputation within it. For example, a great but mortal sifu won’t impress one of Luna’s Chosen who feels contempt for all civilization and knows he could eat the sifu for lunch. The Storyteller can also reduce a character’s effective Face if she travels, since news spreads slowly in the Age of Sorrows. One character might acknowledge another martial artist’s Face only after seeing her fight and recognizing her skill or who must have trained her.

- **Noticed:** Other martial artists have seen you earn a few victories, or maybe you just have a revered teacher.
- **Known:** You have a strong reputation in the Martial Arts World, at least locally. Other martial artists know you as a capable practitioner who should not be taken lightly. Your sifu is most likely proud to claim you as a student.
- **Famous:** Your victories are known far and wide. Other martial artists challenge you to see if you are as skilled as stories say. Would-be martial artists might seek instruction from you. You could open your own dojo.



- **Revered:** Impeccable technique and numerous victories make you known throughout Creation, at least among connoisseurs of combat. Other martial artists consider you one of the greatest living practitioners of your fighting style.
- **Legendary:** Only the greatest or most hotheaded martial artists dare to test your prowess. Students constantly seek your tutelage, and you have successfully trained several of them. You are known as one of the all-time greatest practitioners of your fighting style—perhaps you even created a powerful style of your own. Even the Sidereal Exalted speak your name with respect. Anyone who studies under you receives +1 bonus to his Face because of it.

INFECTIOUS MARTIAL ARTS

When a person grows ill, his illness tampers with the proper flow of Essence in his body. The reverse is also true: When the Essence in a person's body does not (or cannot) follow its prescribed course, the person becomes ill. Therefore, a competent doctor knows not only how to alleviate the symptoms of a person's illness, but also how to rectify the warped Essence flows that either cause or result from it. Herbal teas, acupuncture and other therapies help correct corrupted Essence flows and speed the body's natural healing. Such techniques are slow and useless in combat.

A few supernatural martial arts, however, specialize in creating or curing disease through attacks on the target's Essence. Such arts are called infectious martial arts. The White Veil Style (see p. 61) and the Citrine Poxes of Contagion Style (see p. 124) are examples of styles that include infectious Martial Arts Charms.

All infectious martial arts affect spirits and Fair Folk as easily as they do mortals, whether the spirit victims materialize or not. If the character's attacks cannot normally damage spirits, they inflict no damage, but they still affect the spirit's very Essence with the disease.

Spiritual diseases act much like natural diseases, with a Virulence, Incubation period, Diagnosis difficulty, Treatment difficulty and both Treated and Untreated Morbidity. For an infectious martial art, the disease vector is the martial artist's attack. The character must hit with an unarmed Martial Arts attack, with which the character can choose to inflict its normal damage (if any). After resolving normal damage, the target's player must roll (Stamina + Resistance) for his character to resist the disease.

Virulence: The difficulty to resist an attack with an infectious martial art usually equals the martial artist's Essence. If that roll fails, the victim catches the disease, on whatever time frame the Charm provides.

Incubation: An immediate effect is usually most useful in combat. Sometimes, however, a martial artist prefers to inflict a disease that takes effect some time later.

Diagnosis: Spiritual diseases are much less common than natural diseases and, therefore, harder to diagnose. The difficulty to diagnose a disease caused by an infectious martial art usually equals the minimum Essence needed to use the disease-inducing Charm.

Treatment (Mundane/Magical): With successful diagnosis, treatment becomes feasible. A player who wants her character to cure a spiritual disease must roll (Intelligence + Medicine). Unlike mundane diseases, spiritual diseases have two Treatment difficulties, one for mundane treatment and one for treatment using Charms such as Contagion-Curing Touch. The Mundane Treatment difficulty is usually at least twice the Magical Treatment difficulty.

Morbidity: Whether a disease is treated or not, characters suffering from spiritual diseases might have a chance to recover. The character's player rolls (Stamina + Resistance) like for a normal disease, against a Morbidity rating. Success means the character recovers, or at least starts to recover. (Some diseases require more than one successful roll.) Failure means the character is dying, or at least continues to suffer the disease. (Spiritual diseases are not always fatal.)

For many spiritual diseases, the Treated Morbidity difficulty is only 1. If the disease can be treated at all, the victim recovers. This is especially likely for diseases that do not cause health levels of damage. The Untreated Morbidity difficulty can be as high as 10. Even the Exalted don't easily recover without treatment.

For diseases that do not kill, infected characters periodically receive a new morbidity roll. For mortals and animals, this may be weekly, monthly or longer, if they have not received treatment. The Exalted and other supernatural creatures usually receive a new roll to recover every day, though tenacious diseases impose longer periods.

THE CIRCLES OF SPIRITUAL DISEASES

Spiritual diseases come in three circles, though all three can kill an un-Exalted mortal if left untreated. Diseases of the First Circle have a Magical Treatment difficulty of 1 or 2. They weaken certain aspects of the victim's Essence to impose minor penalties (one or two dice) to a class of actions (based on Physical, Social or Mental Attributes). They can also have miscellaneous effects ranging from the conventional (loss of

health levels) to the bizarre (the victim emits a scent that attracts amorous sheep). For the Exalted, rerolls to recover happen daily at the longest. Mortals (including enlightened mortals) receive Morbidity rerolls in days to weeks.

Second Circle illnesses have a Magical Treatment difficulty of 3 or 4. They are the most virulent diseases possible for most infectious martial arts. Such diseases can both weaken Essence and stir aspects of it to unhealthy strength. A victim might lose two Attribute dots or suddenly find that his joints all bend the wrong way. Without treatment, supernatural beings have a chance to recover from daily to weekly. Mortals receive rolls to recover every month, if at all.

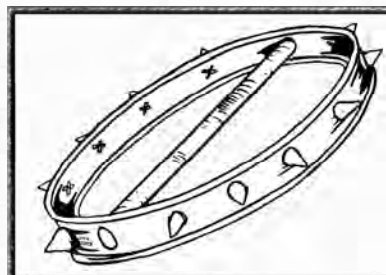
Third Circle illnesses are comparatively the most virulent and contagious of all Essence afflictions. These diseases have a Magical Treatment difficulty of 4 or 5, and you should reduce the dice pool to resist them to zero before the effects of Stamina or Resistance Charms. Rerolls to recover happen no more often than weekly for Exalts or per season for mortals.

NEW WEAPONS

People throughout Creation have devised a wide variety of weapons. Only a few became common Creation-wide, though. This list expands the roster in **Exalted** to describe some of the more unusual weapons in Creation as well as some of the simplest—and especially those weapons that can be used with Martial Arts.

MARTIAL ARTS WEAPONS

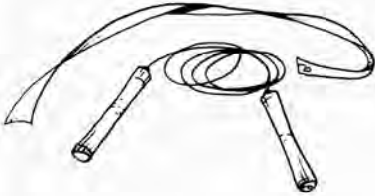
A weapon gains the "martial arts" quality if its use imitates or enhances the forms of unarmed combat such as punching, kicking or clinching. A fighting chain, for instance, extends the sweeping motion of the arm; hook swords grasp weapons like hands to pull them away. When a character wields such a weapon, her player may use either Martial Arts or Melee for dice pools, at least in ordinary combat. The player must still use the character's Melee rating for Melee Charms, or Martial Arts rating for Martial Arts Charms. If a Combo includes Charms for both Abilities, or if the character uses Charms that do not require Abilities (such as a Lunar Exalt), the character can use the higher of the two Abilities.



CHAKAR

A chakar looks like a rimless wagon wheel. The wielder spins the chakar at great speed and slams the weighted spokes into foes. A chakar requires great strength and some Martial Arts training to keep the wheel spinning. A warrior who lacks the listed Martial Arts rating not only suffers penalties using the chakar, but, on a botched attack roll, he strikes himself. The chakar's defense is quite good because an attacker must strike past the whirling spokes.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Minimums	Cost	Tags
6	-1	+10B/3	+2	1	Str ●●●, Mrt ●●	●●	2, O



GARROTE

The garrote enhances strangulation. The soft garrote is simply a length of cloth such as a sash or a long scarf. The wire garrote is a length of sturdy wire with handles at the ends. A soft garrote deals very little damage—just the wielder's Strength—but places the target in a clinch and forces him to hold his breath, eventually leading to asphyxiation (see *Exalted*, p. 130 for rules about holding one's breath). Since the victim no doubt struggles against the clinch, the (Stamina + Resistance) roll against strangulation has a difficulty of 3. A wire garrote strangles and additionally deals lethal damage as the wire cuts into the victim's flesh. The low Accuracy of the attack reflects the need to wrap the garrote around the victim's neck. Most of the time, using a garrote is feasible only with a surprise attack from behind. The first trait bar describes a soft garrote; the second line is for a wire garrote.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	I
6	-3	+0B	
6	-3	+0L	



HAND NEEDLE

This weapon consists of a sharp needle, much like a throwing needle, but wielded hand-to-hand. A character might slip the needle from hiding in a sleeve or attach it to a ring so it can lie close to a finger or snap out for use. A hand needle inflicts very little damage. Assassins use them to deliver poison, since a single level of (post-soak) damage suffices to deliver the venom. Hand needles are too small to parry anything. A character may still parry while using a needle, but he does so as if he were unarmed.

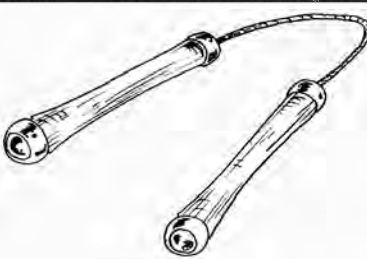
Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Minimums	Cost	Tags
5	-1	1L	—	3	Mrt •	•	M, P



KAMA/SICKLE

The kama is a kind of sickle with a curving blade mounted perpendicular to the handle. It is functionally identical to a sickle with a semicircular blade at the end of the handle. Both sorts are used in agriculture throughout Creation, but the listed traits are for a kama or sickle specially made as a weapon. Both weapons are small and short enough to mimic a person clawing with his nails. A martial artist often carries one kama or sickle in each hand.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	I
5	+0	+2L	



NUNCHAKU

A nunchaku consists of two lengths of hard, strong wood connected by a short length of cord or chain. The weapon began as a farmer's tool for threshing grain. By whirling a nunchaku before striking, the weapon achieves force like a club but with much less weight and size. Martial artists often wield nunchaku in pairs.

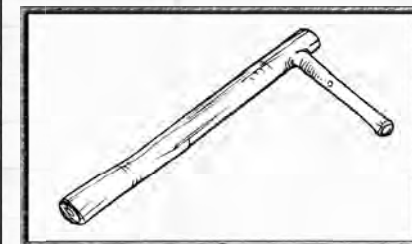
Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Minimums	Cost	Tags
5	+1	+6B	+2	2	Dex ••, Mrt •	•	M



STICK

Any light baton, from a parasol-handle to a large wooden spoon, can be used as a weapon. The stick can also represent a lightweight wooden practice sword or the scabbard of a regular sword. Sticks deal little damage compared to a club but are easier to maneuver, giving them superior Speed, Defense and Rate. They are probably the most common form of improvised weapon. Most improvised weapons have considerably worse statistics, but a person with basic Martial Arts proficiency can use any sturdy stick as a decent weapon.

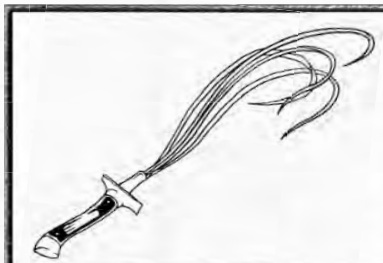
Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Minimums	Cost	Tags
4	+0	+3B	+1	3	Str ••, Mrt •	—	M



TONFA

The tonfa is a truncheon with a perpendicular handle mounted near one end. Martial techniques make it almost as damaging as a club but a tonfa is much smaller and lighter. Tonfas enhance punching and are sometimes wielded in pairs.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Minimums	Cost	Tags
5	+0	+4L	+2	3	Str •, Dex ••, Mrt •	•	M



URUMI

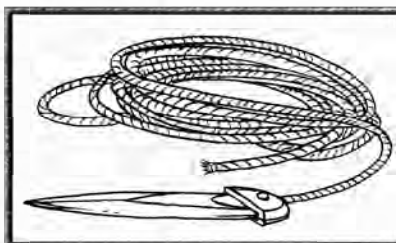
The "spring-sword" has a hilt like a regular sword but one to five slender, flexible blades—like a cat-o'-nine-tails made of razor-edged steel. When not in use, an urumi can be coiled around the waist like a belt. This exotic weapon is not widely used in martial arts, but any wielder who doesn't possess the requisite degree of Martial Arts is likely to hurt himself as the blades lash and curl. Botched attacks result in the wielder attacking himself.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Minimums	Cost	Tags
5	+1	+3L	-2	2	Str •, Dex ••, Mrt ••••	••	—

CHAIN AND ROPE WEAPONS

The fighting chain is only one example of a distinct subclass of martial arts weapons. Chain and rope weapons extend a combatant's reach. By whirling the end of the weapon, one can also build up greater speed and force before lashing out to strike. Chain and rope weapons have a natural range of 10 feet. Any greater distance requires a Charm or a stunt. Characters can also use these weapons to enhance a clinch or to perform stunts involving grabbing onto, swinging from and

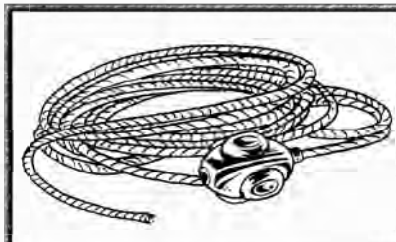
pulling objects. On the other hand, chain and rope weapons do not function well in confined spaces. A wielder needs at least five feet on either side to swing the weapon, lest he suffer a -2 Accuracy penalty. Without a stunt, rope weapons are useless for parrying. (It's hard to block an axe with a length of rope.) Chain versions of these weapons can parry like a fighting chain. Also, rope weapons are slower than fighting chains because of their lighter weight. The wielder must spend more time building up momentum before striking.



ROPE DART

A rope dart consists of a small blade at the end of a rope or cord. The blade usually looks like a knife, but stylized claws and other forms also occur. The wielder whirls the rope so the blade slashes at foes.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	D
6	-1	+2L	



WEIGHTED ROPE

The weighted rope is less effective than the fighting chain, but easier to obtain: Just tie something heavy to the end of a rope. This weapon can also take the form of a sash, long sleeves or a weighted cloak-hem swung about to strike a foe—even a long ponytail bearing a heavy weight (though using such a form would definitely involve a stunt).

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Minimums	Cost	Tags
6	-1	+3B	—	2	Dex •••	—	M, R



YO-YO

As scholars of the fighting arts know, this popular children's toy began as a weapon used by certain tribes in the East, who used weights on cords to stun birds and small game, and weighted blades on cords to attack each other. Casting a yo-yo with sufficient force to inflict damage requires basic Martial Arts proficiency. Catching the bladed form without cutting off your own hand requires a little more. The first trait bar describes a bladed yo-yo; the second describes the blunt version.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Minimums	Cost	Tags
6	+0	+2L	—	2	Dex •••, Mrt ••	•	M, R
6	+0	+0B	—	2	Dex •••, Mrt •	•	M, R



ROPE CLINCH

Like a fighting chain, a rope dart, weighted rope or yo-yo can wrap around an opponent's body in a clinch, giving the attacker a chance to pull a foe off balance. Those three weapons all share this additional trait bar to represent such uses. A warrior can also try to wrap a turn of rope around a foe's body to hold him. Rope, however, does not work as well as a fighting chain. Ropes simply don't deal much damage, while armor tends to be more effective against soft rope than hard chain.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Minimums	Cost	Tags
6	-1	+0B	—	1	Str ••, Dex ••	—	C, M, R

MELEE WEAPONS

These weapons are not true Martial Arts weapons. Players normally use Melee for the wielder's dice pool. They could be form weapons for a martial arts style, though. Some of

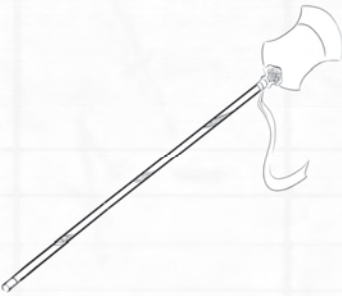
these weapons are already associated with certain formalized fighting arts. Others appear because of the martial arts tradition of adapting weapons from found items or the tools of a trade.



PICKAXE

Miners break stone with picks, and laborers use them to chop up sod or heavy, packed soil. Warriors sometimes use a variation of this common tool. The long, heavy spike of a pick can punch through armor to leave deep but narrow wounds.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Minimums	Cost	Tags
6	+0	+5L/2	-1	1	Str •••	•	O, P



POLEARM

This catchall term covers a wide assortment of long-hafted weapons that chop, slash or stab. They range from the simple bill, a pole ending in a curved, cleaver-like blade, to the ghi, a spear with two crescent-shaped blades mounted points-out just behind the spearhead. Other polearms include the eyebrow spear, with a head shaped like a half moon, or the wolf's-teeth staff, whose end is lined with small, ripping spikes. None of these weapons are significantly better than the others. Some polearms can be set like spears when charging or used against a charging opponent, in which case they inflict 7L damage. Many polearms began as farming implements, or by attaching some other weapon to the end of a long stick. Any character with even a single dot of Martial Arts can also use a polearm as a fighting staff and switch between uses without the need for a miscellaneous action to ready the weapon. The same is true for the poleaxe and trident.

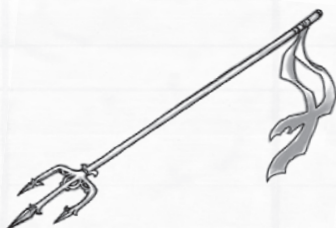
Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Minimums	Cost	Tags
6	+0	+5L	+1	2	Str ••	••	2, R



SPREAD-THE-WATER KNIFE

The spread-the-water knife consists of a curving blade like a shallow crescent up to three feet long, mounted on a crossbar. Variants may sport fancifully curved blades. This slashing weapon may be wielded in either one or two hands. For full maneuverability, however, the wielder needs to use both hands (sometimes with both hands on the crossbar, sometimes passing the weapon from hand to hand).

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Minimums	Cost	Tags
4	+1	+3L	+0	3	Str ••	••	—



TRIDENT

This polearm ends in three sharp tines. Variations range from the military fork with just two tines, to the nine-dragon trident, which has a forest of spikes, flanges and crossbars. In addition to poking at an enemy like a spear, the trident's tines make it especially good for catching an opponent's weapon to disarm him. A trident also deals extra damage if used in a charge, or set against a charging opponent.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Minimums	Cost	Tags
6	+1	+4L/7L	+1	2	Str ••	••	2, D, R

THROWN RESTRAINING WEAPONS

These weapons are designed to restrain targets rather than harm them; only the bola actually deals damage. They are also designed to throw at targets, giving them at least a short range. If the weapon hits, it deals no actual damage but merely restrains the target in some way. The restraint lasts until the target wriggles free—usually not long, since the attacker cannot usually exert her Strength to keep the target held. The attacker can use the actions in which the target is restrained to establish a clinch, though, or to make some other attack. It is easier to clinch someone who's already held.

For a character to use a thrown restraining weapon, her player rolls (Dexterity + Thrown), as with any thrown weapon. The attack can be dodged or parried, but if the attacker has any successes left over, the target is restrained. Keep track of how many successes are left after subtracting the target's DV.

On his next action, the target's player rolls ([Strength or Dexterity] + Athletics) to try to escape from the restraint,

with an external penalty of the attacker's final number of successes. Success means the target spent his action freeing himself. Failure means he's held for another action but can try again, and the external penalty drops by one after each attempt. So, for instance, if you catch someone in a net and end with two successes, the player of the target suffers a -2 external penalty on his first roll, -1 on the second and no penalties on subsequent attempts. If a restrained target wants to fight while freeing himself, he must use a flurry and suffers the same external penalty on his attack as he does on his attempt to free himself.

Some weapons restrain only part of a target's body. Characters can attempt a called shot (see **Exalted**, p. 158) to restrain a particular part of an opponent's body—such as his legs (removing the ability to move and halving Dodge DV) or his weapon hand (removing the ability to attack unless the target switches to his off hand). Targeting arms or legs imposes a -2 called shot penalty. Alternatively, the Storyteller can use the attack roll's threshold to assess how effectively the attacker restrained her opponent.

LASSO

A rope with a slip-knotted loop at the end makes a difficult weapon to use against people, but ranchers and pastoral nomads find it an indispensable tool. Constant practice on their herds leads such people to great skill with a lasso.

Unlike other thrown restraining weapons, a lasso gives its wielder a way to maintain an active hold on a target, if the attacker can maintain tension on the rope. The most effective strategy is to use a lasso from a steed and then to ride away, dragging the target along behind. In that case, the captured target faces a resisted roll of his ([Strength or Dexterity] + Athletics) against the (steed's Strength + attacker's Ride) to free himself... and still takes the external penalty for the attacker's successes.

If an attacker can tighten a lasso around a target's neck, the lasso can strangle a target like a cloth garrote. Dragging a target held by the neck deals lethal damage like a wire garrote, from crushing this delicate part of the anatomy—but including the weapon's bonus Strength. Targeting a victim thus requires a called shot, for a -4 penalty.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage
6	+2	Special

NET

Throwing a net over someone is a good way to restrain him for a short time, and in mortal combat, a short time is all an attacker needs. Nets restrain the target's entire body, but loosely. The target can still try to fight, but he must use a flurry and he suffers penalties for the restraint.

Some nets are specially made with hooks or barbs to injure targets as they struggle to free themselves. A hooked net inflicts no more than 1L per action.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Rate	Range	Minimums	Cost	Tags
6	+4	Special	1	5	Str •	•	C

BOLA

A bola consists of two to four weights connected by lengths of cord. You hold the bola where the cords join, swing the weights like a sling to build up momentum and then throw the whole contraption at a target. With a good throw, the weighted cords wrap around the target's limbs to restrain him. Tribal people sometimes use bolas to hunt animals and flightless birds.

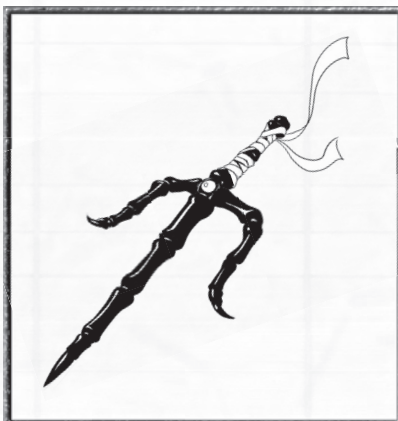
The bola also deals a small amount of bashing damage when it hits. It restrains only two of the target's limbs at most. Without a called shot, it wraps harmlessly around only one limb or the target's torso, restraining him not at all.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Rate	Range	Minimums	Cost	Tags
6	+2	+0B	1	20	Str •	•	C

ARTIFACT WEAPONS

Over the millennia, the Exalted crafted magical versions of most of the main classes of weapons. Any of these weapons

might incorporate any of the magical materials. See **Exalted**, p. 387, for the benefits each magical material offers to the associated class of Exalt.



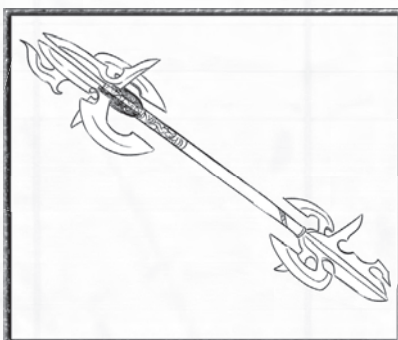
BANECLAW (ARTIFACT •)

The baneclaw is a sai adapted for Exalted use. Not only is it large for a sai, the side-tines might be massive and barbed like a harpoon or designed to look like actual talons. The tines of Abyssal baneclaws, for example, tend to look like long, skeletal fingers wrought in black soulsteel. Theommel may hold the setting for a single hearthstone.

In martial arts, sais are often used in pairs. A baneclaw, however, is also often used singly as a weapon for an Exalt's off-hand. The weapon may be coupled with any mundane or artifact weapon that can be wielded one-handed.

Baneclaws from the First Age might show special powers when set with a hearthstone. Most commonly, on a successful disarming attack the baneclaw can crush any non-magical melee weapon, if the wielder so desires. (The baneclaw's tines flex as if alive to bend and tear a caught weapon.) This action costs the wielder one mote of Essence. Artifact weapons are immune to this effect. Other special powers usually deal in some way with clutching, binding or stripping away, such as draining an opponent's Essence or Attributes. Baneclaws with additional powers are two-dot Artifacts.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Minimums	Attune	Cost	Tags
4	+1	+3L	+4	3	Dex ••, Mrt ••	2	•	D, M



DAIKALBAR (ARTIFACT ••)

The Exalted version of the polearm consists of a stout metal pole four to six feet long. Each end bears an assemblage of blades and points to chop, pierce and slash, and no two daikalbars look the same. A daikalbar is wielded two-handed so a character can either slash or stab as if the weapon were a spear, poleaxe or trident, and parry as if it were a staff. The weapon's comparatively high Accuracy reflects that the wielder can attack with either end, making it a hard weapon to dodge or parry. Indeed, a successful attack might actually strike with both ends, though the damage is the same as if the wielder struck one slower but more powerful blow with only one end. A daikalbar's two blades make it ill suited for charging or setting against a charge, though. A daikalbar usually includes a setting for one hearthstone in the middle of its helve.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Minimums	Attune	Cost	Tags
5	+3	+8L	+2	2	Str ••, Mrt •	5	••	2, R

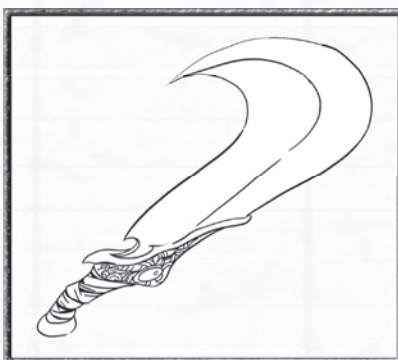


DAIKLAVE, CHAIN (ARTIFACT ••)

The artifact version of the rope dart looks like a short daiklave and can be wielded as such. A quick twist separates the hilt into two sections connected by a slender chain. An attuned wielder can then swing the blade by the chain. The blade then has a 10-foot reach. Alternatively, an Exalt can hold the blade by the remainder of its hilt and swing the other half as a normal fighting chain, as well as using it for clinches. Characters with any degree of Martial Arts Ability can switch between functions without the need for a Ready Weapon action. A chain daiklave never carries more than one hearthstone setting.

The following trait bar describes a chain daiklave with the blade swung on its chain. When using the blade as a regular sword, or swinging the chain instead, use the trait bars for a short daiklave or a dire chain.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Minimums	Attune	Cost	Tags
5	+0	+5L	+2	2	Str ••, Dex ••••, Mrt ••••	4	••	2, M, R

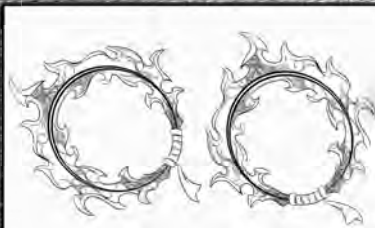


DAIKLAVE, HOOK (ARTIFACT • EACH, •• FOR A PAIR)

Extra-large hook swords made of magical material alloys become hook daiklaves. They are the same length as short daiklaves. Like their mundane counterparts, hook daiklaves are wielded in pairs. They offer superior defense and excel at disarming opponents. A wielder needs considerable martial proficiency to use them effectively, though.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Minimums	Attune	Cost	Tags
5	+2	+4L	+3	3	Str •, Dex •••, Mrt ••••	6*	••*	D, M

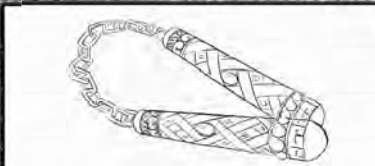
* Artifact and attunement cost is for a matched pair; no offhand penalty to wield set paired.



FATE RING (ARTIFACT •)

Like the wind-fire wheel, the fate ring consists of a hoop with a handle, but the Exalted form of the weapon is larger and heavier and the edge is always razor-sharp. A fate ring's edge may be shaped as simple serrated teeth, elaborate curves or anything in between. They are used in pairs whenever possible. Fate rings lack a good place to set a hearthstone, so these weapons usually omit this feature. Sidereal Exalts are particularly fond of fate rings, which may account for their name.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Minimums	Attune	Cost	Tags
4	+1	+3L	+3	3	Dex •••, Mrt •••	2	•	M



MANTHRESHER (ARTIFACT ••)

Artifact versions of nunchaku are made from steel alloyed with a magical material, rather than wood. The hilt may carry a single hearthstone setting. Manthreshers can be wielded singly or in pairs.

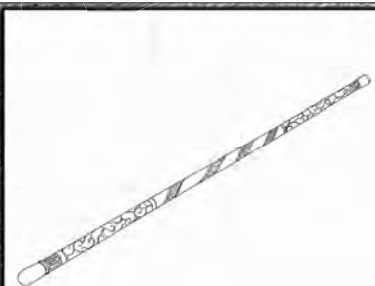
Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Minimums	Attune	Cost	Tags
4	+3	+8B	+2	3	Str ••, Mrt ••	4	••	M



TSUNAMI BLADE (ARTIFACT ••)

The artifact version of the spread-the-water knife is four to five feet long with a heavier crossbar, possibly including subsidiary hilts to enable different grips. The blade might also be curved in different ways, including wave-like points to stab into a foe. The crossbar holds one hearthstone setting. Like a spread-the-water knife, a tsunami blade can be wielded one-handed, but a two-handed grip enables greater agility with the weapon.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Minimums	Attune	Cost	Tags
4	+3	+6L	+2	3	Str ••, Mrt •	5	••	2



WRACKSTAFF (ARTIFACT ••)

The Exalted version of the staff is simply a long rod of metal alloyed with one of the magical materials. When energized with Essence, the wrackstaff can deliver tremendous, crushing blows. The staff is carved to give the wielder a better grip (as well as for ornament). One end bears a sturdy chisel-point while the other is thicker and heavier to increase the force of impact. A wrackstaff usually includes one setting for a hearthstone in the middle of its length.

A wrackstaff is no mere club. To use it properly, the wielder needs basic martial arts training with stick and staff weapons. The wielder holds the wrackstaff in both hands so he can quickly turn the weapon in any direction, guard, parry, spin and thrust. This chisel end (the first trait bar) deals lethal damage and punches through armor. The blunt end (the second trait bar) delivers powerful, smashing blows.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Minimums	Attune	Cost	Tags
4	+2	+4L	+2	3	Str ••, Mrt •	5	••	2, M, P, R
4	+2	+12B	+2	3	Str ••, Mrt •	5	••	2, M, R

ARTIFACT THROWN WEAPONS

Some formalized fighting arts include thrown weapons, so Exalted martial artists create artifact versions of these weapons. Such weapons seldom include settings for hearthstones

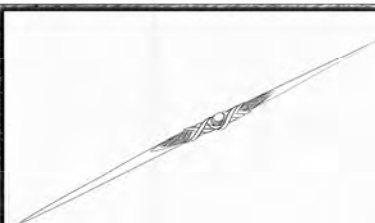
due to the risk of losing the weapon to an enemy. Attuned wielders of the correct type still gain benefit from the magical materials in the weapon's construction, however, as described on page 389 of *Exalted*.



TYPHOON WHEEL (ARTIFACT •)

The typhoon wheel is an oversized shuriken, about a foot across. Since the wielder must throw a typhoon wheel, this weapon never carries a hearthstone setting. A typhoon wheel returns to an Exalted wielder if it misses. If the player succeeds on a second, reflexive (Dexterity + Thrown) roll at difficulty 2, it returns after a strike. Failure leaves the weapon stuck where it hit. Typhoon wheels typically occur in pairs.

Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Rate	Range	Minimums	Attune	Cost	Tags
4	+2	+4L	2	50	Str •, Dex •••	3	•	-



VAJRA (ARTIFACT ••)

The vajra is an artifact javelin. Both ends carry long, sharp points. The center of the weapon holds a setting for one hearthstone. For a normal person, a vajra is equal to a long spear. An Exalted wielder can also throw it. Whether the vajra hits or misses, it magically returns to its wielder after each throw. The force of a returning vajra equals the wielder's (Strength + Thrown). Anyone who wants to prevent the weapon's return must exert a greater force with her (Strength + Athletics). Someone who fails might be carried by the vajra back to its wielder (which could be bad for either person).

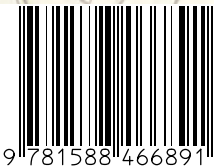
Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Rate	Range	Minimums	Attune	Cost	Tags
5	+3	+6L/10L	1	50	Str ••	5	••	L

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