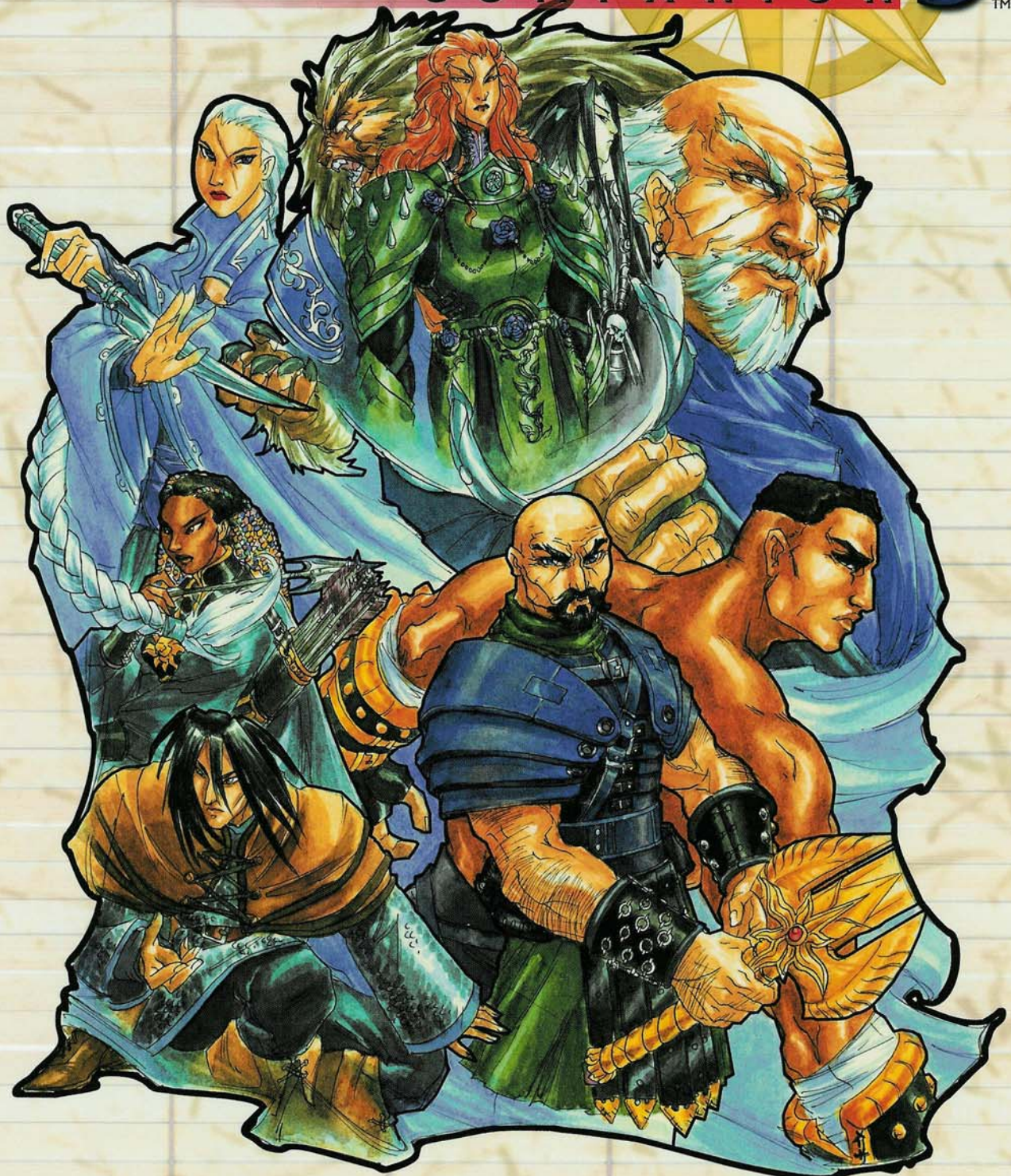


EXALTED Storyteller's COMPANION™



A STORYTELLER'S RESOURCE FOR EXALTED™



EXALTED

Storyteller's

COMPANION™

By HEATHER GROVE,
DEAN SHOMSHAK
AND ADAM TINWORTH

CREDITS

Authors: Heather Grove, Dean Shomshak, Adam Timworth
Storyteller Game System designed by: Mark Rein • Hagen
Developer: Geoffrey C. Grabowski
Editor: James Stewart
Art Direction: Richard Thomas
Artists: Guy Davis, Michael Gaydos, Vince Locke, Ron Spencer
Cover Design: Matt Milberger
Layout, Typesetting and Interior Page Design: Matt Milberger

DEAR READER

Unlike our usual practice, the illustrations in this book, while appropriate to the writing, are, in fact, artwork that was originally intended for the main *Exalted* rulebook. The story explaining why the art wasn't used is given in greater detail in *The Making of Exalted* artbook.

SPECIAL THANKS:

Ken "Walking Wounded" Cliffe, for swords and sorcery above and beyond the call of *anybody's* duty.

Rich "I Love The Barney Miller Marathon" Thomas, for hacking and wheezing through the same five Nick At Night commercials.

Steve "Striking Dragon Stance" Wieck, for making it all more colorful.

Phillippe "Tabernac!" Boulle, for carrying the colors of the Wolf to the Francophonic world.



735 PARK NORTH BLVD.
 SUITE 128
 CLARKSTON, GA 30021
 USA

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PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.



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INTRODUCTION



The world of **Exalted** is a dangerous place, even for the Solar Exalted. Other Chosen make uncertain allies at best. More often, they are enemies, to be tricked or battled. The self-interested princes of the spirit courts are equally dangerous: For every spirit who offers aid and friendship to young Solars, another adheres to the Immaculate Philosophy or hates any being powerful enough to impinge on its authority. The only thing that can be assumed of the Fair Folk is their implacable caprice.

This book provides Storytellers with more information on these dangers, and on other details of the world of **Exalted**. While spirits, Fair Folk and the different breeds of Exalted will be detailed in individual supplements, the material in this book should serve to fill in the broad outlines for Storytellers in the meantime.

The **Exalted Storyteller's Companion** also provides Storytellers a wealth of other information about the world of **Exalted**, including a storyteller's screen with a full-color map of Creation and more wonders — both lesser and greater.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

These are some of the questions that have come up from **Exalted** players and can't easily be answered in the context of rules. Hopefully, your question is among them.

*Q: Does **Exalted** have signature characters?*

A: Yes, but in a different sense than in most **World of Darkness** games. Because **Exalted** characters are so powerful, so capable of influencing the world and so few in number, the signature characters for **Exalted** are not as important as in the **World of Darkness** games. If we insisted that every Solar we named was a force in the world, we'd soon eat up all the potential Storyteller characters and make it very difficult to tell a story without bumping into a named and established character who could do it better.

So while signature characters will be there — serving as characters in fiction, as a way to provide an Exalted's-eye view of the world, and as possible Storyteller characters.



However, there won't be an implicit assumption that every single signature character occupies the "same" continuity, or that if your players go to a certain place, they'll find Signature Character X all set up and running things. Use them as predeveloped personalities in your game or don't — ultimately, it's the player's characters who should be doing things in the world.

Q: Does Exalted have a metaplot?

A: Yes, in the way that it has signature characters. A number of events will be taking place in the world over the course of the next three to five game years. Beyond that point, any group of reasonably active characters will have probably gotten so involved in the course of events that there's no way we could write a supplement and expect the events to be relevant to your game's story line. Each event in the metaplot is designed to be as modular as possible, allowing Storytellers to use some parts of the ongoing "story" while ignoring other parts. In the end, the characters in your game are the metaplot — they, not a bunch of Storyteller characters, are the ones treading kingdoms beneath their feet and changing the course of history.

Q: Is Exalted the ancient past of the World of Darkness?

A: As much as you want it to be, yes. **Exalted** is a game about adventure in the Second Age of Man, not about the cosmology of the **World of Darkness**. It is a world that can take many directions, and certainly one of them — a near-victory of the Wyld that drives the Weaver insane — leads to the creation of the **World of Darkness**. But it could also become a golden age, an age of brutal Solar despots, a world-sized necropolis ruled by the victorious Deathlords, or any of a dozen other possibilities. You should let the actions of your players and the goals of your series shape the future of your world, not the need for the cosmology to eventually transform into the modern game lines.

Likewise, people who have problems with **Exalted** as the "prehistory of the World of Darkness" because it disagrees with their own vision of the time before the darkening of the world can simply say that the world of **Exalted** is another iteration of the Kuei-jin's Cycle of Ages. It is similar to the **World of Darkness** for the same reason that one lotus blossom looks like any other — because that is the natural shape of lotus blossoms, or of worlds. Alternately, **Exalted** may be the remote future of the World of Darkness, set long after the great apocalypse that ushers in the Age of Darkness. Enjoy **Exalted** for its own sake, not just as a library of **World of Darkness** references.

Q: Why is healing so hard?

A: There is no easy way to get the "touch someone, spend Essence and they regain health levels" power, or to make your own health levels magically regenerate. While the genre of **Exalted** has a lot of combat in it, it doesn't

have a lot of easy healing. Characters will have to pay more attention to dodging, blocking or soaking attacks than in other Storyteller games — that's why defensive powers are so cheap to use.

Also keep in mind that while Exalted cannot heal instantly, they can heal very quickly through the use of the Body-Mending Technique Charm. An Exalted character with the Body-Mending Technique heals a -2 health level in 10 hours, a -1 health level in a little under 5 hours and a -0 health level in a just over half an hour. Given a few days, an Exalted using this Charm can recover from almost any mauling.

Q: Someone has Charm X, Y and Z and I can't hurt him with my attacks! What do I do?

A: Defense is slightly easier than offense. Generally, if you run into someone tough, they are going to eat several attacks (at least) before you do real damage.

The simplest solution is to hold your action until after the opponent attacks with an offensive Charm, then go, since they won't have access to a defensive Charm that turn. Maybe losing their primary defensive Charm will let you get a solid blow in. Alternately, you can wear them down. Several Solars piling on someone — even someone fighting a very conservative, defensive fight — is going to wear down his Essence reserves quickly. Then unload your big Combos on him when he's tapped out.

Finally, don't forget that you don't have to defeat everyone by hitting them with your sword. Myth and fiction are full of people who can't be hurt. Even if you

can't poison him or harass him with arrows from a distance, you can always sink the bastard to the bottom of the sea, chain him in magical sleep or trap him in a giant block of gold — or possibly all of the above.

Q: How many Exalted are there?

A: As many as you want there to be. As the game was originally posited, there were more than one hundred and less than two hundred Solar Exalted. There are between three and four hundred Lunars, a hundred or so each of Sidereal and Abyssal Exalted. In contrast to these tiny numbers, there are more than ten thousand Terrestrial Exalted in Creation — in the Realm, there is roughly one Terrestrial Exalt for every five thousand citizens, and this doesn't count Outcastes, Exalted inhabitants of Lookshy or the rural bloodlines of the Northern Threshold nobility.

WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK

Chapter One: The Scarlet Empire

This chapter details the culture of the Dynasty and describes the Charms of the Dragon-Blooded.

Chapter Two: The Celestial Exalted

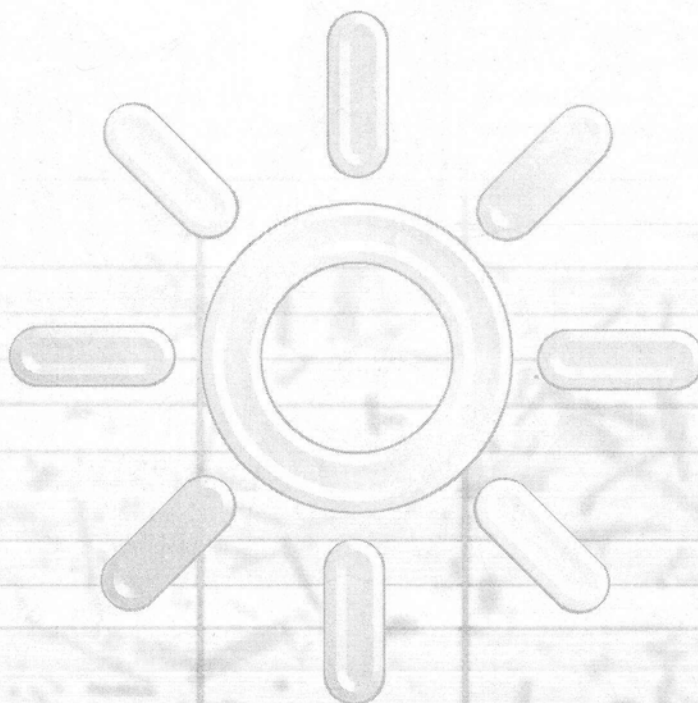
Material detailing the histories, culture and powers of the Sidereal, Abyssal and Lunar Exalted.

Chapter Three: Spirits and Spirit Courts

Descriptions of the Charms and courts of the spirits, elementals, and of the infernal realm of the Yozis.

Chapter Four: Further Wonders

More wonders of the First Age, as well as details of the lesser wonders of mortal men.







CHAPTER ONE: THE SCARLET EMPIRE



The Dragon-Blooded see no difference between their Realm and themselves. So, then, let us follow the Dragon-Blooded through their lives in search of clues to the empire's soul.

CHILDHOOD

Dragon-Blooded parents seldom see their young offspring for more than an hour or two a week. Immediately after birth, a Dynastic mother passes her infant to a wet nurse. Dynastic children live amid nannies, tutors and the lesser household servants. Their parents remain distant and awesome demigods.

No one can foretell which offspring of the Dragon-Blooded will be Exalted. All Dynastic children learn how to command servants, keep their temper and defer to those of higher rank. Servants teach them basic reading, writing and figures. The Dynasts also believe that their children should sing and play a musical instrument well enough that they will not embarrass themselves (or their parents) at social functions, and so children are taught these skills as well. By eight years old, Dynastic children are expected to behave like little ladies and gentlemen.

After their ninth birthdays, Dynastic children leave their homes for boarding schools. Several such primary schools dot the Blessed Isle. The school year begins in the month of Resplendent Air and lasts until the end of Ascendant Fire.

Youngsters receive two months, plus the Calibration, to visit their homes if their parents so choose. The children attend primary school for six years. They study all the arts a ruler must learn, from swordplay to accounting. Those who are not Exalted nevertheless become patricians; they too must learn how to wield power and administer the work of others.

Year by year, however, some children depart the regular classes and dormitories to attend a smaller program within the school. The Dynastic blood runs true in these children, and they are Exalted by it. Some children revel in their new divinity. Bullied children may take revenge on their tormentors. Other young Dragon-Bloods suffer fear and grief as onetime playmates bow and back away, faces guarded. Exaltation means childhood's end.

YOUTH

After primary school, young Dragon-Bloods attend six years of secondary school. The parents have considerably less choice about the school their child attends. Just four academies cater to Exalted students alone. The headmasters of these schools, called the dominies, accept what pupils they will. The mightiest Dynast must still petition for a child's acceptance, with letters of recommendation, cash donations and the promise of more grants to follow. (The four academies do not charge fees for services; they expect gifts to honor their labor.)



CHILDHOOD RHYMES

Every child in the Realm learns many rhymes. These provide a rhythm for games. The best-known counting game involves bouncing a ball back and forth while singing this rhyme:

*One is for a golden crown
Sun goes up and sun goes down.
Two is for the moon at night
Half in darkness, half in light.
Three is for a human life
Born to die in endless strife....*

In addition to counting games, rhymes may provide memory aids (such as one that describes farming activities through the 15 months) or commemorate historical events (such as the Great Contagion). Rhymes may be used to teach important arcane lore, such as the protocols of the spirit courts, and many other rhymes are so old that their true meaning is forgotten.

The Immaculate Order sponsors one academy, a walled monastic compound not far from the Palace Sublime, called the Cloister of Wisdom. The young men and women study the Immaculate Texts and use them as grist for exercises in logic, rhetoric and philosophy. They also practice the Immaculate Dragons' martial arts. Relatively few students of the Cloister become priests — that involves training at the Palace Sublime itself — but many Dynasts believe that the Order possesses special skill at teaching the ways of Essence, and at keeping young people out of trouble.

Two secular academies claim the Empress herself as their sponsor — or the Regent in her absence. The House of Bells emphasizes the arts of war; its name refers to the clash of swords on shields and armor. This academy occupies a sprawling estate on the southern shore of the Blessed Isle, not far from the port of Arjuf, where warships and legion troop-ships depart for the mainland. Every year, veteran officers re-create entire battles at the House of Bells, using cadets as junior officers and people from the nearby villages as make-believe soldiers. The estate's varied terrain lets young warriors practice combat and related arts in diverse environments. Three times a year, the students hunt condemned criminals through the grounds as a way to burnish their tracking and riding skills.

The Spiral Academy focuses on administrative, political, legal and business skills. This school is located within the capital itself. The instructors include some of the most powerful functionaries of the Thousand Scales, as well as masters of the Guild and politicians from the Deliberative: they're not just teaching, they're *headhunting*. The Spiral Academy may lack the obvious glamour of the

other schools, but endless dramas of money, rivalry and youthful ambition play out within its walls.

The fourth school apparently sponsors itself. The Heptagram, located on a small, rocky island several miles off the Blessed Isle's northern coast, teaches alchemy and sorcery. It is the most difficult academy to enter, with the smallest student body — and the highest attrition rate. The other schools lose students to scandals, accidents and the murderous plots of family enemies. The Heptagram loses students to demons successfully conjured but unsuccessfully bound. Thus does the low end of the grading curve tend to take itself out of play without too much weeding. The Heptagram's senior teachers constantly wear masks, and when the light strikes at just the right angle, the shadowed eyeholes seem filled with stars.

Although each academy has its focus, all provide a well-rounded imperial education. The House of Bells, for instance, teaches administrative and social skills as well as weapon skills, tactics and strategy. An imperial commander must manage a budget and glitter in high society if she expects to hold her own among her fellow aristocrats. Likewise, a Spiral Academy graduate aiming for a post in the Thousand Scales still needs to defend himself. In their potentially long lives, the Dragon-Blooded may pursue many careers. The four academies strive to prepare graduates for any challenge.

The academies wield considerable influence within the Realm. Between the tuition-gifts from parents and revenues from properties deeded to the schools, the academies possess considerable wealth. They are virtual satrapies of their own. More importantly, the dominies maintain contact with their most illustrious alumni. A word from a dominie can open many doors to a graduate... or slam them shut and end a career before it begins. Conversely, "old grads" in government, the legions and the Immaculate Order often butter up their old headmasters in hopes of receiving the best and brightest of the graduates.

COMING OF AGE

After graduation, a Dynastic family hosts a party to celebrate an offspring's coming of age. The young man or woman's parents do their best to introduce the child to the world in high style.

The Dragon-Blooded believe that a truly memorable party should give pleasure in as many ways as possible and appeal to every sense. The finest wines and delicacies satisfy the palate while perfumes, incense and flowers scent the air. Skilled musicians and singers provide a continuous backdrop of melody. Frescoes and tapestries delight the eye. Many Dynasts build special rooms where they can manipulate light itself through lamps, mirrors and filters of colored glass. For instance, the great lords aligned to Water send shafts of sunlight through panes of blue and green glass, then reflect it off bowls of quicksilver to fill the

THE SORCERER'S ISLE

The Heptagram's island is called the Isle of Voices because of the wind that endlessly sighs and moans over its rocks and crags. The seven halls of the academy, built of the island's gray-black basalt, cluster in a sheltered valley. The six-sided basalt columns within the low, sprawling buildings are prised, already shaped, from one of the island's cliffs. The Isle of Voices holds many such sports: a forest grove of brazen trees, a high rock that draws lightning from storms, a cave that gives back three echoes. The students made some of these oddities; elemental spirits shaped the others. No student learns all the island's mysteries, but some of the Heptagram's slaves and tenant farmers and fishers might. Only folk of unusual courage and sagacity could make their living on the magic-soaked and spirit-haunted isle. Wise students learn to respect the Heptagram's servants: The slave who scrubs the floor may have seen more magic and danger than the young aristocrat can easily imagine.

feasting hall with rippling, submarine light. Couches and pillows covered in satin, silk or fur sate the sense of touch, as do the pleasures of dancing and love. Many Dynasts blind child-slaves and train them as masseurs and masseuses: Knowing the world by touch instead of sight, they can play the body like a musical instrument. Exotic liquors, pastes and powders made from hallucinogenic herbs and mushrooms rouse visions to gratify the subtle senses that belong to the mind alone.

Coming-of-age parties typically end with a veil dance whose origins and meaning are lost to history. Two dancers swathed in silken gauze dance a mutual seduction, while musicians play intoxicating melodies. The dancers remove each other's veils until they are nude. One is a young man, the other a young woman. In the oldest, most traditional form of the dance, gold leaf covers the skin of one, silver leaf the other; modern versions sometimes paint the dancers other colors. The youngster who comes of age picks one or both of the dancers to serve that night as his or her first lover of adulthood.

A coming-of-age party isn't all feasting and fun. The parents regard it as a sales presentation. They hope to entice a powerful guest into a marriage alliance, showing off their offspring's grace, health and beauty, and their own wealth, taste and power. Unless something goes very wrong, the parents will arrange a betrothal within the year; they often invite other nobles with children who recently attained their maturity or will do so soon. The Dynasts consider it very romantic for fiancées to meet each other by dancing the Veil Dance at a coming-of-age party.

Betrothals, however, may last for years or even decades, while the family elders assess whether the fiancée

lives up to her early promise and brings sufficient power and influence to the union. An actual marriage within the Scarlet Dynasty joins houses, not merely individuals, so they are not entered lightly.

HIGH SOCIETY

Dynasts throw parties to celebrate birthdays, consummated marriages and a variety of religious and secular holidays. A Dynast can always find some occasion to commemorate. Like the coming-of-age parties, Dynasts use these celebrations to meet and negotiate private pacts. A vote in the Deliberative is often decided at a holiday feast or wedding reception, amid flirtation and wine.

Less grandiose but more frequent gatherings — the salons — weave the invisible strings of prestige and influence about the capital and provincial courts. Some Dragon-Blooded make a profession of hosting concerts, balls and parties. A salon invariably includes food, drink and music. These may frame a new poem or work of art celebrating the host or an honored guest: Many dynasts burnish their own glory by patronizing talented artists.


Dynasts and patricians with social ambitions try to wrangle invitations to more prestigious soirees, for these present the best opportunities to meet powerful people. Once a social climber gets into the salon, however, he had better seem as witty, charming or talented as the people he hopes to meet!

Aristocrats also purchase status by funding public festivals. Pageants, parades and gladiatorial games mark

IMPERIAL TITLES

The Dragon-Blooded do not multiply ranks and titles. A Dynast who oversees an imperial satrapy is a *satrap*, while one who governs a prefecture is a *prefect*. The heads of the great houses call themselves *scions*, because of their descent from the Empress. Priests of the Order are called *Immaculates* or *lectors* (people qualified to read the Immaculate Texts, a holdover from the dark years after the Great Contagion when few people could read). Dynasts in the upper house of the Deliberative are *senators*; those in the lower house, *delegates*. Commanders of a legion bear the title of *general*. Their subordinates use the title *lord*, qualified by the sort of unit they command: thus, *dragonlord*, *winglord*, *talonlord*. The ranks of the Thousand Scales are *provost*, *auditor*, *minister* and *chancellor*. Untitled Dragon-Bloods are simply addressed as *Lord*. They may assume whatever personal titles they please, such as "Master of the Throne of Roses" or "Dowager Princess of Goldmont," but such titles hold no legal force. There is no shame in this — some of the Realm's most influential Dynasts take no special title at all.





every major holiday in the Realm's cities. Dynasts and patricians who organize a public spectacle can attract attention from more powerful people. Some committees sponsor a yearly show to mark a particular holiday; membership in such committees carries great prestige.

Like the dominies of the schools, the salons and festival committees form a secret network of power that most people outside the Realm never see. Outsiders see titles: satrap, general, chancellor, senator. Only an adept of high society (or someone born and raised within the system) could understand that the *real* nexus of power within a Realm city might be Lord Iselsi's monthly poetry reading, because the people with power will not talk to you without an introduction from Lord Iselsi.

THE SOCIAL YEAR

Seven holidays order the social calendar in the Realm: the Calibration, five days devoted to the Immaculate Dragons, and Empire Day.

Many people in the empire turn the Calibration into a five-day party. The Dynasts use the Calibration as an excuse to burlesque their own rule and the tenets of their faith. A satrap might beg for coins on a street corner, or a magistrate might arrest people for absurd "crimes" such as moperly or improperly laced tunics. At the final night's party, the guests dress up figures of scorn for a drunken revel: devilish Anathema, the Antitheses of the Immaculate Dragons (ostentatious peasants, sickly whores and so on) and Wyld barbarians are popular choices. At midnight, five lucky children dressed as the Immaculate Dragons rush into the party. They chase the guests with slapsticks while shouting maxims from the Immaculate Texts, and everyone promises that they will behave much better in the coming year.

The Realm also celebrates the five birthdays of the Immaculate Dragons. These festivals take place in the middle of the month when the Dragon's element is strongest; for instance, the Dynasts celebrate Mela's birthday on the 14th of Resplendent Air. The holidays feature both public and private performances of plays based on the exploits of the appropriate Immaculate Dragon.

Empire Day, the first day of Ascending Wood, commemorates the Empress' formal coronation. Every city in the Realm hosts a military parade on this day. Both local militias and any legions in residence march in the parade; the satrap or governor, and the highest-ranking local officials of the Thousand Scales, join the parade on ornate palanquins. Mercenary units may join the parade too, if they want; they usually do, since military recruitment of all kinds spikes after the Empire Day parade. Even the notorious Red-Piss Legion looks presentable for Empire Day. (Well, mostly. Some years.)

Other Realm holidays are local and idiosyncratic. For instance, the city of Lord's Crossing celebrates the anniversary of the Battle of Hollow, an imperial victory over

THE INFORMAL CHAIN OF COMMAND

On paper, the legions and the Thousand Scales present tidy chains of command. The reality is not so simple.

Each legion is sponsored by a dynastic house that appoints its general. The Empress decreed, however, that no house could monopolize a legion's cadre of lower officers. Hence, a general who might want to attack a rival house knows that some of her officers may have ties to that house, whether by descent, betrothal, school friendship or even more obscure connections. She cannot be sure that all her officers will remain loyal.

The high officials of the Thousand Scales bureaus face similar doubts about the loyalty of their own Dragon-Blooded underlings. A chancellor or provost who shows too much favor to one house might inspire sabotage from underlings loyal to other houses.

As a further complication, duties and powers often overlap in the Realm. For instance, the Minister of Exchequer for the Outer Isles and the Prefect for the Merchant Marines might both claim the right to set docking fees in the Outer Isle provinces. Both the Deliberative and the head of the sponsoring house can order about a legion.

The Empress cultivated such divisions of loyalty and ambiguities of authority. By multiplying the centers of power and keeping their relationships fluid, she prevented any one faction from growing strong enough to challenge her rule. She also made herself necessary as an arbiter between competing authorities. To get anything done, however, a Dynast must pull together a Byzantine coalition of relatives, school chums and other Dynasts willing to trade favors. The full-time socialites are indispensable to such coalition building. Offending a socialite can be just as dangerous as offending a satrap, a general or a high-ranking government minister.

Wyld barbarians some five centuries ago. (The people of Hollow barely remember the battle.) The Battle of Hollow Memorial Parade Committee wields great influence over affairs in Lord's Crossing.

THE IMMACULATE ORDER

The Immaculate Order dominates the Realm's spiritual life and presides over the transition rites of birth, marriage and death. The Order also conducts weekly services, or whenever an influential Dynast commands.

Immaculate Order temples are all based on a circle within a square. The square represents the world, its corners aligned to the cardinal directions; the circle represents the Blessed Isle. The temple may be very simple — a square room with a circle marked on the floor — or



elaborated with subsidiary chapels, bays, balconies, apses and domes, depending on the wealth and taste of the builders. The center and corners hold altars and statues, one for each of the five Immaculate Dragons. Dynastic patrons of a new temple often pay to have one of the Dragons represented in their image.

In a worship service, the presiding Immaculate makes offerings at each altar: volatile perfumes for Mela in the north; flowers and leafy branches for Sextes Jylis in the west; burning incense for Hesiesh in the south; pure water for Daana'd in the west; and freshly baked bread for Pasiap at the center. Services also feature a homily based on a passage from the Immaculate Texts, hymns of praise to the Dragons and prayers for personal guidance, the welfare of the Realm and the local satrap, and victory for the legions. Worshipers stand, sit or kneel on the floor (though they may bring cushions for themselves), so they may turn to face any direction.

The greatest temples — the ones most closely connected to the scions and satraps — fill the worship service with all the sensory overload that human art can devise. Gilded sculptures and glittering mosaic murals adorn the temple itself. Professional musicians and a choir perform the hymns. The Immaculates use jeweled implements, while incense perfumes the air. The operatic spectacle proclaims the power and glory of the Immaculate Dragons — and the Dynasty and Realm.

In contrast, a small, radical faction within the faith condemns all physical representations of the Five Dragons, arguing that images distract worshipers from the purity of the Immaculate wisdom. The iconoclasts also call for a simpler, plainer worship rite that places greater emphasis on meditation, prayer and the homily. Some of them even question the divine privilege of the Dragon-Blooded (though as reformers seeking to restore ancient virtue rather than true revolutionaries).

The Immaculate Order's leaders do not encourage this faction but do not condemn it as heretical... yet. The "puritans" include many of the Order's most zealous crusaders against the Hundred Gods heresy and most fervent missionaries to the Threshold and the Wyld. Few people in the Threshold accept the imperial version of the Immaculate faith. The Immaculate teachings appeal, however, to people who feel themselves oppressed by the caprice of spirits. The iconoclasts give the Order influence in places that may be hostile to the Realm itself.

WAR

The Realm has many enemies, and the Dragon-Blooded are its sword and shield. Whether as an officer in the legions, an Immaculate spirit-fighter or a private monster-hunter, many Dynasts fight for their empire at some point in their lives.

NAMES IN THE REALM

The Realm boasts an unusually diverse range of names drawn, quite literally, from the four corners of the world. People from everywhere have moved to the Realm (willingly or not) and added their names and naming styles to the empire's repertoire. Most commoners are named in the tongue of the modern Realm, using ordinary words — Hawk, Blossom, Fortune and so forth.

Among more prosperous folk, family surnames are not uncommon. Typically, the commoners follow the model of the Dynasty and adopt the name of a relative (usually the one they see as having elevated the family in status) as their surname. Thus, a family might be the Thunderhead family, after their grandfather Thunderhead, whose blacksmithing made the family prosperous. In the Realm and in most other places in Creation, family comes first — individuals state or write their surname and then their personal name. Members of the Thunderhead family would be Thunderhead Hawk, Thunderhead Shadow, Thunderhead Grace, etc.

Names of Dynasts and their descendents were originally in the tongue of the Old Realm, a language whose syllables are built in a consonant-vowel pattern, often with a lone consonant at the end. While in some cases Dragon-Blooded names are still meaningful words, Old Realm is spoken mostly by sorcerers and savants in the modern era. Today, many parents simply combine letters until they get a sound pleasant to their ears — most Dynastic names have c-v-c-v-c, c-v-c-v-c-v or similar structures.

BANDITS

The empire fights a constant war against bandits, brigands and pirates. Few robbers dare to challenge the Realm's navy or the legions, though. When imperial galleys guard convoys of merchant ships or a wing of legionnaires escorts a caravan, wise pirates and brigands fade back and wait for the soldiers to leave. Victories against robbers, therefore, usually come from Dragon-Blooded satraps and their provincial militias and mercenaries, in addition to their own formidable powers as Exalted.

For instance, the naval commander Tepet Ajava made her reputation by crushing a pirate syndicate in the southern Threshold. "The Roseblack" found herself limited to the ships donated by her own house and mercenaries donated by the Guild. She turned to guile. Some of the ships sailing between the Realm and the Southlands were actually traps, loaded with mercenary marines. When pirate ships hove to, the mercenaries boiled out of the hold. The canvas-covered "cargo" on deck actually consisted of catapults and bombs of Southern firedust and flammable oil.

After whittling down the pirates' fleet, Lady Ajava captured a ship instead of burning it. She tortured the location of the pirates' hidden harbor from her captives. She then sailed her fleet right into the pirates' harbor. She burned the pirates' ships and their fortress, while her mercenaries slaughtered the pirates and their village of camp followers. The Roseblack herself fought the pirate chief in the burning fortress and took his head. The camp followers who surrendered went to the southern slave marts, as compensation for the Guild and bonus payments to her officers. Captured pirates were blinded with hot irons and their right hands were burned off. Then they were released in the southern cities. They did not live long, but they set an excellent example to other pirates. For the next year, the Realm's ships sailed the southern seas unmolested.

THE SHADOWLANDS

The Deathlords are the most persistent and intractable of the Realm's enemies. The armies of the dead are mighty indeed. What's worse, the very Essence of a shadowland is defiled: Even if the legions hack apart every zombie, the shadowland remains tainted by death for decades, ready for a Deathlord to take up residence again. Most Dynasts settle for preventing a shadowland's spread. Until recently, few believed that the Realm could achieve a complete and permanent triumph over the Deathlords.

The legions adopt defensive tactics when they fight the walking dead: Each soldier slain in or near a shadowland strengthens its corruption, so the legions avoid casualties whenever possible. The soldiers group in tight phalanxes, shield to shield. Typically one soldier pins a zombie with a spear while other soldiers hack it apart with swords and axes. All remains must be burned, or the Deathlord can reanimate them to fight again. All too often, legionnaires must fight their own former comrades, whose bodies were not retrieved from the battlefield.

Only the Dragon-Blooded can hope to defeat the more potent minions of the shadowlands. The Dynasts command fire and lightning to sear the undead, send storm winds and floods to drive them back and bid trees and rocks to pin them. Like their soldiers, the Dragon-Blooded fight methodically, teaming up to destroy one horror at a time. Once in a while, they can even kill a deathknight this way: The Wyld Hunt has defeated a few Abyssal Exalted.

THE WYLD

The legions fight the occasional invasions from the Wyld much like they do the shadowland forces, pitting discipline and strategy against strength and fury. Barbarians and beastmen may be tougher than Threshold soldiers, but the Legions' excellent equipment, training and discipline have proven time after time that they can defeat the howling hordes.

The legions need Dragon-Blooded officers, however, to defeat the monsters, shamans and Lunar Exalted who often

join (or lead) the invaders. As when fighting shadowland horrors, the Dragon-Blooded fight in closely coordinated groups. The Empress herself supplied the Realm's greatest defense against the Wyld, though. From the Seat of Splendors she could link Manses held by her satraps and create vast magical barriers between them. Against an invasion of Fair Folk, for instance, the Empress evoked a wall of iron thistles and sent a wind to blow iron thistledown through their ranks. At various times, the Empress also crafted miles-long walls of flame, squall lines showering lightning and fist-sized hail, deep trenches and living palisades of thorn trees. Even when she could not directly harm a foe, she temporarily structured the battlefield in the Realm's favor.

THE SOLAR PURGE

The Solar Purge lapsed soon after the Empress' disappearance. But the uncanny insight into the location and habits of Solar prey are still there, and the Unblinking Eye's assassins, outcast bounty hunters and fanatical holy warriors still pursue Solars. Yet, in recent days, their efforts have taken second place to the Realm's more immediate problems. It would take wholesale insurrection to draw the legions and the Dragon-Blooded to hunt them as they once did.

Not all Dynasts are necessarily hostile to all Solars. Quite conceivably, one Dragon-Blooded noble might try using a Solar against his own rivals, whether by an elaborate frame-up or a simple offer of alliance. Why not? Some of them make secret pacts with far worse enemies of the Realm.

DEATH


The Dragon-Blooded can live longer than non-Exalted humans, but they still die — whether from old age, war or their own deadly rivalries. The funeral obsequies become a Dynast's final rite of passage.

Before the Great Contagion, Dragon-Blooded lords erected lavish tombs for themselves. Some nobles ordered themselves buried in their Manses after whatever rites they prefer. These days, many Dynasts return their dead to the element they commanded. Thus, Dynasts attuned to Air grind the ashes of their dead into a fine powder that they disperse on the wind, while the Aspects of Water deliver their remains to the sea. Wood-attuned Dynasts bury remains among the roots of a tree, while the Aspects of Earth inter their ashes in a box or urn of stone. The lords of Fire may burn the corpse with flames of Essence until nothing remains, or smelt them with bronze or gold to forge a memorial plaque.

The Immaculate Order teaches that the souls of the consecrated dead join the Five Dragons. Beyond that basic doctrine, folk of the Realm tell many tales. Some say that when the Maiden of Battles shines high and red in the midnight sky, the spirits of Dragon-Blooded heroes ride to battle against evil spirits, and mortals see them as shooting stars.



Box 5



Not a few Dynasts believe that if they die within their Manse, are cremated there and their ashes inhumed within its foundations, their spirit will merge with the Manse's currents of Essence. The Realm has many ghost stories set in Manses. These range from grim tales of spectral revenge to tragic romances between the living and the dead. (Deathlords exploit such tales.) One recent legend — condemned as heretical by the Immaculate Dragons but widely repeated nevertheless — claims that the Seat of Splendors hosts a yearly Deliberative meeting of long-dead lords. The tale goes on to say that this Deliberative of the Dead granted the Empress her power, and that she disappeared because she displeased them.

Some of these tales might be true. Certainly, ancient Manses remain uncanny places whose Essence can show a will of its own. Whatever the truth of tales, however, no one can deny that Dragon-Blooded funerals are on the rise. Between invasions from the Wyld, wars in the Threshold, shadowlands attacks and clashes with resurgent Solars, a lot of Dynasts are dying. If the Realm cannot rally its forces and seek allies, what pyre will suffice for a falling empire?

SAMPLE DRAGON-BLOODED CHARMS

The Dragon-Blooded have characteristic Charms of their own. Dragon-Blooded characters can manipulate their favored element in both physical and metaphorical ways. For instance, the Aspects of Fire have a knack for rousing quelling and shaping physical flame, but also the fires of lust, rage and other strong emotions.

The Charms of the Dragon-Blooded tend to be less powerful overall than the Charms of the Solar, Lunar and Sidereal Exalted. However, a Celestial Exalted cannot equal the facility of the Dragon-Blooded at manipulating the actual, physical substance of an element. Training and interest reinforce a Dragon-Blooded's innate knack: A Dynast can gain power most quickly by concentrating on Charms related to her favored element.

To work their magic, the Dragon-Blooded also require greater mastery of mundane Abilities than a Celestial Exalted. By the favor of the gods, Essence leaps to obey the Celestials. The most rudimentary Abilities can still form the basis of impressive Charms. The Dragon-Blooded must have at least two dots in an Ability — genuine competence — before they can magnify that ability through Charms.

The Charms described in this section are all fairly simple. They require low Essence scores and middling Abilities, making them suitable for less-powerful characters. None of them have prerequisites. Each Charm comes with suggestions for more advanced versions that Storytellers could develop from them — “cascade” Charms — for Dragon-Blooded characters with higher Ability and essence ratings. This section may also include simple

variations based on other Abilities. More Charms, including full cascades, will be available in **Exalted: Dragon-Blooded**, the Dragon-Blooded sourcebook.

COMBAT CHARMS

Combat-related Charms demand special mention. There are very few direct-combat Charms in this section, because it is fairly easy to construct them. They add two dice to the Dragon-Blooded's dice pool per mote spent on them and cannot more than double the character's Ability, *including applicable specialties*. Dragon-Blooded warriors tend toward Charms that reinforce mundane combat skills or hinder an opponent in some way, rather than inflicting health levels of damage. That doesn't make the Charms weak — just indirect. The flashiest sort of combat magic is sorcery of the Terrestrial Circle, and the Heptagram produces some exceptionally skilled masters of war magic.

Storytellers can adapt some of the combat Charms of Solars for use by Dragon-Blooded characters. This involves reducing their power and giving them a more “elemental” effect. Dragon-Blooded versions cost more motes of Essence, inflict less damage, or both. The initial Charms in a cascade may also require the physical presence of the Dynast's favored element — only a more experienced Dragon-Blood can evoke the elemental effect from pure Essence.

For an example, here is an adaptation of one of the most basic Solar Charms, Hungry Tiger Technique (see **Exalted**, p. 163). It is suitable for Dynasts attuned to any element. Also included is a generic elemental bolt attack, commonly used by Dragon-Blooded of all elements.

ELEMENTAL BLOW TECHNIQUE

Cost:	Varies
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Supplemental
Minimum Melee:	2
Minimum Essence:	1

The Terrestrial Exalted charges her weapon with the Essence of her favored element. An Aspect of Fire's weapon flickers with flame; an Aspect of Water's weapon shimmers wetly and moves with eerie, fluid grace; the weapon of an Aspect of Air glitters with frost or crackles with lightning; an Aspect of Earth's weapon grows more massive and gleams like polished stone; the weapon of an Aspect of Wood character glows like polished wood or sunlight through leaves. For each mote of Essence the Exalted's player spends on this Charm, she may add one die to a single attack, but can no more than double her regular Melee Ability. If the character's specialties apply to the attack, she may double those as well.

Dragon-Blooded characters who know this Charm may employ it at will if they use a weapon that bears the appropriately colored jade in its hilt (black for water, red for fire and so on). With other weapons, the character must

spend one turn executing a special weapon flourish and touching the weapon to the appropriate element. Air-attuned Dynasts seldom find this a problem; Dragon-Bloods attuned to Fire may suffer more inconvenience.

Cascade Charms:

- A Dragon-Blooded character with a higher Essence rating could conjure the elemental effect without the need for jade or touching the weapon to the appropriate element.
- An even more powerful Dynast could pull a weapon from the appropriate element. For instance, a Fire-attuned character could grab the flame from a candle and grow it into a sword; an Air-attuned character could conjure a weapon of glittering ice from a handful of snow.

ELEMENTAL THUNDERBOLT METHOD

Cost:	1 mote per 2 dice of damage
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Simple
Minimum Lore:	2
Minimum Essence:	1

The character unleashes a bolt of elemental force extends from her hand — a blast of ice, or fire, a barbed javelin, a stroke of lightning or slashing shards of crystal. The character rolls Dexterity + Athletics or Archery (whichever she prefers) to hit. This attack has a range increment of 20 yards x the character's permanent Essence, and does a base damage of 2 for every mote of Essence she spends activating it. The character cannot spend more motes activating this Charm than she has points of permanent Essence.

AIR

ARCHER'S FAVORABLE WIND

Cost:	1 mote
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Supplemental
Minimum Archery:	2
Minimum Essence:	1

Wind makes archery less accurate because it blows arrows off course. The Aspects of Air, however, can persuade the winds to let the arrow fly unhindered. Each point of Essence the character has cancels one point of extra difficulty. Thus, a Dynast of Air with Essence 4 could practice target shooting in a hurricane! Each bowshot demands a separate use of this Charm.

Cascade Charms:

- A more experienced Aspect of Air might be able to negate wind penalties for a few minutes, during which she could fire as many arrows as she wanted.
- The character could extend the Archer's Favorable Wind to a small group of other characters.
- An Air-attuned archer might persuade the winds to blow against the arrows of his enemies, increasing their difficulty to hit.

FORTUNATE WIND ATTACK

Cost:	1 mote
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Supplemental
Minimum Archery:	2
Minimum Essence:	1

Through this basic Charm, a Dragon-Blooded archer persuades the winds to propel and guide his arrow. The range increment of the character's weapon is doubled for that attack.

Cascade Charms:

- A more experienced Dynast of Air could extend this Charm's effect to a small group of people.
- As with various Archery-based Charms used by Solars, a Dragon-Blooded archer might negate range penalties entirely.

VOICE ON THE WIND TECHNIQUE

Cost:	3 motes
Duration:	1 minute
Type:	Simple
Minimum Awareness:	2
Minimum Essence:	2

Speech requires breath, the very air of life. Some Dynasts of Air can extend their senses through the air and so listen to what people say far away. The farther away a character wants to eavesdrop, the more difficult the Charm becomes: For a simple success, an Aspect of Air can clearly hear normal speech from a hundred feet away. The character also gets a general sense of the target's direction (assuming she doesn't know already). For each additional point of difficulty, that range increases by a factor of ten. For each additional dot of Essence the character has, the *base* distance increases by a factor of ten. A powerful Air-attuned lord can — with great difficulty — hear voices throughout the world. (The Empress certainly seemed to have this knack.)

This Charm comes with limitations. The character must specify a single person he wants to spy upon: He cannot, for instance, declare that he will "listen for people plotting against me." At most, he can make a list of suspected enemies and eavesdrop on them one by one. The character cannot hear anything spoken in an airtight chamber. Many of the powerful Dynasts build such chambers for their privy councils, specifically to defeat this Charm. Finally, listening to a person from so far away demands total concentration: The character cannot perform any other action while hearing voices on the wind.

Cascade Charms:

- A more powerful Charm could have a longer duration, allowing a character to listen in on another character for a full hour, or even longer — but still only one person at a time.
- Alternatively, the character can listen to any conversation or other noises at a specific location far away.





In this case, the character must objectively define a precise spot (such as "the kitchen in Lord Peleps' villa" or "the interior of that carriage down the street").

STORMWIND CALLING METHOD

Cost:	5 motes
Duration:	1 hour
Type:	Simple
Minimum Occult:	2
Minimum Essence:	1

The Dragon-Blooded are not born occultists and magicians like some Celestial Exalted, but many of them study the supernatural lore of their favored element. Many Aspects of Air learn the ways of the spirits who create the weather through their dances and processions in the sky. Exalted who know the ways of the sky-spirits can call them to direct the wind. One must speak to the elementals in their own tongue: the sounds of wind sighing over stony crags and through treetops, and the rumbles of thunder. Some Aspects of Air imitate such sounds with their voice and a bullroarer. Others might play a flute or position a harp so the wind plucks its strings. Inviting the winds to blow takes five minutes.

This basic Charm evokes nothing more than a stiff breeze — still enough to interfere with archery or send a sailing ship scudding through the waves at top speed. During the hour of the Charm's effect, the character can control the magic wind's direction by singing and whirling his bullroarer for a turn.

Cascade Charms:

- As the character's Essence rating rises, Charms for more powerful winds become possible, all the way up to gale force. Old tales mention the great Lords of Air who could evoke hurricanes and tornadoes by working together. That may be true, but nobody has done it recently.
- A character can also show greater mastery of the air through Charms to command lightning, hail, snow and other sorts of storms. (Some of these Charms are also suitable for Dragon-Blooded attuned to Water.)

ONE MIND TECHNIQUE

Cost:	2 motes per person
Duration:	5 minutes
Type:	Simple
Minimum Melee:	2
Minimum Essence:	2

Just as speech is a form of modulated wind, so thought is silent speech. A Dynast of Air can enable a group of armymen to know each other's thoughts, at least to a limited degree. What one soldier knows, the others know. As a result, a group that fights with one mind displays uncanny coordination. They trade opponents without a hitch; one fighter parries a blow aimed at another; an enemy seen by one cannot hide from any.

The player rolls Charisma + Melee. For each success that the Dragon-Blooded character receives, the recipients gain one dot each of Wits, Perception and Melee, up to the Dragon-Blooded character's own Melee rating. The character can link as many people with one mind as she has dots of Essence. Typically, this includes the character herself, but this is not strictly necessary. Dynasts typically use this Charm to magnify the fighting prowess of their bodyguards or minions.

Characters linked by this Charm must have trained together for at least a week. They must spend a turn on a shared breathing exercise and battle cry to initiate the link. The characters must stay within 50 feet of each other. If any character moves beyond that range, the link breaks and the Charm ends. No character can benefit from multiple uses of the One Mind Technique at the same time, even if different Dragon-Blooded activate the Charm.

Cascade Charms:

- Instead of Melee, an Aspect of Air can learn a variation that employs Brawling, Martial Arts or Archery.
- Fighters of extraordinary skill might learn how to link two characters per dot of Essence, or even more.

EARTH

ENTOMBED MIND TECHNIQUE

Cost:	5 motes
Duration:	5 minutes
Type:	Simple
Minimum Presence:	2
Minimum Essence:	1

Earth is the most static and quiescent of the elements. This Charm enables a Dragon-Blooded character to infuse some of that somnolent stasis into another person's mind, putting them to sleep. Some Dynasts work this Charm through speaking in a low, droning voice; others prefer to use a glittering gemstone, such as the jewel in a ring, to fix their victim's attention and convey the flow of Essence. One can only bury someone's mind if one can keep them sitting still for five minutes, so this Charm calls for a fair bit of guile.

The player rolls Manipulation + Presence, with a difficulty equal to the target's Essence. A simple success causes the target to sleep for an hour, and each extra success adds one hour to the total. During that hour, noise, light and movement do not awaken the victim. You could send the entire Red-Piss Legion past with cymbals and he wouldn't wake up. At the end of this period, the victim passes to normal slumber.

While in the grip of magic sleep, the victim dreams strange, still dreams of the caves beneath the earth and the mysteries within them. Once in a while, someone wakes up afterward knowing where to dig a well that never goes dry, or the location of an ore deposit.

Cascade Charms:

• More powerful versions of this Charm can put a victim to sleep for longer periods. Old tales tell of great lords of the Silver Age whose bound enemies still slumber in hidden locations, or maidens cursed to sleep for a hundred years.

• A still more powerful variation petrifies the victim's body as well as her mind. Only occult means can rouse such a stone sleeper.

STONE-CARVING FINGERS FORM

Cost:	Varies
Duration:	1 minute
Type:	Simple
Minimum Craft:	2
Minimum Essence:	1

This Charm is extremely popular with the Aspects of Earth because it forms the prerequisite for so many others. It enables the character to split stone with uncanny precision. Aside from the usefulness in siegecraft—breaching walls and the like—the character can make all manner of useful items out of stone.

The character must spend at least a full minute carefully striking at the stone. Most characters will use a hammer, pick or chisel, but a sword pommel or another rock will do just as well. Characters trained at martial arts might strike with their bare hands. At the end of the minute, the character strikes a final blow—and the excess rock shatters, leaving the shape the character wanted.

The player rolls Wits + Craft. For a simple success, the character can quarry stone blocks ready for use in building or knock a doorway in a wall. With three successes, he can craft an obsidian vase, already hollowed out. For five successes, he can produce a portrait statue so realistic that a person might mistake it for the actual person, turned to stone.

The Essence cost of this Charm depends on the volume of the finished object: one mote of Essence per cubic foot of stone.

Cascade Charms:

• The Dragon-Blooded have developed variations where a character picks up a rock, bashes it against something hard, and the rock shapes itself into some specific useful item. The most common variations produce weapons. A character who knows this Charm is seldom disarmed for long. The stone weapon remains as strong as a metal weapon for a scene, but can break afterward.

• A cascade Charm much prized by martial artists enables a Dynast to shatter large masses of stone with a single blow. This is extremely useful in sieges.

• One variation enables a character to merge bits of rock into solid stone. It works just as well on glass, brick or pottery. A character could use the Charm to seal doors shut with bars of solid rock.

• Another variation (not requiring Stone-Carving Fingers Form as a prerequisite because it's so simple) lets a character break an enemy's stone or metal weapon with a





single well-placed blow. These variations use Brawling, Melee or Martial Arts, depending on which way the character prefers to fight. (Each Ability serves as the basis for a separate Charm.)

- Great masters among the Aspects of Earth hew entire palaces and temples from rock using advanced versions of this Charm.

MOUNTAIN TOPPLING METHOD

Cost:	10 motes
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Supplemental
Minimum Athletics:	2
Minimum Essence:	2

Through this Charm, a Dragon-Blooded character links his own Essence to the Essence within a mass of stone. This enables him to exert vastly magnified strength against that mass. After a moment's concentration, the Dynast can hurl boulders, topple pillars, stomp on the edge of a cliff to start a landslide or perform other momentary feats of superhuman strength. In game terms, the character's strength increases by 5 for one turn, but he can only apply that extra strength to objects made of earth or stone. This can include an attack; for instance, throwing a boulder at an opponent for Strength-based damage.

Cascade Charms:

- This Charm is quite self-contained. A more experienced and powerful character, however, might gain the ability to use this Charm at lower Essence cost, and therefore use it more often in combat.

PERFECT CLIMBING ATTITUDE

Cost:	1 mote
Duration:	One scene
Type:	Simple
Minimum Athletics:	2
Minimum Essence:	1

The Dragon-Blooded of Earth include some superb mountaineers and rock-climbers, all because of this Charm. Not only does the character cling to a rock face like a limpet, she leaves indentations in the rock that other people can use as hand- and footholds, making the climb easier for them. The character can climb a sheer stone wall at a rate of 10 feet per turn, or 20 feet or more per turn up a rough cliff face (or a surface where someone already made handholds in the rock). Surfaces that are worse than sheer, such as overhangs, require multiple successes.

Cascade Charms:

- More skilled Dragon-Blooded can find or make projections sufficient to support a hammock. Sleeping 50 feet up a cliff face may not be comfortable, but with this Charm it sure is safe.

- More powerful Dynasts of Earth can leave a virtual ladder or stairway in the rock, making ascent or descent quite safe and easy for anyone else.

STRENGTH OF STONE TECHNIQUE

Cost:	2 motes per person
Duration:	The Dragon-Blooded's Essence in scenes
Type:	Reflexive
Minimum Resistance:	2
Minimum Essence:	1

One of the most notable traits of the element of Earth is its strength and resistance to damage. Through this Charm, a Dragon-Blooded can take on some of the strength and hardness of stone and share it with other people.

After a short meditation while holding and concentrating upon the Essence within a pebble, the character becomes stronger and tougher, gaining one dot of both Strength and Stamina for the next five minutes. If the Dragon-Blooded character wants to include other people in the Charm, the recipients must all hold hands in a circle with a pebble between each pair of palms. An individual cannot benefit from multiple simultaneous uses of this Charm, even if different Dragon-Blooded invoke it.

Cascade Charms:

- An obvious extension grants actual dots of armor by making the character's skin as hard as stone while retaining the flexibility of life.

- A more advanced variation lets a Dragon-Blooded character become as invulnerable as a stone statue. Unfortunately, the character also becomes stiff and slow, cutting all Dexterity-based dice pools in half for the Charm's duration.

FIRE

FIRE IN THE BELLY ATTITUDE

Cost:	2 motes per person
Duration:	The Dragon-Blooded's Essence in scenes
Type:	Simple
Minimum Presence:	2
Minimum Essence:	1

People often describe strong passions as flames, and the Aspects of Fire take this metaphor literally. Through this Charm, a Dynast can whip up the flames of courage and anger, making a person more brave and aggressive. The character must say something fierce and rousing to his troops, and his player makes a Charisma + Presence roll. If the Charm succeeds, each recipient gains one dot of both Valor and Willpower for the next five minutes, up to the maximum possible. Alas, the Charm does not work on the character himself—and if the Dragon-Blood cuts and runs or otherwise shows cowardice, the Charm's effects end at once. An individual cannot benefit from multiple simultaneous uses of this Charm, even if different Dragon-Blooded invoke it.

Cascade Charms:

• More powerful versions of this Charm bestow more Virtues, and in some cases actual increased Attributes as well.

• Another variation suppresses the fires of courage in enemies, temporarily reducing their Valor so they are more likely to turn tail or surrender.

FIRE BLAST TRAP TRICK

Cost:	1 mote
Duration:	Until triggered
Type:	Simple
Minimum Lore:	3
Minimum Essence:	2

This peculiar Charm finds use among Dragon-Bloods who worry about thieves. It takes a clever hand, though, to trap a fire inside a box, jar or bottle so that it can't go out. The Dynast must place a bit of fuel inside the container — firedust from the far south works best — set it on fire, then slap the lid shut and seal it *just right*. When someone opens the container, the captive fire explodes, much larger and hotter from anger at being trapped. A typical use for the fire trap is to rig it inside a trunk or cupboard so that anyone who opens it the wrong way pops open the hidden container and set off the trap.

Like most Charms with long-term effects, the fire trap “ties up” the mote of Essence used to set it up. For this reason, the Aspects of Fire do not manufacture fire traps by the dozen. Creating a fire trap takes just a minute, but the trap itself can last indefinitely. The trap lasts even after its creator's death, if she never reclaimed its Essence. The fire trap's explosion has a three-foot radius. The player rolls Dexterity + Lore. As well as causing a flash and loud bang, for each success the player rolls, the trap does a number of points of lethal damage equal to the Essence of the Exalted who set the trap, soaked normally. Obviously, fire traps are unsuitable for guarding anything that flame could destroy.

Cascade Charms:

• The Fire Blast Trap Trick needs few improvements. One possibility is an improved fire trap whose flame fills a larger area.

PRECISE FIRE METHOD

Cost:	5 motes
Duration:	1 hour
Type:	Simple
Minimum Survival:	2
Minimum Essence:	1

As one might expect, the Dragon-Blooded attuned to Fire can shape that unstable element with preternatural skill. This Charm displays that power in a comparatively subtle way. The character starts a fire; the method doesn't matter. If the fire has suitable fuel, it will spread, as fires do. *This* fire, however, spreads only along a path predefined by its creator along invisible threads of Essence. For instance, a Fire-attuned character could drop a torch on a forest floor littered with dry leaves and have the fire burn in a narrow line, not

even scorching the leaves near the defined path or setting the trees on fire. Applications include barriers of flame to restrict and channel a fight, or a form of time-delayed arson.

The fire can last a full hour, fuel permitting. At the end of that time, the Dragon-Blood can extinguish magic-bound fire, if he so desires. If the character is no longer present to restrain the fire, it burns out of control to the extent that its fuel permits.

The player rolls Intelligence + Survival for the character to lay the threads of Essence. The basic Precise Fire extends through 25 square feet, in whatever simple shape the character desires. For instance, the Dynast could create a wall of fire one foot wide and 25 feet long, a solid square five feet on a side, a foot-thick ring eight feet in diameter and so on. For every extra success, the area is increased by an additional 25 square feet, but the character cannot benefit from more successes than she has points of permanent Essence. The Storyteller may also impose difficulty penalties if the character wants to burn a particularly complicated shape, such as writing a person's name in fire.

Cascade Charms:

• The basic Charm requires that the Dragon-Blooded character light the fire by hand. With greater skill and power, a character could initiate Precise Fires using fires someone else set, or from a distance. For instance, a character could shoot a flame arrow to start a Precise Fire far away, or send flames leaping from an enemy's campfire.

• A more powerful character could make the flames burn even in areas without suitable fuel. Whatever's available, burns.

LEAPING FLAME ATTITUDE

Cost:	5 motes
Duration:	The Dragon-Blooded's Essence in scenes
Type:	Simple
Minimum Dodge:	2
Minimum Essence:	1

Fire is the most mobile of the elements. The Dragon-Blooded who learn its mysteries can infuse the Essence of Fire into themselves or a single target, granting them the agility of a leaping flame. The player rolls Wits + Dodge. The target gains one dot of the Dodge Ability for every success rolled by the Dragon-Blooded character, to a maximum of the target's own Dodge rating, for the duration of the Charm. The recipient also gains one extra dot in Athletics (no more), but only for purposes of jumping and keeping his balance. The target cannot more than double his Dodge ability, even if multiple Dragon-Blooded invoke this Charm on him.

Cascade Charms:

• An improved Charm could increase the recipient's movement rate, allowing the character to move his full distance (walking, running or sprinting) while still performing other actions in a turn.



• A considerably more powerful Dynast might learn to perform an Essence-fueled dodge so agile that she becomes *impossible* to hit by any hand-to-hand attack that is not itself reinforced with Essence.

REVEALING LIGHT METHOD

Cost:	5 motes
Duration:	1 minute
Type:	Simple
Minimum Investigation:	2
Minimum Essence:	1

Fire reveals what is hidden. Its light pushes aside the darkness; its heat reveals the metal within the ore. A Dynast can use Essence to make an ordinary flame blaze up with a glaring, pitiless light that reveals whatever another person tries to conceal. Secret cupboards, chambers and passages are easily located as the hair-fine crack of their hidden doors suddenly stand out like gaping black chasms. A person's disguise looks laughably false.

The player rolls Perception + Investigation. A simple success rolled for this Charm negates any physical attempt to make one object or person look like another. In cases where something is hidden by misdirection or being placed in or behind other objects (such as a letter hidden in a stack of other missives, or within a long-necked vase) the Storyteller must set a difficulty rating based on how cleverly or thoroughly the object is concealed, and the player must meet that difficulty when rolling for the Charm.

Cascade Charms:

• The Revealing Light Method does not penetrate magical forms of concealment and disguise. An improved Charm can — or at least, each success rolled cancels one success from any Charm of concealment.

• A more powerful or skilled Dynast could develop a Charm that would reveal any attempt to tell a deliberate lie. The Dragon-Blooded “sees it in his eyes” that the target was fibbing.

WATER

BOUNDING MAIN TECHNIQUE

Cost:	5 motes
Duration:	1 hour
Type:	Supplemental
Minimum Sail:	2
Minimum Essence:	1

Dynasts attuned to Water can become some of the world's greatest sailors. The Charm makes every sailing task just a little bit easier: The wind doesn't die or shift at awkward moments, there always seems to be a current in the desirable direction, and crewmembers do their jobs with skill and efficiency.

In game terms, every two successes rolled with this Charm (rounded up) cancel out one difficulty penalty from a Sail-based feat. Thus, if the Storyteller rules that

threading the narrow, stormy Straits of Hell normally would be difficulty 3, one or two successes with this Charm would reduce the difficulty to 2, and three or four successes would reduce the task to normal difficulty. The player must still make Ability rolls and gain at least a simple success for tasks, but does not suffer penalties for adverse conditions.

Multiple characters *cannot* add together successes rolled for this Charm. Only the roll with the greatest number of successes counts. For instance, if two characters both use Bounding Main Technique and one rolls two successes while the other rolls three, only the second character's Charm has any effect.

Cascade Charms:

• A more powerful version of this Charm extends over multiple ships, at least if they stay fairly close together.

• A more skilled and powerful sailor could reverse this Charm and use it against an enemy, *adding* difficulty penalties for any sailing task. On the high sea, this merely hinders a ship — it doesn't move as quickly, the crew seems clumsy and stupid, and so on. Moderately risky tasks (such as sailing a narrow passage between rocky shoals) can become incredibly dangerous.

LOYALTY-ERODING METHOD

Cost:	3 motes
Duration:	Varies
Type:	Simple
Minimum Socialize:	2
Minimum Essence:	1

Fire destroys quickly; water erodes slowly, subtly, but no less completely. Those who study the metaphysical aspects of the elements declare Water the most sinister and deadly of the elements. Masters of the Essence of Water can stir currents of doubt in the minds of others, eroding trust in favor of treachery.

This Charm requires nothing more than a few minutes in which to talk to a person. The Storyteller sets the difficulty, based on the target's degree of devotion and faith in another person, institution, belief or cause. The Dragon-Blooded's player rolls Manipulation + Socialize. If he rolls enough successes, the target person becomes suspicious, cynical and hostile enough to betray whoever or whatever the Dynast wanted. The treacherous dislike persists for at least an hour after the Charm's use; if the Dynast received more successes than the minimum necessary, the hatred can last for days.

A Dynast who uses the Loyalty-Eroding Method on several well-chosen targets can turn an entire town against a victim. Rousing suspicion and hatred on such a large scale often runs out of control, though. After the affected people banish or lynch the target of their ire, the Storyteller secretly rolls one die for every person in the community affected by the Loyalty-Eroding Method. For each success

rolled, the community attacks one more scapegoat as old enmities flare — and the Dynast has no control over who the people choose.

Cascade Charms:

- A more subtle and advanced Charm instills a seed of betrayal that grows and blossoms later instead of right away. Such a delayed-effect Charm might have a time limit, or prime a person for treachery when a certain condition is met or signal given.

SPIRIT-REFLECTING BOWL TECHNIQUE

Cost: 3 motes
Duration: Until disrupted
Type: Simple
Minimum Occult: 2
Minimum Essence: 1

Water has deep connections to the spirit world. Dragon-Blooded characters with occult interests can use this connection to see and communicate with the unseen spirits of the world. The character requires nothing more than an ordinary bowl of water. As long as the Dynast concentrates, she can see nearby spirits reflected in the water and hear what they say. A clever Dragon-Blood might even do this without the spirits noticing — for instance, by using a goblet of water and taking a sip now and then, while pretending to do something else.

Cascade Charms:

- More powerful and learned Dynasts can actually search for a spirit using a bowl of water, and communicate with it at a distance.

DROWNING-IN-BLOOD STRIKE

Cost: 4 motes
Duration: Instant
Type: Supplemental
Minimum Medicine: 2
Minimum Essence: 1

The body, as anyone can see, contains a lot of water — blood. Dragon-Blooded warriors who learn the hidden tides and currents of blood can strike in such a way as to cause internal bleeding into an enemy's lungs. The victim can literally drown in his own blood.

To use this Charm, the attacker must successfully strike her opponent in some way. If the Drowning-in-Blood Strike roll succeeds, the target loses one point of Stamina on each subsequent turn, for as many turns as the player rolled successes on the Essence + Medicine roll. The Drowning-in-Blood Strike does not itself inflict health levels of damage, though it may look like a series of rapid punches or some other attack.

Cascade Charms:

- A more skilled or powerful Dynast no longer needs to punch his opponent to inflict the Drowning-in-Blood Strike; a light slap, or even a mere brush with a finger, will suffice to disrupt the flow of blood.

- An even more advanced version of the Drowning-in-Blood Strike adds a time delay: The attacker can prime the victim to drown in his own blood minutes or hours later.

- Techniques resembling the Drowning-in-Blood Strike can be used to stanch internal or external bleeding.

ARMOR-NEGATING STRIKE TECHNIQUE

Cost: 2 motes
Duration: Instant
Type: Supplemental
Minimum Martial Arts: 2
Minimum Essence: 1

More than any other element, water has the power to locate, penetrate and widen the tiniest gap. The trickle through a breach in a dike swiftly becomes a torrent. Dragon-Blooded warriors attuned to Water Essence may learn an analogous knack for seeking out the gaps in an enemy's defenses, letting them bypass mundane armor.

The Dragon-Blooded character must use this Charm to supplement a Martial Arts or Brawl attack. The character strikes, and if the attack is successful, his player makes a reflexive Perception + Martial Arts roll. For each success, the Dragon-Blooded attacker lowers his opponent's bashing and lethal soak by one for the purposes of determining the effect of the attack. For instance, suppose a Dragon-Blood makes a Martial Arts attack against a person wearing armor worth 5 points of soak against bashing damage. He uses the Armor-Negating Strike Technique with an attack and receives three successes. His opponent receives only two points of soak against the attack.

Cascade Charms:

- One straightforward improvement on this Charm is a version that automatically bypasses all material armor (but not Stamina or magical defenses).

- The basic Charm has no effect against magical defense. An improved version could cancel out armor derived from Charms as well as mundane, physical armor.

WOOD

FOREST PASSAGE METHOD

Cost: 2 motes
Duration: The Dragon-Blooded's Essence in scenes
Type: Simple
Minimum Survival: 2
Minimum Essence: 1

A Wood-attuned character can attune herself to the Essence of trees, grasses, briars and other plant life around her. While thus attuned, she can pass through dense vegetation without any penalty to her movement or combat. Somehow, the crowding, tangling plants never seem to be exactly where the character is. Not only does this make it easier to pursue animals or fugitives through





undergrowth, briars or other hindrances, the Dragon-Blooded character enjoys a considerable advantage over an enemy if she fights in such surroundings.

Cascade Charms:

- A more experienced or powerful Wood-attuned character could extend the effect of the Forest Passage Method to other characters, for a suitably increased Essence cost.

- A variation using Stealth instead of Survival makes a person virtually invisible, silent and undetectable while within forest, scrub or shrubbery.

TEN SEASONS' GROWTH DISCIPLINE

Cost:	1 mote per minute of use
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Simple
Minimum Lore:	2
Minimum Essence:	2

By communing with the living spirit of a plant, a Dragon-Blooded character can rouse it to grow with impossible, supernatural speed. A seed can grow into a flower. A seedling can become a sturdy sapling. What's more, the character can shape the plant's growth. Although instant topiary is an esthetically pleasing application, a character can also grow trees so they crack stone walls with their roots, produce living ladders from ivy or perform other useful tricks.

To employ this Charm, the character must lightly stroke the target plant, softly hum or sing to the spirit within it and supply it with water. For every minute and mote of Essence expended, the plant experiences up to a full year's worth of growth. Thus, growing an annual flower from a seed requires only one minute and one mote of Essence; growing an oak tree 20 years old from an acorn takes 20 minutes and 20 motes of Essence.

Cascade Charms:

- With greater Lore or Essence, the character could learn to grow and shape trees with greater speed and less cost of Essence.

- A plant might actually animate for a short time to work the Dragon-Blooded character's will.

- A plant could grow supernaturally large. A bower of giant flowers aids any courtship; more bizarre options include giant gourds or pumpkins as houses or boats.

- A really powerful Dynast might be able to make a tree grow around a captured enemy, trapping him in ageless slumber until someone cuts the tree down.

HURLED BRANCH ARROW TECHNIQUE

Cost:	2 motes
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Simple
Minimum Thrown:	2
Minimum Essence:	1

Through this Charm, a Dragon-Blooded character charges any convenient stick or scrap of wood with Essence. When he then throws the Essence-charged wood, it flies through the air as smoothly as an arrow from a bow — and does as much damage. The character rolls Dexterity + Thrown, and the improvised missile inflicts damage based on its shape — most are point, fowling or frog crotch. The weapon has the same range increment as a compound bow.

Cascade Charms:

- When the character achieves greater throwing skill, she could improve the range or damage of the arrow. Alternatively, she might Combo the Charm with Archery-based Charms.

- A character with a higher Essence rating might gain the ability to harm spirits with this Charm, or multiply the improvised missile's effect in various ways. (See the Archery and Thrown Charms for Solars in *Exalted* for inspiration, but tone down their effect and increase the Essence costs for Dragon-Blooded characters.)

- For a variation, a character might have a Charm enabling her to use any convenient scrap of wood as a melee weapon.

SNARLING UNDERGROWTH FORM

Cost:	3 motes
Duration:	1 turn per success
Type:	Reflexive
Minimum Dodge:	2
Minimum Essence:	1

This Charm reverses the effect of the Forest Passage Method and turns it against an enemy. For a short time, the local plant life hinders the Dragon-Blooded character's opponent any way it can. Branches somehow manage to get in the way of his sword arm. Twigs and briars catch at his clothes. Even someone fighting on a close-cropped lawn finds his feet slipping on the grass. The player rolls Charisma + Dodge. For every success, the effect hinders the target for one turn. As a result of this hindrance, the Dynast's foe suffers a +1 difficulty penalty on all attack and Dodge rolls, and has his movement speed halved. The Dragon-Blooded character can even use this Charm to add to natural combat penalties from vegetation. The Charm only works against one opponent per use.

Cascade Charms:

- One obvious improvement is a Charm that hinders every opponent of the Dragon-Blooded character.

- Another version increases the degree of hindrance, or its duration.

- A still more powerful version could actually trap an enemy so that he could not fight at all. This requires fairly sturdy vegetation, though — shrubbery or heavy vines at least.

- Snarling Undergrowth Form and the Forest Passage Method are a splendid Combo.

HERBAL MEDICINE TECHNIQUES

Cost:	5 motes
Duration:	Until consumed
Type:	Simple
Minimum Medicine:	2
Minimum Essence:	1

In the Age of the Exalted, most drugs and medicines come from plants. A physician or druggist who understands the Essence within plants can prepare drugs and medicines with uncannily precise effects. Each effect is actually a separate Charm, but a character who learns one Herbal Medicine Technique probably knows a few more as well. Some common tricks include:

- Time Delay: A drug or medicine takes effect at a time set by the Dragon-Blooded character, perhaps days after the Dynast administered the draught.

- Trigger: A drug or medicine takes effect when a certain external condition is met.

- Tuning: The druggist can control the content of hallucinations caused by a drug.

Most uses of an Herbal Medicine Technique require only a simple success. Some applications — for instance, very precise hallucinations or a time delay longer than a few hours — might impose difficulty penalties.

The Dynast who would use an Herbal Medicine Technique must compound the drug or medicine herself and infuse it with Essence at that time. The effect of the Essence-charged drug lasts its regular duration. Only after the magic medicine runs its course can the character who created it recover the motes of Essence used in its creation.

Cascade Charms:

- With experience, a Dragon-Blooded pharmacist might Combo different Herbal Medicine Techniques.

- More skilled and powerful druggists might produce medicines with actual magical effects on their users. Storytellers may want to restrict how “magical” an effect characters can achieve through Medicine-based Charms.





CHAPTER TWO: THE CELESTIAL EXALTED



LUNAR EXALTED

The Lunar Exalted never truly blamed the Dragon-Blooded or themselves for the events that transpired at the end of the First Age. True, it was the Terrestrial Exalted who rose up and destroyed the Solars. However, the Lunars had failed to protect their consorts and lovers, from both the corruption and arrogance that had overtaken them and also from the Dragon-Blooded's treachery. Instead they blamed the civilization that had brought the Solars to moral ruin and themselves to an awful betrayal of their oaths of loyalty and love.

Fleeing both the slaughter of the Solars and their own failure, the few remaining Lunars went into hiding on the fringes of Creation. But the bordermarches of the world are inhospitable places where survival exacts a harsh price. The Lunars, well used to the comforts of the Realm, found themselves living the life of primitives, as hunters and gatherers. Despite their Charms and training, some died of starvation while others perished under the claws of Behemoths and Wyld-mutated animals while hunting. Those who survived learned to enjoy their new existence. The harsh discipline and finely honed skills necessary to survive at the very edge of the Wyld came naturally to the Lunars.

The Lunars had always exploited their close relationship with animals through the Charms that allowed them

to control and use them. Before their exile, those Charms had been used to turn specially bred domesticated animals into a fearsome army. The Lunars had to relearn the patterns of animals' lives in the wild, both to hunt effectively and to learn the secrets of survival in the brutal and Wyld-twisted conditions near the Elemental Poles.

The Lunars found much to admire in the simple life of predator and prey. It seemed that the day-to-day activities of hunting and warring with their neighbors were much purer and easier than their time as the generals of the Realm. Soon, most adopted these patterns of life once more, living their lives to fight, hunt, eat and reproduce — much as they had done millennia ago, just after the war against the enemies of the gods.

Their society reverted to tribalism and then broke down further as the Lunars scattered. They spread apart to make it harder for the Dragon-Blooded to hunt them, and to avoid putting too great a pressure on the natural resources of any one area. Within a century, the majority of them lived apart from others of their kind. The exiled Lunars had already become efficient predators. They were quite able to support themselves on the prey they caught alone, without need for a pack. The exiles' behavior became increasingly territorial, and soon a meeting of two Lunars would either lead to combat or to one conceding the territory immediately.

COUTING COUP

Lunars rarely, if ever, fight to the death. With so few — perhaps a few hundred — alive at any given time, fratricide serves little purpose and harms their chances of survival as a group. Instead they use a system of challenge and obligation. Any Lunar who defeats another Lunar in combat can claim a debt from his opponent by withholding the death-blow. Instead, as the defeated Lunar heals, the victor creates a circular scar on the part of the loser's body near where the blow that incapacitated them fell.

This scar represents the debt the Lunar owes to the winner. At any future point, the winner can call the debt due. He then sets the debtor any task he sees fit, which must be carried out to the best of the debtor's ability. Once the task is completed, and the debtor returns with evidence of the fact, the victorious Lunar strikes a new scar through the circle, making the debt as collected. He then allows the loser to scar the triumphant Lunar's forearm with a small "x" shape, to mark a successful victory.

The result of this system is a complicated respect structure among Lunars based on a combination of age, victory marks and number of uncompleted and completed debt circles.

Messengers, particularly scholars of the No Moon Caste, are the exception to the Lunars' territorial tradition. News is carried by itinerant Exalted who are presented with a problem large enough to convince them to leave their territory and inform others. So news could continue to flow, the Lunars developed a series of ritualized greetings and challenges that signaled both a lack of hostility and an intention to move on as soon as their business was done. This system stills serves the Lunars today.

Some Lunars took mates from the human tribes that lived at the edge of the Wyld. The Lunars' tremendous life spans and their sheer physical prowess allowed them to dominate these tribes ruthlessly. Compared to the mortals around them, they were ageless. Generations of a tribe would be born, grow old and die while the Lunar's power remained unchallenged. As the leader asserted breeding rights with each generation's most attractive and capable mortals, their kin began to make up a predominant proportion of the tribe, cementing the Lunar's control still further.

Those Lunars who chose to stay alone lived almost as animals. They hunted, feasted, rested and occasionally took a mate for a time. Yet life-span differences made these brief interludes in a solitary life. Though they might stay with a mate for a human lifetime before returning to the wilds, a lifetime is but a short while to a Celestial Exalted.

Even before the Great Contagion, the Wyld was already pushing inwards. It overtook the territories of more and more of the Lunars, until a majority of them existed within the precincts of its chaotic realm. Their Exaltation allowed them to resist and survive its mutating effects.

Yet there were disturbing side effects. The Lunars had always been able transform any part of their bodies into different forms. The influence of the Wyld was making the process of transformation easier, but reverting to their natural form became harder and harder. It became clear that the Lunars had two choices — find some way to further resist the Wyld's warping effect on their bodies, or move back in toward the Realm and face conflict with the Dragon-Blooded.

To retreat from any threat was unacceptable to the Lunars. They had done it once before. They would never do it again. Thus, they had no option but to find a way to resist the Wyld.

SURVIVING THE WYLD

In the First Age, each Lunar was a member one of five castes: the Half, Waxing, Full, Waning and No Moons. Unlike other Exalted, their caste was not fixed on Exaltation. Instead, the markings on their forehead reflected the phase of the moon in silver cast on a dark background. When the moon was full, their Caste Marks were full silver circles on their foreheads. It waned over the coming weeks until it was all but invisible against the black background by the time the moon was completely in shadow. Then, the silver slowly reappeared as the moon waxed strong once more.

This sigil only settled into the Caste Mark after the young Exalted had undertaken a quest into the Wyld. If the questing Lunar survived, their caste was decided by their actions on this adventure. They were welcomed back into Exalted society and trained in the ways of their newfound caste.

However, the Lunars knew from previous expeditions into the Wyld that if they spent long periods on the borders of Creation, it was likely they would start to revert to their newly Exalted condition. After weeks or months of exposure to the Wyld, their Caste Marks would begin to follow the lunar cycle again, changing shape to match the moon for a few days before and after the phase of their caste.

At first, the changing Caste Marks and even the Lunars' increasingly protean nature were harmless. But as the years passed, the Lunars found themselves unable to use the most puissant Charms of their caste. Now, these Charms were available to them only during the appropriate phase of the moon. Their Caste Marks had become more and more mutable, and shifted through the phases of the moon just as if they were freshly Exalted.

The Lunars set to work to finding a way to stabilize both their form and their caste, so that they could regain access to their most potent Charms without returning to the Threshold. The sorcerous No Moons experimented

when the moon permitted it, and researched both Charms and sorcery to no good effect. Even apparently successful attempts faded as the moon changed. Meanwhile, those Lunars that explored ever deeper into the Wyld, far from the relative stability of the Threshold, found their castes and bodies shifting ever more unpredictably. While they could still use Charms to return to their human form, they no longer seemed to have a true form to return to when the effect of the Charm passed.

In the decades that followed, many of the oldest and most powerful of the Lunars succumbed to the Wyld completely, becoming utterly protean monstrosities whose thought processes are incomprehensible to Exalted and mortals alike. As desperation grew, a few among the No Moons noticed that limbs which had been scarred in battle returned to their original shape somewhat more easily than unmarred appendages.

It was eagerly seized upon, and the No Moons researched the matter. They soon found patterns that served well to lock the Lunars into their true forms. A tradition of ritual scarring arose among the Lunars, allowing them to maintain stability of shape. Careful scarring allowed a Lunar to not only retain her shape, but her caste stability as well. Tattooing and piercing — indeed, any sort of purposeful ritual marking of the self — had the same effect. Such methods were quickly incorporated into the Lunars' repertoire of personal expression.


When a new Lunar was found by other Lunars before the Wyld Hunt dispatched her, she was forced to undergo a series of trials to prove her worthiness. Each successfully completed trial was celebrated with another mark on her body, following ritually proscribed patterns that help define caste. The scarification follows the line of the Lunar's true form, travelling in long sweeps up and down the arms and legs. The torso is adorned with elaborate swirls emphasizing its shape and the position of ribs and the rest of the skeleton. Her face is heavily scarred with deep marks above her eyebrows and along her nose and cheekbones. And finally, the forehead is marked with a representation of the Caste Mark — a design to appear frequently in later decoration.

In the end, only three castes could reliably be created through these rituals: the Full Moons, the No Moons and a caste that combined elements of the Waxing, Waning and Half Moons: the Changing Moons.

LUNARS TODAY

If you called a Lunar an animal with intelligence, she would be briefly complimented. Then, she'd tear you limb from limb to prove that her





lifestyle was vastly superior to your life in civilization. The long years in exile have left the older Lunars with a chip on their shoulders. It is not enough for them to believe that their lifestyle is superior to that spent resting in buildings and farming the land. They have to prove it to themselves and everyone else. This is the reason that the people of the Threshold have never achieved any lasting peace with their Wyld neighbors — they can't. The Lunars have developed a set of moral standards that separate them utterly from the society of the Realm.

Lunars disdain the things of civilization. Many of the tools that residents of even the Threshold take for granted aren't used by the Lunars, who consider them the toys of the weak. However, these Exalted are somewhat pragmatic: Most Lunars are more than happy to use the weapons of the Realm when it suits them and use the blacksmith's hammer and anvil to work silver into items of power.

Even the Lunars' appearance separates them from the mass of humanity. Most carry themselves with a quiet confidence that is utterly unlike that of residents of the Realm. Only Lunars from the extreme North carry any fat on their frames, and most are a mass of muscle that even the fittest of the Dragon-Blooded cannot rival. They have the bearing of predators, and the animal that lurks within each human can sense that. Even the Changing Moons, who spend time travelling among the societies of the Threshold and do their best to conceal their true natures, cannot overcome this instinctive unease.

Few Lunars wear garb of woven cloth, save for that they loot in raids. Most choose to wear animal pelts, when they go clothed at all. On the rare occasions when Lunars gather together and fight as a group, they have similar markings or dress to convey a sense of unified identity. This is useful in the Wyld, allowing the group to reinforce each other's identity and allowing members bolstering themselves against the effects of the ever-changing environment. In the more stable world of the Threshold, the Lunars know well the psychological benefits of intimidation. Through uniform dress and group tactics, they display their own abilities of organization to the defenders of a civilization that sees organization as its primary advantage.

LUNARS OF THE EAST

Those Lunar who live in the East, toward the Elemental Pole of Wood, are the most colorful. There is no game that can outrun them and few predators that can match their battle skill. With their magical abilities of stealth and shapechanging, there is little need for camouflage.

The animals of the East provide more opportunities for really dramatic adornment. The Lunars and their subjects wear enough animal skin to keep themselves warm and no more. The tattoos that decorate their bodies are brightly painted with intricate patterns indicating both their tribe and their status within it. In addition, many wear bangles of bone or horn. Most decorate their hair, their weapons

and their clothes with the brilliantly colored feathers of forest and jungle birds. To a traveler in the Eastern forest, these bright flashes of color mean only death.

LUNARS OF THE SOUTH

Lunars living in the South, toward the Elemental Pole of Fire, rarely dress in more than basic loincloths. Tattooing and scarring are more common than piercing: Metals grow hot in the heat of the desert. However, a few choose bone piercing instead, and a tiny minority chooses metal, using the agony of sun-heated metals as a test of their own endurance. Southern Lunars adorn themselves with skins of the brightly colored lizards found in the region; many Changing Moons take on the characteristics of those creatures. Others stud their bodies with the gems that are common in the Southern desert, working them into the intricate patterns they daub on their bodies.

LUNARS OF THE WEST

Lunars from the West, toward the Elemental Pole of Water, are island and archipelago dwellers. Most have a thin layer of fat to keep them warm during extended periods in the water. Their scarring and tattoos are the largest and most dramatic of all the Lunars, simply because they have to be to be clearly visible underwater. They also tend toward brilliant colors — livid red, bright yellow — to warn off predators. While Lunars enjoy a good fight, no predator fights when intimidation will do the job. While out of the water, these Lunars dress in garments made from the skins of fish and other water dwellers, giving their clothing a luster and shimmer that a lady of the Realm would envy.

Those in the Northwest look more like those Lunars who live in the North; they carry more weight to insulate them from the icy waters and wear the skins of cold-water animals to further protect their bodies from the cold.

LUNARS OF THE NORTH

Lunars from the North, toward the Elemental Pole of Air, are usually the most heavily dressed. Even the lowliest Lunar is swathed in massive skins. A Guild fur trader would sell his entire family and most of his friends just to obtain a single Lunar's garments. Survival in this, the most brutal of the regions, is a struggle even for a Lunar. Many are surprisingly fat, storing energy against the inevitable times of starvation. But their bulk is deceptive. Underneath the fat is as much muscle as on Lunars in other part of Creation. The northern Lunars are often surprisingly adept at using their bulk against opponents in battle.

THE EXALTATION OF A LUNAR

If an individual is Exalted in a barbarian tribe that is ruled by or tributary to a tribe of Lunar Exalted, she is given into the direct care of the tribe's Lunar king as quickly as possible. If she is Exalted into a tribe ruled by a human, the

youngster soon defeats him in combat, supplanting him as king. If the young ruler is lucky, an itinerant Lunar finds the tribe and spends some time as the mentor of the newly Exalted. Otherwise, she has to hone her skills and develop her Charms on her own, which takes much longer. Luckily, time is something Celestial Exalted can afford most.

Lunars who are Exalted in the Threshold or the Realm are usually lost to the Wyld Hunt of the Dragon-Blooded. But, when the stars say that a rescue has some chance of success, a No Moon will gather a band of Lunar Exalted to travel into the Threshold and rescue such foundlings. These bands attempt to hide or protect nascent Lunars from the Dragon-Bloods and spirit them away to the safety of the Wyld for a proper education.

Regardless of their origins, young Lunars have a difficult time ahead of them. Those few who came from a life of peace are soon exposed to violence in the wake of their Exaltation. Those who are in the tutelage of their elders are sent on quests into the Wyld. There, beyond Creation, they are subjected to tests that challenge their supernatural power and instincts. The trials that the older Lunars set the youths are designed to show them that the only skills that matter are those that allow you to survive. The agony of the ritual scarring that follows each success slowly inures the new Exalt to pain.

During the tests, their mentors and the very nature of the Wyld make the tasks difficult enough to pose a challenge even to the Exalted. A shelter built one day is swept away the next. The landscape shifts. Adaptability and endurance become crucial skills for survival. Add in clashes with Behemoths, the depredations of the Fair Folk and regular conflict with tribes ruled by other Lunars. The very nature of the environment creates survivors.

Once their training is done and their castes are set, the young Exalted are sent away from their mentors and left to fend for themselves. No Lunar ruler tolerates a potential threat so close to home, so the elder makes it clear to the departing youth that any attempt to return will be punished by death. Some of these exiles return to the Wyld to live solitary, predatorial lives in the lands beyond the world. Others choose to dwell on the bordermarches of Creation. These Lunars quickly establish themselves as rulers in the communities they choose to join.

Any Exalted or other occult power in the area is challenged for dominance. If the Lunar wins, he quickly asserts his dominance over the resident humans. If he loses, he dies or flees to lick his wounds and find another territory. The barbarian tribes are accustomed to the practice, having lived with the Lunars among them for centuries.

Lunars who cannot seize territory from elder Lunars attempt to take lands and make them more amenable to their rule. Villages and even cities in the Threshold have been destroyed by marauding Lunars in this fashion. The warriors stride into town, their bulky frames, animalistic

features and silvery hair attracting immediate attention and fear from the villagers. The greatest warriors of the village try to repel the invader, but unless they too are Exalted — a most unlikely event — they stand little chance. The Lunars cannot be reasoned with or bought off. They want nothing but to rule, and rule on their own terms. Those who disagree die for their views. Most of the Lunars who go this route die, typically at the hands of the Wyld Hunt. Those few who survive are strong, cunning and lucky, molded by the Lunars' philosophy of conflict and strength.

RAIDING

Sometimes, barbarian bands lead by a Lunar attack settlements in the Threshold, raiding for goods and slaves. The destruction during these attacks is out of all proportion to that necessary to obtain the booty. On occasions, settlement leaders have tried to placate the tribesmen by giving them all the goods and slaves that they want, to no avail. The barbarians simply take these offerings and then proceed to raze the settlement anyway. The price of weakness in the wilderness is starvation and hardship.

Far worse are the full-scale assaults that barbarian and beastman tribes launch from the Wyld into the Threshold. Villages and towns are swept aside by these marauding hordes that pillage for months without any apparent goal save the destruction they are wreaking. The residents of the Threshold have learned to flee and bide their time in hiding as best they can, until they are destroyed by the legions of the Realm or grow bored of their assaults and retreat to the wilderness once more.

With the Empress gone and the Dynastic houses constantly vying for political advantage, the resources to drive back these attacks are unwelcome burdens. Raids have become more frequent and more damaging in the last five years, and the Lunar-ruled tribes grow ever more aggressive in the face of dwindling opposition.

CASTES

CHANGING MOONS

The Changing Moons are the most common of the three modern Lunar castes. This is because they combine the qualities and roles of three lost castes. For every lone Full Moon hero, there are several Changing Moons prowling the territory they have claimed as theirs.

Changing Moons are the caste most likely to develop animal features. Despite the ritual scarring and tattooing that all Lunars undergo to fix their shape and caste, repeated use of shapechanging Charms can and does alter the Exalted's natural shape. Some Changing Moons take pride in this and actively specialize in using Charms that give them the animalistic characteristics of their choice. They also use their animal-controlling Charms to run with





the animals that they favor. Ironically, this does not always work to their best advantage. Defenders in the Threshold and Changing Moons in other tribes can use the behavior of the attacking Lunar's chosen animal to predict the broad scope of their strategy.

Still, the Changing Moons are the most versatile of the castes. What they lack in raw magical power or combat skills, they make up in tactical cunning and resourcefulness. Animals, human slaves and goods stolen from the Threshold are merely tools to them.

NO MOONS

The No Moons are the magicians and wise men of the Lunar tribes. They hold the lore of the Lunar Exalted, passed down in oral tradition from No Moon to No Moon. When Lunars gather to relax, the No Moons tell them tales of the deeds of their ancestors and peers, providing the audience with the knowledge of many generations of Wyld dwellers. The Lunar rulers teach their subject tribes to hold the lore of their ancestors in high regard: The accumulated knowledge of the tribes may one day save them, when a danger presents itself that their forefathers have dealt with before.

To the Lunar way of thinking, it makes more sense to have this lore in the head of the tale-tellers than on paper. A living storyteller with centuries of teaching experience behind him is a far more effective tutor for a tribe of unruly barbarians than a scrap of material with marks scribbled on it. Indeed, writing is all but a lost art among the Lunars, who see no need for it, except as a simple sign language that communicates messages like "danger" or "this way."

One vital piece of knowledge held by the No Moons, and the No Moons alone, is the specific patterns of ritual scarring needed to allow a Lunar to maintain caste and shape even in the most mutable parts of the Wyld. This knowledge is vital for the survival of the Lunar Exalted as a whole, so No Moons defeated in battle are almost never killed outright, and their debt repayments are rarely dangerous. Lunars who have adopted a young Exalted do their best to locate a No Moon as soon as possible afterward, so the youngster's caste can be fixed. For their part, the No Moons carry the stories and tales of the Lunar Exalted, and risk any danger to rescue a lost Exalted youngster from the Wyld Hunt.

The No Moons are also the magicians of the Lunars. They know sorcery, passed down to them through a combination of oral teachings and a pictogram-based system, which is similar to Old Realm but unique to the No Moons. Most No Moons also possess powerful Charms of illusion that spring from their tale-telling abilities. The illusions they conjure are merely examples of those stories made real briefly by investing them with Essence.

FULL MOONS

The Full Moons are the warriors among a race of warriors. They test themselves constantly against other

DEALING WITH THE REALM

Many among the Dragon-Blooded describe the Lunars and the tribes they work with as "conquering barbarians." That assessment is plain wrong. While few Lunars are without desire for conquest and territory, they are just not interested in empire building in the conventional sense. Land is important to the Lunars only insofar as it can support them. They would rather fiercely defend their own territory and raid other lands than add the holdings of others to their own. They regard the land rendered static by the farming efforts of the civilized peoples of the Threshold with particular disdain.

In truth, "conquering barbarians" is something of a comforting fiction for the people of the Threshold. Invaders seeking to conquer and rule can be driven off by a sufficient show of strength, or else they settle and soon develop an interest in making sure their new home runs well. Invaders looking merely to plunder and test their own mettle against others will return, and return however badly they were defeated on their last visit.

Raids by the Lunars in recent years have struck deeper and deeper into the Threshold. Following the disappearance of the Empress, the Dragon-Blooded have turned their attention inward to the heart of the Realm. The Lunars are doing their best to follow them there, for they seek further tests of their strength that only Exalted can provide.

Lunars and the Fair Folk, and are the caste most likely to be found assaulting settlements in the Threshold. They define their lives in terms of conflict: not just the visceral thrill of combat, but matching themselves against any force that the world can throw at them. Many leaders of the barbarian tribes are Full Moon Lunars, who push their followers into greater and greater efforts in their attacks on the people of the Threshold.

Others plunge ever deeper into the Wyld, seeking to prove the strength of their own identity against its warping power, while some slaughter their way through small Threshold settlements, proving their might against many mortal challengers. In recent years, some have encountered Solar guardians of these communities. This, to the Lunar's mindset, is a good thing. The Solar provide a much more fitting test of their abilities, and many Full Moons actively seek out rumors of Solars, hoping to find them and fight them.

A few of the older Lunars, who have survived since the end of the First Age, have started exploring the Threshold again to find former Solar friends or lovers. These Full Moons are the most discreet of their kind, passing up

chances of combat for the slightest chance to set eyes on a loved one for the first time in centuries. They have discovered that in the years since the Empress' disappearance, they are no longer as hunted as they once were. They become lone adventurers, striking deep into the Threshold, sometimes to the very gates of the Realm itself, plundering Manses, challenging all comers to single combat and willingly throwing themselves into any battle that presents itself.

SAMPLE CHARMS

TENTACLES

Cost:	Varies
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Extra Action
Minimum Brawl:	3
Minimum Essence:	1

The Lunar pours Essence into one of her limbs, which splits into multiple, writhing tentacles. Anything held in that limb is dropped, but the Exalted's natural attacks function as normal. Each of the tentacles is capable of making a separate attack at the Exalted's full dice pool, although all must attack the same target. For each tentacle the Exalted wishes to create, she must spend 3 motes, and she cannot create more tendrils than her Essence. If the defender dodges, make one roll and apply it to all attacks.

The tentacles re-form into the original limb after the attacks are made.

SUMMON WILD BEASTS

Cost:	10 motes and 1 Willpower, +2 motes per creature
Duration:	One day
Type:	Simple
Minimum Lore:	2
Minimum Essence:	2

The Exalted may summon creatures touched by the Wyld to him and direct them against his foe. The nature of the beast depends on the area where the summoning takes place. For example, in the Southwestern swamps, giant mutated toads may spring from the water to aid the Lunar. Each creature is around the size of a large dog, and the Exalted cannot summon more beasts than 10 times her Lore. See *Exalted*, p. 315, for creature statistics.

ACID SPIT

Cost:	3 motes
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Simple
Minimum Thrown:	3
Minimum Essence:	1

The Lunar channels Essence into his own digestive system, momentarily transforming the acids within his





stomach into something far viler. He can then spit this 5corrosive phlegm onto his opponent. The phlegm has a range of 10 yards and does a damage of 4L + extra successes. It continues to do the basic damage every turn until it is scraped off its victim, which requires a successful Dexterity + Athletics roll. This roll is not a reflexive one and must be made as a dice action.

MIGHTY THEWS

Cost:	2 motes per point of Strength
Duration:	Varies
Type:	Simple
Minimum Brawl:	2
Minimum Essence:	2

When she uses Essence to enhance her very muscles via this Charm, a Lunar seems to swell into an intimidating, muscular version of herself. Tendons stand out like taught rope, and her muscles seem ready to burst through her skin. The Exalted's player makes a Strength + Brawl roll. For every success, add one to her Strength. The character cannot more than double her initial Strength through the use of this Charm. The Charm's effect lasts for a number of turns equal to the character's Essence + the number of successes rolled.

STRIDES OF THE PANTHER

Cost:	4 motes
Duration:	One scene
Type:	Simple
Minimum Athletics:	3
Minimum Essence:	2

The Lunar's legs shift into the likeness of the legs of a giant cat, and his whole body twists slightly, becoming lower and more streamlined. For the remainder of the scene, the character can move at twice his normal movement rate and leap three times his normal jumping distance.

SIDEREAL EXALTED

The people of the Realm have long believed that the Dragon-Blooded are the only Exalted that live among them. The age of the Anathema is long past, and their current rulers are the new masters of the world.

They are wrong. They have always been wrong.

The Sidereal Exalted never left the Realm. Even as the Dragon-Blooded exterminated the Solars, the Sidereals vanished from sight. First went the oldest and those who lived in isolation and were rarely seen anyway. The youngest followed. As the Solars fell beneath the blades of the Dragon-Blooded, the middle-ranking and most visible Sidereals simply vanished.

With the agreement, and tacit help, of the Dragon-Blooded leadership, the Sidereals set themselves up in positions where they could oversee the Realm's development

and ensure it kept on track according to their great Prophecy. They relocated to minor cities of the Realm, careful to use their powers in public as little as possible and covering their Caste Marks as best they could when they were forced to use Charms. Their access to astrological magic and their close relationship the spirit courts kept them hidden while they guided the rise of the Immaculate Order. They had adopted and manipulated this cult founded in the Threshold as soon as the Prophecy made it clear what they had to do. By the time of the rebellion, it was a strong religious force. After the massacre of the Solars, a few well-made suggestions in the ears of well-placed Dragon-Blooded nobles ensured that the Immaculate Order was adopted as the state religion.

The Sidereals developed into a shadow cabinet, advising the Dragon-Blooded clandestinely. After the Scarlet Empress rose to the throne, they found they could debate their own agendas in private session and then influence the Empress through her advisors. As time passed, and the barbarians were driven out of a large part of the Realm's original extent, any slight traces of guilt they felt over the revolt they had been forced to instigate faded, and they became content in their new existence. The death of the Solars was regrettable but absolutely justified, they reasoned. After all, the Dragon-Blooded were closer to the people than the distant, awesomely powerful Solars. With the advice of the Sidereals, guided by the Prophecy, how could they possibly fail?

LOSING CONTROL

The unforeseen disappearance of the Scarlet Empress has thrown the Sidereals into disarray. They did not foresee it, and have, as yet, not regained the power they lost with her disappearance. When one woman stamped her authority on the whole Realm, the hidden Celestial Exalted had only to make sure the appropriate words reached her ears. The Realm progressed as the Sidereals wished. Indeed, the older Sidereals knew that the Empress was aware of their continued existence but was happy to maintain their charade, for their goals and hers were similar enough that she could trust their advice.

But now, with the Realm tottering on the brink as the houses seek ascendancy, the Sidereals desperately seek to predict the future and influence their choice of houses in the right directions. But it is a time of flux. Predictions of the future change hourly, and only the most powerful Charms are able to give an accurate picture of how the events are likely to progress. This leaves the Sidereal with fewer and fewer options. The day is not far, it would seem, when they will be left with the choice of coming out of hiding and giving their advice and prophecy to all who ask once more. The problem they face is one of their own making. Through the Immaculate Order, they have thoroughly instilled the idea that that all Celestial Exalted — Anathema — are monsters. The Sidereals would be hunted the moment they appeared.

To add to the woes of the hidden Sidereal, many of the oldest, wisest and most powerful among them have finally succumbed to age in the last few decades. The Sidereals were never numerous; there have rarely been more than a dozen members of any given caste alive at one time. The death of even a few of their oldest members is a serious loss. Many of their most powerful astrological rites require large groups of Exalted to gather. All too often now, the assembled group lacks the raw power to perform the divination, and they must settle for vague information obtained from a lesser augury.

THE FACTIONS

Toward the end of the First Age, while the Sidereals were planning the murder of the Solars, a group refused to participate. They weren't large in number and didn't have the influence to prevent the other Sidereal continuing with the plan. Instead, they went into hiding, well before the Dragon-Blooded began the culling of the Solar Exalted at the Sidereal's behest. Their intention was to claim newborn Solars as they returned to the world and hide them from the followers of the Prophecy. Their rivals anticipated this move and responded with the Wyld Hunt. The rebel faction — the Gold as they dubbed themselves — accepted this defeat and resigned themselves to await a more auspicious time to strike back.

That time has arrived. The recent influx of young Sidereals, born after the deaths of the old guard, are less willing to stick to the long-term plan of the Prophecy. Many reject the idea of hiding behind a religious order or even find the concept offensive. Many young Sidereals were and remain devout believers in the Immaculate faith. They reject utterly the idea that everything they have believed in is wrong, especially when this explanation comes from someone they have always been trained to think of as Anathema. Many of them continue to believe the doctrine of the Immaculate Order, despite what they have discovered. This dissention in the ranks may give the Gold faction the chance to seize the reins of history.

THE BRONZE

Bronze Sidereals, so called because they believe that a "bronze" world, lacking the gold of the Solars and silver of the Lunars is the best option, are keepers of the faith. They follow the path charted for them by their elders over a millennium ago. In part, they are in denial. The weight of evidence is that the Prophecy is somehow flawed. It didn't contain anything that could be construed as a hint of the Great Contagion. In the 800 years since, the Bronze have refused to accept that its absence from the Prophecy was significant. Then came the appearance of the Abyssal Exalted: Their increasing threat to the Threshold and even the Realm was not accounted for in any way by that same Prophecy they made those long years ago.

However, members of the Bronze faction dismiss this evidence. They argue that the Prophecy deals with the broad strokes of history, not the detail. They hope that, given enough time, the threat of the Abyssals, like that of the Contagion, will pass. Then, or so the idea runs, it will be obvious that the incident has failed to disrupt the flow of history predicted by the Prophecy. "It was always right, merely lacking in detail," they argue. To admit that they could be wrong would mean that everything they have fought for over the last 10 or 20 centuries was for nothing: the hiding, the systematic murder of reincarnating Solars and the construction of a false religion that has the people of the Realm in its grasp.

The very few who are old enough to remember the overthrow of the Solars are the staunchest in their commitment to the Prophecy. Every time they recall those cries of agony and the stench so like the smell of meat cooking in a fire pit, they resolve that the sacrifice of so many lives, both in the revolt and in the years since, must not be in vain. They tell themselves that the long years of hiding could hardly be for nothing: They were necessary to prevent darkness overtaking the world.

Some of the younger members of the Bronze faction do things the way they do because they have always been done that way. Many enjoy the temporal power without day-to-day responsibility that involvement with the Immaculate Order gives them. The young Sidereals don't have the weight of years behind them to dull the edges of their views. Some are cynical and self-interested. Why should they upset things? The world as it is suits them well enough. Why should they risk the status quo by allowing the legendary leaders of the past to return, upsetting their positions of privilege and power? These Sidereals are most likely to be found actively involved in the struggle for succession that grips the Realm, fighting to ensure their own positions of privilege and the stability of the Dynasty.

Others young Sidereals believe in the Prophecy fervently, and see the Gold-faction Sidereals as heretics and betrayers of all they have fought for down the centuries. They are adamant in their belief that the broad scope of the Prophecy remains correct. The fact that it failed to reveal every challenge that will beset the people of the Realm through time is entirely understandable. Much older and wiser heads have told them that they are doing the right thing. With thousands of years of experience, can the leaders of the Bronze faction really be wrong? In years past, these Sidereals often covertly aided and even directed the Wyld Hunt in suppressing any new Exaltations. In recent times, a few have started to institute their own version of it, with Chosen of the Maidens of Battles and Endings, seeking out errant Sidereals and newborn Lunars and Solars, and killing them.





THE IMMACULATE ORDER

While the Sidereals were behind the formation of the Order, to say that they control it would go too far. The Bronze Sidereals that are actively directing the behavior of the Order can certainly influence the broad religious movement that the Order represents. Their ability to gain insights into the future allows them to suggest the right idea or course of action to the appropriate member of the priesthood and thus move the Order forward in the direction they wish.

But the Sidereals have little or no direct control of the rank-and-file of the Order and only interfere with them when it becomes absolutely necessary. Without major evidence of heresy, it is difficult for any one Sidereal to call down the might of the Order on an individual who earns their displeasure. Still, the Order's hidden leadership can interfere directly when it becomes necessary. The most common example of that in previous years was when a prophecy showed that a newly Exalted Sidereal would be found in a Wyld Hunt. Then, the Sidereal members of the Order made sure that one of their number joined the hunt—usually a follower of the Maiden of Battles—posing as an Order observer. It was this Exalted's duty to make sure that his quarry was returned alive to the Palace Sublime, and later to the appropriate temple for their caste.

However, a few younger members of the Bronze Sidereals have begun to wonder if their creation is no longer truly under their control. The Order has been a part of the Realm's culture for long enough that most people, including most Dragon-Blooded, are now sincere believers in its philosophy—a philosophy that espouses the destruction of all the Anathema, including the Sidereals themselves.

As the rogue Gold Sidereal grow more and more active in the world, recruiting Solars and reborn Sidereals, the risk that the lower-ranking members of the Order will discover that the Sidereals still exist grows ever stronger. The true believers in the Order would lead a pogrom against the hidden Sidereals in a moment, especially if their presence within the

Order was revealed. In the past, the Order—working with the Wyld Hunt—has been remarkably adept at recovering newly Exalted Sidereals. If these skills were turned to hunting down the group, it would not take long for their numbers to dwindle alarmingly.

THE WYLD HUNT

The Wyld Hunt was first conceived as a method of keeping newly Exalted Solars and Sidereals out of the hands of the Gold faction. The Bronze faction's original plan assumed that the Dragon-Blooded would be able to weed out any returning Solars fairly quickly after they were Exalted. But it became obvious, once the Gold faction's plans to start hiding new Exalted were discovered, that the Bronze faction needed to capture new Exalted within hours, at worst, of their Exaltation.

The Wyld Hunt was the solution to this problem. Formed under the wing of the Immaculate Order, it consisted of Dragon-Blooded and humans working under the secret direction of Sidereals. While the Immaculates claimed that Elemental Dragons lead the faithful to the Anathema, the truth was that it was future-telling Charms used by the Sidereals that directed the hunt.

When the Empress came to power, she already had some idea about the true masters of the Wyld Hunt, and it may be that she had dealings with them of one sort or another before the Contagion. Whatever the case, she never pried too deeply into who was actually running the hunt. Her demands that a portion of the captured Lunars and Solars be taken to the Imperial Manse and given over to her were always met. The Sidereals were never able to directly determine what she did with the captured Exalted. The best their auguries were able to do was to indicate that stopping the flow of captives into the Isle would be detrimental to its defenses. So, they complied with the Empress' demands and quietly used the hunt to keep watch for any of their own race returning to the world.

THE GOLD

Members of the Gold faction—so called because they favor a return to the golden days when the Solars ruled the world—were, until recently, a despised and exiled group of revolutionaries and nonconformists. They failed to stop the Bronze from acting on the Prophecy and were prevented from rescuing new Solars by the Wyld Hunt. They remained embittered and angry in their hiding places deep in the Threshold. At least one Gold Sidereal set himself up

as the ruler of a small kingdom toward the southern extreme of the Threshold. His people remain in awe of his ability to predict attacks by the Fair Folk or barbarians, and he has encouraged open worship of the spirits, which makes his own dealings with them easier.

However, most Gold-faction Sidereals chose to live clandestinely or in isolation, doing what they can to move the world onto what they see as a fitting course. They work subtly to foster greater numbers of adherents to the Hun-

dred Gods Heresy, which undermines the power of the Order. Members of the Bronze faction have come to associate growing numbers of spirit venerators as a sign that a Sidereal of the Gold faction is resident in an area, and will often instigate Order purges of the region with the assistance of the Dragon-Blooded. However, if the Gold Sidereals stay out of trouble and avoid spreading dissent, the Bronze faction is happy to leave them alone. At times, they have even sheltered the occasional Gold-faction member from the eyes of younger Dragon-Blooded who are unaware of the Sidereals' continued existence.

Since the Wyld Hunt's activities have grown more erratic, the exiled Gold faction is often better placed to make contact with newly Exalted Sidereals than the Realm-dwelling Bronze faction, which is distracted by the internal struggles there. As a result, more of the influx of young Sidereals have joined the Gold faction than the Bronze, making it a large and viable entity for the first time. This fresh blood has changed the face of the faction, making it into an active organization. The Gold faction is now able to seek out Solars and recruit other followers in an attempt to push forward its vision of a Realm that is strong once more, with all Exalted standing united beneath the Solar banner against the legions of the dead and the creatures of the Wyld.

The Exaltation of more and more Solars in the years that followed the Empress' disappearance has offered the exiled Gold faction new opportunities. Many have taken in some newborn Solars, and even a few Lunars who have not been found by their own kin, and given them training and tutelage in their new powers.

Unlike the Bronze faction, though, the Gold faction has only two members left who remember the days before the Prophecy, when the Solars were not always the great heroes that they often appear to be now. Both of them are close to death. In the past, the youthfulness of the faction has worked to its benefit. It isn't hamstrung by preconceived notions of how the different types of Exalted should work together. However, without the knowledge of the Solars' fall into indolence and corruption, it will be frighteningly easy for the Sidereals to put the world back on its original course to destruction if they repeat the mistakes of their ancestors.

UNALIGNED SIDEREALS

A few of the recently Exalted choose to eschew both groups entirely. Some of these are devout Immaculates who are horrified to find unbelievers in charge of the church. These rogues live by their wits and the principles of the Order while doing their best to overthrow the established rule in any Immaculate-dominated area. The more people whose faith they can strengthen, while undermining their faith in the Order's leadership and direction, the better.

Others merely seek personal power and can be found as the advisors to rulers in the Threshold and other areas where the Realm's influence is minimal or non-existent. These rulers



Exalted



often prosper on the advice of a trusted confidant who seems to have an uncanny grasp of the best way to act in any situation. Even better, from the point of view of a petty lord, is the fact that these advisors seldom wish to take any credit for their advice, seemingly happy to serve a king whose leadership makes life better for all his subjects. As this lets lords that are often little more than cunning thugs appear to be brilliant strategic thinkers, well versed in the finer arts of warfare and politics, they are happy to accept the clandestine advice, often persuading themselves that their advisors are merely reinforcing what they were already thinking.

CURRENT AFFAIRS

It is not the Golds' aim to overthrow or destroy the Bronze faction so much as it is their hope to reform them. The Gold faction, on the whole, acknowledges that as many Sidereals will be needed as possible when the Prophecy is abandoned. Without that to guide them, new soundings of the future and its many possibilities are necessary if the Sidereals are to work in an effective and organized way.

On the other hand, the Bronze faction has the same numbers problem: Many of its original members are dead, and the reborn divine spirits have joined the Gold faction rather than returning to the Bronze Sidereals. The surviving elder Bronze view this as a temporary aberration, predicting that the newly recruited Gold-faction members will see the error of their ways once the situation is explained clearly to them.

Thus, the Bronze faction, aiming to capture Gold Sidereals, initiates most direct confrontation between the two groups. Gold faction members withdraw from actual combat whenever they can. As a result, the Bronze faction members have become as adept as their adversaries at manipulation. Many Solars have become caught up in conflicts which, while apparently disputes between houses or kingdoms, are really ideological games between two Sidereals, each seeking to impose his own vision of the future on the world around him.

Of course, the best way to bring unity back to this group of Exalted would be for them to gather once more and re-enact the Prophecy ritual to gain a new understanding of the future based on the changes wrought by the last few centuries. The odds of this happening in the current climate, with the hostilities between the Bronze and Gold factions and the increase in unaligned Sidereals, seem remote. This does not prevent Sidereals of both factions from working toward that end. After all, if there is one thing that their divinations teach them, it is that the most likely outcome is not always the one that happens.

THE EXALTATION OF A SIDEREAL

Even before their Exaltation, Sidereals are different. Most are obsessed with beginnings and endings in different

ways. Woe to the storyteller who tells a future Sidereal Exalted a tale that does not have a beginning, a middle and an end. The young Exalted-to-be will take her to task for the inadequacies of the story, a revised form of which the youngster often supplies.

Of all the Exalted, the moment of a Sidereal's elevation into the ranks of the Chosen is often the most subtle. For most, it is nothing more than a sudden awareness of both the flows of Essence and fate around them that mark their Exaltation. However, coming at a time of crisis or stress, like most Exaltations, the new Sidereals' abilities allow them to manipulate these twin flows to their best advantage, often preventing the impending crisis that caused their Exaltation. Once they become aware of these flows, and their ability to manipulate them, they are forever separated from the rest of humanity.

The most telling sign of a Sidereal Exaltation, for those who know, is that at the moment of Exaltation, the star of the new Sidereal's patron Maiden will be visible in the sky. Over the next few days, the Sidereal's Caste Mark becomes apparent on his forehead as he begins to examine and manipulate the twin currents of Essence and Destiny. His eyes begin to change color. If he is found by another Sidereal of any faction, the newly Exalted's death is faked or the youngster is taken away by the Wyld Hunt and diverted to a temple of the Immaculate Order. The young Sidereal is apprenticed to an elder who is Chosen of the same Maiden; the newly Exalted is taught her secrets over long years of study.

HIDDEN IDENTITY

The Sidereals have become masters at hiding their own identities. This is not as hard as it would be for other Exalted: They lack both the golden radiance of the Solars and the animal characteristics and Wyld marks of the Lunars. However, like all Exalted, they carry a Caste Mark on their foreheads.

Still, these marks can easily be concealed. They only become apparent when the Sidereal channels Essence, and as long as the forehead is covered when this happens, there are few telltale signs. The formal dress of the priests within the Immaculate Order have elaborate headdresses that conceal foreheads, but not the rest of the face, for a reason: covering the Caste Marks of those Sidereals who are forced, or chose, to live publicly for a period of their extended lives. Many of the Bronze faction wear Immaculate dress most or all of the time. It hides their secret and facilitates their dealings with the Order.

All but the boldest of the Gold faction choose to do something similar. Few risk just wearing a hat, which will too easily blow away or be whipped off. Most choose elaborate headwear, ranging from strips of cloth wrapped around the head in intricate fashion, to full hoods and veils, depending on what will be inconspicuous among local residents. As clothing styles vary wildly across the

world, there is no one mode of dress that most Gold Sidereals adopt. A few daring rogues rely on little more than long hair or a bandanna to hide their Caste Marks.

No Sidereal can disguise the colored cast to his eyes. Luckily, few people know its meaning in the modern day, so it is not often a problem for the hidden Exalted. The Immaculate Order's teachings on the Anathema omit this detail in their description of the Sidereals — a policy instituted by the Order's Sidereal leadership in the early days of their infiltration of the new Realm.

When they channel Essence, the anima of each Sidereal flashes brightly in the color of the Maiden they serve. The more powerful the Charms they are working or the more Essence that is channeled into it, the brighter the color of the anima. Because of this, most Sidereals avoid using all but the weakest Charms when they are in public.

CASTES

The Sidereal are divided into five castes, each one aligned to a particular Maiden.

CHOSEN OF THE MAIDEN OF JOURNEYS

When the Maiden of Journeys shines her light on one of the Exalted, he will never find happiness if he is confined to one place. Once the messengers and communicators of the Sidereals, the Chosen of the Maiden of Journeys now help cement the control the Sidereals have over the Immaculate Order. The Realm is huge, and messages must travel between the various Sidereals that oversee parts of the church. Using their Charms to guide them along their best route, speed their passage and protect them from the dangers of the road, these Chosen are the communications network that allows the Sidereals to keep the Immaculate Order as a guiding force in the Realm. Under their direction, it can react with a speed and a unity that the houses or the Guild cannot.

Those of the Gold faction who follow this Maiden are often wandering troublemakers and mentors. Some stir up dissent against the Order and move on before they can be found. Others train Solars for a short while in certain skills. Their students often find that members of the Gold faction will aid them elsewhere if their former mentor has already passed through the region.

CHOSEN OF THE MAIDEN OF SERENITY

A human needs many things: food and shelter, security and excitement, work and play. In the First Age, the Chosen of the Maiden of Serenity championed the times of rest and relaxation. They promoted joy, health and pleasure in the world around them. They oversaw the rituals of happiness that marked stopping points along each person's road of fate: betrothals, marriages and pregnancies.

In this new age, they oversee the parts of the Immaculate Order that deal with marriage and celebration. Many choose to use their abilities to serve as matchmakers to the

Dragon-Blooded, ensuring that their offspring stand the best chance of being Dragon-Blooded themselves and that the union brings benefits to both families.

Gold members of the caste fulfil much the same roles in the Threshold. In all societies, properly arranged marriages between houses or the families of two rulers can be the key to peace and prosperity in a region for generations. Sidereals of this caste often involve themselves deeply in such affairs by undermining rivals for the affection of their intended couple, or even travelling vast distances to find the right person for a particular marriage and persuade them of its worth.

Some members of both factions, though, abandon the propriety their caste-mates embody, and choose instead to oversee the brothel and slave trades in their areas of influence. Disdaining the loftier ideals of love and relaxation for the simpler emotions of lust and laziness, they feel that their Maiden demands that love, of a very physical sort, should always be available and that leisure is promoted when there are those who have no choice but to do your work for you. They can be found wherever there is conflict in the Realm, making sure that captives from both sides end up in slavery.

CHOSEN OF THE MAIDEN OF BATTLES


Members of this caste, despite their patron's bloody-handed image, rarely become frontline warriors. Instead, they are the strategic battlefield commanders of the Sidereals, plotting campaign objectives and tactics, not the individual cuts and thrusts of the melee. However, when pressed, their Charms allow them to fight with remarkable effectiveness, predicting their enemies' attacks and feints before their opponent has yet committed himself to the action.

Bronze caste members often work as Immaculate priests to the legions, or strategic advisors to houses. Some Gold members train Solars in the martial arts. A few have been forced from hiding to coordinate the defense of their homes from attack by the dwellers in the Wyld, the armies of the dead or any of the myriad of dangers that threaten the people of the Threshold. With the Dragon-Blooded absent from the scene, the Sidereals are reluctantly forced to take on the roles of leaders themselves, or else abandon their homes and their plan to the depredations of Lunar tribes or Fair Folk. As many of them have descendants among the peoples of the region, they are usually unwilling to flee.

CHOSEN OF THE MAIDEN OF SECRETS

The Chosen of the Maiden of Secrets are the most feared and pitied of the Sidereals. They are feared because their patron grants them insights into the natural course of events. With this understanding comes a responsibility to make sure that things continue to move that way. They are pitied because they are often so obsessed with the whole of





life's journey that they are unable to relish the moment. Where the other Maidens focus on the various signposts along fate's road, these Sidereals see the whole path in its greater scope. If the Sidereal can be said to have leadership, it is the members of this caste.

Among the Bronze, Chosen of the Maiden of Secrets are the Exalted who focus on the broad scope of the Order's future and policy, and how the Realm itself should develop. Most refuse direct positions of authority. Instead, they choose to act as advisors to those in power within the Order and even the houses of the Dynasty.

These Sidereals are the most moderate of the Gold faction. They can see that change is needed but that many existing structures need to be preserved. They are by far the most active caste in finding and mentoring Solars. They hope that, with the right guidance, these born leaders can change the Realm, and the future, for the better. Indeed, many Chosen of the Maiden of Secrets feel an affinity with the Solars, as one group of natural leaders to another.

CHOSEN OF THE MAIDEN OF ENDINGS

To all things, an end. In the Realm, however, the people's perspective on endings is skewed by the knowledge that death is not just a process, it is a place. While few people have seen the shadowlands that dot the landscape in person, ghosts are an accepted reality of life. Though no one is in a hurry to die and join the spirits who walk the shadowlands and the Underworld, they accept that death is often only one step in a longer journey.

The Chosen of the Maiden of Endings personify this concept that ending is a necessary part of the cycle of life and death. From the wisdom granted to them by their patron, these Sidereals know when something has run its course and it is time for it to give way to something else. They feel that it is their duty to bring that conclusion to pass. It was Sidereals from this caste who first proposed the slaughter of the Solars, when they saw that their rule was ill favored by the Maidens.

The Maiden does grant her Chosen a certain leeway. While it is the Maiden who determines when the time has come for something to end, the Chosen can select the moment and the manner of its passing.

The few members of this caste who remain in the Bronze faction oversee the Order's funerary arrangements and work with the Chosen of Secrets to prepare for the deaths of members of the Perfected Hierarchy and ensure a smooth transition of power to their successors. Among the Gold, they coach people in the importance of times of transition: harvests, year's end and death. Some travel from kingdom to kingdom, immersing themselves in the local customs for a while. When they see something in that society that has outlived its time — be it an idea, ruler or even the whole society — they do their best to bring it to an end. It is for this reason that more members of this caste

belong to the Gold faction than the Bronze. The age of the Prophecy must end, they reason.

THE WAYS OF PROPHECY AND POWER

What does it mean to be favored by the Maidens? Each of them is a great power within the Celestial Hierarchy that plans the fate of the world. Their favor allows an Exalted to play a direct part in manipulating those webs of fate that the Maidens lay across the world. Once functionary spirits within the Celestial Hierarchy carried out those tasks alone, but now they have to share responsibility with the Sidereal Exalted. While the Bronze faction's support of a religion that crushes spirit veneration is part of the reason that the Sidereals have such an adversarial relationship with spirits, their usurpation of some spirit's place in the Maidens' favor is another factor.

All of the Maidens gift their Chosen with the ability to see and interact with spirits easily. For much of the First Age, the Sidereals worked as intermediaries between the spirits of the Celestial Hierarchy and the Realm's own government. The Sidereals' increasing role in directing fate is a bone of contention with many spirits, but not enough to be a problem — yet. However, relationships between the Sidereals and the spirits have soured considerably over the last millennia or so. The Bronze-faction Sidereals' continued support for a religious movement that brands spirit veneration as heresy has driven a wedge between the faction and the functionaries of the Celestial Hierarchy. The ability to communicate with spirits and gain access to the prophetic Charms many of them possess is a vital part of the augury process. Over the last few centuries, as their manipulations have grown more sophisticated, the Sidereals have resorted to using binding sorcery instead of striking deals with the spirits. As a result, relations between the Sidereals and the spirit courts have deteriorated even further.

In its exile, the Gold faction has done a little to undo this damage. These Sidereals have promoted worship of the spirits among the people of the Threshold and have many spirit allies.

The greatest gift given by the Maidens is the ability to see the future direction of fate's flow. Each individual Sidereal's Charms allow them insights into the immediate future, but truly great prophesying takes extended rituals and cooperation. One of the reasons that the Sidereals have stayed so close-knit within their factions is that many prophetic auguries, and some of their more esoteric spirit-binding or summoning rituals, require several Exalted to work together.

Usually, a specific combination of the Chosen of several Maidens is needed to take a reading from a particular aspect of the future. Each Sidereal brings another facet of insight to the casting, granted by their patron Maiden. The Sidereals involved gather to perform these rituals in

hidden chambers within Immaculate Temples or in towers deep in the Threshold's wilderness where the risk of discovery or interruption is slight.

SAMPLE CHARMS

FORCE DECISION

Cost:	5 motes, 1 Willpower
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Simple
Minimum Presence:	3
Minimum Essence:	2

The ability to predict possible futures is of little use without the ability to make the outcome you prefer come to pass. This Charm allows a Sidereal to channel Essence into another being briefly, forcing them to make the decision the Sidereal desires. The player makes a Manipulation + Presence roll with a difficulty equal to the target's Essence. Success indicates the target will make the decision the way the Sidereal wishes.

ABSENCE

Cost:	1 mote per difficulty point
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Supplemental
Minimum Dodge:	2
Minimum Essence:	1

The Sidereals are not the fiercest warriors of the Exalted. However, their ability to glimpse the future makes them surprisingly effective in combat. The Charm allows an Exalted to predict where a blade or blow will fall in advance, so they can be somewhere else when it does. Like many other Sidereal Charms, the player can decrease the number that she must roll on a die for it to count as a success. In this case, the player can reduce the success number of a Dexterity + Dodge roll by one. As always, the success number cannot be reduced below 4.

WISE CHOICE

Cost:	6 motes
Duration:	Instant
Minimum Lore:	2
Minimum Essence:	1

Life is full of choices. This Charm gives a Sidereal the edge on mere mortals by allowing them to make the best choice when confronted with many options. However, this Charm allows only a brief peek into the future, not an extended glimpse into all the consequences of the decision. So, the short-term benefits won through using Essence in this way might easily be outweighed by the long-term downfalls.

PRIOR WARNING

Cost:	5 motes
Duration:	One hour
Minimum Awareness:	2
Minimum Essence:	1

Once a Sidereal has committed Essence to this Charm, her perceptions are constantly probing into the immediate future for anything that could do her harm. When the character is in danger, her player makes a Wits + Awareness roll. If the character succeeds, she has a feeling of ill ease that informs her of impending danger. The character will get a warning period of two minutes per success rolled. While the warning she gets does not necessarily allow her to avoid the danger completely, it allows her at least a little time to prepare. This Charm only allows the Sidereal to spot obvious harm: slow-acting poison concealed in her ale would not set off the warning because the effect is too far in the future. However, it might be triggered just before the effects kick in, giving the character time to deduce the cause and seek a cure.

ABYSSAL EXALTED

As any of the Chosen of Endings can tell you, death is only a line that marks a transition from one state to another. For the people of the Realm, death is not a great unknown, a condition from which no one returns. It is not even the possibility of nonexistence, for any fool knows that the afterlife is real. And that makes them fear it all the more.

While ghosts have been a fact of life throughout the age, recent years have brought the reality of the afterlife closer to the living. The Underworld has bled into the world at those terrible and ill-understood places called shadowlands. The dead attack the cities of the Threshold with increasing frequency, and even a defeat swells their ranks. Worst of all, these forces are lead by beings that are not dead at all, but who glory in everything that it means to be dead — the Abyssal Exalted. The Abyssals straddle the line between death and life. While their existence and powers are fueled by the Essence of death, they remain living creatures.

The very existence of the Abyssals makes the few people who survive an encounter with them question everything they know. Everything about the deathknights is horrifying. The fact that no extant writing from the First Age mentions them is disturbing. Their obvious relish in drawing Essence from living people rather than from the world around them is terrible to watch. The fact that they are often found at the head of huge armies of walking corpses and skeletons is enough to make weak men welcome death's embrace, for death seems sure to be the winning side.

However, what those who have faced them and returned alive to tell the tale find most disturbing is their strange beauty. Yes, they are often cold and aloof, but they can display a burning passion. People who have looked on their dress, and at the chambers they inhabit in their cities of bone, have found a beauty and joy in them that seems disturbing, because it so alien yet so seductive.





The Abyssals themselves are a paradox. They are living beings. They breathe, they eat and they bleed when struck, yet they enjoy and even revel in the company of the dead things that accompany them. They seem ill at ease when surrounded by the trappings of life. There is laughter and pleasure in their existence, and on occasions fierce loyalty and camaraderie has been seen between deathknights.

Together, these facts raise the disturbing possibility that life and death are not so different after all. They are merely two different ways of existing, with different rules and values. What keeps the survivors of their attacks awake at night is the thought that death may just be a superior condition to life and that the deathknights have come from the Underworld to help all of the Realm experience its joys.

BEFORE THE GRAVE

The first reports of the deathknights — as many call the Abyssals — came from settlements on the fringes of shadowlands. Individuals were being Exalted in and around shadowlands. They would disappear soon afterwards without any interference from the Wyld Hunt. The Caste Marks they showed and the abilities they wielded before their disappearance bore only a passing resemblance to any of the stories of the Anathema taught by the Immaculate Order.

People closer to the Realm itself tended to discount these tales as the superstitions of the primitive people

living in the Threshold. No one hit upon the true significance of these rumors until a few observant Sidereals, particularly among the Gold faction, began to make the connection between these disappearing Exalted and the strange deathknights that were slaughtering the Dragon-Blooded on the field of battle. It was after the fall of the city of Thorns to a huge Necropolis some years ago that the Gold faction started actively recruiting and training Solars to counter this new threat, rather than just pursuing its original goal of retaking the Realm.

QUALITY OF DEATH

The deathknights and their legions of walking dead are not a united force hell-bent on the destruction of the living world. Indeed, they serve different masters. Armies of the dead have been observed moving between different shadowlands. Just like the armies that have assaulted the living, they are invasion forces, fighting the wars of the dead. The Deathlords whose Manses lie at the heart of the shadowlands war with one another as often as they do with the people of the living world.

The Underworld itself is much like the living world, but distorted by the mirror of death. There is no one Realm in this land built of exquisite shades of gray and black. Where there is the Blessed Isle in the living world, there is an island surrounded by a thousand petty citadels rising from a vast, still sea of death. The citadels are ruled by

Deathlords and inhabited by the spirits of the departed. The Deathlords constantly war for these souls, for the measure of their power is in the number of souls they can rally to their banner. The central island is a free city, under the rule of no one Deathlord but protected by them all. At its heart lies a pit, around the edge of which winds a circular staircase that leads deep under the ground. From time to time, a Deathlord, surrounded by his closest advisors and generals, will travel down the staircase, spending weeks or months below, before returning with a renewed commitment to expanding his territory and taking the beauty of death to the unenlightened souls of the Realm.

The lands of the dead seem to be as rich and varied as the living lands, in their own dark way. Creatures sprung of the very substance of the Underworld live all across the lands. Strange beasts lurk under the surface of the sea, which holds no threat of drowning. Some Abyssals undertake quests into the hills surrounding the citadels to retrieve great beasts for the stables of their masters. Caverns lead into deep tunnels that riddle the ground, where dark and nameless things throng in the endless night.

Many of the feuds between the Lords of the Dead have little apparent purpose in the eyes of the Abyssals: Territory isn't gained; souls are not captured in any significant numbers. The only apparent goals are the destruction of the foe and all that belongs to them. Alliances between the Deathlords seem to shift like the wind, and yesterday's ally is tomorrow's hated foe. Still, the Abyssals have faith in their chosen lords, and throw themselves into those wars.

LOVE IN DEATH

Nothing dims the Abyssal Exalted's enthusiasm for the world of the dead. Their eyes have been opened to its dark beauty, and they see the pointless struggles of petty kings in the living world as a pale reflection of the glorious wars fought by the Deathlords. The living world is but a transient place where souls spend a brief period of learning before the worthy spirits move on to the true world of death. Existing as a pure soul unsullied by the clothing of flesh is the ideal state for any being. The ability of the walking dead to possess their bodies once more for short periods of time is evidence of that: The flesh is a tool to be used and discarded as they see fit.

In fact, it amuses the deathknights to resurrect the detritus of a life and send it against the living. The fear they see in the eyes of those who are merely fighting the remains of their own existence is a source of much pleasure to the Abyssals. Certainly it is why they use zombies and skeletons as shock troops: losses matter not a jot, for they are only things of the living world with the appearance of death, not true residents of the Underworld. They commit ghosts and risen to combat far less often — the truly dead deserve better treatment than things of the living world.

While most Abyssal Exalted spend long periods of time in the Underworld or shadowlands, they accept that

their casement of flesh gives them certain responsibilities in the living world. The Great Contagion was merely a taste of what is to come. In the wake of that great gift to the poor, flesh-ridden creatures of the world, the Abyssals come as missionaries, bringing news of the true beauty of death and the wonders that await the living once they have the courage to pass beyond the barrier.

Some Abyssals have infiltrated the Threshold and even the cities of the Realm itself. They insinuate themselves into positions of power, acting as spies for their masters' campaigns against the living. Others are missionaries, educating people about their loved ones' wonderful fates after their deaths. These missionaries sometimes receive a warm welcome in many settlements ravaged by the Fair Folk or the Lunar tribes. There, the pitiful few survivors gratefully accept any idea that gives them hope that there is more to the suffering and death, and a religious belief that gives meaning to it all is welcome indeed. Mass suicides are not unknown among such people. Of course, if they refuse to accept the truth, many missionaries gift them passage to their true existence, whether they are ready or not.

Cults spring up around these Abyssals, who use their followers as a source of sustenance and troops. Of course, should some followers take their faith to its logical conclusion and kill themselves, their bodies soon swell the ranks of the Abyssal's army.

THE EXALTATION OF AN ABYSSAL

More than any other sort of Exalted, it would seem as if Abyssal Exalted were created through the magic of the Deathlords. Individuals who grow to maturity near to shadowlands are influenced by energies emanating from these lands, and occasionally, one accepts a shard of death energy into their soul and is Exalted by it. It is known that causing this to occur is a tremendous strain on the Deathlord, and that spies of the Deathlord vie with one another to spot the newly emergent deathknight first.

The Abyssals are still relatively few, and each one in a Deathlord's army adds to his prestige among his peers. These Exalted are dependant on the Essence of the Underworld rather than the free-flowing Essence of the living world to power their magic. The only way that they can absorb Essence when in the lands of the living is to taint it with death as they do so. So, they drink blood, eat flesh and suck the very breath of living beings to gain the Essence motes they need for their dark Charms. The Abyssals take great pleasure from these acts, but not for reasons of cruelty or sadism. By feeding on the living, the Abyssal brings them one step closer to the beauty of the Underworld. They are not taking away from the victim — they are giving her a gift.

New Abyssals spend several years in the Underworld. Having started their existences as creatures of the living world, gaining an understanding of the place that they





draw their Essence from is vital to their development. By the end, they appreciate both sides of the line of death that they straddle and come to see the inherent superiority of the Underworld. They then spend time in the citadels of the shadowlands, where they are tutored in the arts of necromancy that require corpses to perform, like raising bodies and skeletons from the dead.

Some Abyssals then choose to remain in the Underworld as the servants of the Deathlords, while others return to the sunlit world to champion the cause of death among the living.

APPEARANCE

Abyssal Exalted fall into one of two groups. Some are touched by decay and take on the semblance of dead things. They appear to be composed of rotting flesh or even mere skeletons. Yet they live enough that their festering flesh, rotting teeth and the scars of disease can be Exalted. Bones poke through gaping holes in their bodies, and their eyes glow with silvery graveyard fire.

Other Abyssals are the opposite, taking on a breathtakingly cold beauty, with flawless alabaster skin stretched tight over perfectly sculpted bones. Their flowing black of silver hair falls around them like a waterfall, and their lips are of the purest and most luscious red. Those Abyssals who operate among the living have learned Charms that allow them to maintain a more mundane appearance, but these cost Essence to maintain, and most Abyssal Exalted wear the marks of death upon themselves proudly.

CASTES

The castes of the Abyssal Exalted parallel the castes of the Solar Exalted. The Abyssals view themselves as the Solars of the dead, with their Deathlords as their leaders. As such, each of the castes forms a roughly equivalent role in the society of the dead as its originator did in the society of the living.

DUSK

The Dusk Caste are the warriors of the dead. In the Underworld they ride at the head of the Deathlords' armies, leading their unliving brethren in fierce combat for the glory of their masters. In the living world, they delight in their calling. They have been given the skills, Charms and inclination to bring the great blessing of death to the poor, crude creatures of the living world. The precise, calculated swipes of the blade separate the living from the cares of sustenance, shelter and fornication.

In battle, they sing exultant hymns of praise that sound like eerily beautiful dirges to the ears of the living. The delight in their weapon skills, for they can cripple an enemy in such a way as to make sure his death will be a slow one. As the fallen foe edges painfully toward the final freedom of death, his soul is infused more thoroughly with the death Essence he will need to prosper as a ghost in the

Underworld. The battle song of the Dusk Caste causes all opponents attacking her to incur a -2 penalty if they do not succeed at a Willpower roll.

Dusk Caste Abyssals' Caste Mark is a dark circle with striations of gray through it. Their anima tends to be pitch black with an edging of gray, sometimes tinged with dark purple.

MIDNIGHT

The Midnight Caste are the priests of the Underworld. There they preach the virtues of their Deathlord and her allies to her followers, boosting the morale of the masses in their struggles with the forces of the other Deathlords. Some preach that death is the ultimate state, and one that should be enjoyed to the full. Others teach that the Underworld itself is merely another step on the road and that a third world awaits, one that frees a soul from the burdens of self-awareness and desire. In the lands of the living, they are evangelists come to spread the message of the glory of death. They are the caste most likely to be found wandering the cities of the Threshold, persuading the poor, the lonely and the dispossessed of the rewards that await them if they let go of the mortal realm.

The Midnight Abyssal can channel the Essence of death through their anima and cause a body to rise as a zombie at the end of the scene. They can also channel the energy of death through their anima, using it to chill and injure the living.

Midnight Abyssals have a large, black, circular Caste Mark. Their animas are a black so deep that it seems like nothing less than a hole in the Tapestry.

DAYBREAK

Deep in the citadels of the Deathlords, Shade Abyssals labor over parchments made from the dried skin of Underworld creatures. They seek to understand the mysteries of death and the natures of the creatures and lands that surround the Deathlord's citadels. As dedicated and enthusiastic scholars, the Shade Abyssals seek the true nature of the Underworld.

However, it is in the living world that the Shade Caste truly excels. The Shade Caste are the most powerful necromancers among the Abyssal, and it is they who are most commonly seen raising legions of skeletons from a battlefield. While there is little subtlety in their magic, it is unchallenged for raw power among the Abyssal. Their magics also help sustain the necropolis that moves ponderously across the face of the world from shadowland to shadowland, raiding and destroying as it goes. Daybreak Caste Abyssals are able to channel their Essence to fill their aura with freezing power, slowing or deflecting blows.

Daybreak Caste Abyssals have a Caste Mark that has its top half filled in with gray and its bottom half marked only by an empty border. Their animas tend toward the more spectacular colors of the Underworld, displaying the whole range of grays with some purples and even dark greens.

DAY

Day Caste Abyssals are the infiltrators of the deadlands. Many citadels within the Underworld hide a member of this caste who is spying for a rival Deathlord. They bide their time, gathering information of use to their true master and destroying any who could create too great a threat.

These skills serve them in equal stead among the living. Their Charms allow them to pass as the living more easily than most Abyssals can. More Day Caste Abyssals have wheedled themselves into positions of minor power through the Realm and the Threshold than anyone suspects. There they stay, observing and doing what they can to aid the cause of the Deathlords. A singularly unpleasant murder, a violated corpse and an unexplained suicide are all the subtle signs that one of the Day Caste is at work within a town: feeding on the inhabitants, using their corpses in rituals and persuading a few lonely souls that death is the best answer for them.

Day Caste Abyssals are able to suppress their animas, allowing them to use peripheral Essence to power Charms without displaying their anima banner. They can also channel their Essence into a smothering cloak, making it hard to sense them. Day Caste Abyssals have only a pale, empty gray ring for their Caste Mark. Their animas are translucent grays and blacks.

MOONSHADOW

The Moonshadow Caste of the Abyssals is at once the most like, and yet the most unlike, its Solar cousin, the Eclipse Caste. The two castes perform nearly identical roles of negotiator and ambassador. In the citadels of the dead, members of the Moonshadow Caste specialize in parlaying the information gathered by the Day Caste into deals, treaties and alliances that can last a matter of hours or for all time. They have a finely attuned sense of when the time has come for the Deathlord they serve to switch her political alliances and to renegotiate a deal.

These Exalted can channel Essence into their animas to sanctify oaths by the power of their black masters. Moonshadow Caste Abyssals are also talented at diverse abilities. They can learn the Charms of spirits and other types of Exalted, though it requires a significant investment of time.

Shadow Caste Abyssals have only a pale, empty gray ring for their Caste Mark. Their animas are translucent gray and blacks.

NECROMANCY

The Abyssal Exalted's attunement with the energies of death gives them power over all things that have been brushed with its touch. Although corpses are inherently of the living world, decomposing and returning the materials within the body to the natural cycle, they are suffused with



the Essence of death as the soul leaves the body. The Essence of death gives the deathknights power over them.

Of course, the manner of death affects the corpse in several ways: its integrity is an obvious example. Less intuitively, the way it died can also affect the degree to which the body is infused by death Essence. Relatively natural deaths, from old age and accidents permeate the body only slightly. Death from murder, violence, unpleasant diseases and especially improper burial infuse the body more than other forms of death. The more heavily touched by death Essence a corpse is, the easier it is to animate it. The cities destroyed by the Contagion and the battle-grounds of the Dragon-Blooded's wars provide rich pickings for Abyssals looking to raise an army.

The summoning of ghosts and the channeling of death Essence into a living body to cause it damage often requires rituals that enhance the flow of death Essence through the living world. Most of these rituals require the use of trappings associated with death in the minds of the living. The long candles used during the deathwatches for dying people are a common tool, as are cleaned remnants of bodies, particularly skulls, rib cages and the pelvic bone.

Some castings require the slaughter of an animal, whose spirit becomes little more than pure death Essence. Sympathetic castings need someone close to the victim to be tortured in such a way that their life Essence is slowly leached away without killing them outright.

SAMPLE CHARMS

DIRGE

Cost:	4 motes
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Reflexive
Minimum Performance:	3
Minimum Essence:	2

A deathknight can channel Essence into a mournful song so that the audience, willing or otherwise, starts to die as they listen. Their bodies weaken as their life Essence is sucked away into the Underworld. Each listener suffers 3L dice of damage each turn that they listen to the song, which can be soaked only by Stamina and soak-boosting Charms. The Essence cost of this Charm must be spent each turn that the deathknight continues to sing his Dirge.

WITHERING TOUCH

Cost:	1 mote
Duration:	One turn
Type:	Supplemental
Minimum Brawl:	3
Minimum Essence:	1

The Exalted focuses the Essence of the Underworld into his hands. Any attacks the character makes without a weapon that turn cause lethal rather than bashing damage. However, this Charm only works against bare or

cloth-covered flesh. Characters in metal armor are immune to this Charm. Abyssals who use this Charm often Combo it with the Rust Charm.

BLIGHT

Cost:	5 motes
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Simple
Minimum Lore:	2
Minimum Essence:	2

By forcing her death Essence into the land around her, the deathknight can destroy all the plant life in the vicinity and seriously damage the living creatures that live there. The player rolls Charisma + Lore. All plants within a circular area with a radius equal to the number of successes rolled in meters wither and die. All animals and people within that radius, including other Exalted, take three dice of lethal damage.

SUMMON SKELETON

Cost:	5 motes, 1 Willpower
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Simple
Minimum Presence:	3
Minimum Essence:	3

The Abyssal Exalted channels her Essence into the ground beneath her feet. If a largely whole skeleton is in the vicinity, it claws its way from the ground and follows the orders of the Abyssal to the best of its limited Intelligence. See *Exalted*, page 298, for statistics of the walking dead.

SPEAK WITH THE DEAD

Cost:	2 motes
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Simple
Minimum Investigation:	2
Minimum Essence:	1

The lands of the dead are not far from the lands of the living. Sometimes ghosts can observe the doings of the living with near clarity. This Charm allows an Abyssal to ask a single question of an incorporeal ghost about events that have happened in that location within the last 10 minutes x successes rolled.

CONTAMINATE

Cost:	4 motes, 1 Willpower
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Simple
Minimum Medicine:	3
Minimum Essence:	2

Diseases are one of the doors to the Underworld. This Charm allows an Abyssal to open that door somewhat, temporarily infecting the target with a plague. The player chooses from one of the plagues listed in the *Exalted* rulebook (page 298) and makes an Intelligence + Medicine roll. If the roll is successful, the target must succeed on a Stamina +

Resistance roll to resist infection, just as if exposed to the disease in question. The illness is noncommunicable.

RUST

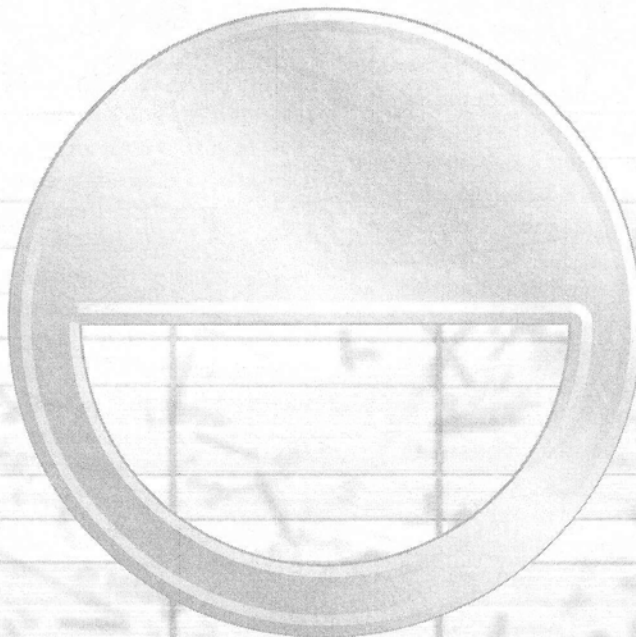
Cost:	5 motes
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Reflexive
Minimum Craft:	3
Minimum Essence:	1

The Exalted channels Essence directly into a piece of metal, causing it to rust away to nothing within seconds. This Charm can be used only on objects the size of a large sword or a single suit of metal armor. This Charm does not work on items made from or reinforced by the Five Magical Materials. This Charm has a range of 10 yards x the Abyssal's Essence and may be used only once per turn.


INTIMATIONS OF MORTALITY

Cost:	5 motes
Duration:	One day
Type:	Simple
Minimum Socialize:	3
Minimum Essence:	1

Some Day Caste Abyssal are particularly adept at seeding the minds of mortals with such doubts about the true nature of life and death that they come to obsessed with their own mortality. An Abyssal must speak with the target at least briefly (the exchange need be only a few sentences) and his player makes a Manipulation + Socialize roll with a difficulty equal to the target's Essence. If the roll is successful, all social rolls the target makes for the next 24 hours are at +2 difficulty.







CHAPTER THREE: SPIRITS AND SPIRIT COURTS



SPIRIT CHARMS

The spirit Charms in this chapter are templates. Each spirit has its own way of doing things, and its Charms reflect its unique identity. One spirit might cast Tiny Gift (a small “blessing”) by biting its target, while a second utters complex benedictions and a third gives its target a trinket to wear. While each of these spirits possesses the same Charm, each one may see it as a totally different ability. Some spirits might not be able to use every aspect of a Charm, while others can do things with a Charm that seem beyond the magic’s ability.

Treat these Charms as guidelines. Expand on them. Narrow them. Give each one a personality to fit the spirit you create. They are suggestions that have been balanced, not strict rules. Don’t feel limited by what you find here.

The “Prerequisite Charms” are also guidelines. You will find that not all spirits in later sections who are listed as having the same Charm use it in the same way, and a few of them don’t even possess the normal minimum requirements; this is deliberate. If you think a spirit would have one Charm but would never have learned its prerequisite, then go with that. You might choose a different prerequisite instead if it makes more sense.

ECLIPSE CASTE CHARMS

Members of the Eclipse Caste Solar Exalted are capable of learning Charms from spirits. Some Charms’ effects depend largely on the nature of the spirit involved. For instance, Landscape Travel allows a spirit to travel easily within “its natural element.” The Exalted who learns this Charm would be able to use it in the same element that the spirit did. If she learned it from a forest spirit, for example, it would enable easy travel in forest areas.

Eclipse Caste Exalted *always* learn the version of a Charm that the spirit uses, with all inherent limitations and style, *not* the generic Charm. In the case of blessings and curses, which are particularly broad, the Exalted learns only the one or two effects that the spirit prefers to use.

Spirits aren’t particularly eager to teach their powers to mortals. They might exchange knowledge of a Charm in return for a significant favor or quest. Characters might also trick a spirit into teaching them a Charm.

While Materialize may technically be learned by Exalted, it won’t do them any good unless they somehow end up disembodied. Any other Charms that similarly

have no effect on Exalted may be learned but do little good until something makes them useful. In addition, the Storyteller should feel free to disallow the acquisition of any Charm that seems too powerful for the game.

COMPASSION

Spirits use Compassion to heal and help others, as well as to extend their senses beyond themselves.

DREAMSPEAK

Cost:	5 motes
Duration:	One scene
Type:	Simple
Minimum Compassion:	1
Minimum Essence:	2
Prerequisite Charms:	None

This Charm allows a spirit to speak with the target in his dreams. The target must be asleep, and the spirit must know approximately where he is, although the spirit need not be present there. Roll the spirit's Intelligence + Compassion. The more successes the spirit gets, the more easily it converses with the dreamer. Four or more successes indicates that not only can the spirit appear in the dream, but it will seem to be of extreme significance to the dreamer.

DREAMSCAPE

Cost:	10 motes, 1 Willpower
Duration:	One scene
Type:	Simple
Minimum Compassion:	1
Minimum Essence:	4
Prerequisite Charms:	Dreamspeak

This Charm allows a spirit to govern the dream of a sleeping mortal. It may shape that dream in whatever way it wishes, appearing or not appearing in the dream as it pleases. Roll the spirit's Manipulation + Compassion. The more successes, the more the spirit can manipulate. The spirit must know either the approximate location of the dreamer or his identity. While the spirit may harm the dreamer inside of the dream, no damage carries over to the real world.

NATURAL PROGNOSTICATION

Cost:	2 motes
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Reflexive
Minimum Compassion:	1
Minimum Essence:	1
Prerequisite Charms:	None

The spirit is naturally in tune with the patterns of destiny and the astrological forces. A simple success on a Perception + Compassion check causes this spirit's behavior (actions, words) to reflect in some small way the path of things to come. Most spirits with this Charm don't notice themselves using it and would shrug if it was pointed

out to them; it's simply a part of what they are. The number of successes indicates the importance of the event that is prognosticated and/or the level of detail provided. The words and actions of such spirits are frequently ambiguous and often enigmatic.

FORETELL THE FUTURE

Cost:	10 motes
Duration:	Variable
Type:	Simple
Minimum Compassion:	1
Minimum Essence:	3
Prerequisite Charms:	Natural Prognostication

This spirit may deliberately attempt to foresee what may come with a successful Perception + Compassion check. The number of successes determines how long it takes the spirit to glean the information. The spirit must sleep, meditate or in some other way "go within" for one day per success. More successes means more information means *more* time spent "under." This spirit sees what may be, not what must be.

HAND OF DESTINY

Cost:	14 motes, 1 Willpower
Duration:	Variable
Type:	Simple
Minimum Compassion:	1
Minimum Essence:	6
Prerequisite Charms:	Foretell the Future

This Charm allows a powerful spirit to glimpse the hand of Destiny moving behind the curtains of reality, upon a successful Perception + Compassion check. The number of successes determines how much of Destiny's plan the spirit glimpses. *It also determines how much of that plan notices the spirit.* The more the spirit sees, the more the spirit becomes caught up in whatever is happening. The spirit may feel compelled to take part in the plan, and not necessarily in the way it would have chosen. Few spirits will use this Charm lightly, and they may require great boons or services in return for its use. If the Storyteller chooses, this Charm may have the same sleep or meditation requirement as Foretell the Future—except that the spirit must go within for at least one week for each success. Spirits can spend months dreaming, trying to comprehend Destiny's plan.

LANDSCAPE TRAVEL

Cost:	4 motes
Duration:	One scene
Type:	Reflexive
Minimum Compassion:	1
Minimum Essence:	1
Prerequisite Charms:	None

This Charm allows a spirit to travel quickly, comfortably and easily in its natural element. A forest spirit might gain perfect balance and sticky feet to allow it to travel

easily along tree limbs and jump from tree to tree. A water spirit might walk on water, or develop gills and fins if it didn't have them already.

LANDSCAPE CAMOUFLAGE

Cost:	5 motes
Duration:	One scene
Type:	Simple
Minimum Compassion:	1
Minimum Essence:	1
Prerequisite Charms:	Landscape Travel

This Charm allows a spirit to camouflage itself, as long as it is within its natural element (a forest spirit must be within the trees; an earth spirit could camouflage itself against grass, earth, or stone; a fire spirit could camouflage itself within or against a fire, or against hot desert sands). Roll the spirit's Wits + Compassion. Every success adds one to the difficulty of Perception + Awareness checks to notice the spirit.

LANDSCAPE HIDE

Cost:	6 motes, 1 Willpower
Duration:	One scene
Type:	Simple
Minimum Compassion:	2
Minimum Essence:	2
Prerequisite Charms:	Landscape Camouflage

This Charm allows a spirit to hide within a solid piece of its natural landscape. A forest spirit might sink into a tree trunk; a spirit of the plains might sink into the ground. During its time within its element, the spirit's senses are muted. Roll the spirit's Stamina + Resistance if the item in which it hides suffers any damage. If the roll fails, the spirit is forced out of the item. If the roll succeeds, the spirit may choose to stay in the item, but it will take any damage that the item takes, health level for health level. If the item is particularly sturdy, it may add up to five health levels to the spirit's total, at the Storyteller's discretion — one health level per success on the original roll.

TRACKING

Cost:	5 motes
Duration:	One scene
Type:	Simple
Minimum Compassion:	2
Minimum Essence:	1
Prerequisite Charms:	None

This Charm allows a spirit to track someone or something on a successful Perception + Compassion check. One success is all that's needed for a spirit to track a normal human in the spirit's natural domain, regardless of the prey's Survival skill. More successes are needed if the spirit wishes to track an Exalted, another spirit or some other supernatural creature capable of supernatural Stealth, or if it wishes to track outside of its natural domain. Other

modifiers (such as familiarity with the prey or weather conditions) apply only to tracking beings capable of supernatural misdirection — see the rules in the main Exalted book for details.

SENSE DOMAIN

Cost:	5 motes, 1 Willpower
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Reflexive
Minimum Compassion:	2
Minimum Essence:	1
Prerequisite Charms:	Measure the Wind

This Charm enables the spirit to get a feel for how things are going within its domain of influence (up to a half mile in diameter per point of Essence, but most often related to a geographical feature — for instance, a single tree and a little land surrounding it might be a spirit's area of influence). Roll the spirit's Perception + Compassion. One success allows the spirit to sense the presence of any direct and immediate danger (to itself or to the domain) in the area. Two successes allow a reasonably thorough catalogue of the influences at work in the area and the intentions they have with regard to the spirit or its domain. Three or more successes allows the spirit to know almost anything currently going on within its domain that isn't protected by some sort of supernatural ward or misdirection. Charms, sorcery and exceptional Ability rolls or stunts may block this insight or remove successes, at the Storyteller's discretion. Some spirits that have no natural domain may be able to use this ability in any area they've spent several days exploring (Storyteller's discretion; two additional successes required).

SUMMON FOOD

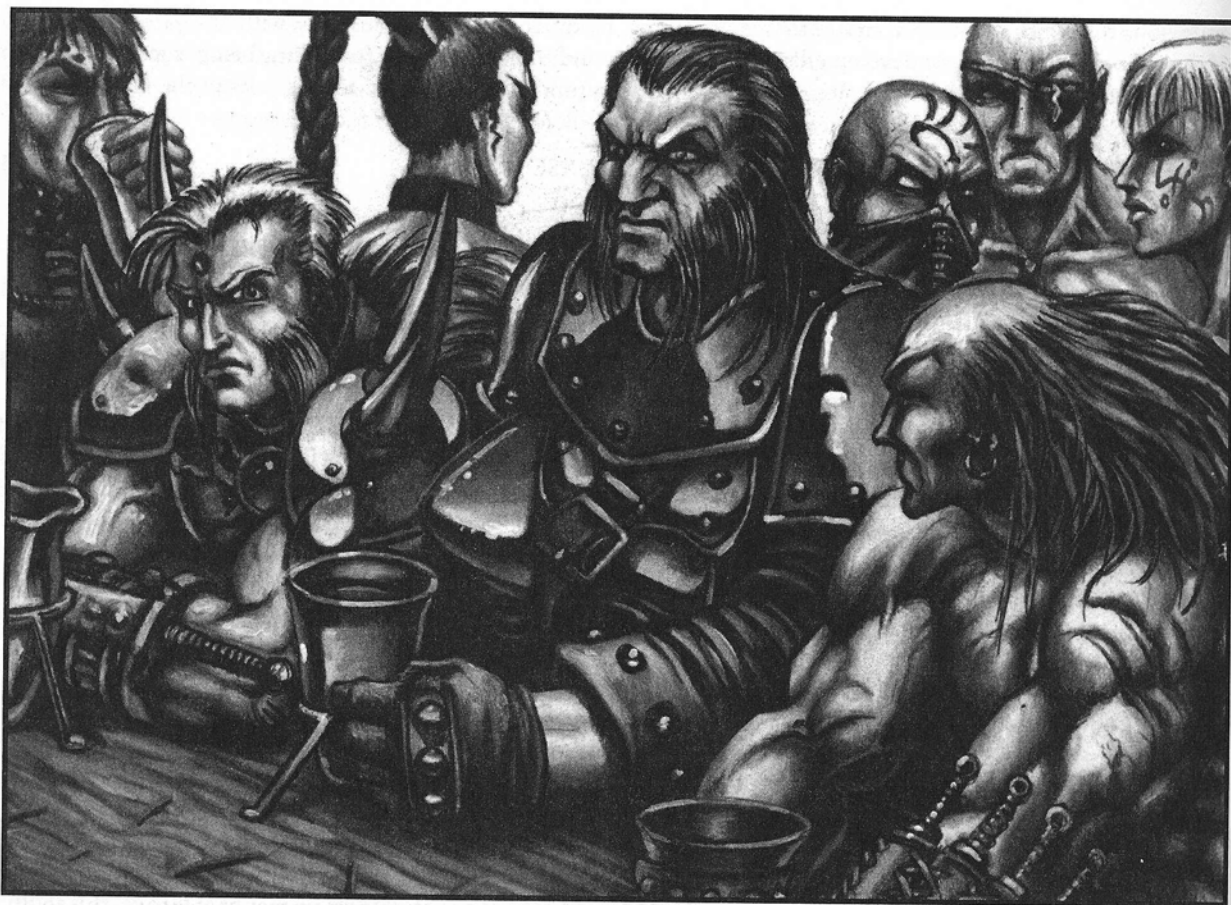
Cost:	5 or 10 motes
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Simple
Minimum Compassion:	3
Minimum Essence:	2
Prerequisite Charms:	None

Spirits use this Charm to summon food for those who need it. The spirit must succeed at a Stamina + Compassion check. Each success the spirit achieves allows it to summon enough food for a full meal for one person (the spirit may choose to summon less than its successes allow it to). For five motes, the food summoned is edible. For ten motes, the food is some of the finest nourishment ever tasted.

BLESSINGS

Every now and then, a spirit wants to reward someone, or would simply like to show favor for a mortal. Blessings are one way to go about this. Blessings, even more than other Charms, are highly individualized to the spirit in question. Break the guidelines below (or add to them, or modify them) if it suits your story. Just try to keep the power level about the same.





In all cases, the spirit must succeed on a Charisma + Compassion check. Abilities and Attributes may not be raised above 5 unless otherwise stated. Any blessing that involves the return of something disposable (temporary Willpower, Essence motes, etc.) does not fade — it is simply used up as normal. Abilities the target does not possess may not be affected unless otherwise stated. Statistics that have maximums (Willpower, for example) may not be raised above their maximums unless otherwise stated.

TINY GIFT

Cost:	5 motes
Duration:	One day
Type:	Simple
Minimum Compassion:	1
Minimum Essence:	1
Prerequisite Charms:	None

The effects of this Charm always fade by the next sunset, and the Charm may not be used more than once per day. Some possible gifts:

- One extra dot added to an Ability of the spirit's choice.
- The return of two motes of Essence.
- Good luck: The target gains one extra die to add to all normal Ability checks (not Charms).

BENEFACTION

Cost:	10 motes
Duration:	One week
Type:	Simple
Minimum Compassion:	1
Minimum Essence:	2
Prerequisite Charms:	Tiny Gift

The effects of this Charm last for one week, and the Charm may not be used more than once per week. Some possible benefactions:

- Two dots of Abilities, distributed as the spirit sees fit.
- One dot added to an Attribute.
- The return of five motes of Essence.
- Create a good luck charm, walkaway or other talisman that lasts for a week.
- Good luck: the target gains one extra die to add to normal Ability checks (not Charms).
- A mark appears on the target in an obvious place (forehead, hand, etc.) that can be seen only by spirits and Exalted using a sensory Charm that allows them to perceive Essence at work. This power is most often used to grant safe passage through an area or as a mark of favor.

LARGESS

Cost:	15 motes, 1 Willpower
Duration:	One week

Type:	Simple
Minimum Compassion:	2
Minimum Essence:	4
Prerequisite Charms:	Benefaction

The effects of this Charm last for one week, and the Charm may not be used more than once every other week. Some possible effects:

- Four dots to Abilities, distributed as the spirit sees fit. This may include Abilities the target does not normally possess, unless he is not physically capable of possessing them. This may not raise a target's Ability score above six.
- Two dots to Attributes, distributed as the spirit sees fit.
- The return of one temporary Willpower point. (The target's Willpower may not be raised above his maximum. The returned Willpower may be used up normally, but will not disappear when the week is over.)
- The return of ten motes of Essence.
- The effects of one Charm (maximum Virtue 1, Essence 1) that the spirit possesses may be conferred upon the target. These effects last *no longer than* one week.
- Good luck: the target gains one extra die to add to normal Ability checks *and* to Charm checks.
- Create a good luck charm, walkaway or other talisman of permanent duration.
- A permanent mark appears on the target in an obvious place. This mark can be seen only by spirits and Exalted using a sensory Charm that allows them to perceive Essence at work. While mortals cannot see the mark, it obviously alters the character's horoscope and can be detected in that fashion. Effects vary, depending on the meaning of the mark.

ENDOWMENT

Cost:	20 motes, 1 permanent Willpower
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Simple
Minimum Compassion:	3
Minimum Essence:	5
Prerequisite Charms:	Largess

This blessing is *never* given lightly. Great tales are told of the massive quests that lead to such rewards, and the heroes who achieve them. This Charm may only be used once per year.

- One dot added to an Attribute, duration permanent.
- Two dots to Abilities, distributed as the spirit sees fit, duration permanent. This may include Abilities the target does not normally possess, unless he is not physically capable of possessing them.
- One permanent Essence point.
- The return of all temporary Willpower that the target has lost.
- The effects of one Charm (maximum Virtue 2, Essence 2) that the spirit possesses may be conferred upon the target. These effects last for as long as the effects of the

Charm that was conferred would normally last. In rare cases, the effect may be permanent (Storyteller's discretion).

- Good luck: the target's temporary Willpower is always one higher than her permanent Willpower. The effect is permanent.
- Create a double- or triple-effect talisman of permanent duration.

CONVICTION

Spirits may use Conviction to employ mental attacks against others, as well as to affect others' emotions and mental states.

CONFUSION

Cost:	6 motes, 1 Willpower
Duration:	One scene
Type:	Simple
Minimum Conviction:	2
Minimum Essence:	1
Prerequisite Charms:	None

Roll the spirit's Manipulation + Conviction with a difficulty equal to the target's Essence. Simple success or one extra success indicates that the target is mildly confused. He might confuse one direction along a path with another. Two or three extra successes indicate that the target is quite confused. He might believe that traveling after dark in the woods without a lantern is a perfectly reasonable thing to do. Four or more extra successes indicate that the target is completely addled and may well do something very dangerous. He could try to scale a cliff face in the dark or go to sleep in a bear's den. Fair Folk are immune to this power.

MEMORY MIRROR

Cost:	6 motes, 1 Willpower
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Reflexive
Minimum Conviction:	2
Minimum Essence:	2
Prerequisite Charms:	None

The spirit must touch its target in order to employ this Charm (normal Dexterity + Brawl or Martial Arts check). If successful, roll the spirit's Manipulation + Conviction with a difficulty equal to the target's Essence. The more successes, the more of the target's memories the spirit absorbs. This may temporarily befuddle the target, but Memory Mirror does not actually remove the target's memories, just duplicates them. With a simple success, the spirit obtains only the most basic details: profession, name and any major life events. Four or more extra successes indicate near-total memory absorption.

MEMORY SPONGE

Cost:	12 motes, 1 Willpower
Duration:	Instant



Type:	Reflexive
Minimum Conviction:	4
Minimum Essence:	3
Prerequisite Charms:	Memory Mirror

This Charm works like Memory Mirror, except that the memories are drained out of the target as they enter the spirit's mind. Roll the spirit's Manipulation + Conviction with a difficulty equal to the target's Essence. The more successes the spirit achieves, the fewer details the target remembers, until only the smallest details remain. Four or more extra successes indicate that the target suffers from near-total amnesia. The memories have actually been removed and cannot be recovered through association or prompting.

MEMORY TRANSFERENCE

Cost:	15 motes, 2 Willpower
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Reflexive
Minimum Conviction:	4
Minimum Essence:	4
Prerequisite Charms:	Memory Sponge

This Charm allows a spirit to transfer memories between two subjects. The spirit must be able to touch both subjects at once, and if they are evading, the spirit must succeed on a Dexterity + Brawl or Martial Arts roll. This is not a reflexive attack, and if the spirit is attempting to touch both targets in the same turn it activates the Charm, split its dice pool at least three ways.

After the spirit touches the targets, roll its Manipulation + Conviction with a difficulty equal to the higher of the two target's Essences. The memories are moved from one subject to another, not copied. The spirit gets a vague idea of the shape of the memories — enough to identify blocks of them and figure out what should be moved. The spirit remembers only vague details afterward, not specifics.

The more successes on the roll, the more precisely the spirit can identify and choose what to move, and the more it can move. Simple success allows the movement of a few random memories, three successes allows large, important memories, and five or more extra successes allow the spirit to transfer an entire lifetime's worth of memories, or just a single dark and hidden secret. Note that the transfer is one way — a spirit that wishes to swap two personalities between bodies has to roll five or more extra success on two uses of the Charm.

INSTALL OBEDIENCE

Cost:	10 motes, 1 Willpower
Duration:	One day
Type:	Simple
Minimum Conviction:	3
Minimum Essence:	3
Prerequisite Charms:	Stoke the Flame

The spirit channels Essence into the target to alter his emotional state, instilling within him a desire to obey the spirit. Roll the spirit's Charisma + Conviction with a difficulty equal to the target's Essence. Simple success merely makes the target slightly more likely to obey, while three successes forces him to obey completely unless such obedience would cause him physical harm. At five successes, the target does anything the spirit commands.

GEAS

Cost:	1 mote per day (Min 15, Max 28), 2 Willpower
Duration:	One to 28 days
Type:	Simple
Minimum Conviction:	5
Minimum Essence:	4
Prerequisite Charms:	Instill Obedience

This Charm allows a spirit to lay a Geas, or bond, upon a target. It requires eye contact and a successful Manipulation + Conviction check, with at least three successes. The spirit may order the target to perform one task, which may include such broad orders as "serve me for one month." The spirit may not order the target to do something that would directly harm the target, but it may order him to attempt a difficult or dangerous goal as long as there is a reasonable chance of success (Storyteller's discretion). This Charm has a minimum cost of 15 motes, even if it is to last only one day. This Geas does not completely govern the target's actions; rather, it gives the target a compulsion to work toward the task he has been given. For each day that the target fails to work in good faith toward the task, he loses one temporary Willpower and takes one health level of aggravated damage. For each two days spent working in good faith toward the task, he regains one health level lost from for disobeying the Geas.

LEND AUTHORITY

Cost:	15 motes
Duration:	1 day x the spirit's Willpower
Type:	Simple
Minimum Conviction:	3
Minimum Essence:	3
Prerequisite Charms:	Instill Obedience

For each success on a Conviction + Presence check, the spirit may raise an individual's Presence by one dot. The spirit may not increase the target's Presence by more dots than the spirit's Essence, although it may increase it above 5. Only one use of this Charm may be active on an individual at any given time. The Presence lasts for one day for each dot of the spirit's Willpower.

WORLDLY ILLUSION

Cost:	20 motes, 1 Willpower per person
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Duration:	Instant
Type:	Reflexive
Minimum Conviction:	4
Minimum Essence:	3
Prerequisite Charms:	Harrow the Mind

The target of this Charm finds herself in an illusory world of the spirit's design. The illusion is total and covers all senses — according to all of her senses, the target has been transported elsewhere. The illusion has a nearly instant duration but may appear to last for up to one day to the mind of the target.

This Charm requires the spirit to touch its target (a nonreflexive Dexterity + Brawl or Martial Arts roll if she's actively evading) or look in her eyes. The spirit may use this effect on multiple people at once, but all of them must find themselves in the same illusion, and the spirit must touch all of them at once.

Any damage the target takes within the hallucination is purely illusory. However, if the target dies within the illusion, then her player must succeed on a Stamina + Resistance roll or fall into a coma for one day per point of the spirit's Essence (or longer, at the Storyteller's discretion, if it suits the dramatic needs of the story).

DREAMBANE

Cost:	15 motes, 1 Willpower
Duration:	Reflexive
Minimum Conviction:	3
Minimum Essence:	6
Prerequisite Charms:	Dreamscape

This Charm acts exactly as the Compassion Charm Dreamscape, except that the roll made is Manipulation + Conviction, and any harm done to the target within the dream has a chance of leaking through to the target's physical body (as either bashing or lethal damage, as appropriate).

If the target takes damage in the dream, her player must make a reflexive Wits roll to see how much slips through to harm the character's real body. For every success on the wits roll, one health level is subtracted from the damage that the character took in the hallucination before it is applied to her real body. The character can never take more damage to her real body from a single event in the hallucination than the Essence of the spirit that used Dreambane on her.

Each time damage gets through the soak roll, the target's player may make a Willpower roll. With three or more successes, the character wakes up. The player must also succeed a Willpower roll if the character takes enough damage to kill her in the dream before she wakes up. If the roll botches, the character dies (if mortal) or enters a coma for one week per point of the spirit's Essence (if Exalted). If the roll fails, the character wakes up at Incapacitated and must heal normally. If the roll succeeds, she wakes up with only one additional health level of bashing damage. This Charm may only be used on one target at a time.

TEMPERANCE

Spirits use Temperance to defend themselves, as well as to steal Essence from others.

HOODWINK

Cost:	8 motes, 1 Willpower
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Reflexive
Minimum Temperance:	2
Minimum Essence:	1
Prerequisite Charms:	None

This Charm allows the spirit to temporarily distract the target, causing his attention to focus on something other than the spirit. Roll the spirit's Manipulation + Conviction with a difficulty equal to the target's Essence. Simple success distracts the target for a turn — long enough for the spirit to run away or dematerialize. Three or more extra successes distract the target from anything it was thinking about the spirit, such as suspicions, accusations, anger, etc. Five or more extra successes means the target does not remember the spirit until something or someone reminds him of what he was thinking. This Charm requires extra successes to distract a target who is feeling negative emotions toward the spirit, and it requires at least three additional success to affect someone in combat with it.

STILLNESS

Cost:	3 motes
Duration:	One scene
Type:	Reflexive
Minimum Temperance:	1
Minimum Essence:	1
Prerequisite Charms:	None

This Charm allows the spirit to remain absolutely, perfectly still.

CAMOUFLAGE

Cost:	10 motes
Duration:	One scene
Type:	Simple
Minimum Temperance:	3
Minimum Essence:	2
Prerequisite Charms:	Stillness

This Charm allows the spirit to camouflage itself within whatever environment it happens to be in. A spirit standing against a rock takes on the coloration of that rock, and its edges might soften a bit, making its outline difficult to make out against the background. Roll the spirit's Wits + Temperance. Successes on this roll are added to any successes on the spirit's Dexterity + Stealth roll if it is attempting to actively hide. The result is the number of successes observers' players must roll on their Wits + Temperance checks (four net successes are required if the spirit is still, three if it moves slowly, two if it moves normally, and one if it moves quickly).





HURRY HOME

Cost:	10 motes, 1 Willpower
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Reflexive
Minimum Temperance:	2
Minimum Essence:	1
Prerequisite Charms:	None

With a successful Wits + Temperance check, a spirit may escape whatever situation it is in and return to its own home — what exactly constitutes the spirit's home is a matter for Storyteller discretion. The more tense and hurried the situation, the more successes the spirit requires. One success is all that's needed in a relaxed, quiet setting. Five successes take the spirit home even in the middle of a combat.

PORTAL

Cost:	15 motes, 1 Willpower
Duration:	One turn
Type:	Simple
Minimum Temperance:	3
Minimum Essence:	3
Prerequisite Charms:	Hurry Home

A successful Intelligence + Temperance check allows the spirit to open up a portal large enough for it to step through. The portal lasts for one turn; during that time, anyone else may step through it as long as they can fit through the opening. With one success, the portal takes the travelers to a random (though not immediately harmful) location. With two successes, the spirit may loosely direct the exit point ("Southern Deserts, please") or go directly to its home. Five or more successes allow the spirit to direct the portal wherever it pleases. Extra successes beyond the successes required for pinpointing the portal's exit point allow the spirit to triple the radius of the portal.

TRANSPORT

Cost:	20 motes, 1 Willpower
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Simple
Minimum Temperance:	4
Minimum Essence:	4
Prerequisite Charms:	Portal

A successful Dexterity + Temperance check allows the spirit to transport itself wherever it chooses. For each success, it may transport one passenger (willing or unwilling) as well, though it costs one additional Willpower point if there are passengers involved. All passengers must be within the line of sight of the spirit. The spirit must have been to the destination before.

BANISH

Cost:	10 motes, 1 Willpower per target
Duration:	Instant

Type:	Simple
Minimum Temperance:	4
Minimum Essence:	4
Prerequisite Charms:	Transport

With this Charm, a spirit may banish any targets within line of site to a *random* habitable location up to one mile distant (i.e., a human would not be banished to an underwater location or dumped in a lava flow). Roll the spirit's Perception + Temperance. Each success allows one target to be banished in this manner. The more successes, the farther away the target is likely to be sent. This Charm must be used within the bounds of the spirit's home territory.

CAPTURE

Cost:	15 motes, 1 Willpower per target
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Simple
Minimum Temperance:	5
Minimum Essence:	6
Prerequisite Charms:	Banish

With this Charm, a spirit may transport any targets within line of site to a location of the spirit's choosing, as long as it isn't immediately deadly to the target (the target could be transported into a cage or into the cave of a dangerous beast, but not into a lava flow or the bottom of the ocean unless the target could survive those places). Roll the spirit's Dexterity + Temperance. Each success allows one target to be captured in this manner.

SUSTENANCE

Cost:	3 motes
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Simple
Minimum Temperance:	1
Minimum Essence:	1
Prerequisite Charms:	None

The spirit must touch a mortal in order to activate this Charm. This does not involve a Brawl or Martial Arts check, as this Charm works only on a sleeping mortal. After the spirit touches the target, roll its Wits + Temperance. For each success, the spirit devours one mote of Essence. This Charm always involves some other method of sustenance as well. The spirit might feed on the dreams and nightmares of the mortal, or on her breath. Whatever the spirit feeds on does not harm the mortal, although it might have mild (and temporary) effects when the mortal wakes up. Even if the spirit does not regain the Essence it spent, it still feels satiated from the other part of its meal.

STEAL SUSTENANCE

Cost:	6 motes, 1 Willpower
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Simple

Minimum Temperance: 2
Minimum Essence: 1
Prerequisite Charms: Sustenance

The spirit must touch a sleeping mortal in order to activate this Charm. Roll the spirit's Strength + Temperance. At least two successes are required. Not only does this Charm steal two motes of Essence per success, but it also devours something that leaves the mortal impaired in some way — hearing, sight, etc. — although it leaves the body apparently unharmed. Only supernatural healing of some sort restores the loss; it never heals normally. Even if the spirit does not replenish the Essence it spent, it feels satiated.

VALOR

Spirits use Valor to affect the physical world, whether positively or negatively. Valor Charms are often used to harm others.

DETAILS

Cost: 3 motes
Duration: One scene
Type: Reflexive
Minimum Valor: 2
Minimum Essence: 2
Prerequisite Charms: None

Spirits use the Details Charm to change small details of their physical appearance, upon a successful Charisma + Valor check. Each use of this Charm allows one discrete detail to be changed. The size and complexity of the detail depends on the number of successes the spirit achieves. One or two successes allow a small detail to be changed: hair length, the shape of the spirit's pupils. Three or four allow the spirit to change larger details: the design of a dress, the length of its limbs. Five or more successes allow the spirit to create details from nothing: a bracelet where there was none.

FORM MATCH

Cost: 8 motes per day,
 1 Willpower
Duration: Variable
Type: Reflexive
Minimum Valor: 2
Minimum Essence: 1
Prerequisite Charms: Details

The spirit may take on another's physical form upon a successful Charisma + Valor check. This requires the spirit to touch the being to be emulated, which may require a successful Dexterity + Brawl or Martial Arts check, depending on the circumstances. The spirit must pay in advance and choose up front how many motes to spend; if it chooses to break the Charm early, those motes are not recovered.

A very successful Perception + Awareness check may see through the disguise. Four successes indicate that small elements of the disguise seem wrong, while five or more indicate that the shapechanging seems patently false.





Some spirits and Exalted may possess Charms designed to see through such trickery.

Certain actions may allow someone to see through such a disguise or may momentarily break through the disguise; superstitions of various areas prescribe different actions. Some of these are: looking at someone's reflection in a fractured mirror, looking at someone through lenses that have been soaked in a special herbal solution, blowing ashes of certain types of wood into someone's face. Which superstitions apply depends on the spirit. Some particularly difficult "rituals" may break the disguise entirely.

SHAPECHANGE

Cost:	12 motes per day
Duration:	Variable
Type:	Simple
Minimum Valor:	2
Minimum Essence:	2
Prerequisite Charms:	None

The spirit may take on any physical form it wishes upon a successful Charisma + Valor check; it must pay the cost for the full duration in advance (if the spirit breaks the Charm early, the extra motes are not recovered). After that, the spirit must reactivate the Charm if it wishes to continue the masquerade, making the Charisma + Valor check again. The spirit must spend another 10 motes and a Willpower point in advance (once per use of the Charm, not per day) if it wishes its Abilities, Attributes, etc. to change with its form. This latter restriction does not apply if the spirit has a very limited number of forms and knows them very well.

The Shapechange Charm may be seen through in the same manner as the Form Match Charm, above.

WILL-O-WISP

Cost:	5 motes
Duration:	One turn
Type:	Simple
Minimum Valor:	2
Minimum Essence:	1
Prerequisite Charms:	None

The spirit causes brief, somewhat muddled manifestations of sound, smell, and light, such as a ball of light or indistinct sounds of conversation. Roll the spirit's Manipulation + Valor. The more successes, the more noticeable these manifestations are (louder, brighter) and the longer they may last. This Charm may not be used in precise ways—no writing words or making pictures in light; no speaking distinct phrases.

GHOSTLY PRESENCE

Cost:	8 motes
Duration:	One scene
Type:	Simple
Minimum Valor:	3
Minimum Essence:	1
Prerequisite Charms:	Will-o-Wisp

The spirit may cause the same manifestations as Will-o-Wisp, again making a Manipulation + Valor check. This time, however, it may create distinct patterns. Ghostly writing may be created. This Charm may be used to hold a conversation with a target while the spirit is unmanifested. The number of successes affects how distinct the manifestations are, how precisely controlled they are, and just how thoroughly the spirit may manipulate its medium. With five successes, the spirit may paint simple scenes out of light, sound and smell. These scenes may not be larger than ten feet in any direction, and they are obvious to anyone who is close enough to observe them.

PARALYZE

Cost:	6 motes
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Reflexive
Minimum Valor:	2
Minimum Essence:	1
Prerequisite Charms:	None

Through the use of this Charm, spirits can paralyze targets. It must touch its target for this Charm to work, which may require a successful Dexterity + Brawl or Martial Arts check. If the spirit successfully touches its target, roll its Strength + Valor with a difficulty equal to the target's Stamina. Every extra success the spirit achieves causes the target to suffer a -2 penalty to all rolls involving movement or agility for the rest of the scene.

AFFINITY ELEMENT CONTROL

Cost:	6 motes
Duration:	One scene
Type:	Simple
Minimum Valor:	2
Minimum Essence:	2
Prerequisite Charms:	None

The spirit may use this Charm to affect whichever element(s) it shares an affinity with. For example, a forest spirit could affect Wood, and possibly Earth (Storyteller's discretion). This allows spirits to cause or calm small floods and rainstorms, twist a small torch into a raging inferno or a delicate dance of firelight, create gusts of wind, open a hole in the earth or twist tree limbs into manacles.

Roll the spirit's Manipulation + Valor. The number of successes indicates how fine a level of control the spirit has and how powerful an effect it can create. One success allows a spirit to call forth a mild rain or light a campfire, while three allow a spirit to cause a rainy day or build a torch into a bonfire without any extra fuel. Five successes might allow a spirit to create a phantom lover out of air itself or instantly consume a large wooden structure in flames. The spirit may manipulate a one-yard cube of an element per point of Essence it possess. In the case of area effects like rain, it could cause the effect in a five-meter radius per permanent Essence point.

ELEMENT CONTROL

Cost:	10 motes, 1 Willpower
Duration:	One scene
Type:	Simple
Minimum Valor:	3
Minimum Essence:	3
Prerequisite Charms:	Affinity Element Control

The same as Affinity Element Control, except that the spirit can control any element, not just one to which it is attuned.

WEATHER CONTROL

Cost:	10 motes
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Simple
Minimum Valor:	3
Minimum Essence:	2
Prerequisite Charms:	Affinity Element Control

This Charm allows the spirit to control the weather. Note that this may duplicate some effects of the Element Control Charms, but its effects are limited to weather phenomena: rain, fog, floods, storms, heat, cold, etc. This charm affects a larger area as well — a one-mile radius per permanent Essence point. Roll the spirit's Manipulation + Valor; the number of successes determines the size of the effect the spirit can create, and the length of time before the area's natural climate reasserts itself. One success allows small changes — a low wind could be created, or a heavy wind could be downgraded to a moderate wind. Three successes allow the creation of a moderate rainstorm or a mild heat wave. Five successes allow wild changes in local weather patterns, such as high heat in the middle of the month of Ascending Water. It takes one hour per success for the local weather patterns to reassert themselves. *Unnatural or one-time* meteorological effects that are halted by the use of this Charm can be considered ended.

IGNITE

Cost:	1 or 5 motes
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Reflexive
Minimum Valor:	2
Minimum Essence:	2
Prerequisite Charms:	None

The spirit may, upon a successful Stamina + Valor check, set fire to whatever item it touches. This requires 5 motes if the item is nonflammable.

ELEMENT TOUCH

Cost:	10 motes, 1 Willpower
Duration:	One day
Type:	Reflexive
Minimum Valor:	2
Minimum Essence:	2
Prerequisite Charms:	None

This Charm causes its target to become "touched" by the spirit's element. The spirit must touch its target for this Charm to work, possibly requiring a successful Dexterity + Brawl or Martial Arts attack. Roll the spirit's Manipulation + Valor with a difficulty equal to the target's Essence. The more extra successes, the more intense the target's reaction to this Charm. A Fire-aspected spirit causes someone to grow feverish. The target might take on some of the personality traits associated with fire: a hotheaded temper, lusty libido, curiosity, anger, vengeance, forcefulness or willfulness. The effects of this Charm last for one day or until the spirit chooses to release the target, whichever comes sooner. This Charm is a favorite among demons, who use it to bring out the worst in targets.

ELEMENT KISS

Cost:	20 motes, 1 Willpower
Duration:	One week
Type:	Reflexive
Minimum Valor:	2
Minimum Essence:	2
Prerequisite Charms:	Element Touch

This Charm is the same as Element Touch, but it lasts for one week or until the spirit chooses to release the target, whichever comes sooner. Like Element Touch, this Charm requires the spirit to touch its target. If the spirit achieves three or more successes, the target may have hallucinations that support and intensify his reaction.

ELEMENT INFUSION

Cost:	30 motes, 2 Willpower
Duration:	One month
Type:	Reflexive
Minimum Valor:	3
Minimum Essence:	3
Prerequisite Charms:	Element Kiss

This Charm is similar to the lesser Element Kiss and Element Touch Charms, but lasts for one month or until the spirit chooses to release the target (whichever comes sooner). Like the two lesser Charms, the spirit must either touch the target or look into the target's eyes. Roll the spirit's Manipulation + Valor with a difficulty equal to the target's Essence. With two or more successes, the target has the hallucinations described under Element Kiss. At three or more successes, the target may well harm herself under the force of her reaction.

CURSES

Not all relations between spirits and mortals are friendly. The little gods have their own rules and demand their own etiquette, and improper behavior may earn a spirit's wrath. Curses are one means at the spirits' disposal to punish mortals. Curses are very much unique to the spirit, just as blessings are. A drink of water from one spirit's favored well may activate its curse, while another spirit



might confer its curse with the gift of an object or with a touch. When designing a spirit's curse, do not hesitate to break, add to, or modify the guidelines below if it suits your story (thought you should try to keep the power level approximately the same).

Most small gods will be able to use only one or two aspects of a curse. As always, an Eclipse Caste Solar Exalted may only learn the aspect of a curse that the spirit teaching her knows, *never* the generic "template."

In all cases, Roll the spirit's Manipulation + Valor roll for the curse to take effect. Abilities, motes and temporary Willpower may not be lowered below 0; Attributes, Essence, and permanent Willpower may not be lowered below 1. Any curse that involves the loss of something disposable (temporary Willpower, motes of Essence) simply lasts until the target regains the points as normal.

The suggestions below are just that: suggestions. It is possible in rare cases that high-level curses (Scourge, and perhaps Malediction) may also affect Backgrounds (such as a spirit cursing someone to lose his friends), Virtues and Charms. When creating a new curse for a spirit, however, keep in mind that an Exalted may learn the Charm, and try to balance the power accordingly.

TINY DAMNATION

Cost:	5 motes
Duration:	One day
Type:	Simple
Minimum Valor:	1
Minimum Essence:	1
Prerequisite Charms:	None

The effects of this Charm always fade by the next morning's sunrise, and it may not be cast more than once per day on the same target. Some possible curses:

- One dot lost from an Ability of the spirit's choosing.
- The loss of one temporary Willpower point.
- The loss of two motes of Essence.
- Bad luck: the target loses one die from any normal

Ability checks (not Charm checks) that relate to the way in which the target offended the spirit.

IMPRECATION

Cost:	10 motes
Duration:	One week
Type:	Simple
Minimum Valor:	1
Minimum Essence:	2
Prerequisite Charms:	Tiny Damnation

The effects of this Charm last for one week, and it may not be cast more than once per week on the same target.

Some possible curses:

- Loss of two Ability dots, distributed as the spirit sees fit.
- The loss of two temporary Willpower points.
- The loss of one Attribute dot of the spirit's choosing.
- The loss of five motes of Essence.

• Bad luck: the target removes one die from normal Ability checks (not Charm checks).

• A mark appears in an obvious place on the target that only spirits or Exalted with some sort of supernatural sight can see. This may, for example, urge any spirits who meet the target to torment him.

MALEDICTION

Cost:	15 motes, 1 Willpower
Duration:	One week
Type:	Simple
Minimum Valor:	2
Minimum Essence:	4
Prerequisite Charms:	Imprecation

The effects of this Charm last for one week, and it may not be used on a target more than once every two weeks. Some possible effects:

- Loss of four Ability points, distributed as the spirit sees fit.
- Loss of two Attribute points, distributed as the spirit sees fit.
- Loss of three temporary Willpower points.
- Loss of ten motes of Essence.
- Bad luck: the target removes one die from both normal Ability checks and Charm checks.

• The effects of one Charm (of Virtue 1, Essence 1) that the spirit possesses may be conferred upon the target, but that effect is twisted in some way. If Natural Prognostication were conferred, the target might predict only the bad things that will happen to his companions. Or his predictions might be more than a little mixed up. Landscape Travel, if cast on someone traveling through a forest, might force him to travel through the trees and prevent him from ever touching the ground. This twisted Charm lasts for *no more than* one week.

SCOURGE

Cost:	20 motes, 1 permanent Willpower
Duration:	Instant
Type:	Simple
Minimum Valor:	3
Minimum Essence:	5
Prerequisite Charms:	Malediction

This curse is *never* cast lightly, and it may not be cast more than once per year. Only spirits that have been drastically wronged in heinous ways would consider using this curse (if just because they wouldn't be able to cast it again for another year).

• Loss of one Attribute point, permanently. It must be bought back up through practice (and experience points). Against a mortal character, this Charm also permanently lowers the character's maximum score in that Ability by one.

• Loss of two Ability points, permanently, distributed as the spirit sees fit. Only practice and experience points may buy this back up again.

- Loss of one permanent Willpower point.
- Loss of one permanent Essence point.
- Loss of all temporary Willpower.
- The effects of one Charm (maximum Virtue 2,

Essence 2) that the spirit possesses may be conferred upon the target, but the effect is twisted in some way (as Malediction). This lasts for twice as long as the Charm would normally last. In rare cases (Storyteller discretion) the effect may be permanent.

- Bad luck: the target attracts ill-intentioned spirits wherever he goes. Duration permanent.

- The spirit may permanently change some physical feature of the target, such as facial hair or eye color. (This alteration may not change any Attributes by more than one point.)

SPIRIT COURTS

Most spirit courts are organized by geographical region and by the type of spirit. Forest spirits tend to feel more comfortable interacting with other forest spirits, preferably ones that live in the same forest. A spirit court may range from a loosely associated group of little gods to a strict hierarchy and an actual court. There also exist odd connections between courts — spirits have a tendency to involve themselves in each other's business, which may create ties between geographically or conceptually distant spirits. A water court may consider a forest spirit a few hundred miles away to fall under its jurisdiction, simply because a traveling divinity from the water court once bested the god of a nearby forest at a game or saved it from some threat. Or the spirits of two different forests in entirely different areas may consider themselves to comprise a single court. Some courts (such as the Court of Seasons, below) are not tied to geographical region at all.

In theory, all courts are part of one vast Spirit Court, ranging from the Unconquered Sun down to the lowliest of the little gods. In practice, the old hierarchies have broken down since the Great Contagion. Some of these chains of command still linger intact, especially in the Realm, but most are fragmented and corrupt. It is always wise for travelers to ask the locals about the gods of the area, and many travelers carry items that may be used as impromptu sacrifices.

Note: Spirits are less likely to possess the "Suggested Powers" listed in parentheses than those not listed in parentheses. All statistics are suggestions and should be changed at the Storyteller's discretion.

CITY FATHERS AND CITY MOTHERS

Some cities are ruled not by men or by women, but rather by incarnate spirits. Some of these small gods come from outside of the city, driven by ambition and the desire for worship. These may be almost any sort of spirit, though of necessity they must be powerful in order to hold sway over

an entire city. No godling of doves or airy sprite would last for long as ruler of a city, even if it desired a crown and the veneration of subjects. However, most ruling spirits embody the very nature of the cities they rule, its culture and strength of traditions personified and given voice and hands.

The spirits that embody cities have most often taken on the aspect of fathers or mothers, and so these spirits have come to be called City Fathers and City Mothers. A City Father may be a strong-willed patriarch or an indulgent father figure. He might embody the sanctuary of one's own bedroom or the lasciviousness of the brothel. He may also represent the strong right arm of the city barracks, going to battle and to war to protect what belongs to him. The peculiar mix that makes up any given spirit depends on the particular personality of the city involved; the spirit of a city derives its personality and power from the city, even if it rules the city's precincts from a golden throne.

The rule of the City Fathers varies from city to city. In an area where food is short and bandits are plentiful, the City Mother may govern with an iron hand, rationing food and overseeing the execution of her enemies in sparse and impersonal public ceremonies. Yet she keeps her human charges alive better than many mortals, and they will follow her with gratitude and defend her to their last breath. Other city gods may pass themselves off as mortals, sometimes perpetrating elaborate hoaxes. One city's inhabitants believe their succession of enigmatic rulers to be entirely mortal. Instead, the city has been ruled over by the same spirit for generations; it simply kills its supposed successor and pretends to be him for the next generation.

Some City Fathers appear entirely human when manifested; others reflect their origins. A City Father from a desert city might be scaled like a snake. He moves slowly and smoothly or in swift strikes, and his reflexes are keen. He sheds his skin once a year and eats his prey whole by unhinging his jaw. A City Mother who rules over a seaside city might possess gills or large fish eyes protruding from a gray face. She eats only small fish and drinks seawater. To swim in fresh water would destroy her. A City Father from the high mountains might bear aspects of mountain birds, his hair falling like dark feathers down over his shoulders, and his eyes shining a liquid brown that could melt any young girl's heart.

Most City Fathers cannot leave the cities they embody, or sometimes the immediate environs beyond the city. Their power may seem impressive within their domains, but they cannot tear the connection that binds them to their homes. Such spirits need human and spirit allies and subjects to act as eyes, ears and sometimes enforcement.

City Fathers recruit many helpers within their cities, some of whom wield a great deal of power. However powerful it may be, the city's god can do only one thing at a time, and thus mortals it trusts may have great influence.





However, this is a tricky game to play for the mortals — most City Fathers have mystical ways of knowing what's happening around their cities, and underlings who get too greedy run the risk that their patron might be watching at an inopportune moment.

City Fathers take their personalities from the cities they embody — what changes the city changes the City Father.

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3, Perception 6, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 3, Temperance 3, Valor 2

Abilities: Athletics 3, Awareness 6, Brawl 3, Bureaucracy 6 (Its Own City +2), Dodge 4, Endurance 5, Linguistics 3, Lore 3 (City Facts +3), Melee 4, Presence 5, Resistance 5, Socialize 5, Stealth 4, Thrown 4

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Contacts 5, Influence 4, Resources 4

Suggested Charms: Lend Authority, Stoke the Flame, Instill Obedience, Materialize, Measure the Wind, Sense Domain, (Landscape Travel/Camouflage/Hide), (Dreamspeak), (Foretell the Future/Natural Prognostication), (Tiny Gift/Benefaction), (Stillness), Hurry Home, (Portal), (Paralyze), Tiny Damnation, (Imprecation), (Words of Power), Principle of Motion

Cost To Materialize: 21

Base Initiative: 7

Attacks:

Sword: Speed 7 Accuracy 9 Damage 9L Defense 9

Javelin (thrown): Speed 7 Accuracy 9 Damage 9L

Javelin (melee): Speed 8 Accuracy 9 Damage 8L Defense 8

Dodge Pool: 8 **Soak:** 8L/13B (Lamellar Armor + Target Shield, 6L/8B, +1 difficulty to attack)

Willpower: 6, **Health Levels:** -0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Essence: 3, **Essence Pool:** 68

Other Notes: This is a generic City Father. These beings may be more or less powerful depending on the strength of their city, and their Attributes and Abilities often vary, reflecting the character of their cities.

A FOREST COURT

Among the trees of the forest, you will find a most chaotic court, with Green-Beards leading travelers to their deaths, Soul-Thieves worming their way into caravans, Life Trees and Spirit Poles aiding those they favor, and animal spirits of all kinds squabbling over territory and prey. Among the animal spirits, the food chain serves as something of a hierarchy, although this doesn't stop lesser spirits from making trouble for greater ones. Older spirits of greater power, usually spirits that encompass entire areas of forest or the occasional lake or waterfall, outrank the lesser ones but aren't usually as gregarious and so don't assert their position often.

Mortals may serve many functions within this venue. Some spirits see them as prey, and feast on their bones and flesh at any opportunity. Others see them as playthings, or as children to be protected (from themselves if necessary). Still other spirits see mortals as sources of something they want, willing or unwilling — companionship of one type or another; the warmth of a campfire, or as pawns in the games and machinations of spirits.

THE LIFE TREE

Legend states that not long ago, members of a Southern tribe contracted a particularly virulent disease, and the women thenceforth gave birth only to males. This did not bode well for the future of the tribe, so the shaman of the tribe prayed to the Maidens for help. That night he had a dream, and in the dream a voice that creaked and sighed instructed him to take his tribe farther south, to a place where they would find trees growing where nothing had a right to grow. The tribe was to camp beneath the misshapen trees for one year, eating of their seeds and of their flowers. For every female birth, they were to plant a tree in thanks.

The shaman did as his dream instructed. That year the tribe planted twenty-one trees.

Each Life Tree possesses a special link with a particular type of tree; the Life Tree the shaman spoke with favored the cactuslike tree beneath which the tribe made its home, called a Marrah tree. The Life Trees are ancient, and they give aid with issues of fertility (human, crops or otherwise), healing, long life or strength.

Life Trees are almost infinitely patient, but they do not appreciate being entreated for small tasks. While they may do as requested, they will remember the slight. When a Life Tree nears the end of its natural cycle (which lasts 500 years), it seeks to grow young again in a perpetual cycle of renewal. Some Life Trees return to their youth spontaneously. Others require certain rituals to be performed for them. A very few may regain their youth only by bathing their roots in the blood of Exalted or other magical beings. The Southern tribe that lived for a season beneath the Marrah tree has been known to aid Life Trees in this latter goal.

Life Trees prefer to take on the form of an old man with barklike skin and a thick walking staff when speaking with mortals. They move slowly and do not like to be rushed, but they are stronger and healthier than they appear.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5, Charisma 4, Manipulation 1, Appearance 4, Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Virtues: Compassion 4, Conviction 2, Temperance 4, Valor 1

Abilities: Awareness 2, Brawl 1, Craft 4, Endurance 5, Linguistics 4, Lore 3, Medicine 4, Melee 3, Presence 4, Resistance 5

Backgrounds: Followers 5, Influence 4



Suggested Charms: Touch of Grace, Measure the Wind, Stoic Endurance, Dreamscape, Natural Prognostication, Foretell the Future, Landscape Travel/Camouflage/Hide, Summon Food, Tiny Gift, Benefaction, Largess, Stillness, Hurry Home, Portal, Materialize, Element Touch, Principle of Motion

Cost To Materialize: 43

Base Initiative: 5

Attacks:

Swinging Branch: Speed 7 Accuracy 7 Damage 5L Defense 8*

Dodge Pool: 0 (It's a tree) Soak: 4L/9B (Tough Bark, 2L/4B)

Willpower: 8, **Health Levels:** -0x5/-1x4/-2x3/-4x2/Incap

Essence: 4, **Essence Pool:** 86

Other Notes: Life Trees have enough branches they can be assumed to make an attempt to parry all attacks and launch at least one attack at every assailant.

OTHER FOREST SPIRITS

For almost every animal there is a matching spirit. Such spirits think in many of the same terms as their living counterparts: shelter, sustenance, safety. They may see people as prey, and stalk them for either real or imagined sustenance, which they may take in the usual way (by devouring flesh), or in a most unusual manner. Some eat the nightmares of humans as they are dreamed, having no other noticeable effect than to leave the person unusually well rested in the morning. Others sip the breath of a sleeping

person, or eat his ability to hear. Some animal spirits care only for certain parts of the human body, such as knuckles or eyeballs. Some may agree to accompany travelers in return for shelter, protection and warmth. They often know the safe ways through the forest (though these ways may not be easy for travelers to follow). Others use people (willing or unwilling, knowing or unknowing) in their eternal games of dominance among the other animal spirits.

There are many older and more powerful spirits within the forest. Some trees bear their own spirits; these rarely leave the tree but may choose to converse with people. A river or lake or a particularly interesting rock formation may possess a spirit. In some cases, an entire section of forest has awakened into a single spirit. These spirits may see humans as threats, and act directly or indirectly to remove people from their territory, remove whatever they see as a threat, or destroy mortals entirely. Such spirits have been known to take one or two people under their protection for unknown reasons. They are also said to protect those people born and raised within their territory, though they expect protection and aid in return. Such people may unwittingly become a part of the local court hierarchy.

Green-Beards are wizened little spirits that use every trick at their disposal to lead travelers into dangerous and deadly situations. Soul-Thieves prefer to find travelers when they've been separated from their companions. They eat the traveler's flesh (or inhale his breath while he



sleeps), thus taking the traveler's memories and shape into themselves. They then dispose of the traveler and take his place with his companions. They live off of the mortals, doing as little work as possible, until someone finds them out or the illusion fades; they leave again, searching for a new group to infiltrate. Soul-Thieves feel a deep, aching emptiness inside of them that they try to fill by devouring human memories and experiencing human companionship, but it is somehow never enough to satisfy them. If crumbs of leavened bread can be scattered in a Soul-Thief's sleeping place without his notice, he will wake up in the morning looking wizened and old for just a moment or two.

THE COURT OF SEASONS

The Court of Seasons is one of the most hierarchical courts of all. Each season determines which faction of the court is in favor, and each phase of each season determines which members of which faction are in control. Thus the hierarchy changes from month to month, but in an extremely rigid and predictable pattern.

Accordingly, there are three types of spirit for each season, one of which is termed Ascending, one Resplendent, and one Descending, to match the months. Generally the Ascending spirits are the youngest, the Resplendent are the most powerful, and the Descending are the most dangerous. As season-spirits tend to be comparatively powerful, and as they hold formal courts at which people may petition for their favor, mortals often seek out the Court of Seasons for aid in all manner of quests and problems.

The Court of Seasons holds an actual court, but only the spirits of the current month, the preceding month, and the following month may be found there at any given time. Thus, during the first or third month of a season, the court tends to be a troubled place as few spirits of differing seasons get along. In particular, the conjunction of Fire and Wood is said to be a dangerous time to visit the court.

The court moves with each season, leaving one place and taking up residence in another. The court has resided in the following places, among others: the tropical forests of the Southeast, in a high, fanciful tower made of the branches of living trees. The Wyld demesne of Firewander in the city of Nexus. An underwater cave system offshore of the archipelago known as Wavecrest. An air-castle above the chilly tundra of the North. An ever-shifting sandcastle embedded in the dunes to the South, protected by albino savages.

THE GOLDEN STARS

The Golden Stars hold sway during Ascending Fire. They are six sisters robed in cloth of gold, the strands of which are so delicate that they resemble sparkling cobwebs. Bright feathers of gold hang glittering among their curly blond tresses. They appear almost identical but for the shape of a birthmark on each sister's left ankle.

The sisters are not particularly beautiful; their features are broad and rough-hewn, with strong noses and flat chins. They are creatures of strong emotion however, and fall in love easily. They have been known to squabble over whatever person (male or female) they currently favor. Their egos are fragile, and so each constantly requires proof from the person she favors that he loves her and not her sisters. This may take the form of quests or tasks. The person may also be asked to identify a particular Star from among her identical sisters; in areas that the Stars frequent, young men and women are encouraged to pay attention to the legends and rumors concerning the physical differences between the sisters. The story of the birthmarks is just one among several.

To be the favored person of the Golden Stars is not a comfortable thing, and some flee from such an "honor." It is difficult to hide from these spirits, however, and they are capable of inflicting harm on those who anger them. Most submit to their attentions. No one person occupies their interest for more than a month or two at most, so it is a brief hell. In addition, they have a tendency to heap presents (both material and supernatural) upon their object of interest in an attempt to hold his interest (and keep him from their sisters), so it does have its rewards.

Nature: Caregiver, Critic, Gallant, Hedonist, Leader and Martyr (one of each)

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 2, Temperance 2, Valor 4

Abilities: Archery 3, Athletics 1, Awareness 2, Dodge 2, Lore 4, Martial Arts 1, Medicine 3, Melee 1, Occult 3, Perform 3, Presence 3, Ride 3, Socialize 3

Backgrounds: Allies 1, Contacts 2, Followers 2, Influence 3

Suggested Charms: Materialize, Details, Hoodwink, (Confusion), Element Touch, (Element Kiss), Tracking, Tiny Gift, Benefaction, (Sustenance), (Steal Sustenance), Paralyze, Weather Control, Tiny Damnation, Imprecation, Measure the Wind, (Principle of Motion)

Cost To Materialize: 30

Base Initiative: 8

Attacks:

Self Bow (Frog Crotch): Speed 7 Accuracy 7 Damage 6L

Punch: Speed 8 Accuracy 5 Damage 2B Defense 5

Kick: Speed 5 Accuracy 4 Damage 4B Defense 4

Dodge Pool: 6 Soak: 2L/4B (Spirit Clothes, 1L/2B)

Willpower: 6, **Health Levels:** -0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Essence: 3, **Essence Pool:** 60

Other Notes: None

WHITE TERRORS

The White Terrors come to power during Descending Water. While the world starts to warm up, the White Terrors

bring a strong reminder of the dangers of cold and snow. The Terrors are small, only a few feet high. They look a little like a cross between a cat and a monkey, all covered in fine white fur, and their voices are soft. They look harmless, perhaps even pretty when stretched out on a rock, but only mortals who have lived in cities or in warm climes all their lives are unaware of the danger these spirits represent.

Looking into a Terror's eyes affects the change, or touching one of them. The person (or animal) grows cold, and nothing — not fire, not blankets, not another person's touch — can warm her up again. Then she hallucinates. She sees movements out of the corner of her eyes. Every spirit, animal and person she encounters looks twisted and evil. Over the course of the next two weeks, the hallucinations become auditory as well, and she hears threats from every open mouth. She grows colder, shivering next to the warmest fire. She must be watched carefully during this time, as some people have climbed into fires and burned to death. The condition only eases as the next month begins, and then it takes most of the first week to slowly dissipate.

The bite of a Terror relieves the condition, but that bite is extraordinarily painful, and it is difficult to convince a Terror to comply. The only offers that move a Terror's frozen heart are those that bring the danger and pain of the cold season home to others, such as the destruction of a town's supply of firewood, the drowning of a person beneath the ice of a frozen lake, the theft of a town's stores of food and so on. However, if one can find a way to threaten the very cold and fear that the Terrors thrive on (by somehow warming up an area's climate, for example, or providing plenty of food to carry a starving village through a lean season), they may be able to push the Terror into helping them.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 5, Stamina 2, Charisma 2, Manipulation 1, Appearance 4, Perception 3, Intelligence 5, Wits 3

Virtues: Compassion 1, Conviction 5, Temperance 4, Valor 3

Abilities: Athletics 4, Awareness 2, Brawl 4, Dodge 4, Endurance 4, Investigation 2, Lore 2, Resistance 3, Socialize 2, Stealth 3, Survival 4

Backgrounds: Contacts 1, Influence 2

Suggested Charms: Element Touch/Kiss/Infusion, Landscape Travel/Camouflage, (Geas), Worldly Illusion, Stillness, (Hurry Home), (Portal), (Transport), (Banish), (Sustenance), (Steal Sustenance), Materialize, (Paralyze), Affinity Element Control, (Measure the Wind), (Possession)

Cost To Materialize: 55

Base Initiative: 8

Attacks:

Claw: Speed 8 Accuracy 7 Damage 5L Defense 7

Bite: Speed 6 Accuracy 8 Damage 8L* Defense 5

Dodge Pool: 9 Soak: 6L/7B (Spirit Hide, 5L/5B)

Willpower: 9, **Health Levels:** -0x2/-1x4/-2x6/-4/Incap

Essence: 4, **Essence Pool:** 93

Other Notes: Some Terrors have contacts among demons and Deathlords. Terrors can bite for less than 8L if they desire, but the bite is just as painful as if they'd maimed the target.

OTHER SEASON-SPIRITS

Season-spirits are not elementals, though they bear some resemblance to them. Season-spirits are more willing to engage themselves in the affairs of mortals, and have more complex motives than those of elementals. Given the strict rotating hierarchy, many season-spirits guard their one month of ascendancy jealously and take great pride in their one month of rule. The rest of the year they bicker endlessly, hating each other for the fact that they don't rule year-round. Many season-spirits perform small favors for anyone who acts in opposition to other season-spirits, particularly in opposition to the spirits who rule the following month or season.

Resplendent Water is ruled over by three men — grandfather, father, and son — made entirely of ice. They move slowly, and no one has yet unraveled the scheme by which they determine which of the three is in charge at any given time. The touch of a rare white flower found in the Northern taiga leaves these three stunned into immobility for days, hot tears melting trails in their cheeks. A pack of young white bears governs Ascending Water; they hunt the Northern tundra and engage in fierce battles with packs of omen dogs. No one knows what terrible thing the omen dogs did to enrage the bears so, but the bears hold grudges for centuries.

To appeal to the Court of Seasons during the month of Resplendent Earth is almost entirely useless, as the quartz-spirit that rules then cares about little except finding the right angle of light to shine through its crystalline matrix to best effect. If one brings this spirit lit lamps and torches at night when the moon is dark or covered by clouds, it may choose to give aid. During Ascending Earth a White Sand spirit rules, its form continually shifting, occasionally humanoid, occasionally a pile of sand, sometimes animal or plant, but always soft and white. It is practical to a fault, and cannot abide the presence of those who talk incessantly. It favors the young as long as they show respect. A spirit of clay rules over Descending Earth. It spends most of its time still and stonelike, able only to whisper. In order to converse freely with people, it must be doused with water from the farthest reaches of the Western islands.

A wild pack of foxes governs Ascending Wood. They show favor only to those who can first gain the acceptance of a powerful forest-spirit, and they make a game of hunting mortals who offend them as men hunt foxes. Resplendent Wood is ruled by a single brown-skinned man with leaves for hair who will only speak with those who can best him in a riddle game. He is ancient and wise, and knowledgeable in the ways of all animals. The spirit that rules Descending Water appears as two eight-foot-tall men made entirely of wood; the





grain of that wood wends its way about their bodies in labyrinthine patterns. In order to speak with them, a person must choose one or the other, and then she and her companions touch him and find themselves in a maze. One maze is complex and winding, and extremely difficult to solve. The other maze is easy to solve, but filled with great dangers. The petitioners have one day from sunup to sundown to reach the heart of the maze, and there they will speak with the spirit. If they fail, they must serve the spirit for a month and a day.

That which rules Resplendent Fire appears as flame in the shape of a human or large bird. It takes offense easily and has burned entire crops or villages in return for some slight. It may demand great quests, tasks or sacrifices in return for its help, but it is quite powerful and many have sought its favor. The Desert Noon rules over Descending Fire. She is a tall, black-skinned woman with very short hair and hematite eyes, and she dresses in red-and-gold silks. She is inordinately curious, particularly about people, and she may lend her aid comparatively easily. In return, she demands that the supplicant host her when her time of rule is done, for a period ranging from one month to eleven, depending on the size of the favor. This is more difficult than it sounds, as her curiosity and piercing questions tend to get both herself and her host into trouble.

A handful of mischievous young air sprites rule Ascending Air. They never manifest visibly, but they move items around, "touch" people, and perform other random acts of mischief and malice. Whether or not they respond to appeals seems entirely random; when they do respond they manifest as mere whispers of conversation. Resplendent Air is a tall woman called "the Divine One," with long white hair and blank white eyes. She remains eternally pregnant, and every ten years she gives birth. Sometimes she births monsters, with names such as "crushing rock monster" and "tall cliff monster," and anyone who harms her children earns her wrath. At other times, she births clouds and rainbows, and all who see their beauty and comment on it are blessed by her. Thus some peasants always take care to praise the beauty of any bright clouds and rainbows that appear during the month of Resplendent Air. Descending Air is governed by a spirit called the Dreamer, a tall willowy creature that sometimes appears as male, sometimes as female. In order to speak with him, the petitioner must drink three drops of a tincture of a particular poisonous mushroom diluted in a glass of river-water. The petitioner falls into a deep sleep for three days, during which time he speaks with the Dreamer. The Dreamer has developed a taste for the hair of old men and women on the verge of death.

CALIBRATION

When the five-day Calibration was added to the calendar, it threw the entire court off. The Court of Seasons determined that a new spirit should be chosen to rule over the Calibration (no member of the court was willing to allow another the extra five days' rule), but that's as far as they got. Any spirit chosen must be worthy of the Court of Seasons, but no powerful spirit is happy with only five days

when all the others hold a full month. That's where they've been stuck for as long as most people can remember. Every now and then, representatives of the court approach another spirit about the position, and the spirit refuses, or makes demands that the court is unable or unwilling to meet. More often, a spirit approaches the court about the position and is invariably refused on grounds of not being powerful enough, dignified enough, interesting enough or any other reason the court could come up with.

This lack of a ruler for the five days of Calibration only adds to the perception of the peasants that the Calibration is an unlucky time. The court is technically still "in session," but as no one is in charge it is a chaotic place of bickering and outright fighting. Visiting the court during Calibration is a dangerous proposition. This is the one time of year when all season-spirits are likely to be found at the court.

A WATER COURT

The hierarchy of this water court is flexible without being chaotic. The position of most spirits within the hierarchy may change from month to month or year to year, following a pattern as unfathomable as the currents of the ocean depths. A person may make a bargain with the spirit that rules an area, only to come back later and find that a different spirit altogether now holds sway. With few exceptions, only the Storm Mothers hold their positions for long terms.

Storm Mothers are powerful spirits; they may hold sway over reaches of water that stretch for one to three days of sailing in a swift boat. Those islands that exist within their domain may fall prey to devastating storms unless they sacrifice to the local Mother. Storm Mothers cannot abide each others' presence and are never found together.

Many lesser spirits chafe under the rule of the Storm Mothers; the legendary harsh humor of the Mothers often as not turns against these spirits. The masks are as varied as any single type of spirit may be, and they tend to be near the bottom of any pecking order. Sirens do their best to avoid the Storm Mothers, as the Storm Mothers cannot abide their beauty and go to great lengths to subjugate them.

Very few spirits are superior to the Mothers in a water court, and most of these are less aware than the Mothers. These are usually the awakened spirits of islands themselves, ocean regions, coral reefs or other natural landmarks. While they have consciousness, they aren't as likely to notice the comings and goings of mortals. The Mothers do not like to bow down to other spirits, so they do their best to keep such spirits placid and unaware, or even sleeping.

Like the forest court, there are of many weak spirits for every powerful one — every court contains small gods of the local flora and fauna, as well as other, stranger things.

STORM MOTHERS

Most Storm Mothers could never be called feminine. They're bald or balding, with a greenish complexion, and their bodies are scaled. Most have large mouths full of

jagged teeth, although some look slightly more human. They have eyes the color of the night sky swirling with clouds; sometimes lightning flashes in their gaze. Each Storm Mother has a spirit-companion, traditionally either a raven or a black dog, which may act as friend, helper and lover. Storm Mothers have twisted senses of humor, and they may require people to perform humiliating tasks before they aid them.

The Storm Mothers prefer to come out at night, when the sky is dark and cloudy and rain is in the air. Sometimes the Storm Mothers bring the storms themselves. The Storm Mothers are battle spirits, and at times they stir themselves to aid their favored spirits or mortals. Because of this, many island dwellers make sacrifices to the Storm Mother of their region, as do some pirate ships. Storm Mothers favor those who gift them with obsidian, or with the sacrifice of black-furred dogs and black-feathered birds. Most accept the sacrifice of human babies as well.

Many a storm that has swamped a raiding ship has been ascribed to a Storm Mother protecting those who sacrifice to her, or taking revenge upon someone who offended her. The list of things that offend these crones grows with each retelling, but some of the more common elements are: trespassing into a Storm Mother's domain without offering some sort of sacrifice, however small. When the water changes color beneath a ship, that ship has crossed into or out of a Storm Mother's domain. The butcher of people who have gained a Storm Mother's favor angers her, but she takes action only if those she favors fought back; she has no pity for weaklings. Harming a black dog or a raven in circumstances other than sacrifice may anger her. Also, she cannot abide the wailing of a child on the water. Because of this last prohibition, most boats do not take children on board unless the boats are large enough that the child can stay below decks. Particularly beautiful people of either gender may also offend a Mother simply by their presence. Mothers have been known to demand the sacrifice of such people, or to demand periods of service (or single dangerous tasks) from them in return for their safety and the safety of their comrades.

The Storm Mothers have no power over red-haired women. Some sailors carve the prows of their ships into the shape of women and paint their hair red in the hopes that this will keep the boats safe.

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4, Charisma 1, Manipulation 3, Appearance 0, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Virtues: Compassion 1, Conviction 3, Temperance 2, Valor 5

Abilities: Awareness 3, Brawl 5, Craft 3, Dodge 2, Endurance 4, Linguistics 2, Occult 3, Presence 4, Resistance 1, Sail 3, Survival 3

Backgrounds: Followers 3, Influence 2, (Resources 2 - some Storm Mothers have picked up items from wrecked ships)

Suggested Charms: Landscape Travel, Stoke the Flame, Instill Obedience, Materialize, Paralyze, Affinity Element Control, Weather Control, (Element Touch/Kiss/Infusion), Tiny Damnation, Imprecation, (Malediction), Measure the Wind, (Harrow the Mind), (Words of Power), Principle of Motion

Cost To Materialize: 38

Base Initiative: 6

Attacks:

Claw: Speed 6 Accuracy 8 Damage 6L Defense 8

Bite: Speed 3 Accuracy 7 Damage 8L Defense 5

Dodge Pool: 5 **Soak:** 5L/8B (Tough Hide, 3L/3B)

Willpower: 8, **Health Levels:** -0x3/-1x3/-2x3/-4/Incap

Essence: 3, **Essence Pool:** 74

Other Notes: The occasional Storm Mother possesses Charisma of 2 and Appearance of 1 instead of 1 and 0. Storm Mothers may not use their Charms against red-headed women. When using their Charms against boats with prows carved and painted in the form of redheaded women, they require one extra success for any effect.

SIRENS

Sirens are terrifyingly seductive spirits that stalk the shores for human prey. They appear as young, beautiful women with long, flowing hair and eyes the color of the sea at noon. Some of them have fishtails instead of legs, or delicately scaled skin. Others appear human at first glance, but can be recognized by the thin, almost invisible gill slits on their neck or back. Sirens have lungs as well as gills, but they aren't made for prolonged use. Any siren that spends more than one day out of water sickens and dies.

Saltwater sirens are savage, vicious creatures that tear apart any mortal drawn to them by their magical song. These spirits kill for the sheer pleasure of it. Freshwater sirens seem to be sweet, seductive spirits, gentle and playful right up until the moment when they pull their prey under the water with an iron-tight grip. These sirens feed from the last dying gasps of breath that escape from their victims' lips beneath the water.

Sirens are most plentiful where the Storm Mothers have no sway; sirens who find their way into a Storm Mother's domain are subjugated as servants whenever possible. Outside of the Storm Mothers' domains, sirens may band together loosely for mutual protection.

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2, Charisma 5, Manipulation 2, Appearance 5, Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 3, Temperance 2, Valor 3

Abilities: Brawl 4, Craft 2, Dodge 2, Endurance 2, Perform (Singing) 5, Presence 3, Stealth 3, Survival 2

Backgrounds: Resources 2 (Sirens like to comb through the wreckage of ships for magical or deadly items)

Suggested Charms: Landscape Travel/Camouflage, (Tracking), Measure the Wind, (Sense Domain), (Confu-





sion), Instill Obedience, (Hoodwink), (Stillness), (Hurry Home), (Sustenance/Steal Sustenance), Materialize, Details, (Shapechange), (Will-o-Wisp), (Paralyze), (Affinity Element Control), (Element Touch), (Tiny Damnation)
Cost To Materialize: 20

Base Initiative: 6

Attacks:

Claw: Speed 6 Accuracy 8 Damage 5L Defense 8

Dodge Pool: 6 **Soak:** 1L/2B

Willpower: 6, **Health Levels:** 9

Essence: 2, **Essence Pool:** 58

Other Notes: Sirens technically don't have the minimum Essence for Instill Obedience. However, since they augment the Charm with their not inconsiderable Charisma, Appearance, Presence, and Perform (Singing), they can use it at a lower Essence level. Since much that goes into this version of the Charm is nonmagical, any Exalted who learned this Charm and did not share these other characteristics of the sirens does not find it very effective (the Charm requires one additional success for each of the four listed Abilities/Attributes which the Exalted does not possess at the same level).

OTHER WATER SPIRITS

Spirits of fish, crabs, trees, seaweed and any number of other natural flora and fauna may be found in the water court. Unlike animal spirits in the forest court, however,

these spirits hold more sway and power here. In an area with little arable land, any spirits related to food supplies take on a surprising significance and strength. Some island inhabitants sacrifice to the spirits for each catch they make, in the hopes that the spirits will give them greater catches in return. These spirits possess a number of lesser charms that enable them to affect (in small ways) such things as water, weather, time and healing.

"Mask" is a generic term for any spirit that exists purely as an empty face and no more; there are many such spirits where the sea meets the shore. These masks may be formed when people behold their own reflection in the water, and leave an impression of their soul behind. Such spirits later grow in power and stature, becoming fully humanoid over the course of centuries. Masks have little power but much character; each possesses a distinct personality. Most have human facial characteristics — two eyes, a nose and a mouth. Masks share one characteristic: a desire to share their company with humans or other spirits. Many of them possess a limited ability to predict the future, not in a structured sense, but their actions and parroted words reflect the stands of Destiny.

The deeper seas far to the West play host to a number of more dangerous spirits. Among these may be found the Cavern Mysteries, odd creatures with a multitude of dark, shining legs that play among the smaller scattered islands. They're the size of a dog, and they only approach the water's



surface during deepest night when the moon is full. They crawl up on the shores of the islands and drag unprotected children and small animals into the sea. These creatures know a great deal about the mysterious ocean depths, and the treasures and mysteries that lie there. In particular, they know every sea cave within two miles as though it were their home. They have whispered to some mortals of a mysterious writing carved into the walls of the deepest of those caves. This writing shines with a soft blue light, and no one has yet been able to translate its meandering strokes.

The Cavern Mysteries possess venom with some unusual properties. One bite enables a person to breathe underwater for a few hours, at the price of several nights of fever and illness. Some people treat with these creatures, offering them animals or jewels in return for their bite and guidance. The Mysteries respond best to offers of rare magical secrets, which they prize above all else. They refuse to play the games of court hierarchy, relying on their speed and their knowledge of the seafloor to keep them safe from spirits who would subjugate them. Sometimes a Storm Mother or even a siren may be found with a Cavern Mystery upon a bejeweled leash. The Mothers milk them for lore and use them as sentries, while the sirens simply keep them as pets.

ELEMENTALS

Simple cousins to the spirits, the elementals are rarely as complex or intelligent as their more intellectual brethren. Strongly tied to their elemental urges, their emotions are more likely to govern their actions than those of spirits. Also, elementals are naturally material beings, and interact with the world around them much more than the average spirit.

FIRE

Fire elementals are said to be the most dangerous of the elementals. They are anger, change and brilliance; they are force, vengeance and willfulness. All of that, bound up together with all the power of an incredibly destructive element. Fire may be life-giving as well as destructive, but this is unlikely to console a villager whose home has gone up in flames.

FIRE BUTTERFLIES

Fire butterflies are dainty things, orange of wing with irregular black spots. They can cause whatever material they have perched on to catch fire simply by fluttering their wings in a particular pattern, whether or not their perch is flammable. Some sorcerers compel these butterflies to give up their smaller, lower wings (which grow back), as the powder that coats them is a potent ingredient in any explosive or flammable substance.

The powder is also given in hot water to those who have been stricken with fever. When used in body paint and spread in patterns that only the butterflies know the secrets to, the powder may give mortals the power to light

fires at a glance or a touch for the span of a single hour. For the next twenty-four hours, however, the sorcerer has intense hallucinations of a violent, terrifying or sexual nature that may completely obscure the real world.

Fire butterflies like to be told how beautiful they are, although they despise obvious empty flattery. They grow angry at anyone who wears gold in their presence as it reminds them that some things are more beautiful than they are. It is said that they would remove the very stars from the heavens if they could, if only to make their own beauty the less contested.

Most fire butterflies know the common names of many beautiful spirits, as well as other details about them, and feel spiteful toward each and every one (particularly other fire elementals). They will happily share any information they think will help someone to harm or take advantage of one of these other spirits.

It is rare for a fire butterfly to take on humanoid form, and those who know anything about them fear such an occasion. When this happens, they appear as slender, androgynous beings made entirely of fire, and they easily set any flammable materials nearby on fire. They also cause severe burns to anyone who touches them. Only a threat to the fire butterfly (that it can't out-fly) or the command of a sorcerer can cause it to take on humanoid form. Some Fire-aspected Dragon-Blooded sorcerers keep fire butterflies as lovers. Such consorts must be carefully sequestered, or they will destroy or maim other wives and concubines out of jealousy.

Attributes: Strength 0, Dexterity 5, Stamina 1, Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 5, Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 2, Temperance 1, Valor 2

Abilities: Awareness 4, Dodge 5, Endurance 1, Linguistics 1, Lore 3, Resistance 1, Socialize 2, Stealth 4, Survival 1

Backgrounds: None

Suggested Charms: Dematerialize, (Natural Prognostication), Landscape Travel/Camouflage, Hoodwink, Stillness, Tiny Damnation, Inflame

Elemental Powers: Coarse Skin, Mobility (Flight), Rejuvenation

Cost To Dematerialize: 21

Base Initiative: 8

Attacks:

Touch: Speed 7 Accuracy 7 Damage 2L Defense 0

Dodge Pool: 10 Soak: 0L/1B

Willpower: 4 **Health Levels:** 6

Essence: 2, **Essence Pool:** 46

Other Notes: None

WATER

Water elementals may be nurturing, healing creatures, or they may be deceptive, dangerous foes. They may embody the shallow sparkle of a pool or the dark depths of





the sea itself. Many people familiar only with rivers and ponds make the mistake of underestimating water elementals. Not so the men and women of the West, who lead their lives in the company of such creatures.

THE WATER CHILDREN

The Water Children are elementals who appear as prepubescent children, both male and female, who drowned. These elementals were present at the deaths of the children, and they became reflections of those children's last moments. Although the Water Children take on the appearance of drowned children, they do not know anything of those children's lives (although they may have seen who drowned them, in the case of murder), and they possess only a limited intelligence.

Each Water Child fixates on a specific goal. Some seek to warm their skin in the arms of loving mortals, to feel cared for. Some seek to punish mortals for acts of violence — particularly those spirits who take on the guise of a child who was murdered. These may, as their first act, hunt down and kill the child's murderer. Still others seek to warm the unending cold of their bodies by wrapping themselves in the ripped, torn and still-steaming flesh of mortals, to take from others what they cannot have themselves.

Water Children leave wet footprints everywhere they go, and their touch chills to the bone. Their skin is pale white tinged with blue, their clothes and hair may drip water, and some of them cough up water periodically. Their gaze is filled with reproach, and those who look into their eyes find it difficult to fend off guilty thoughts of those crimes they have perpetrated. Their grip is surprisingly strong.

Water Children predict with uncanny accuracy which children will die at the hands of their own parents. They know at a glance whether a child's parents are truly his parents. They can cause or calm small floods, as well as heavy rains. Sorcerers who wish to have precognitive visions call forth these elementals. The sorcerer kisses the child, swallowing a mouthful of water from the child's mouth. Then he sinks into visions for several hours while the child guards his body. This process is called "water riding." It takes a strong will to direct these visions; sometimes they take the sorcerer where they choose instead of the other way around.

Nature: Bravo, Caregiver, Martyr, Paragon, Rebel or Survivor

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Virtues: Compassion 2 or 4, Conviction 4, Temperance 2, Valor 3

Abilities: Awareness 4, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Endurance 5, Larceny 2, Medicine 2, Melee 3, Occult 2, Presence 3, Resistance 3, Stealth 3

Backgrounds: None

Suggested Charms: Dematerialize, (Dreamspeak), Natural Prognostication, Landscape Travel/Camouflage/Hide, (Tracking), (Tiny Gift), (Benefaction), (Confusion), (Memory Mirror/Sponge/Transference), (Stillness), (Sustenance/Steal Sustenance), (Details), (Form Match), (Will-o-Wisp), (Ghostly Presence), Affinity Element Control, (Element Touch/Kiss), (Tiny Damnation), (Imprecation), (Possession), (Stoke the Flame), Principle of Motion

Cost To Materialize: 21

Elemental Powers: Suspire, Mobility (Swimming), Aegis
Base Initiative: 4

Attacks:

Chill Touch: Speed 4 Accuracy 5 Damage 3L Defense 5

Dodge Pool: 5 Soak: 4L/5B (Aegis, 3L/3B)

Willpower: 7, Health Levels: -0x3/-1x3/-2x3/-4/Incap

Essence: 2, Essence Pool: 65

Other Notes: A Water Child's version of Form Match allows it to take on the form of any dead person temporarily, usually for the purpose of confronting that person's killer or family. The Water Child's Compassion depends on whether the Water Child is fixated on a violent goal or not (4 if it isn't, 2 if it is). This often depends on whether the child it copied met a violent end or not.

UNDERTOWS

Undertows are the spirits of deep, swift currents. They know many of the world's secrets, but because they cannot see the surface, they don't always know the significance or the relevance of those secrets. Undertows see the world as a web of secrets, connected only with other secrets.

Undertows believe the entire world and everyone in it are devious and duplicitous, that all people keep what they know to themselves. They see secret-keeping as the natural order of things. They also see sharing the secrets of others as a perfectly natural activity. Why else would they know all of these things?

Undertows do not manifest except for a voice that sounds only in the sorcerer's own mind, and an odd indistinct pulling sensation: They have no surface.

Sorcerers call on these elementals when they need to know deep secrets. In order to coax the correct information out of the Undertow, the sorcerer must already know some small relevant secret so that the Undertow can make the connection to the right secret — surface details have no meaning to these creatures. Conversations with Undertows may be long and confusing, as it can take a lot of work to help the Undertow figure out what secret the sorcerer wants. The mind of an Undertow works in swift and subtle ways, often jumping from one topic to another in ways that make sense only to it.

Undertows appreciate those people with quick-moving, devious minds. They refuse to believe anyone who tells them that their worldview is wrong. They can be very convincing when discussing their own way of seeing

things and have been known to drive sorcerers into bouts of paranoia.

Undertows may also be called on to pull people and small boats beneath the surface of any reasonably large body of water.

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 0, Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Virtues: Compassion 1, Conviction 4, Temperance 3, Valor 3

Abilities: Bureaucracy 4, Dodge 5, Linguistics 5, Lore 5, Martial Arts 3, Occult 5, Socialize 2

Backgrounds: Contacts 5

Suggested Charms: Dematerialize, Dreamspeak, (Natural Prognostication), Confusion, Hoodwink, (Will-o-Wisp), (Ghostly Presence), Paralyze, Affinity Element Control, Weather Control, (Element Touch/Kiss), Tiny Damnation, (Imprecation), (Harrow the Mind), (Possession)

Elemental Powers: Enshroud, Mobility (In Water), Aegis, Element's Domain

Cost To Dematerialize: 30

Base Initiative: 4

Attacks:

Touch: Speed 7 Accuracy 7 Damage 1B Defense 3

Dodge Pool: 6 Soak: 3L/4B (Aegis, 3L/3B)

Willpower: 7, Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap.

Essence: 2, Essence Pool: 53

AIR

Many regard air elementals as the most alien of elementals, and the most difficult to understand.

WIND MAKERS

The white eagle-spirits in their feathered finery are known as the Wind Makers, and with the flapping of their wings they may stir up the winds. Hunters sacrifice to eagle-spirits in an attempt to keep the wind blowing always toward themselves and away from their prey.

Those who wish to gain favor with the Wind Makers (without compelling them) paint their faces with white and braid white feathers in their hair. Since white face paint has lead in it, praying to the eagles too often may be dangerous to one's health, perhaps even deadly. The Wind Makers with their harsh sense of humor find the irony of this situation quite amusing. Eagles are rather haughty spirits, and prefer mortals to be respectful or even subservient in their presence. They do not like to be reminded that they can be summoned and ordered about just as any other elemental. Because of this, wise sorcerers carry out an elaborate social charade of calling on the eagle's aid and generosity even when the eagle is compelled to do as the sorcerer says.

Sorcerers call upon the Wind Makers when they need help with wind, speed or lore of the Unconquered Sun. Few know of the eagles' knowledge of the Sun, however. The eagles can see through deception, so they may be

called upon to verify a statement. They may warn of an impending ambush or purify air that has become fouled.

Nature: Bravo, Critic, Explorer, Gallant, Judge, Leader, Paragon, Sage or Traditionalist

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 5, Stamina 2, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 4, Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 3, Temperance 2, Valor 3

Abilities: Athletics 4, Awareness 5, Dodge 4, Endurance 1, Investigation 3, Larceny 1, Lore 2, Martial Arts 3, Presence 3, Resistance 3, Survival 3

Backgrounds: None

Suggested Charms: Dematerialize, Natural Prognostication, Tracking, Tiny Gift, (Memory Mirror), (Element Touch), Tiny Damnation, Affinity Element Control

Elemental Powers: Mobility (Flight), Dragon's Suspire (Lightning)

Cost To Dematerialize: 35

Base Initiative: 7

Attacks:

Claw Swoop: Speed 7 Accuracy 8 Damage 1L Defense 3

Lightning Bolt: Speed 7 Accuracy 9 Damage 4L

Dodge Pool: 9 Soak: 1L/3B (Feathers)

Willpower: 6, Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Essence: 1, Essence Pool: 48

Other Notes: White Eagles may use Affinity Element Control despite lacking the normal Essence requirement.

WOOD

Wood elementals may possess an enigmatic nature, or they may embody fertility. They may be strong and sturdy or willowy and wild. Wood is a more versatile element than many believe it to be; almost anything can be made from wood.

ARTISANS

Artisans are tall, slender, fragile spirits. Their fingers are long and thin and incredibly quick. They pay no attention to their own appearance and are usually dirty and unkempt, with lank brown hair and rough, barklike skin. They speak very little and are introverted almost to the point of autism.

Artisans can do the most amazing work with wood, however. The tools of their craft are all carved from hard woods and, mysteriously, never wear down or dull. They can make serviceable goods such as furniture or weapon parts (such as sturdy axe hafts or slender arrow shafts). They can also create the most amazing and delicate works of art. Artisans have a perfect feel for wood—its strengths, its weaknesses and what purpose it would best serve.

Artisans do not craft living wood unless compelled to by a sorcerer; wood must be dead at least one month before an Artisan will willingly touch it. After the Artisan has finished crafting whatever the sorcerer wanted from the



living wood, its fingers become arthritic and pained, and it is unable to craft for a year and a day.

Items made by Artisans are unusually sturdy, but they can be broken. They also tend to fetch high prices. Whenever the tree that houses a tree-spirit dies, the Artisans descend on the wood and craft it as a tribute to their departed fellow. The Artisans wait for one month in honor of the former inhabitant and then craft the dead tree into something odd, unusual and quite splendid.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 5, Stamina 1, Charisma 1, Manipulation 1, Appearance 2, Perception 5, Intelligence 1, Wits 2

Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 2, Temperance 2, Valor 2

Abilities: Brawl 3, Craft 5, Dodge 2, Endurance 1, Resistance 1, Stealth 3, Survival 1

Backgrounds: Resources 3 (Artisans always have several small pieces of their work with them)

Suggested Charms: Dematerialize, Natural Prognostication, Landscape Travel/Camouflage/Hide, Stillness, Affinity Element Control, (Element Touch)

Elemental Powers: Aegis

Cost To Dematerialize: 28

Base Initiative: 7

Attacks:

Razor Finger Slash: Speed 7 Accuracy 8 Damage 2L Defense 5

Dodge Pool: 7 Soak: 3L/4B (Aegis, 3L/3B)

Willpower: 4, **Health Levels:** -0/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Essence: 2, **Essence Pool:** 48

EARTH

Earth elementals endure forever, but they may come across as overbearing or ignorant. They may be practical and strong, stubborn or even passive.

SERPENT-AND-EGG

These glittering green-and-gray serpents, wrapped around and seemingly forever about to swallow their egg, signify different things to different people. They personify wisdom to some, symbolizing the mother who absorbs the knowledge that is her child. To others, they signify dangerous or unhealthy knowledge as the mother who devours the child that should rightfully be her successor. Still others see them as spirits of the cycle of Essence, old and new in perpetual circulation. The Sidereal Exalted whisper among themselves that the serpent and its egg represent a solar eclipse: the egg the sun, and the serpent's body the darkness that devours its surface.

This elemental can, in its own somewhat autistic fashion, impart an understanding of the cycle of life and death. This understanding may be more trouble than it's worth, for it often leads sorcerers down dark and dangerous paths of power in search of such elusive goals as eternal life. Yet the danger comes only from the sorcerers' reactions to such things, and not from anything the serpent says or does.

And it is true that the serpent has an affinity for unseen power and for the invisible. Some sorcerers compel it to sniff out or explain such powers, or to give them the ability to do so. To ask any task of the serpent that requires movement on its part is bad luck, because it forces the serpent to swallow its egg in order to keep it close by. Depending on the circumstances, this can presage the birth of an Eclipse Caste Solar Exalted, the death of a king, the creation of an Abyssal Exalted, a tornado or similar natural disaster, the disruption of a truth-seeker's quest, a loss of harmony, a poor harvest season or the first snowfall of Water.

The serpents themselves are passive, content to help the sorcerer who compels them in any way, regardless of what they are told to do. In truth, they feel deep inside that the knowledge they impart always leads to someone's bad end, and that pleases them. In a very fundamental way, they dislike Creation and most things in it (with the exception of the Solar Exalted of the Eclipse Caste and Lunar Exalted of the No Moon Caste, for whom they feel an odd affinity), but they are quite content to allow the actions of impetuous sorcerers to doom themselves and other mortals.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2, Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance 4, Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 2

Virtues: Compassion 1, Conviction 4, Temperance 2, Valor 2

Abilities: Awareness 4, Brawl 2, Dodge 3, Lore 5, Occult 4, Presence 1, Stealth 3, Survival 2

Backgrounds: None

Suggested Charms: Dematerialize, Natural Prognostication, Foretell the Future, Landscape Travel/Camouflage, Memory Mirror/Sponge/Transference, Stillness, Sustainance, Steal Sustainance, Paralyze, Words of Power

Cost To Dematerialize: 48

Base Initiative: 6

Attacks:

Bite: Speed 6 Accuracy 6 Damage 1L Defense 1

Dodge Pool: 7 Soak: 3L/4B (Scales 2L/2B)

Willpower: 6, **Health Levels:** -0x2/-1x3/-2x3/-4/Incap

Essence: 3, **Essence Pool:** 66

Other Notes: The Serpent's Paralyze Charm activates when it bites someone.

DEMONS

Demons of the First Circle are servants, comparatively easily bound by the will of sorcerers and more powerful demons. They rarely possess their own names and are rarely unique creatures, instead being races or types of beings. Demons of the Second Circle possess their own names in the singular. They are more powerful than demons of the First Circle, although they too may be summoned and compelled by sorcerers. They are not as powerful as the demon princes, the lesser of whom comprise the Third Circle.

BISCLAVARETS, DEMONS OF THE FIRST CIRCLE

A bisclavaret is a trickster and a shapechanger. The skin of its true face looks like a network of cobwebs. Its iron-gray eyes glitter with fierce, animalistic cunning. Its clothing is tattered and torn. Even the finest fresh robes fall apart over the course of several days — this is the mark of its nature and shows through no matter what handsome form it may take.

In travel, the bisclavaret prefers to take on animal form, so that it may fly or run swiftly. Otherwise it enjoys the company of mortals and frequently takes on the form of a mortal woman or man. The bisclavaret may only shift its shape at twilight (dawn or dusk), “the time between the dog and the wolf,” the time between civilization and the wild.

When in animal form, the bisclavaret favors sustenance in the form of mortal flesh and blood, the feathers of a dove, the liver and spleen of a wolf, or the eggs of a serpent. In human form, the bisclavaret eats only honey and, occasionally, mortal shadows cast by moonlight. Any person whose shadow becomes food for the bisclavaret loses all ability to sleep within a fortnight, his waking moments hounded by nightmares and visions. Only a potion made of honey, flowers with purple petals and three drops of venom from a tree snake may restore a normal sleep pattern, but the mortal never entirely returns to normal.

The bisclavaret possesses an intelligence that lies somewhere between mortal and animal. It may carry on a conversation, but eventually the other party realizes that there was something wrong with it. Most assume that the bisclavaret was brain-damaged or mentally handicapped in some way.

Despite its inarticulate nature, the bisclavaret plays with mortals as a cat plays with mice, tormenting them, playing tricks on them and frightening them until they break down from stress and fear. It also delights in setting people against each other with its tricks. When it feels particularly vicious, it forces mortals to carry it on their backs over long roads, driving them to exhaustion and sometimes to their deaths.

The bisclavaret’s love of tormenting people leaves it lonely. Each time it finds company and starts to enjoy someone’s presence or conversation it grows restless, impatient and angry, until it cannot help but torment those around it.

Nature: Architect, Bravo, Conniver, Explorer, Hedonist, Jester, Rebel or Thrillseeker

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2, Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2 to 4, Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 2

Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 4, Temperance 1, Valor 2

Abilities: Athletics 2, Brawl 4, Craft 2, Dodge 1, Endurance 3, Larceny 5, Melee 2, Perform 2, Stealth 4, Survival 2, Thrown 2

Backgrounds: None

Suggested Charms: Tracking, Confusion, Sustenance, Steal Sustenance, Materialize, Form Match, Shapechange, (Will-o-Wisp), (Paralyze), (Tiny Damnation), (Imprecation), (Harrow the Mind), (Possession), (Stoke the Flame), (Element Touch)

Cost To Materialize: 30

Base Initiative: 6

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 6 Accuracy 8 Damage 4B Defense 8

Kick: Speed 3 Accuracy 7 Damage 6B Defense 6

Dodge Pool: 5 **Soak:** 3L/4B (Tough Hide, 2L/2B)

Willpower: 6, **Health Levels:** -0x1/-1x3/-2x4/-4/Incap

Essence: 3, **Essence Pool:** 56

Other Notes: The bisclavaret’s particular version of Steal Sustenance works with a Temperance of only 1, and works even if the mortal is awake. If the mortal tries to keep the bisclavaret from taking its shadow, then the usual Dexterity + Brawl or Martial Arts check is required (unless it Paralyzes the mortal first, which is its preferred tactic).

ANUHLES, DEMONS OF THE FIRST CIRCLE

The anuhles are giant spiders. They range from the size of a housecat on up to a large horse. They may lift ten times their own body weight. They possess spinnerets and prefer to spin strong ropes of sticky, shimmering silk around their victims while their victims sleep. By the time the victim awakes, there’s no way for him to break free.


Many anuhles are poisonous, and a single bite may lead to hallucinations, fever, sickness, paralysis or even death. Some poisons cause much stranger effects. Dog-sized gray anuhles (called Dog-Spiders) inject their victims with a hypnotic that leaves them open to suggestion. Particularly vicious anuhles with dull red carapaces (called Scarlets) inject their victims with a poison that slowly dissolves everything but the skin. Scintillating blue anuhles (called Star-Spinners) cut their victims’ bellies open with sharp mandibles and eat them from the inside out.

Most anuhles are killers, although they may also capture victims and truss them up for storage or transport. Larger anuhles may strap their silk-wrapped burdens to their backs and carry them thusly. Sorcerers most often call on these demons to sneak into houses in the middle of the night, murdering or kidnapping the sorcerers’ enemies.

Anuhles have eight many-jointed limbs and a hard exoskeleton. The exoskeleton may be slick and slimy, furred, or dry and hot. They have many-faceted eyes that burn with tiny fires or gleam cold and silvery. A few have no eyes at all and yet find their way with uncanny accuracy. The mandibles of anuhles are always sharp, and sometimes the tips of their legs are pointed and sharp as well.

The anuhles cannot hunt and kill unless they are summoned and ordered to do so; thus, they obey their sorcerous masters with slavish devotion. Any excuse to





slay or feed upon mortals delights these creatures. They cannot abide the barking of a dog — it sends them into paroxysms of pain. Thus they meticulously avoid or kill any dogs in the area before moving on to the humans.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3; Social Attributes vary wildly from 1 to 5; Perception 5, Intelligence 1 to 5, Wits 3

Virtues: Compassion 1, Conviction 5, Temperance 1 to 3, Valor 4

Abilities: Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Brawl 4, Craft 4 (Webwork), Dodge 3, Larceny 3, Resistance 2, Stealth 5, Survival 1, Thrown 3

Backgrounds: None

Cost To Materialize: 28

Base Initiative: 8

Attacks:

Bite: Speed 8 Accuracy 9 Damage 3L Defense 7

Dodge Pool: 8 **Soak:** 6L/8B (Tough Hide, 5L/5B)

Suggested Charms: Landscape Travel, Confusion, (Hoodwink), Stillness, (Camouflage), (Hurry Home), (Sustenance), (Steal Sustenance), Materialize, (Details), (Paralyze), (Element Touch/Kiss), (Tiny Damnation), (Imprecation), (Harrow the Mind), (Possession), Principle of Motion

Willpower: 9, **Health Levels:** -0x3/-1x3/-2x6/-4/**Incap Essence:** 2, **Essence Pool:** 71

Other Notes: This particular version of Landscape Travel allows the anuhles to easily walk on walls and ceilings, and to otherwise move much as any other spider. This template represents a generic anuhle — to model a specific type, use one of the parenthetically noted Charms reflexively activated by the spirit's bite.

MARA, DEMON OF THE SECOND CIRCLE

Mara looks almost mortal, if you don't look too closely. She usually appears as a comely maiden of anywhere from fifteen to fifty years. Most of her features change but her eyes are always a bright blue, and she sports the hooves of a deer beneath her long skirt. She prefers to dress in the colors of the forest, and she seems most comfortable in forested areas. Some have suggested that she might once have been a tree- or forest-spirit. The rest of her features match the cultural preferences of the person she appears to.

Mara is called Shadow-Lover in some places, and Eater of Souls in others. She may be summoned by sorcerers, but deep and abiding grief for a loved one may also call her forth from Malfeas in the form of that loved one. Another legend states that seven tears shed into a still forest pool will conjure her, and that her arrival is marked by the arc of a shooting star across the heavens.

Mara seduces mortals, either physically or in their dreams. Her victim may die overnight, or he may waste away over a period of days or weeks. Mara may enter a

home in her own form or in the form of a cat or a mist, and she kills by swallowing the souls of those whom she seduces — though she may not kill Exalted in this manner. She entices the souls from their bodies in the midst of the throes of passion or the unknowing depths of sleep. Her victim's soul comes forth in the form of a vapor, a butterfly, a bird or a snake (or less savory things, such as swarms of insects), which she eats as it issues forth. She may regurgitate the soul later (unharmful), thus transporting a mortal's soul from body to sorcerer. She may also return the soul to the body, provided that the body is still alive, but most bodies die once the entire soul has been removed.

At times Mara has seduced a man or woman and chosen not to eat his or her soul, but no one knows for sure why not. Did the taste displease her? Did her victim please her and earn her favor? Does she refuse some types of victims? It is likely that she operates under a complex set of rules? Some tribes to the South say that anyone she visits and does not kill is destined to become a great shaman (some ambitious folk have lied and claimed to have had congress with her in order to become favored as shamans). In the Eastern forests where she prefers to tread, she will not harm those whom the forest favors and protects; she has an ancient pact with the forest spirits there. In the North it is whispered that she is a melancholy soul, and anyone who can make her laugh will survive their encounter with her.

Some that Mara spares are destined to cause great misery or suffering within their lifetimes. She returns to such people over and over again, teaching them the delights of the body. She feeds them pieces of other people's souls from her own lips in order to strengthen them and to give them a taste for death.

There are many things rumored to keep Mara from one's bed or home; few of them actually work, and no one knows exactly which ones are effective. Some say that only those who sleep with their heads toward the South are vulnerable to her affections. Others say that only those who grieve too deeply for their loved ones and fail to move on attract her attentions. Rumor has it that putting one's shoes by the bed with toes pointing outward is an effective barrier, or placing an iron nail under the foot of the bed. In some villages it is said that she takes only the beautiful, and so when she has been sighted parents scar and disfigure their children's faces.

Many small towns and villages have had some experience with Mara over the past few centuries, particularly in the East. She avoids large towns and cities unless compelled otherwise.

Nature: Paragon (from a certain perverse point of view)

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2, Charisma 5, Manipulation 4, Appearance 4, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Virtues: Compassion 3, Conviction 4, Temperance 5, Valor 2

Abilities: Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Dodge 3, Linguistics 3, Lore 4, Martial Arts 5 (Black Claw Style +2), Occult 2, Perform 3, Presence 4, Resistance 5, Stealth 5

Backgrounds: Allies 2, Contacts 2, Followers 3, Influence 2, Resources 1

Suggested Charms: Dreampeak, Dreamscape, Natural Prognostication, Essence Bite, Foretell the Future, Hand of Destiny, Summon Food, Tiny Gift, Benefaction, Largess, Confusion, Dreambane, Sustenance, Steal Sustenance, Materialize, Details, Form Match, Shapechange, Paralyze, Harrow the Mind, Stoke the Flame, Principle of Motion

Cost To Materialize: 86

Base Initiative: 7

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 7 Accuracy 11 Damage 4B Defense 11

Kick: Speed 4 Accuracy 10 Damage 6B Defense 10

Dodge Pool: 7 Soak: 4L/5B (Tough Skin, 3L/3B)

Willpower: 9, **Health Levels:** -0x2/-1x4/-2x6/-4/Inc

Essence: 6, **Essence Pool:** 102

Other Notes: Horses and other animals fear Mara and will not approach her, with the exception of deer, which accept her as one of their own. Mara's version of Form Match allows her to duplicate a dead loved one's form, rather than the person in front of her.

SONDOK, DEMON OF THE SECOND CIRCLE

Sondok is a protector-demon known as She-Who-Stands-in-Doorways; sorcerers compel her to guard their homes, treasures or other important things in times of great danger. She stands five feet tall; her hair is a cloud of black fibers so fine they cannot be discerned as individual strands. The constellations can be seen faintly in her blood-filled eyes, and she is most powerful on cloudless nights when the stars are visible. Poisonous red mushrooms grow where she has walked the earth.

Sondok wears armor of dark red leather, and beneath it, a shirt and pants of black silk. She wears a crown of gold and garnet, with gold uprights designed to mimic the ears of a wolf, and dangling strings of garnet framing her face meant to represent the dead roots of trees. Her nails are black talons, with blood eternally encrusted beneath them. She fights with sword, battleaxe or claws, and does not fear to use her Charms in carrying out her duty. She speaks with a smooth, cold voice that sends chills into the hearts of warriors. Her face is more striking than beautiful, with strong features; her teeth, occasionally revealed behind slender lips, are sharp and pointed.

Sondok walks with swift, powerful strides that make her seem taller than she is. Dried blood marks her cheeks, and some

say that she washes herself in animal blood before each new task. A black tattoo in the form of an intricate bird claw marks her left breast, and the spirit of a decaying brown dog accompanies her everywhere. Sondok is angry and cold, totally devoted to her tasks. Only once has she ever shown favor to a mortal, a Dragon-Blooded sorcerer who fathered her child. This daughter — named Silla — has hidden herself away somewhere in the city of Nexus, or perhaps the River Province. This young woman bears a birthmark that matches her mother's tattoo, but in all other ways appears like any other Dragon-Blooded. Prophecy states that only by tricking Sondok into washing in her daughter's blood may she be completely destroyed. Sondok guards her daughter's identity and location viciously; a threat to the girl drives Sondok out of her cold demeanor and into a frenzy of rage. It is said that Sondok killed her daughter's father, despite favoring him, in order to keep anyone from getting information about the girl out of him. Others say she keeps him imprisoned (or safe) somewhere.

Some sorcerers have summoned Sondok not to guard, but rather to teach. She is a consummate fighter, battling with pure economy of motion, and those who become her pupils excel in the physical arts of battle.

Nature: Bravo

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4, Charisma 1, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Virtues: Compassion 1, Conviction 5, Temperance 2, Valor 5

Abilities: Athletics 4, Awareness 2, Brawl 4, Dodge 4, Endurance 3, Martial Arts 4, Melee 6 (Sword +1, Axe +1, Claws +1), Presence 4, Resistance 4, Thrown 4

Backgrounds: Allies 1, Contacts 4, Destiny 4, Familiar 1, Followers 3, Resources 2

Suggested Charms: Landscape Travel, Instill Obedience, Materialize, Element Control, Tiny Damnation, Imprecation, Malediction, Scourge, Words of Power, Essence Bite, Principle of Motion

Cost To Materialize: 87

Base Initiative: 7

Attacks:

Claw: Speed 7 Accuracy 7 Damage 7L Defense 7

Infernal Axe: Speed 7 Accuracy 12 Damage 11L Defense 11

Infernal Sword: Speed 9 Accuracy 13 Damage 9L Defense 12

Dodge Pool: 7 Soak: 12L/13B (Infernal Reinforced Breastplate + Target Shield, 10L/9B, +1 difficulty to hit)

Willpower: 10, **Health Levels:** -0x3/-1x6/-2x6/-4/Inc

Essence: 5, **Essence Pool:** 106

Other Notes: Sondok's version of Landscape Travel also works in areas of fire, lava or barren rock.





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CHAPTER FOUR FURTHER WONDERS



The Exalted live in a world filled with magic, including items of wondrous and magical craft. The most powerful magic artifacts date back to the First Age, when all the secrets of magic were fully known. Other magic items are later attempts by Dragon-Blooded magicians to copy First Age artifacts. The empire's magicians retain some skill at crafting items of elemental power, but only the Celestial Exalted can cast the most powerful enchantments.

The Exalted live in an age of magic, but Storytellers should not haphazardly scatter magic items as prizes for characters to win. Keep in mind that every wondrous device was made for some practical purpose — they have owners, and their owners use them. Magic weapons provide the most obvious example.

Storytellers should strive to make powerful magic items interesting and distinctive in some way, with hooks for stories. A simple flaming sword, for instance, is just loot to wrest from whomever owns it. The Sword of the Sunset, lost to barbarians a hundred years ago and prophesied to be the only weapon that can slay the Deathlord of the Isle of Bone — that is a story waiting to happen.

GHOST CESTUS (ARTIFACT •••)

A cestus is an armored glove designed to enhance the force of punches, much like brass knuckles. The Dragon-Blooded use cesti in some of their fighting styles. Sorcerers and Essence-smiths sometimes enchant cesti to make a fighter more powerful.

Ghost cesti are one of the oldest sorts of enchanted gauntlet, produced and used in the Realm and beyond. These magical gloves incorporate whatever magical substance its Exalted creator preferred: orichalcum, moonsilver, starstone or (most common, nowadays) jade. When a local spirit challenged the Empress' authority by proclaiming itself a god, she sent a champion armed with ghost cesti to subdue it. Non-Exalted priests of the Immaculate Order also might carry ghost cesti.

Spirits don't have to remain solid or visible. A warrior who wears ghost cesti, however, can see and punch and wrestle with a spirit that other people can neither see nor touch. Ghost cesti cannot kill a spirit — that requires more dreadful and powerful magic — but a cestus-wielding wizard or warrior can pummel a spirit into submission. Spirits are so used to their invulnerability that a few good uppercuts from a “mere mortal” can utterly demoralize them.

Ghost cesti work against both umbrood and ghosts. Mortal souls are immune, however, because their garment of flesh protects them. The Deathlords have not yet made their own ghost cesti.

System: Ghost cesti operate for normal humans just as well as they do for Exalted or magicians. They require no special training to use. When a character fights using ghost cesti, the player makes all the normal dice rolls for unarmed combat and inflicts the normal, Strength-based damage of the combat maneuver. Instead of health levels, however, the



character inflicts points of temporary Willpower loss. The victim can soak this attack using her own Willpower. See page 147 in *Exalted* for the effects of total Willpower loss on humans; spirits become totally obedient to the one who subdued them. Spirits recover lost willpower as if it were lethal damage; mortals, as if it were bashing damage.

SLING BOW OF ICE (ARTIFACT ●●●)

The Sling Bow of Ice is a weapon that has been used since the First Age of Man. They were once common, but time has claimed most of them. Though the sorcerers and savants of the Realm can still create them, their numbers are few.

A sling bow resembles a normal bow, but instead of arrows it fires bullets of stone or metal, like a sling. These particular sling bows are fashioned of mingled black and blue jade carved with a fine tracery of frost ferns. A bullet of black or blue jade fired from the weapon explodes on impact into a cloud of snow and icy fog that sets everyone within 20 feet shivering uncontrollably, no matter how warmly they are dressed, unless they carry a bit of orichalcum or are protected by magic that shields them from cold. It also coats the ground with a thin layer of slippery ice, making it hard to remain upright.

A shot from the weapon also freezes bodies of water to a depth of four to six inches in a 10-foot radius, depending on how warm the water is. In the Great Eastern War, General Tepet Hala used this power to move her legion across a river and take the Eastern army by surprise.

System: The Sling Bow's magic requires three factors: the weapon itself, a walnut-sized bullet of black or blue jade, and a wielder who can manipulate Essence. The Sling Bow requires a single mote of Essence to fuel its magic. In the First Age, there were bullets imbued with Essence so that mortals could use these weapons, but the secret of this process is lost and such ammunition is vanishingly rare in the modern era.

The player rolls Essence + Archery. For each success, everyone within 10 feet of the impact loses one dot of Dexterity from shivering, frostbitten numbness and slipping on the icy ground. A victim with 0 Dexterity can do nothing but huddle in misery. A character's Essence is subtracted from the number of successes rolled. The zone of supernatural cold lasts one turn per success rolled in hot weather, one minute per success in mild conditions, and five minutes per success if the weather is already chill. Anyone who enters the zone of cold suffers its effect; anyone who leaves it regains one Dexterity per turn.

A character may soak the Sling Bow's supernatural cold using their Essence rating. The weapon does not affect Undead at all. A person who carries a bit of orichalcum also becomes immune to the weapon's effect, as are characters with charms or spells active that protect them from extreme cold. In the First Age, soldiers operating in conjunction with Sling Bow-armed Exalted wore orichalcum rings to protect them from the weapon's effect. Since the art of

forging orichalcum was lost centuries ago, latter-day warriors must exercise care when employing the Bow.

THE GOLDEN VIPER (ARTIFACT ●●●●●)

The master magicians of the First Age could breathe the semblance of life into dead matter, producing animate but unliving servants. Latter-day wizards achieve similar results by binding spirits into magically crafted bodies, but these golems are either mindless or display entirely too much free will.

The Golden Viper is the most intelligent automaton known, and even First Age texts speak of it as a notable thing. This lifelike serpent, fashioned of orichalcum and jewels on a framework of starstone, stretches six feet long and is about four inches wide at its thickest. The Golden Viper serves anyone who possesses it, once its previous owner is dead.

The Viper is a formidable assassin. It can move through small openings and hide like a real serpent, coil and strike. In a matter of seconds, a person bitten by the Viper turns to gold (ordinary gold, not orichalcum). Magicians and Exalted have somewhat greater resistance to the Golden Viper's bite than do mere mortals, but even they can be slain and transmuted by the magic serpent's bite.

What's more, the automaton knows whatever any of its victims knew. It advises its owner on the basis of this truly awesome base of stolen knowledge and experience. The Golden Viper knows no mercy or compassion. It advises the most ruthlessly practical course to whatever goal its master seeks. If the Viper's master is not already a complete cynic about human nature, she will be after a few years of the Viper's callous insight into human foibles.

System: The Golden Viper itself has Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5, Perception 5, Intelligence 7, Wits 5, Charisma 3, Manipulation 5, Appearance 3, Willpower 10. It lacks Virtues since these have no meaning for its cold, inhuman intellect. Instead of defining a list of specific Abilities, the Storyteller may assume that the Viper has a rating of 4 in any Ability it needs, with one exception: it remembers nothing about the First Age... or claims not to. It speaks all known languages, and rapidly learns any new ones it is exposed to. Its health levels are -0x3/-1x2/-2x2/-4x2/Incapx3, and it has a soak of 7L/10B. Restoring a health level to the Golden Viper is a difficulty 2 task on an Intelligence + Crafts roll.

The Golden Viper's magical bite inflicts a base of 6L special damage. Only armor can soak this damage, though Exalted characters can add their Essence to their rating. Each health level inflicted also strips away one point of Dexterity, as the victim's body stiffens. If the victim survives the attack, the magic fades quickly: the victim regains health levels and Dexterity as if they were bashing damage. If the victim is reduced below 0 dexterity, he is transmuted forever to gold.



LAND SHIP (ARTIFACT •••••)

In the First Age, land ships were common. Very few of them remain. Masters of earth and water magic, working together, could craft new land ships — but this has not happened in centuries. Although land ships were once common, war or accident has destroyed most of them. Two Dragon-Blooded nobles own land ships; so does one Deathlord. Perhaps a few more await discovery.

All the magic of a land ship rests in its keel — a long, curving strip of yellow jade sandwiched between strips of black jade. The rest of the ship is ordinary wood and metal, built however the shipwright pleased and subject to normal wear and aging. The two land ships in mortal hands are both single-masted forty-footers with high prows. One is square-rigged, the other lateen-rigged. The Deathlord's ship is a 60-foot sloop.

A land ship sails through earth and stone as easily as it sails through water. The land ripples around the ship's hull and in a short wake behind it, until it quiets and returns to its former shape and solidity. A tracker familiar with the signs can follow a land ship's wake for days afterward, but an untrained eye does not see any trace of a land ship's passing. The land ship cleaves low stone walls or boulders as if they were waves.

Still, the ship's magic has limits. A land ship cannot sail up or down cliffs, any more than a mundane ship can sail up or down a waterfall. The one time someone tried using


a land ship to breach castle walls, the ship's high prow went into the wall — and the liquefied stone pushed the prow down into the ground. The land ship sank into the earth.

System: A land ship requires someone who can manipulate Essence to start it sailing on land, though in the First Age there were devices that contained Essence that could be used so that the vessels did not need Exalted crews. To start the vessel sailing requires one mote of Essence per hour and a simple success on an Essence + Sailing roll. With a good wind and a skilled crew, a land ship can sail at 10 miles per hour, +1 mph for each success on the captain's Intelligence + Sailing roll — wind permitting. Bad weather or obstacles such as trees may result in increased difficulty.

SINGING STAFF (ARTIFACT ••••)

The Singing Staff demonstrates the odd approach to magic taken by some First Age magicians. This man-high staff of white jade is carved in an irregular series of waves and swellings, with a knob at each end. When rubbed with a rosined bow, the Singing Staff emits a sweet tone, like a musical saw; different parts of the staff play different pitches and timbres.

If one plants the end of the Singing Staff on the ground and plays it correctly, the land responds to the music, rising and falling like waves or shaping itself like clay molded by unseen hands. This makes the Singing Staff precious as both a tool and a weapon: the Staff can topple castle walls as easily as it digs canals. The Staff's uses are limited only by the skills of its player.



Singing Staves are immensely sophisticated devices, despite their simple appearance. They were never easy to make, and in the modern era are vastly difficult — only three are known to exist. One is in the hands of the Empress and stored among her personal effects, one at the Heptagram for study, and one is held by the Immaculates of Pasiap, who use it for geomantic landscaping when building new Manses. Two used to be held by the military, but one was lost in battle with the Tepet legions and the other lies on the bottom of the Inner Sea. Although the effects of the Staves are functionally identical, each one has its own musical “tuning.”

System: Wielding the Singing Staff's magic costs one mote of Essence per turn, and even in the First Age required an Exalted wielder. Each turn of use, the Staff can reshape 100 cubic feet of earth, sand or clay, or 20 cubic feet of stone. To use the Staff, the character's player must succeed on an Essence + Performance roll (difficulty set by the detail or magnitude of the task). The Storyteller may demand multiple rolls to succeed at lengthy tasks, or additional Ability rolls for tasks that demand specialized training. For instance, constructing an ornamental stone pavilion might require three Essence + Ability rolls: Performance to use the Staff correctly, Craft to make sure the building stands, and another Craft to get the ornamental carving right.

EYE OF AUTOCHTHON (ARTIFACT N/A)

The Eye of Autochthon surpasses all other magic items known, for the Primordial Autochthon itself created it. Through the Eye, mortals can tap a tiny fraction of a power older than the world or gods or time itself — if they dare.

The Eye of Autochthon looks like an immense black pearl, so large that a hero might strain to wrap his arms around it. Its ebon luster draws the eye into limitless depths of dark radiance, a void that could birth worlds. No force, whether human, natural or divine, could so much as scratch the Eye's surface, but in the First Age some unknown agency clamped the great globe into a tight-fitting nest of three gimbaled rings so that the Eye could turn freely in all directions. With no hand to push it, the Eye nevertheless spins by itself.

No one since the First Age has owned the Eye long enough to fathom all its mysteries. The sages of the Immaculate Order know this much: The mere presence of the Eye quells all disturbances of land, sea, air and Essence for a league around it. The earth does not quake. Storms and waves calm. The Wyld itself subsides and stabilizes. The Fair Folk wither and die in minutes if they enter the Eye's zone of power. The few trustworthy accounts of the Eye also tell of other powers that the Eye granted to owners who could weave the threads of Essence.

Six centuries ago, the sorcerer Bagrash Köl used the Eye to wrest a Demesne from the northern Wyld. He built a citadel so tall that its towers needed gates to let the moon pass through, and enslaved thousands of peasants and barbarians to populate his kingdom. Five years later, dozens of terror-maddened men and women appeared in the northern Threshold kingdoms.

They said that Bagrash Köl's kingdom had met a strange and nameless doom. Many sought the kingdom of Bagrash Köl in hopes of looting his treasures, but no one ever found his citadel — or if they did, they never returned.

Five centuries ago, the Grand Satrap Manosque Viridian found the Eye and sought to usurp the Empress. At Lord Viridian's command, the Manses of power that defend the Realm shut down, denying their use to the Empress and their legitimate owners. The legions of House Manosque were only three days' march from the Imperial capital when the day darkened to blackest night and — so the survivors said — Lord Viridian and half his army fell into the sky. The Empress subsequently killed every remaining member of House Manosque, even though they were of her own blood.

She did not obtain the Eye, though. Two centuries ago, the Eye turned up again in the hands of the Southlands prophet Ikerre, who proclaimed a crusade against all the forces of chaos. Ikerre's cult of Autochthon decimated the Fair Folk of the south and cleansed two shadowlands. When the Imperial legions came to wrest the eye from Ikerre, however, they found the prophet and her caravan entirely turned to crystal — but not a trace of the Eye.

System: The Eye's power to suppress all physical and magical turbulence within several miles operates automatically. No wind blows above a mild, steady breeze. No one in the area suffers Wyld contamination. Charms and sorcery have normal immediate effects, but any continuing effect has its duration cut in half as the Eye reorders the local Essence. Magical storms or earthquakes fail.

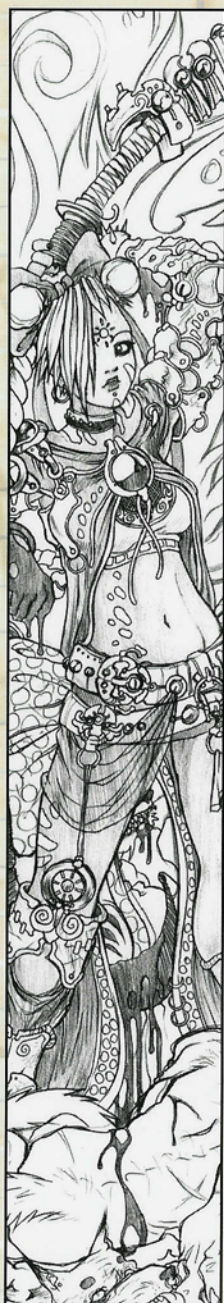
The Eye's active powers may be summarized as “plot device.” The Eye can do whatever the Storyteller wants it to; in general, the Eye rearranges Essence at the wielder's command. As its history shows, the Eye can create, destroy or usurp control of Manses and Demesnes. The Eye cannot rearrange the stable lands of the Realm and Threshold but can transform the looser, more Essence-soaked reality of the Wyld or the shadowlands.

The Eye demands great expenditure of Essence. Usurping control of a Manse, for instance, might require its owner to expend 15 motes for every dot of the Manse's power, though how the un-Exalted prophet Ikerre used it remains a mystery.

The Eye also demands great skill to use. The player must succeed at an Essence + Occult roll at +2 difficulty to discover a new use for the Eye, and roll a simple success to perform the feat thereafter. Any botch means that the character suffers some bizarre and very permanent doom. So might everyone else within a mile or so, depending on the Storyteller's mood.

Please note that it's in bad taste to kill off an entire group of players' characters just because one of them insists on meddling in Forces Beyond Human Control. Give the other characters a *chance* to escape! Note also that the Eye does not function as an Instant Enemy Killer: The Primordial's power just doesn't operate on that focused a scale. Any target smaller than a castle is too puny for the Eye to affect directly.

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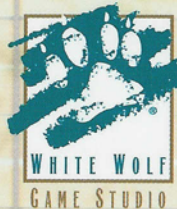
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