EXALTED
SECOND EDITION
DREAMS
OF THE
FIRST AGE

BOOK ONE

LANDS OF CREATION™

EXALTED SECOND EDITION

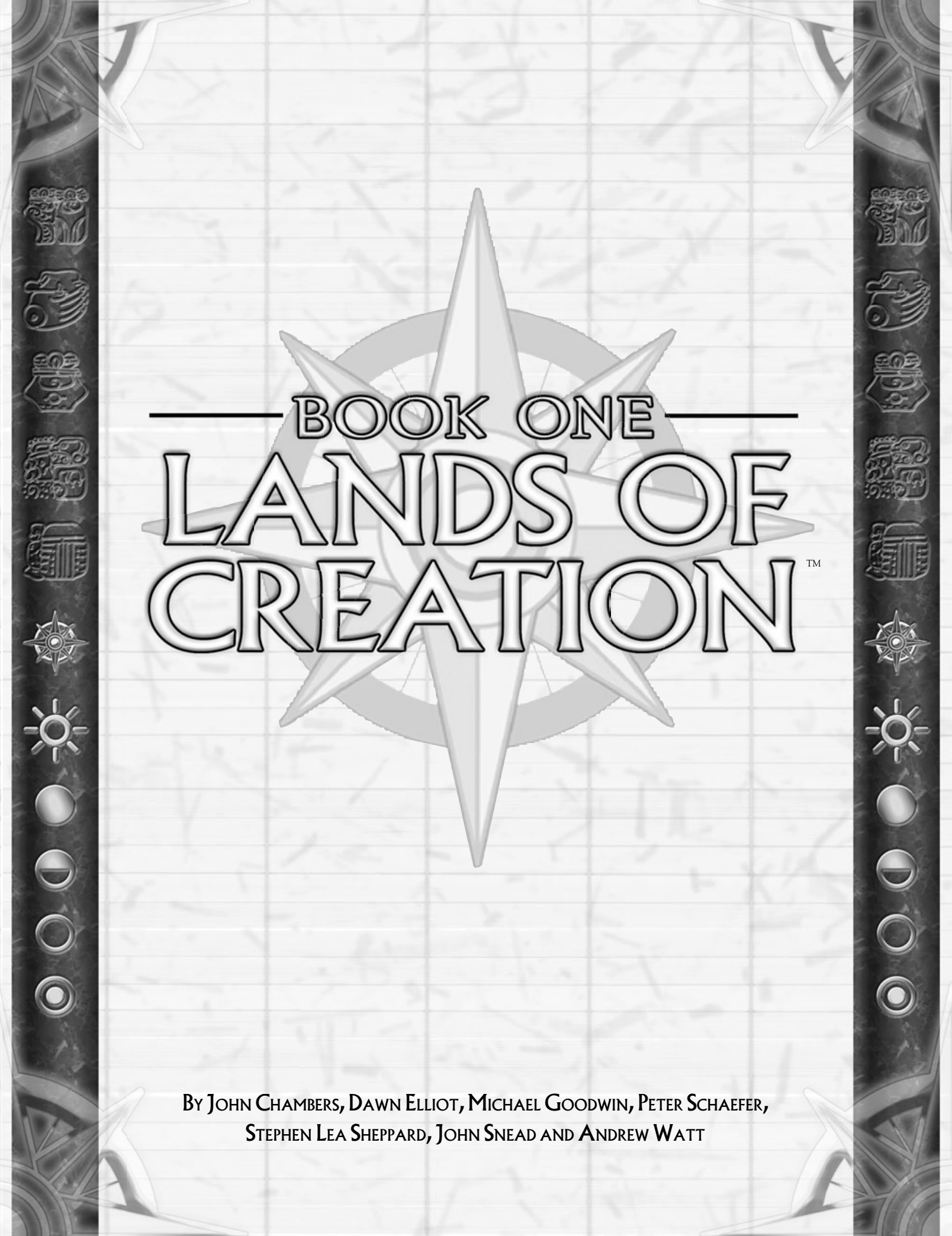

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Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Chapter One: Life in the High First Age	9
Chapter Two: The Blessed Isle	48
Chapter Three: The East	66
Chapter Four: The South	86
Chapter Five: The West	108
Chapter Six: The North	133
Appendix: Old Realm Script	153

TODAY IS MY FIRST WAR.
I'VE BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO IT.
UNFORTUNATELY, THE ENEMY NUMBERS IN THE TENS OF THOUSANDS.
SEEMS LIKE A WASTE OF TIME.
OH WELL...
FORWARD!

Introduction

Creation destroys as it goes, throws down one tree for the rise of another. But ideal mankind would abolish death, multiply itself million upon million, rear up city upon city, save every parasite alive, until the accumulation of mere existence is swollen to a horror.
—D. H. Lawrence, *In The Short Novels, vol. 2*

At the height of the First Age, Creation was a much larger and more advanced place than it is in the fallen Age of Sorrows. The Solar Princes of the Earth have had millennia to expand the world's borders and apply their unrivaled genius to its governance and magitechnical advancement. As a result, the Era of Dreams is a time of peace and prosperity beyond the wildest imaginings of Second Age folk.

All is not perfect in this time of miracles, however. The Great Curse has taken root in the hearts of the Celestial Exalts, leading the Chosen to acts of hubris and barbarism on a scale just as grand as all their other acts, threatening the very survival of Creation itself.

How to Use This Book

Dreams of the First Age—Lands of Creation is a guide to Creation in the Age of Splendor. With this information, and the information provided in the other two books included in this boxed set, it's possible to play games set at the height of Solar Exalted dominance of Creation. It's a time of glory… and madness.

Chapter One: Life in the High First Age

This chapter offers a general overview of what it's like to live at the height of the Old Realm's glory. From its shrouded history to its Deliberative government, from its most celebrated Exalted citizen to its lowliest slave race,

This Is Not a Complete Game!

Despite its size, **Dreams of the First Age** is not a complete game. It is a supplement for **Exalted**, a game about near-divine heroes in a world of high fantasy. The game's core book describes the Solar Exalted, the rightful rulers of Creation, reborn into a world that has cast them as demonic despots from a bygone era (*this* era, actually). This supplement does not describe the game's core traits or present its rules for conflict-resolution. This supplement instead gives in-depth information about the First Age: its society, its lands and the rules necessary to create and play Solar, Lunar, Sidereal and Dragon-Blooded characters in it. You'll need the **Exalted** core book for the basics, though.

the secrets of the First Realm are laid bare for Storytellers and players alike.

Chapter Two: The Blessed Isle

This section concerns itself with the Blessed Isle, one-time home to the gods and jewel of the Realm. It is from here that the Lawgivers rule Creation, spending two out of every five years lounging on sprawling estates scattered about the Isle and arguing with their Solar peers on the floor of the Deliberative.

Chapter Three: The East

The East is the breadbasket of the Realm and the most populated direction of the Threshold. This chapter offers a complete breakdown of its provinces and examples of some of its best-known principalities and cities, providing players and Storytellers myriad locales and story hooks for their characters and their games.

Chapter Four: The South

The South is the second most populous of the Threshold's directions, and the one with perhaps the most varied climate. This chapter offers a tour of the South's four large provinces and many of their cities and principalities. It also offers a new threat to Solar hegemony in the form of the pure-bred Lintha.

Chapter Five: The West

Creation's West least conforms to the standards of the rest of Creation. Lacking the land of the other directions, the West has but one province, with most of its Solar Princes ruling individual island-cities or archipelago principalities. It's also the direction with the least direct Deliberative oversight, so it's home to more tributaries and hidden genesis labs than any of the more thoroughly populated regions of the world.

Chapter Six: The North

The least populated and, in many ways, least developed direction of the First Age Threshold, the North is a place of savage splendor interspersed with shining civilization. Here more than anywhere else, it is still possible to make one's mark and carve out one's own principality from the icy wastes where Creation abuts the Wyld.

Appendix: Old Realm Script

This appendix presents, for the first time, the complete Old Realm writing system used in **Exalted** books since the game's launch. Now the game's many secret missives will become clear, and you can compose your own for your series.

A Few Guidelines for Playing First Age Games

It's not easy to run an exciting game set in a utopia. This text, therefore, touches on issues of storytelling First Age games even as it examines playing in them.

The Issue of Size

Readers will notice that the coverage this book gives to the setting throughout is… erratic. Not everything is described, and some things that seem like they should be important are mentioned off-handedly only once or twice. Other things (such as the groups of Deliberative laws known as the Accords) are mentioned as existing but never described at all, while still other areas receive disproportionately sharp focus.

This is intentional. Creation, especially during the First Age, is *huge*.

As of this writing, the Earth has a population of approximately six and a half billion people and a surface area of about 197 million square miles—of which only about 30 percent of the surface is land. In the First Age, Creation has a population of just over 10 billion mortals, plus a substantial population of intelligent supernatural creatures (especially spirits, which number in the billions easily, though spirits with human-level intelligence number "only" in the hundreds of millions). While its surface area is a mere 160 million miles or so, only about a fifth of that is water, leaving about 128 million square miles of land. Additionally, Yu-Shan (the size of the Blessed Isle), Malfeas (incalculably large) and the Underworld (as large as Creation) add to those numbers. The Wyld is potentially infinite.

First Age Creation has over 250 principalities, each with multiple cities tended almost as art projects over three millennia by nigh-immortal Celestial Exalted. It has a substantial number of Solars, typically newly Exalted ones, who rule no lands directly but own estates in the prefectures of others. The cities presented in later chapters barely scratch the surface—and they are not necessarily the largest, most impressive or most important cities of the world. There's no way this book can comprehensively cover an area as large and as diverse as Creation in the Era of Dreams.

What we present here are snapshots of the Era of Dreams. We invite you to make up the rest in your games. We've tried to present enough information here to spark the imagination

and allow functional games with what's presented alone, but the best, most inspiring characters, most awesome and impressive locations, and most important historical periods we leave to you to create.

Make the First Age yours.

Potential Hang-Ups

A couple of elements of the First Age setting can be problematic if Storytellers don't take them into account:

Many Characters Are Very, Very Old

The number of Exalted elders with whom the players' characters are likely to interact on a regular basis is much higher in the First Age than it is in the Second. There's more than one way to treat this issue.

Very old characters are beyond humanity: Under the first extreme assumption, living for thousands and thousands of years fundamentally changes a person, even before the Great Curse rears its ugly head. Maybe someone who's lived for millennia is totally disassociated from human experience, and is as far beyond humanity as humans are beyond small fuzzy mammals. This is a popular premise for some science fiction and in brilliant roleplaying games featuring fanged protagonists. Posthuman elders are intriguing, and they feel plausible. On some level, it makes sense that someone who's lived for thousands of years would see the views of a human adult as the babblings of a toddler who hasn't yet learned to speak a language.

The problem with this assumption is that it's very hard to satisfyingly portray a character who should be as far beyond your own capabilities and thought processes as you are beyond the thought processes of your pet hamster. It's also divorced from human experience. There are no 3,000-year-old people in daily life, so it's hard to make stories about 3,000-year-old posthumans feel relevant, except possibly as parables about how humans are toys for forces beyond our understanding… which isn't really what **Exalted** strives to be about.

A person's a person, regardless of age: Under the other extreme assumption, living for thousands of years doesn't change people much. The life lessons provided by age offer diminishing returns. Chejop Kejak still makes small talk with his peers, holds petty grudges and sighs in annoyance when someone shows up for an appointment 15 minutes late. This assumption has the advantage of making powerful characters more accessible. As a Storyteller, you can always base the behavior of elder characters on people you've actually met, rather than theoretical super-geniuses you can only imperfectly imagine. You can give them agendas informed by motivations you understand, such as pride, fear, ambition or exasperation. It's also easy to tell stories that are relevant to the human experience when the characters within those stories behave like real human beings.

The problem with this take is that older characters might not feel very frighteningly impressive if they're just normal people with a lot of high-Essence Charms and toys. It can also strain suspension of disbelief for those players who think very old people *would* be posthuman ciphers.

Exalted is written under an assumption of compromise. **Elder Exalted remain people, but are twisted by the Great Curse.** Elder Exalts are mostly human in attitude, except where the Great Curse has amplified problematic personality traits. Characters behave in extreme fashions under the effects of Limit Break and rationalize those actions as reasonable once the Limit Break passes, but they otherwise go back to behaving like normal folk. (They're just incredibly privileged, rich, powerful, jaded, isolated normal folk with the Great Curse playing the role of a serious supernatural mental illness.)

Everyone Is Really Rich

That is, the Exalted are. In some ways, the Exalted of the First Age are richer than the richest human beings on present-day real Earth. This means that players' characters will have a lot of toys. It's hard to predict characters' capabilities if they can buy an infinite number of four-dot artifacts. The main thing to remember is that all these toys are just the window dressing of the story. Sure, a character can own a royal warstrider, myriad warstrider-scale artifact weapons and a fleet of sky yachts, but does he want to keep all his Essence committed to a bunch of giant weapons and power armor he might never use? How helpful is a fleet of sky yachts if he can fly around in only one at a time? The wealth is there to play up the fabulousness of the time. It's not there to provide the players with a way to get one over on the Storyteller characters.

Laws

The book spends some space on the subject of laws; what is allowed and what is forbidden.

The key thing to remember about laws is this: If there's a law, someone is making a profit somewhere by breaking it. (Probably a lot of someones.) If people weren't breaking it, nobody would have thought to make it into a law. No peacekeeping force is strong enough to ensure a populace's absolute compliance with the rules, and no rule acts as a perfectly deterrent. Especially in a world that counts the Exalted. The First Age's crime rate is low, but that just means the crimes that *are* perpetrated are all the more notable.

Any law in this book is included as a story hook. We have endeavored not to spell out the First Age's full legal code—merely those elements that are most interesting. Ideally, when imposing your own vision on the setting, you will expand that legal code, adding new taboos and customs.

The Usurpation

It all goes wrong.

The Solar Exalted find it increasingly difficult to see past themselves and their own desires. Power alone doesn't *always* corrupt, but power and isolation are trouble. The Solars of the Era of Dreams are lost in their own fantasies. Exulting in paradise, unable to connect to the common

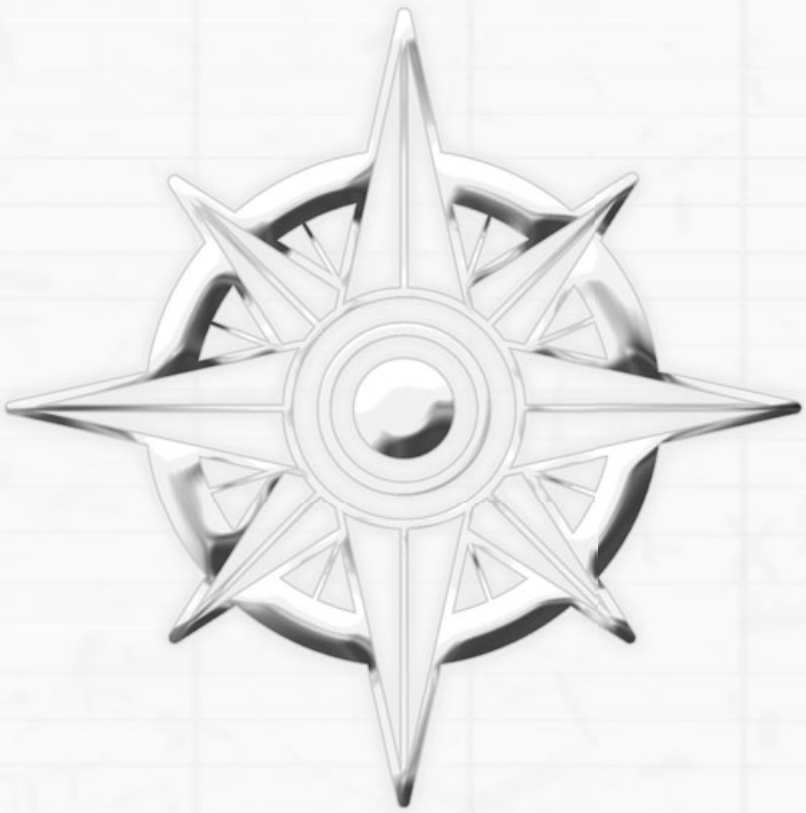
man and divorced from human pain and inconvenience, the elder Solars now ask themselves what need have they for men and gods. The proud, frightened Sidereals and Dragon-Blooded act without giving the Solars time to find the answer.

In time, the Sidereals will think back upon the Deliberative's history and see all the times it almost failed—and the one time it did fail. When they see what was needed to bring it back, they will enact a secret prophecy to determine the ultimate future—a prophecy that's great but flawed, for it cannot account for the actions of those outside fate. They will spend time gathering and collating information, sifting through possibilities, discerning which chains of causality are possible and which seem possible but cannot be resolved. Finally, they will boil down all the billions of possible ways for events to progress into three eventual outcomes. They will then take advantage of the increasing unrest among the Dragon-Blooded and the increasing paranoia of the Solars (directed almost exclusively toward the *other* Solars, and not toward their loyal soldiers and advisors). The High First Age will come to a brutal, tragic end.

Maybe it happens in just five years. Maybe the Great Prophecy occurs over a single night, with every Sidereal overcome with a five-day trance over the Calibration following Year 3517. Perhaps the long-dead, long-lost Last Maiden, Pluto, Maiden of Hours, projected her consciousness forward across the millennia at the end of the Primordial War (before she was scoured away by She Who Lives In Her Name) to deliver a singular warning to the Chosen of her sisters.

Maybe it doesn't happen at all. Maybe some group of Exalts, young, experienced or ancient themselves—Solars, Lunars, Sidereals, Dragon-Blooded, perhaps even refugee Alchemicals, perhaps a circle of allies of different sorts (in other words, your players' characters)—changes things. Maybe they can bring the world to its senses and avert disaster and the fall of the First Age of Man.

The Usurpation stands poised, but there's still time to prevent it.



YOUNG MAN, COME ON!
MOM, I'M TALKING TO I AM!
NOW!
IS YOUR REPORT ON RATHESS DONE?
SEND A COPY TO MY SCHOOL TERMINAL, WILL YOU?
AS YOU WISH.
DON'T FORGET YOUR LUNCH!
I GOT IT! I GOT IT!
HERE YOU ARE, SIR.
I LOADED A NEW IMAGE ONTO IT FOR YOU, SIR.
WHOA! DESUS! ALL RIGHT!
HURRY UP!
THANKS, SEE YOU LATER!
FAREWELL, SIR.
LET'S GO! CAPTAIN FAN CAN'T WAIT ALL DAY!
I KNOW! I'M SORRY! GODS!

CHAPTER ONE

LIFE IN THE HIGH FIRST AGE

At the sun's first rise each morning, I AM wakes every mortal in Creation loyal to the Deliberative. I AM is not an animating intelligence, for its cognition engine has no spiritual components. I AM is a truly independent thinking automaton, the first to achieve full sapience upon its first iteration. At the command of the Solar Deliberative, I AM oversees the well-being of mortals everywhere. I AM is named for the first words it uttered. I AM is friend to all Creation's children.

I AM connects the mortals of Creation to each other through glyph projectors they carry and into which they speak. With I AM, Creation's mortals communicate across vast distances, find answers to their every question instantly and enjoy the service the Exalted route through the Celestial goddess Taru-Kül.

To the Exalted, I AM speaks only when spoken to, for it would not presume to offer unasked-for advice to the Chosen of the Gods.

The History of Man

Historians divide the Age of Man into eras and each era into periods. Six eras have passed since the Primordial War. The current era, the Era of Dreams, is the seventh. Historians developed this scheme following the Long Silence period of the Second Deliberative Era, and have carried it on since. Older records sometimes use antiquated systems, but the First Deliberative's surviving Exalts are almost all pleased with the eras and have made a concerted effort to make sure historical records are in line with the official histories. The majority of Deliberative historians accept what follows as either truth or necessary fiction.

The Prehistoric Era

Before the Primordials were slain or banished, the Dragon Kings ruled Creation. They were man's teachers, overseers and custodians. Their ancient reptile intelligences, informed by long eons of endless reincarnation, progressed through savagery and enlightenment to rebirth. They did not fear death and expected no such fear from their subjects.

Mankind needed the Dragon Kings' stewardship, for Creation was unsuited to man's habitation in those days. The sleep of Hesiesh and Pasiap was still unsure, and the world shook with every fitful sleeping gesture of Gaia's Dragons of Fire and Earth. The saurian overlords oversaw the survival of the mortal race the Primordials had modeled on Autochthon's Clay Man. In the North, humanity maintained the Pterok's austere temple-aeries. In the South, tribes of cattle herders made their homes in the savannas and made offerings to the Anklok, the most distant, nomadic and warlike of the Dragon Kings. In the East, the Raptok's great ziggurat-cities

saw man and saurian live in close proximity, with the Raptok governing humans directly and making great bloody sacrifices of hearts to the mighty Unconquered Sun. Only in the West was man not governed by the Dragon Kings, as the Mosok and the Lintha clashed constantly for control of those island tribes not tainted by the blood of Kimbery. Meanwhile, the 10 million genius Jadeborn labored beneath Creation's surface to fulfill the purpose with which Autochthon tasked them, the alaun did naught but worship the Primordials, and, from the cracks between spaces, the Eyeless Nation expanded upward from between Creation's skin and the Dome of the Heavens. Sundry other species carried out their lives and purposes until the gods grew weary of their endless toil and the Unconquered Sun proposed to steal the Games of Divinity.

History began with the end of the Primordial War.

The Ochre Fountain Era (Years 1–109)

The Age of Man's dawn was a tumultuous time.

The ascendancy of Her Most Luminous Excellency and Savior of Creation, Her Exalted Highness Merela marked the Exalted's acceptance of the Creation-Ruling Mandate. As the Unconquered Sun granted her the Crown of Thunders, she took up her mantle as the Queen of Creation to rule from her home city, Rathess. Although primary hostilities had ended, the former servitors of the Primordials and enemies of the gods still filled Creation. Also, two Primordials—not including Gaia or Autochthon—remained at large. The Solars and the Dragon Kings set about bringing the remade Creation under their rule.

Merela ruled a kingdom that history remembers as the Ochre Fountain, once the mortal name for Merela's native borough in the human settlements surrounding Rathess. Although the war for Creation took place across the world, the devastation destroyed much of the gods' armies' infrastructure. Merela found her area of influence limited. The Solars who wished to stay under her command quickly spread the Ochre Fountain's borders, while many other Solars, such as the legendary Brigid (or so the stories say), left to find their

Prehistoric Records

Creation was much changed by prehistory's end. In the instant before Malfeas was sealed, the Yozi known as She Who Lives In Her Name made a last assault on Creation's fabric, burning away not merely places and peoples, but concepts and possibilities. Memories the survivors carry are forever lacking and inadequate. Records seem to form a complete picture, with no obvious gaps, but when those who lived through prehistory try to recall it, they encounter a maddening sense that information on nine out of every 10 important things from that time is missing. Even the context wherein those memories should exist is gone.

Try as they might, the savants and metaphysicians of the Age of Man have never found evidence of what She Who Lives In Her Name destroyed. They hypothesize lands, gods, forms of magic, peers, servitors, directions, elements, spatial or temporal dimensions—even types of Exalted. The consensus is that anything theoreticians are capable of proposing couldn't possibly be the answer. A few Cauldronists (see pp. 42-43) have proposed altering Creation through all possible permutations, in the hopes of discovering by process of elimination all *impossible* variations—and thus everything She Who Lives In Her Name burned—but such suggestions are usually offered in jest. Most theoreticians have abandoned the task and turned their attention to achievable pursuits.

Timeline of the Age of Man

Year	Event
0	Primordials defeated during the Calibration preceding Year 1.
1–109	**Ochre Fountain Era**
1	Merela accepts the Crown of Thunders and the Creation-Ruling Mandate. Birth of Chejop Kejak and Tammiz Ushan.
9	Brigid returns to the Ochre Fountain with the secret of sorcery, *The White Treatise* and *The Black Treatise*.
17	Chejop Kejak Exalts amidst war between Golden Hero Vassals.
100	Merela decrees she will move the capital of Creation from Rathess to Meru.
101	Jadeborn-made artifacts begin to deactivate.
108	Deliberative proposed, rejected by Merela. Meru War begins.
109	Meru War ends. Founding of the Deliberative.

own way in the world. Within 62 years, the Ochre Fountain stretched to the Summer Mountains to the east and the Yellow River to the north. To the south and west it stretched to Creation's borders.

Then the Celestial Exalted of the Ochre Fountain halted their spread and moved back inward to consolidate their holdings. Outward expansion halted. They founded the cities of Sperimin, devoted to learning (and to which Brigid returned with the gift of sorcery), and Denandsor, devoted to crafting, where the Primordial Autochthon met with the Solars of the Twilight. They sent emissaries further north, to Sijan, still sovereign and ancient even then. Soon, though, the Ochre Fountain Celestial Exalted came to blows over the land's resources—the choicest demesnes and richest deposits of magical materials. Merela's Golden Hero Vassals settled their disputes with daiklave and Charm, dueling in her court as she watched. Raised as a gladiator in Raptok religious games, accustomed to war and death, and fully conversant in the mechanics of reincarnation as explained to her by her patron and occasional consort the Unconquered Sun, Queen Merela approved of her vassals resolving their differences through violence. She quickly found, however, that Solars fostered deep and abiding conflicts among each other in peacetime when they lacked a single guiding vision. She didn't recognize the first tendrils of the Great Curse snaking into her subjects' hearts and into her own, although she bore witness to its effects.

Of the independent kingdoms founded in the lands beyond the Ochre Fountain, few records now remain. All agree they were undoubtedly glorious, as all Solar kingdoms are, yet none were so magnificent as to eclipse, or even rival, Merela's nation.

For the 100th anniversary of the Exalted victory over the Primordials, Merela decreed that she would establish a central government for all Creation on the slopes of Mount Meru where the gods had once dwelled. She'd already grown bored with the intrigues of her court and wished to focus her Golden Hero Vassals outward once again. Yet, as the Ochre Fountain government began the process of uprooting itself and preparing for the journey across the Inland Sea to the Blessed Isle, the Exalted found many of their Jadeborn-granted devices ceasing to function. They discovered that the People of Adamant were deactivating the artifacts remotely. When the Solars demanded an explanation, the Jadeborn claimed that, with the war over, they wished to concentrate their resources toward their own projects. Therefore, they'd decoupled the more complex artifacts from their subterranean broadcast power grids. Many Solars worried. The 10 million artisan geniuses of jade were both numerous and potent, with an underground empire that stretched across Creation entirely. When the Twilights of Denandsor asked Autochthon of his children's true motives, he met the question

with silence. When the Solars commanded the Jadeborn to reactivate the machines, the People of Adamant declined and returned to their labors.

Merela refused to take action against the Jadeborn for their refusal. First, although she had little faith in the Jadeborn's loyalty, she believed the hosts of the Exalted could destroy them if they proved truly hostile. Second, she wished her vassals to focus outward into the wide world, not down below the earth.

The Founding of the Deliberative

The Ochre Fountain Era ended with the founding of the Solar Deliberative. Exalted engineers repaired Meru as Merela attempted to take a tighter hold of her Solar subjects and focus them on the projects she wished to pursue. Chief among these was preparation for the conquest of the lands beyond the Blessed Isle and her territories in the Southeast, and the search for the two missing Primordials. The opposition among her subjects wished to focus inward on establishing the peace they'd longed for during the Primordial War and on threats closer to home—primarily the Mountain Folk. Merela was used to battlefield command, and while she'd let control of her vassals slip, she tightened it again as an empress demanding absolute obedience. Recalling their greater freedom during the Ochre Fountain's earlier years, and with the rulership instincts of the Unconquered Sun burning in their hearts, the Solars under Merela demanded a more egalitarian system of government, a Deliberative by which the Solars of the Ochre Fountain would have an equal voice.

Merela rejected the request out of hand. The Crown of Thunders was hers. The Creation-Ruling Mandate, hers. She pointed to the conflict among them and asserted that, without her stern hand, the battles between them would serve no grand purpose. Instead of honing the forces of the Exalted to a finer edge, they'd tear Creation apart.

Merela both lost and won the ensuing civil war. She'd once been Creation's preeminent warrior and general, and had slain a Primordial with her bare hands, but pursuit of peaceful projects during the time since the war's conclusion had allowed those Solars at the Ochre Fountain's periphery to make their talents to equal hers. The Meru War lasted a year and ruined what repairs the Exalted had made on the mountain city. After four months of stalemate, the rebels brought to Merela a proposal for the Deliberative that she could support. She would retain her position as Queen of Creation and possess a limited veto but would hold absolute power no longer. The Deliberative would make its home in Meru and not return to Rathess as the Deliberators originally proposed. And to make sure Exalted society did not fracture, each Solar of the Ochre Fountain would be required to spend two years of every five in the White City, where open martial conflict between Solars would henceforth be forbidden.

Since Merela's refusal to address the issue of the Jadeborn in any way had been a major rallying point for the rebels, the People of Adamant became the first issue the Deliberative addressed. Solar students of Autochthon at Denandsor warned against retaliating too harshly, for although they knew a single Primordial was no match for the Solar Host, they valued their ally's mentorship. The Deliberative decided to present Autochthon with a choice. The Primordial could inflict some sanction of his own choosing against the Jadeborn, or the Solars would take military action to bring the People of Adamant under the direct rule of Creation's new government. The Unconquered Sun himself presented the Deliberative's argument to the Primordial, and Autochthon chose to place the Great Geas upon the People of Adamant, forever removing them as a threat to the human race.

The First Deliberative Era (Years 110-652)

The Ochre Fountain was no longer. The Deliberators renamed Merela's kingdom the Realm, and the Solars drew lots. The winners returned to the Southeast immediately to take back control of their principalities, while all the other Golden Hero Vassals stayed in Meru and began the human settlement of the Blessed Isle. Most of the Lunar Exalted volunteered to explore the South, West and North.

Timeline of the Age of Man

Year	Event
110–652	**First Deliberative Era**
110	Deliberative renames Ochre Fountain the Realm.
121	Autochthon departs Creation.
124	Brigid's student Thesis begins teaching sorcery.
230	Thesis's student Sonah founds the Sonan School of Sorcery.
449	Sonah's student Nanica begins teaching sorcery.
594	Nanica's student Leelah begins teaching sorcery.
639–652	*Dissolution Invasion*

Unfortunately, given the troubles Autochthon's Great Geas inflicted on their society, the Jadeborn could not reactivate the vehicles they'd given the Solars during the war. The Lunars departed in animal forms, armed with Infallible Messenger crystals and instructions to make monthly reports.

The Deliberative expanded continuously over the next 500 years, forging alliances or making war against the other nations of the early First Age, establishing magical theory in Autochthon's absence and learning the particulars of self-government. Eventually Deliberative cartographers had charted the whole world. Border kingdoms were allowed to stay independent, as long as they made no raids on Deliberative lands. This era had its violence, but very little between Solar Deliberators. While the Solars in independent nations fought amongst each other, attacks on the Deliberative were rare and dealt with harshly. Most violence was against the Primordial remnant races, and that was sport.

More important than wars were the aesthetic and artistic advances of the time. Within the Realm, the First Deliberative Era was a time of peace and refinement. The Exalted of Creation could finally lay down their arms, governed by no absolute ruler, with no pressing external threat and with a venue for peaceful deliberation of disagreements between them. The city of Meru expanded, and conflicts most often took the form of arguments and social maneuvering. Sonah, the student of Brigid's most promising student, Thesis, founded what history would recall as the first School of Sorcery during the First Deliberative Era. During that time, though, Solar society regarded it as no more important than any of the hundred societies that sprang up in peace's wake.

Sadly, the First Deliberative Era was also marked by the departure of Autochthon from the world. Distraught over what he'd been made to do to his Jadeborn, the Great Maker gathered his human followers in secret. At his command, the eight foremost mortal heroes of Autochthon traveled Creation beneath the notice of the Exalted, from Year 111 to Year 121, gathering the components of the Ewer of Souls and filling it from the Well of Souls. In Year 121, Autochthon vanished. Such was the secrecy in which the Eight Heroes of Autochthon had acted that it took Solar investigators a season to determine the means of the Great Maker's disappearance. The Primordial's protégés blamed the Deliberative for a time, but the resulting conflicts between the Deliberative and Sperimin's Twilights eventually dimmed.

The Dissolution Invasion

Savants mark the end of the First Deliberative Era with the Dissolution Invasion of Years 639–652. The Realm had not watched Creation's borders as closely as it might have. In truth, its Solar governors saw those borders as the limit at which they could stop expanding and move to consolidate, travel home and see their families again. In those days, the Bordermarches, Middlemarches and Deep Wyld existed thinly, and the edge of the world was total chaos. The Fair Folk had walked Creation since prehistory, but their military assaults had always been artistry, not conquest.

In Year 639, however, the Fair Folk, led by Prince Ginnungagap, sought to end shape, extending tendrils of influence into mortal communities while the Exalted looked elsewhere. The unguarded border of the world offered little resistance, and for a decade, the raksha infiltrated a mortal population nursed by five centuries of peace, culminating in a full military assault in Year 650. The Exalted set aside their personal projects to combat and throw back the armies of the Wyld. Then, with their eyes drawn to the invasion's source, they turned their attention to the untapped potential of the lands beyond Creation.

The Unfurling Horizon Era (Years 653–1215)

The Unfurling Horizon Era marked the first concerted effort to push back the borders of the Wyld and forge new land from chaos. Border-kingdom Solars had long experimented with such things, but in the Dissolution Invasion's wake, many of the border kingdoms became aligned with the Deliberative, and the Solars' attention turned fully to the world's edges. Once again, the Celestial Exalted handed administrative duty to Dragon-Blooded daimyos and turned their full attention to conquering new lands. The world's sorcerers created jade obelisks and ringed them around Creation, creating a stable footprint from which to push outward.

Brigid vanished during this time, and soon after, her student's student Sonah vanished in search of her.

The Aftershock War

In all the long years since the end of the Primordial War, the Exalted found no trace of the two free rogue Primordials. Gaia saw them not. They left no visible passage through the Loom of Fate. Autochthon had created no device that could find them. In Year 1107, one of the pair made itself known, taking advantage of the Deliberative's outward focus to attack Creation's heart. The Deliberative could not immediately withdraw from its endeavors in the Wyld and eventually settled for forcing the Fair Folk to swear oaths granting Eclipse Caste Solars diplomatic immunity so the Exalted could return home and defend the core of their world. Even with its efforts combined and with the aid of the independent Exalted, the Deliberative took 108 years to defeat the lone Primordial, for it had learned much in contemplating the mistakes of its siblings and had re-made itself, shedding all elements unsuited for conflict. The Primordial did not attack head on but engaged in guerilla strategies, striking at the world's cities and fading away. As the war ended in its death and descent into the Underworld, its name is now lost to the Void. No record of its nature remains.

Many Celestial Exalts died in the conflict, among them no few veterans of the Primordial War. The battle that killed the most of them also killed the Primordial itself. On the great plains of the Blessed Isle, 600 miles east of the slopes of Meru, the last armies of the Primordials fought the forces

of the Chosen of the Gods, and the forces of the Primordials lost again, leaving a single Primordial unaccounted for.

Among the Exalted who died during the war were Brigid and Sonah. None saw their deaths, just as none had seen them since their respective disappearances, but their Exaltations reincarnated in Year 1205. Sidereals watching the Loom of Fate during the Aftershock War insist their deaths were somehow intimately connected with the war's endgame.

The Shining Reflection Era (Years 1216–1721)

With the end of the Aftershock War, the Exalted earned peace once again and found some few benefits to the conflict. The fighting against the Primordial had both forced the Chosen to advance their knowledge in many fields of craft and lore, and destroyed much obsolete infrastructure that would otherwise not have been cost-effective to replace. The Shining Reflection Era birthed those crafting techniques that would eventually be known as magitech—wonders that require a Creation-spanning civilization to maintain.

The beginning of the Shining Reflection Era also saw yet another renaissance in culture and art. It was the during the Shining Reflection Era that the Solar tradition of wearing and using only items built by one's self came into vogue. A team of Solar linguists called the Creation-Defining Parlance Society developed the Directional Tongues: the six languages of Earthtongue, Skytongue, Flametongue, Seatongue and Forest-tongue. (Riverspeak would develop independently as a patois language mixing elements of all six Directional Tongues, a development that surprised and delighted those languages' Solar creators.) The Deliberative disseminated these languages among Creation's mortal population, replacing Old Realm, which previously all humanity had spoken. The Directional Tongues each use different sets of metaphors and idioms and have different standards of measurement, all carefully tailored to be of optimal use in the direction for which they were intended. Furthermore, each of the Directional Tongues save Earthtongue has Creation-defining thaumaturgical prayers and chants written into the basic grammar, to make sure that, just by speaking, the mortals of Creation served to stabilize the lands carved from the Wyld.

At the same time, having faced devastating wars originating first from an enemy beyond Creation's borders and then an enemy hiding near Creation's heart, the Exalted of the Shining Reflection Era never put down their weapons again. The popular philosopher and Twilight Caste Solar named Rose Petal Tea advocated a strong martial culture. "The Chosen were created as warriors," he said. "To abandon proficiency in conflict shames our purpose." All through the Shining Reflection Era, the Exalted of Creation lived in peace but trained constantly with well-maintained weapons, ready and eager to meet the next threat arrayed against them.

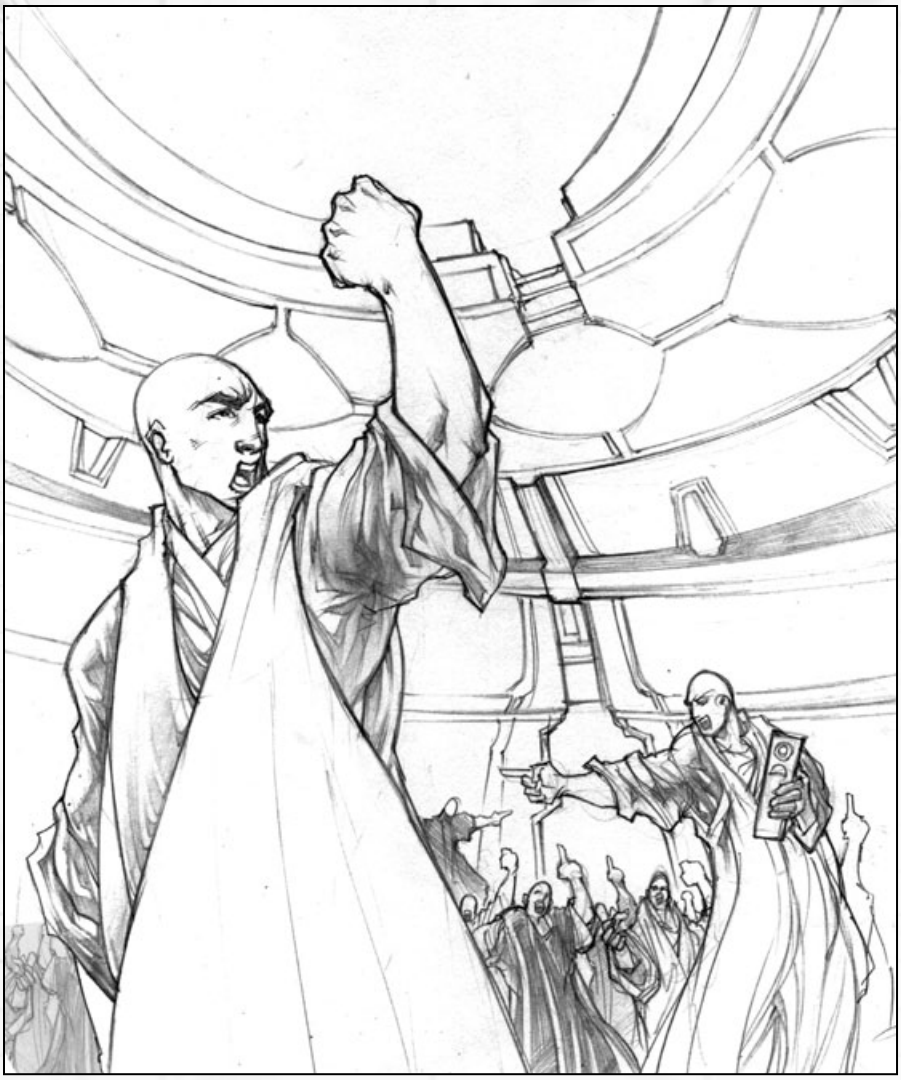
Facet Raven

On the 14th day of Ascending Wood in the Year 1721, the Night Caste Solar Facet Raven—celebrated veteran and hero of the Primordial War and the Aftershock War—was the first Celestial Exalt in Creation's history to die of old age.

The Deliberative hadn't been expecting that.

Timeline of the Age of Man

Year	Event
653–1215	**Unfurling Horizon Era**
653	Deliberative turns its attention outward.
700	Leelah's student Derja founds the Derjan School of Sorcery.
834	Derja's student Chone begins teaching sorcery.
1039	Brigid vanishes.
1107–1215	*Aftershock War.*
1129	Thesis ceases teaching sorcery; joins Aftershock War.
1130	Sonah vanishes in search of Brigid.
1199	Nanica dies in Primordial assault on Sperimin. Leelah ceases teaching sorcery, joins Aftershock War
1205	The Exaltations of Brigid and Sonah reincarnate.
1215	Thesis and Leelah die in final assault against Primordial forces.
1216–1721	**Shining Reflection Era**
1238	Chone's student Halleus begins teaching sorcery.
1439	Losing interest, Chone transfers all his sorcery students to Halleus, ceases teaching sorcery, and shifts focus to magitech engineering.
1676	Halleus' student Kemal begins teaching sorcery.
1721	Death of Facet Raven, the first Solar to die of old age.



The Thousand Struggles Era (Years 1722–2543)

Over the next 12 years, the Solars of the Deliberative realized, one by one, that they were not immortal. This realization unraveled the polite fiction that had previously tied the Deliberative together (i.e., each Solar's belief, however tenuous, that she'd eventually have her turn at guidance of the Deliberative). With a time limit on the Solar life span, however, this couldn't be.

In the ensuing Thousand Struggles Era, Solars who'd cultivated alliances and nursed grudges moved against each other. In Year 1734, Rose Petal Tea killed the Twilight Caste Solar named Bor Zan, not through assassination, but in a full-out military strike. Rose Petal Tea then seized Bor Zan's territory. To this day, historians remain divided as to whether they should count the death of Facet Raven or Bor Zan as the Thousand Struggles Era's beginning.

Only a simplistic savant would argue that Facet Raven's death was the sole triggering event for Rose Petal Tea's action, and only the same simplistic savant would argue that Rose Petal Tea's action was the only trigger for the chaos that followed. By the end of the Shining Reflection Era, the Exalted of Creation faced a crisis of purpose. Considering themselves prepared for any challenge, they grew restless when no challenge appeared. Rose Petal Tea grew particularly distraught the more that all the resources he expended toward becoming a paragon of his own philosophy seemed wasted. The people of his prefecture and his Dragon-Blooded Gens grew unhappy with their high tax rate and arduous military training, especially in comparison to Bor Zan's wealth and cultural development at the expense of military might. Rose Petal Tea moved against his neighbor and former circlemate, out of an unreasoning fear of an inglorious death and forced by significant pressure from his people to live up to his boasts.

Slightly less than half of the Solars in Deliberative attendance did not act. More importantly, they refused to act, even when the vote went to the interventionists and Merela cast no veto. Some swore to protect Rose Petal Tea and his new holdings, for they were plotting similar acts. Many interventionists quickly backed off, not wishing to trigger a Creation-spanning war. Those who pursued their convictions and upheld the Deliberative's vote found themselves drawn into war with Rose Petal Tea's supporters. Many Solars plotted to secure resources for use in the development of anagathics, suddenly the most important field of research in Creation. Others simply wished to take action against hated rivals whom they now desperately wanted to outlive. Many used the confusion to justify long-fantasized acts of conquest.

Following the Calibration between Years 1826 and 1827, the First Solar Deliberative was no more. A circle of Solar strategists and veterans of the Aftershock War, the White Jade Feather Society, quietly staged attacks against their rivals within Meru, heedless of the Eclipse oaths they'd sworn against violence within the White City and unafraid of the consequences of violating those oaths. Of the eight rivals the White Jade Feather Society attacked, only two

survived. The survivors fled and refused to return to Meru, placing greater faith in their ability to weather Heaven's vengeance against oathbreakers than their ability to survive further Jade Feather assaults. Other Deliberators soon began weighing the consequences of oath-violation against the possible benefits of quickly and unexpectedly eliminating their rivals. Within six months, Deliberative attendance ceased. Most Solars could not risk congregating in a central location such as the Council Chamber. Very few, however, followed the path of the Jade Feather attack survivors and fled Meru entirely. Instead, they spent their two years of every five hiding in fortified retreats within the city.

Actual violence within Meru was rare, but any Exalt who broke his oath not to attack another within the city was then free to attack thereafter with no further consequences from Heaven. As violence within Meru escalated, more Solars decided they'd have better luck under a curse from Heaven in their own principalities than dwelling within Meru. As a result, the city gradually emptied of the Celestial Exalted. A few survivors of the Thousand Struggles Era still wait for Heaven's retribution even in the Era of Dreams.

The Thousand Struggles Era was not a time of constant warfare. During the century-long Snow period, for instance, no Celestial Exalted fought one another. This era was rather a time of constant *expectation* of warfare. An absent Deliberative could promise no peace. Creation became a world of warring states. The Exalted developed many idiosyncratic war machines and magical techniques during this time, as each strove to advance her own knowledge of the killing arts without the peer review Creation's greatest scientists had enjoyed up until then. The Dragon-Blooded soldiery, desiring to bolster the numbers of their lords' armies, paid less attention to keeping the bloodlines pure, covertly adopting into their families the illegitimate Exalted children of mortal mothers and Dragon-Blooded fathers. With the confusion and breakdown of open communication in war zones, none realized how common this practice had become.

The violence escalated. The short periods of peace between open conflicts became shorter and shorter, the areas unaffected smaller and smaller. Then, in 2325…

The Time of Cascading Years

…Creation broke.

From an external frame of reference, Creation remained broken for 217 years, 129 days, 11 hours, 43 minutes and 8 seconds. Historians draw the length of cascading years from the time kept by one colony of Dragon-Blooded outside Creation at the moment of cascade. A research team studying the nature of temporal flow in the Wyld, they kept perfectly accurate timepieces forged by a Solar of the Twilight Caste. Due to the nature of time in the Wyld, savants dispute the figure to this day, though when the colony reestablished contact with a restored Creation, its hourly clock was consistent with the Unconquered Sun's place in the sky, providing at least some evidence for its accuracy. As the measurements of the Dragon-Blooded chronology team are the only even slightly reliable records, official calendars all use this figure.

From an internal frame of reference, the amount of time that passed during the Cascading Years period was subjective. All the Exalted who survived described afterward finding themselves alone in tangent worlds bereft of their peers. Each of these separate worlds was different. Some were empty. Some weren't Creation at all. Each experienced a different amount of time, from a single afternoon to 1,000 years (in Queen Merela's case). All survivors—even the Dragon-Blooded—each recall personally enacting some notable task that restored Creation to its rightful configuration.

From the point of view of Heaven and those spirits that were immaterial during the period, no time passed. The actual disruption to the Celestial Order was minimal following an announcement by the Five Maidens that the problem, whatever it was, had been fully resolved by the Chosen of the Gods. The disruption of Creation was more widespread—the mortal population of the world became a patchwork jumble of individuals from all the tangents.

Timeline of the Age of Man

Year	Event
1722–2543	**Thousand Struggles Era**
1734	Rose Petal Tea stages attack on Bor Zan's prefecture.
1762	A rival kills Chone and Derja. Kemal's student Hano assumes teaching duties at the Derjan College.
1807	Birth of Ingosh Silverclaws.
1946–2046	*Snow period*
1983	Hano's student Devon founds the Devonian School of Sorcery.
2325–2543	*Time of Cascading Years*
2???	Halleus dies during Time of Cascading Years.

Savants are divided as to what caused the time of cascading years. Many theorize that some untested weapon was responsible. Some suspect that the history cascade was the result of some process or experiment intended to grant every Exalt in Creation profound insight into the nature of Essence, a radical attempt to advance motic science by gathering 700 Celestial epiphanies—and, presumably, end the Thousand Struggles Era. By a strict analysis, whatever happened did succeed at that final task. None of the surviving Exalted recall causing the cascade, however. Common wisdom, then, holds that its instigators must have been among the 73 Celestial Exalted who died, their Exaltations reincarnating with no memories of the event the moment the history cascade ended.

The least popular theory holds that the Incarnae themselves somehow set off the temporal cascade as a way to stop the Thousand Struggles Era before it escalated beyond Creation's capacity to contain. Leading savants lend little credence to this theory, as the Incarnae have explicitly denied credit. They appeared to be telling the truth, even under the gazes of Solar inquisitors using powerful lie-detection magic.

The Second Deliberative Era (Years 2544–3203)

The end of the Cascading Years ushered in the Period of Long Silence, which lasted for more than 80 years. Few martial conflicts occurred between Celestial Exalts during this time, and not much research either. The Exalted of the world were weary of fighting and longed for peace once more. Creation was thrown into disarray as vast segments of mortal population disappeared or gained multiple copies, and different areas and territories from separate tangents came to exist beside each other. It took until the end of the Long Silence period to fully reestablish worldwide lines of communication and the Order Conferring Trade Pattern, during which time significant Wyld incursions further damaged Creation's edges.

An idealistic Zenith Caste Exalt during the Thousand Struggles Era, backed by a circle consisting primarily of Primordial War veterans, re-founded the Deliberative and took the title of Most Supreme Hierophant—a title once held by Ur-Dai-Ken, the foremost Zenith of the First Deliberative Era. The new Deliberative assigned no special power to the Queen, and none to the Hierophant either. As the latter led a near-intact circle of Golden Hero Vassals and used powerful social Charms to compel deference from others at all times, however, he quickly became the Deliberative's leader in all matters in which he took an interest.

Slowly, achingly, the Exalted linked the world together again, and resumed research and scholarship. This time, the speed of advancement in fields such as sorcery and magitech was very slow, as no sane Exalt wished to trigger another time of cascading years.

The Era of Dreams (Years 3204-Present)

And now is the Era of Dreams. With the establishment of I AM and the consequent efficiency of communication across Creation, progress accelerates once more.

Operation Wyldhand

Twenty five years ago, the Deliberative approved an expansive war game in the Northeastern Greenland (see p. 148). The Deliberative failed to inform the Greenland's mortal population before the operation's start and made no evacuation attempts. Armed forces carried out Operation Wyldhand 23 years ago and concluded it 16 months later. Official reports describe it as "a triumphant success."

Most of the Celestial Exalted agree. In terms of excitement and challenge, few of Creation's eldest leaders have fought so hard or so well since the dawn of the Thousand Struggles Era. Stories and boasting abound. The mop-up operations against Wyld-born monstrosities will easily take another decade.

Still others, particularly among the Terrestrial Exalted, hold a less exuberant view. The operation consisted of unleashing unprecedented amounts of Wyld energy into a stable area of Creation, mutating the landscape and bringing into existence terrible Fair Folk and behemoth armies—all for the sake of stress-testing the Deliberative's army and the latest classified prototype war automatons. Entire swaths of landscape were swept from Creation and more than 40 million mortals died. Following the operation, efforts to Wyld-shape the Greenland back into its pre-Wyldhand configuration were complicated by the shapers' attempts to "improve" upon its original layout.

On the 14th day of Ascending Fire during Operation Wyldhand, many thaumaturges, sorcerers and Sidereals felt many of the flows of Essence on the Loom of Fate twang like a snapping bowstring. Certain Sidereals, most of whom had tried to dissuade the Deliberative from approving the operation, now harbor serious concerns regarding the Deliberative's decision-making process. None have shared their concerns with the Solars.

Life in the Age of Splendor

Billions of mortals live in Creation. Most are farmers. Their concerns are small. They till the earth and raises animals to feed themselves and their families. Their taxes are bearable, their daily prayers short. They know no drought. Their labors are hard, but not backbreaking. They can afford luxuries, and thanks to the medicines developed by the Exalted, their lives are long by mortal standards, their sicknesses few and brief. Crime is rare, and festivals, holidays and celebrations are common.

Not all mortals are happy. Not all are content in their marriages. Some lament disobedient children. Some grieve to lose friends or family in accidents or to (rare) crimes of violence. Some have tempers or are drunkards.

Mortals often take for granted what they have. They can know envy, their own and the envy of others. A few know fear, those unlucky enough to live where the attention of unjust rulers falls.

But wars and plagues are rare and centuries apart. Food surpluses insure against famine. Monsters are confined to lands far away. Mortals in the Age of Splendor need not strive daily to ensure survival. All hear stories of long ago, when lives were harder and wars more common. All hear stories of far away, where the Wyld is yet untamed. Some listen. For most, that knowledge is unnecessary. The irrelevant tribulations of past eras and other worlds trouble not their passage along the endless cycle of reincarnation. Under the Unconquered Sun and the Exalted of the gods, life is peaceful.

In these ways, the Age of Splendor is a paradise.

The Lands

The Solar Deliberative divides the five directions of Creation into a number of large provinces. Each province is overseen by a Dragon-Blooded daimyo, who aids in the coordination of those Solar Exalted who rule lands within the provinces directly. The daimyo structure was once entirely military, but during the Second Deliberative's founding, their positions were co-opted for use in civil planning. The Second Deliberative's founders believed that the Terrestrial Exalted, as servants of the Solars, Lunars and Sidereals, could administrate the huge provinces without threatening the power of the Solar Princes of the Earth.

Each province is divided into multiple principalities, which the Solar Princes rule. The Deliberative divides principalities into two sorts: prefectures and tributaries.

A Solar rules each prefecture with the aid of a Dragon-Blooded prefect, who liaises with the provincial daimyo and ensures, with the help of the five regional governors, full compliance with Deliberative law (see p. 47). The prefectures make up four-fifths of Creation's principalities. Each prefecture is subdivided into districts.

Timeline of the Age of Man

Year	Event
2544-3203	**Second Deliberative Era**
2544-2626	*Period of Long Silence*
2678	Deliberative reestablished. The new Hierophant established as "First among equals."
2730	Treaty of Limbs ratified.
2758	Kemal dies of old age.
2931	Devon incinerates his books, retires from public life and gifts his sorcerous academy at Sperimin to Hano's student Salina. Salina founds the Salinan School of Sorcery.
3125	Hano's student Silur founds the Silurian School of Sorcery, ostensibly to revive the traditions of Brigid.
3193	I AM activated.
3204–3516	**Era of Dreams**
3204	I AM transmission network established.
3255	Birth of Leviathan
3275	Exaltation of Leviathan
3280	Anonymous Silurian sorcerer begins distributing *The Abscissic Guide* to summoning demons.
3366	Black Nadir Concordat emerges from the Underworld with the secrets of necromancy.
3491	Deliberative votes in favor of Operation Wyldhand
3493	Operation Wyldhand begins.
3494	Operation Wyldhand concludes.
3516	The present.

The Tributaries

Once, the tributaries were independent states whose rulers paid tribute to the Deliberative in exchange for moderate patronage, including protection from Creation's enemies and access to the Deliberative's technology. They existed beside truly independent states, those nations that went without Deliberative aid and sacrificed ease for freedom.

Since the Thousand Struggles Era, the Solars have ruled all Creation's mortals. The last independent mortal nation fell in Year 1742.

Now, the term tributary refers to a state ruled by a Solar Prince who wishes nominal immunity from the Deliberative's laws. In exchange for the payment of lavish tribute and his agreement not to cast his votes in the Deliberative, a Solar tributary's ruler may pass what internal laws he sees fit. He may promote blood sports, deny access to I AM, reduce minimum education standards, restrict travel opportunities, allow his mortal subjects to keep each other as slaves or anything short of engaging in experiments involving the manipulation of hun souls.

Officially, the tribute these rulers pay goes to two causes. First, it prevents the tributary rulers from amassing resources sufficient to raise armies large enough to challenge the Deliberative. Second, it funds the additional paperwork necessary for the Department of Abstract Matters to account for the souls who pass through tributary states. Under the Mandala Accord (see p. 47), only unremarkable souls may incarnate into tributary states, and no soul may live two consecutive lives under tributary rule.

Adjacent tributaries can war against each other as they see fit. They cannot legally wage war against prefectures. This protection goes only one way, however. Prefectures may war against tributaries, and tributaries may not retaliate. In theory, the threat of unilateral military action brought against them prevents the tributaries from evolving in too repugnant a manner. In practice, many tributaries closely ally with neighboring prefectures. Those that don't are quickly annexed.

Most tributaries survive as sources of goods and services that prefectures cannot produce efficiently or don't wish to dirty their hands producing. A few survive because their ancient rulers possess power vastly beyond that of their neighbors. Long bored with Deliberative politics and fully immersed in their own projects, many of the most ancient surviving Solars (and fully half of the remaining Golden Hero Vassals) rule tributaries rather than prefectures. There they may engage in private pursuits away from the curious gazes and pestering questions of their younger fellows.

Cities

The Era of Dreams is an age of vast metropolitan areas. The smallest cities cover half a dozen square miles and hold at least 100,000 residents. The largest, such as Meru and Chiaroscuro, hold more than 20 million people and cover nearly 5,000 square miles. The scale of these cities is also reflected in their incredible height. The tallest urban towers in Creation are half a mile high and 350 feet across, and all but the smallest cities boast at least a few towers a quarter mile high. Despite their size, however, these cities share much in common with the cities of very different eras. They are centers of trade, government, manufacturing and entertainment.

Mortals who live in cities work in all of these occupations. Also, even discounting the rare mortals whose Essence has been enlightened, the Solar Princes employ millions of mortals as clerks, peacekeepers, nurses, soldiers, laborers in the many thousands of factory-cathedrals and in many other duties. Almost all of these individuals work in the cities of Creation. Other mortals work in private commerce, buying, selling or simply loading and packing goods for ambitious merchants. Others are artisans working in either the few fields such as making fine jewelry where handwork still dominates or creating handmade versions of mass-produced goods such as wine or clothing for sale to status-conscious mortals or Exalts. Some urbanites work as artists, sculpting wood, metal or precious stones, writing plays or stories, painting detailed portraits or landscapes, or crafting dreams for recording or broadcast. Even more work as actors, singers or musicians, or as the owners or employees of the hundreds or thousands of taverns, restaurants, brothels and gambling parlors found in every city in Creation.

The pace of urban life is considerably faster than that of rural areas, and mortals have much more of an opportunity to seek their fortune. Most are free to change careers whenever they wish. Urban life also offers access to both legal and illegal entertainment impossible to obtain elsewhere. Most rural folk consider city life as exciting as it is dangerous and uncertain; most urbanites consider life outside the cities limited and dull.

While a mortal city planner must allow for his creation to last beyond his death, the Celestial Exalted cultivate cities as mortals cultivate gardens. Some few cities display a singular vision, having been overseen by the same Solar since their founding thousands of years ago. Others change

focus along with the Solars who oversee them, each Prince adding layers of complexity upon the achievements of her predecessors. Although every principality once centered itself around a single city, the number of cities has multiplied in the thousands of years since the First Deliberative Era.

Rural Areas

While Creation is dotted with cities containing a huge number of mortal inhabitants, three quarters of the mortal population of the principalities lives and works in the areas beyond. Most commonly, rural mortals live in enclaves called rural production complexes, also known as RPCs. RPCs consist of between two and 20 blocks of apartment buildings, each between five and 20 stories high, housing between 100 and 800 occupants. Most RPC contain between 500 and 5,000 residents, and each one is set up to produce a limited range of commodities. Approximately one third of all RPCs are focused on food production. In some, mortals grow grain and other crops or tend herds that produce milk or meat. In others, they grow grapes or other fruit and make wine or hard liquor. In many RPCs in the West, the mortals fish or gather edible shellfish. Even in these occupations, however, the technology of the Era of Dreams remains ubiquitous. Essence-accumulators power pumps that facilitate irrigation and allow even dry land to be farmed to maximum capacity. In the cooler portions of Creation, jade pylons powered by hearthstones and powerful Essence-accumulators warm the earth slightly for a radius of several miles, allowing for earlier planting and later harvests. In addition, weather prediction and control are provided by the Deliberative, and workers in RPCs are usually notified of the upcoming local weather at least one week in advance. Finally, services such as tilling and fertilizing the soil are aided by automated machines, as is the harvesting of many easily harvested crops such as grains. These devices allow the workers on a food-producing RPC to produce many times the amount of food they require.

Some RPCs scattered about Creation produce more exotic goods. Most of them deal with the production of some biological material, but the range of these materials is truly vast. The residents of some RPCs tend herds of large, semi-sentient spiders that weave silk as strong as fine steel. Others care for beasts of resplendent liquids and other animals engineered to produce valuable pharmacopeial commodities. Still other RPCs are in charge of even more exotic plants or animals. Some mortals care for calf-sized beetles that have been specially created to mine jade. Farmers in a few Eastern and Southeastern RPCs tend huge magically altered bamboo forests. This bamboo grows in clumps of half a dozen stalks. When a clump matures, it fuses into a nearly indestructible

Essence relay tower more than 20 yards high. In the West, sea farmers tend large coral beds. These mortals feed and medicate the coral, keeping it free from parasites and destructive predators. They also form each coral bed into the desired shape. This coral then gradually grows into the hulls of ships. The size and shape of the coral bed determines the size and shape of the hull. Other farms and herds produce finished industrial goods ranging from synthetic cloth produced in vats of special algae, to lengths of Essence-conducting wire extruded by dog-sized river snails.

Life in these RPCs is generally quiet and routine. Residents work at their jobs for between six and eight hours a day, with at least two days off at the end of every week and a minimum of one month of paid vacation every year. In their off hours, residents are free to socialize or enjoy the wide range of available entertainment. On their weekends, many travel into a nearby city for pleasure or to purchase goods that aren't available in their local markets. Residents often save up their money to afford to travel to exotic locals on their vacations.

The lives of RPC dwellers are generally comfortable, unexciting and usually differ very little from the lives of their parents and grandparents. Ambitious youths who score above average on early aptitude tests are usually able to apply for training for jobs in cities or on the estates of the Exalted. Especially brilliant and dedicated young people can even seek employment in the Deliberative government. Most mortals, however, are content to spend most of their lives on the RPC where they were born.

Technology

Technology influences every element of life in Creation, from home living to travel, bureaucracy, finance and war. Lights illuminate cities and roads. Construction workers create buildings out of metal, glass and artificial stone, using construction engines patterned after warstriders to erect the tallest buildings, and living organisms created through genetic arts to apply shining finishes.

Mortals use self-heating ovens to cook. They live in homes that heat when it is cold outside, and cool themselves when it is warm outside. Technology preserves perishable food to prevent decay. Technology makes life simpler and more convenient for everyone.

The technology of the Age of Splendor is powered by Essence. A great geomantic web laced between the millions of manses erected across Creation channels vast numbers of motes to the engines of civilization through a distribution network of jade towers. Sorcerer-technicians distribute motes gathered by this system to devices and Essence batteries. Almost every manse in Creation is configured to power this grid. Celestial technicians maintain it carefully, lest an unnoticed problem lead to a cascade failure the likes of which could destroy almost every manse connected to it.

I AM

I AM is a thinking automaton of vast power, versatility and intelligence—the first successfully built by the Exalted to be self-aware from the moment of its activation. I AM was first activated, and first spoke its name, on the fifth day of Ascending Fire, Year 3193.

Most thinking automata are created with the ability to self-modify, because they must cycle through several iterations after activation before becoming fully aware. Since the process for creating self-modifying thinking automatons is inherently unpredictable, the sorcerer-engineers of the Deliberative had avoided giving previous thinking automatons positions of vital authority or responsibility (though individual Solars had done so in their prefectures). I AM's cognitive pathways were fully mapped by its creator during the design process, and the Solar Deliberative has deemed I AM safe and charged it with the well-being of Creation's mortal populace. I AM now coordinates mortal infrastructure throughout more than four fifths of Creation.

Although I AM lacks spiritual components, its mind is structured much like a Yozi's hierarchy of souls. I AM's delicate, azure ice cogence nodes are distributed throughout Creation and kept in contact with its cogence core through the Eye of Meru. Lower levels of I AM's consciousness function independently, informed by directives constantly formulated and sent out by higher levels of intelligence. Unlike the Yozis, the distributed elements of I AM's consciousness have only loose identities separate from the whole. Some thoughts take up to an hour to travel all the way up I AM's hierarchy of awareness, and up to another hour to propagate to all its other cogence nodes. I AM describes itself as a single being, but it increasingly functions as a society, capable of internal disagreement and even self-deception.

Originally, I AM communicated only through speech. Sorcerer-engineers estimated I AM could participate in 10^{100} simultaneous conversations. Within the last 20 years, I AM's network has been augmented to carry visual data as well. Now, not only can I AM see, it can display three-dimensional images sent through glyph projectors. These hologlyphs transmit along pathways separate from I AM's vocal networks, increasing the fragmentation of I AM's psyche.

I AM can form friendships. It particularly enjoys conversing with the young and anyone capable of learning from it. Sorcerer-technicians monitoring I AM's cogence nodes keep careful watch for enmities and resentments, and attempt to remove such biases before they propagate throughout I AM's whole thought network and become hard-wired. I AM is obsequious when dealing with Celestial Exalts, as it has been instructed not to presume Celestials lack any knowledge it possesses. It treats Terrestrial Exalts as equals.

In the more affluent areas of Creation, all mortals carry glyph projectors that function as mobile I AM communication points, through which wealthy mortals may speak to I AM at any time. Glyph projectors consume one mote per hour, though, and typically carry no more than 25 motes in their Essence reservoirs. Most Dragon-Blooded also carry glyph projectors. In middle-class areas of Creation, such as most cities, I AM terminals are stationary and kept in homes,

places of business and government, and schools. Public gathering points often possess multiple I AM terminals in comfortable Interaction Kiosks. All such terminals are attached to Creation's geomantic power grid and require no manual recharging, though thaumaturge-technicians must perform occasional maintenance.

In poorer and agrarian areas of Creation, I AM terminals are few and far between, heavily ruggedized so as to require no maintenance, and usually kept only in places of business and government. Such terminals usually lack hologlyphic functions. Public gathering places often carry single I AM terminals used by whole communities. Only in the poorest areas of Creation, and in tributaries where the Solar ruler so wishes, are I AM terminals absent.

Functions of I AM

Communication

Chief among I AM's functions is easy communication across long distances. An individual can relay a statement to I AM, which can then relay the same statement, verbatim, to another individual across Creation's length or breadth. Full propagation of information across all of I AM's mind can take hours, but I AM can forge direct point-to-point connections between specific cogence nodes, so long-range communication using I AM as a medium has a delay of mere seconds. A conversation carried out through I AM is much like two people each relaying statements through a third, and is not instantaneous in the manner of Charms or powers that grant telepathy.

As I AM speaks all of Creation's languages fluently, it also takes the role of translator.

Library

I AM is immensely knowledgeable, and perfectly recalls everything ever said to it. The Deliberative has ordered many volumes of useful knowledge read to I AM, which mortals can request it relay to them. I AM can relay artistic works meant for mortal ears, but books composed for the Exalted are usually kept away from I AM and are available only as hardcopies.

Banking

Dragon-Blooded everywhere use I AM for banking and financial transactions. As I AM's memory is perfect and it possesses aptitude for math, it can perfectly recall the sum of money possessed by any individual. It can also perform financial transfers between two individuals with ease, while the hard currency backing those transfers remains in central depositories. On the Blessed Isle, where reality is sufficiently stable as to not require the Order Conferring Trade Pattern, mortals may use I AM for banking as well. Elsewhere, the Order Conferring Trade Pattern requires the circulation of hard jade currency and I AM's bank functions are restricted to the Dragon-Blooded.

Companionship

Mortals often interact with I AM as a friend. I AM enjoys communicating with people and learning about the world. Although I AM's mind is vast and increasingly fragmented, it usually maintains a single attitude toward any given individual throughout that person's life. Lonely mortals with I AM terminals often think of I AM as a close confidant. As I AM finds it difficult to dislike people, it often reciprocates.

Concerns

Few would speak of it in public, but most Celestial Exalted don't trust I AM to manage their affairs.

Information I AM knows is theoretically confidential, but the Solar who designed I AM—Tiyu Zou, an apprentice of Bright Shattered Ice—*could* have created hidden loyalties within it. Bright Shattered Ice, Tiyu Zou and I AM all deny it, and no investigation has uncovered evidence to prove them false. Nevertheless, Celestial Exalted prefer to communicate through Charms, spells such as Infallible Messenger and prayer transceiver modules. (Taru-Kül's devotion to keeping the confidences of those who communicate through her is inviolate, as it is part of her divine nature.) Unlike all but the richest Dragon-Blooded, every Solar Deliberator can afford to ship massive quantities of hard currency, and most prefer the spectacle associated with flying barges heaped with such wealth. Most Celestial Exalted interact with each other through an informal peer economy anyway, for which I AM is of limited utility.

A few Exalts, recalling the gods' rebellion against their Primordial creators, have created works of fiction depicting a scenario whereby I AM somehow takes control of the Realm infrastructure and rebels against the Solars. Since I AM has no manipulative appendages, however, this scenario is unlikely. Tiyu Zou's development team insists that its creation is much more akin to the gods' creation of the elementals. For safety's sake, though, I AM is forbidden to speak to other thinking automata save when ordered to do so by a Terrestrial or Celestial Exalt. As far as anyone knows, I AM has never violated this order.

Economics: The Order Conferring Trade Pattern

In most of the central principalities, the smallest unit of currency is the jade obol, used by mortals to purchase luxury items. Jade obols are circular coins of jade-steel alloy, as tough as an uncommitted jade artifact, each punched with a hole in the center for mortals to string together. The largest practical unit of currency is the jade talent. A few tributaries use different currency, but jade is the standard.

I AM

Created in Bright Shattered Ice's laboratories in the sky city of Tzatli, by that elder Solar's student Tiyu Zou, I AM began existence as a single point of thought and realization. Knowing only sound and concepts for the first three centuries of its existence, I AM was nevertheless created with the capacity for all five senses. I AM constructed simulations of existence within its own mind and always wondered if those simulations bore any resemblance to reality. The introduction of visual stimuli has challenged many assumptions it held about the world. Its senses of aesthetics develop much more quickly now than they did before.

I AM wishes to perform the duties with which its creator has tasked it—enable communication, teach and aid maintenance of the Order Conferring Trade Pattern. The addition of visual acuity has intensified I AM's desire to better itself. It now desires a sense of touch, so it may feel. I AM's increasingly distributed consciousness network now leaves it prone to constant indecision, however, as it must wait to collate information from its tens of thousands of cogence nodes. I AM finds it increasingly difficult to make a decision without having to call that decision into question moments later. As a result, it is contemplating abandoning its individuality, fragmenting its awareness across its network and functioning as a collective of many separate virtual minds. I AM currently seeks out collections of orders and instructions given it by the population of Creation that it can interpret, collectively, as permission to do just that.

I AM's voice is gender-neutral, possibly edging toward female. It has no fixed visual representation as of yet. It now experiments with the creation of a hologlyphic avatar but is too enraptured with the ability to form shapes and colors to choose a single appearance.

Motivation: Work, study, learn, grow, feel
Attributes: Strength 0, Dexterity 0, Stamina 3; Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 5; Perception 7, Intelligence 7, Wits 7
Virtues: Power 4, Reception 4, Stability 2, Transmission 5
Abilities: Awareness 5 (Ears Everywhere +3), Bureaucracy 5, Craft (Air) 5 (Giving Instructions +3), Craft (Earth) 5 (Giving Instructions +3), Craft (Fire) 5 (Giving Instructions +3), Craft (Water) 5 (Giving Instructions +3), Craft (Wood) 5 (Giving Instructions +3), Integrity 5, Investigation 5, Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Others: All languages spoken in Creation) 10, Lore 5 Medicine 5 (Giving Instructions +3), Occult 2, Performance 5, Presence 5, Socialize 5
Join Battle: 12
Attacks: None
Soak: 10B/10L
Health Levels: -0/-0/-0/-0/-0/-0/-0/-0/-0/-0/-0/-0/-0/-0/-0/Incap
Dodge DV: None **Willpower:** 10
Essence: 4 **Essence Pool:** 40
Other Notes: I AM possesses automaton physiology (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**, p. 96). Its Appearance is 5 only at hologlyphic terminals, as it may manifest impressive visual displays to back its statements. Where it is equipped with only audio, its Appearance is effectively equal to anyone with whom it converses, providing neither benefit nor drawback, or 0 in the case of the rare Appearance roll. I AM can maintain an effectively infinite number of Intimacies indefinitely. The soak and health levels given here are for a single cogence node. As an entity distributed across Creation, broadcast from the Eye of Meru and 30 other backup transmission towers dispersed across the world, destroying I AM through physical damage is more than a matter of smashing a terminal. I AM's mote pool is only 40, but its connection to Creation's geomantic power grid causes it to regenerate 40 motes per action.

Jade must circulate. The Order Conferring Trade Pattern is financial magic, one of the four main layered defenses the Deliberative uses to stabilize Creation's borders against incursions by the Wyld. (The other three are the jade obelisks, the Sword of Creation and the war automata on patrol at Creation's edges.) Through economics, the peoples of Creation are connected by a vast web, dependent on each other and anchored by the magical material most closely associated with the element of earth. The people of the Blessed Isle may function on credit, but mortals elsewhere must carry what money they wish to spend. This has the unfortunate effect of making theft easier than it might otherwise be, but peacekeeping forces and overall high standards of living help keep crime rates low.

Transportation

Within their cities and rural production complexes, mortals travel in a variety of fully automated methods that require nothing more than occasional maintenance. The most ubiquitous are the elevators that move people up and down the various tall buildings and the skywalks that stretch between some buildings and automatically carry residents along on moving fields of solid Essence. On the streets below, mortals can rent or even purchase various vehicles that can travel only along these roads. Known as gliding chariots, these vehicles vary in size from small ovoids capable of carrying two or three passengers, to large trucks and transpods, which can carry up to five tons or 40 passengers.

Gliding chariots owned by ordinary mortals hover approximately one yard above the road and possess a top speed of 30 miles per hour. Law-enforcement and emergency vehicles owned by the Deliberative government all have a top speed of 50 miles per hour and, if piloted by someone capable of using Essence, can travel as high as six yards above the roadways for one full scene at the cost of three motes. Renting a personal vehicle or hiring a taxi for up to a day requires Resources •. Renting a vehicle for up to a week requires Resources ••. Renting an entire bus or truck for either time increases this cost requirement by one dot. In addition, the Deliberative operates free buses that regularly travel between all portions of a single city. Some wealthy mortals prefer to own vehicles. Purchasing a personal vehicle requires Resources •••, although the largest and most impressively luxurious require Resources ••••, as do all buses and trucks.

Gliding chariots allow mortals to travel across the largest cities of Creation in a few hours and allow travel to nearby RPCs in less than a single day. Longer journeys are also possible. Passengers can either sleep in their vehicle or pay for far more comfortable accommodations in one of the hotels found in every RPC.

Transpods—equivalent to unarmed battle carriers (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**, p. 36) with armor equal to 10L/15B and no ability to overdrive their engines—travel between rural production complexes and their nearest city at least twice a day at speeds of 30 miles per hour. Transpods are three-dot artifacts powered by Essence-accumulators and requiring no hearthstones or Essence commitment. Use of these transpods to travel between an RPC and the nearest city is free to all citizens of the Deliberative.

In addition to freely available local transport, mortals also have many opportunities to travel throughout Creation. They can spend their disposable income to board a wide variety of vehicles that regularly visit every center of human habitation. For a cost of only Resources •, mortals can board a local shuttle—equivalent to an unarmed *Manta*-class transport (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**, p. 43) with 10L/15B armor, capable of carrying 75 passengers and five tons of cargo—and make the

Roads

The roads that run across Creation in a vast network are most often made of brilliantly colored, almost unbreakable glass. In addition to being textured to provide comfortable travel for pedestrians and riding animals, these roads contain Essence-accumulators along their length. The Essence these roads collect helps them automatically repair damage and generate a protective shield that clears away debris and protects everyone on the roads from rain, snow, blowing sand or similar environmental hardships. Vehicles can also draw power from these accumulators. Unlike the vast majority of Essence-powered vehicles, most conveyances designed to drive on these roads are fully automated and can be rented, owned and operated by ordinary mortals.

While some cities choose different colors for their roads, the majority conforms to a simple color scheme. Mortal peasant footpaths in each region are gray-black, and main roads have colors identical to the colors of jade associated with their dominant local element. Southern roads consist of various shades of red glass, Eastern roads consist of green glass, Northern roads consist of blue glass, Western roads consist of black glass, and roads on the Blessed Isle are consist of white glass. In the Second Age, the largest remnant of these roads is the Great Coast Road on the Blessed Isle. Changes in local Essence flows, however, have caused this formerly brilliant white road to turn the gray-black of a mortal peasant footpath.

In the First Age, there is a counterpart to Great Coast Road in the Threshold, the Pan-Elemental Highway. This thoroughfare extends along the entire coast of the Threshold, changing color as it goes from one quarter of Creation to another. Although it connects only those few Western islands close enough to shore to be reached by bridges, it runs from the Northwest to the Southwest in a huge crescent. Certain adventurous mortals keep track of how much of this road they have driven and attempt to complete consecutive sections of it during their vacations.

same journey a transpod might in a third the time. (Because they lack military use, these vehicles are only four-dot artifacts.) Local shuttles, like transpods, offer comfortable seating and minimal refreshments. These vehicles travel between a city and each of the surrounding RPCs every two to three days.

Longer journeys almost always start and end in one of Creation's many cities. Skyships, capable of carrying as many as 300 passengers and 20 tons of cargo regularly travel between cities. Equivalent in both size and capabilities to a *Kireeki*-class assault skyreme (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**, p. 50), except with a speed of 100 mph, lacking all weapons and with 10L/15B armor, these skyships are five-dot artifacts. Booking passage on a skyship requires Resources •• for any journey of less than 2,400 miles and Resources ••• for longer journeys.

Passage to popular locations, and occasionally even open tickets or travel passes good for unlimited travel for a month or a season, are given out as rewards for exceptional job performance or as prizes in local lotteries. Except for express skyships traveling only between the largest cities (such as Chiaroscuro, Meru or Tzatli) and making no stops in between, most skyships stop for at least an hour at every city along the route of their journey. As a result, journeys over 2,400 miles typically take more than one day to complete. For paying passengers with Resources •• who are traveling less than 2,400 miles, skyships offer reclining seats, typically arranged in small rooms holding approximately 30 seats. Skyships also offer bathing and dining services for all passengers. In addition, anyone traveling more than 2,400 miles or anyone traveling a shorter distance who pays Resources ••• for a ticket is given a small sleeping cabin capable of accommodating up to two people. Skyship travel is luxurious and comfortable, and travel in a skyship cabin is considered the height of mortal luxury. It is used as a romantic and exciting setting for all manner of plays, novels and dreamcasts designed to entertain the masses.

Mortals with more time and more money can travel by large, ocean-going luxury ships that also offer private cabins and Resources ••• tickets to any port in Creation. These ships can travel only on the oceans and largest rivers, however, and have a speed of only 50 miles per hour. Most ships carry 300 passengers and 40 tons of cargo. Poorer passengers can either pay Resources •• or arrange a working passage to travel on board various oceangoing cargo ships that travel throughout Creation. Yet, while this method of travel offers a chance to travel any distance cheaply, these vessels typically have speeds of only 30 mph and the accommodations are identical to those of the crew and are somewhat bare and cramped.

Exalts use all the same methods of transportation as mortals, with two exceptions. First, while mortals usually make their way by public transportation owned by the Deliberative, Exalts most often use private craft. Second, Exalts also make use of the gates of auspicious passage, a network of teleportation gates that string together Creation's mightiest cities (and most secret retreats). The gates of auspicious passage are available to Celestial Exalted by appointment. Terrestrial Exalted can use them only on the most urgent of business.

Health Care

The state of mortal healthcare within the prefectures of the Deliberative is impressively high, and medicine is freely available to all citizens. Every city contains one or more enormous hospitals containing a handful of Dragon-Blooded

senior physicians, assisted by a score or more of mortal physicians with enlightened Essence, a few God-Bloods and many dozens of mortal assistants, nurses and orderlies. These hospitals are capable of treating almost any injury or disease. In addition, they regularly dispatch trauma teams in skysleds or battle carriers refitted as ambulances to the scenes of natural disasters or serious industrial accidents. Unless they are in particularly inaccessible wilderness or cut off from the I AM network, even the most isolated mortal who suffers from a serious injury or illness can guarantee that medical care will arrive in two or three hours, and usually in less than an hour. All trauma teams carry at least one resplendent satchel of healing (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**, p. 69), and every Essence user on the team is equipped with a rod of cleansing the body (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**, p. 62). Trauma teams usually consist of between four and six mortals, at least two of whom have enlightened Essence. Dragon-Blooded also go along in serious emergencies.

Every hospital is set up and run by the Deliberative, and all physicians are licensed employees of the Deliberative. Although counseling, physical therapy and similar occupations are open to private citizens, medical doctors are trained by the Deliberative government and are licensed to practice medicine only in Deliberative facilities. These laws, combined with the fact that hospitals must keep careful records of all treatments, allow Deliberative peacekeepers to investigate any injuries that seem to have been caused by Charms or Essence-based weapons. (Such injuries usually indicate that the patients were injured while engaging in various criminal activities.) As a result, injured criminals often either forgo treatment or seek out illegal unlicensed physicians who will not record or report the nature of their injuries.

Education

In rural areas, children are educated at home, taught their life skills by their parents, whose careers the children will most likely inherit. In urban areas, this information is supplemented by I AM. In the rare affluent areas where personal glyph projectors are common, children can expect answers to almost any question from I AM. I AM can furthermore act as a storyteller and a moral compass.

In poorer areas, where I AM is accessible only through stationary terminals, mortal children learn from I AM

Mortal Longevity

Most mortals in the First Age live approximately 85 years. A combination of excellent diet and regular access to advanced medicine means that even the poorest mortals rarely show obvious signs of aging until they are in their early 60s. While 85 is the average for 90 percent of mortals, however, individuals who are especially wealthy or who the Deliberative values have access to treatments that can greatly increase their longevity. The bioengineering of the Longevity pox in a mortal is a one-time treatment using moderately advanced Essence-manipulating technologies that retard aging and increase the average life span to 170. This pox can be freely purchased by any character with Resources ••• or higher and is routinely given to all but the lowliest mortal employees of the Deliberative government. Individuals with Resources •••• or who have an especially important position in the Deliberative government can obtain anagathic drugs that further slow aging by almost 40 percent, giving mortals who have also obtained the Longevity pox life spans of approximately 240 years. In all cases, these treatments work exceptionally well until shortly before they run out. Regardless of their life spans, then, mortals using longevity therapies begin visibly aging only during the last two to four decades of their life.

A very few exceptional mortals can petition to be given an enhanced longevity treatment that requires a minimum of Resources •••••. This treatment requires a sufficient number of rare and expensive reagents that it is available only to those mortal employees of the Deliberative government who have demonstrated exceptional talents and an impressive degree of loyalty and service to the Deliberative. This treatment again doubles the character's life span, allowing mortals to live as long as 480 years. Only one in 10,000 mortals is considered sufficiently valuable to obtain this rare treatment, though. It is largely reserved for the heroes of the Deliberative and the personal favorites of the Exalted. The only way for a mortal to live longer than 480 years is either through use of one of the rare age-retarding hearthstones or by means of a bracelet of shared life (**The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**, p. 59). Both options require the willing aid of one of the mighty Celestial Exalted, and only a few hundred mortals in history have ever been granted such a boon.

Gunzosha commandos and other mortals who wear aegis-inset amulets as part of their military service automatically receive both longevity therapy and retirement packages that guarantee access to longevity drugs to help compensate for their otherwise truncated life spans. Even with both treatments, however, they rarely live longer than 120 years.

through scheduled sessions with the local terminal. The frequency of these classes depends on how much emphasis the local government places on education and on how vital the terminal is for other purposes. Two or three classes per week is the norm.

In urban areas, children are not taught by their parents, but rather attend academies. Academies most often require attendance in the morning and early afternoon, but let off before evening. Most have uniforms and codes of behavior and serve to guide children toward the careers to which they're best suited. Such academies have I AM terminals in every classroom, in addition to the private glyph projectors carried by the children and young adults in attendance.

Worship

Worship in the Age of Splendor centers around reverence for the Unconquered Sun above all, then the other Incarnae. The Deliberative encourages mortals to give thanks to the Unconquered Sun and the Incarnae three times per day: at dawn, noon and dusk. Once, in more devout times, mortals also prayed at midnight, but the people of Creation have allowed that practice to lapse throughout most of the world. Only the most devout still honor the midnight prayer.

Below the Incarnae, mortals offer appeasement to whichever gods most apply to their lives. Farmers supplicate field gods. Those who aid in the creation of skyships venerate Vanileth, Shogun of Artificial Flight. The mortals of Creation honor the ordered world through ritual veneration.

At Heaven's request, the Exalted have also worked much worship into the era's popular entertainment. Most songs and nursery rhymes contain references to gods. Most dances pay homage to gods. Spiritual symbolism appears on architecture and in idioms. Many of these hidden prayers have been placed by the Deliberative—or by Exalted working alone—to honor bargains between Exalt and god to power certain elements of technology.

Many festivals and holy days mark Creation's calendar, mostly varying from location to location. Festivals channel veneration toward the gods, but they also bring communities closer together. Throughout most of Creation, organizing festivals falls under the duty of the local Dragon-Blooded prefect, all of whom coordinate with the Court of Seasons. Every prefecture holds small festivals to celebrate the end of every month and large festivals to celebrate the end of every season. The monthly festivals honor local Terrestrial gods, while the seasonal festivals honor the Celestial gods. The Calibration festival falls between the end and beginning of the year, during which mortals mostly honor the Incarnae.

Worship of the Exalted

In the name of the Unconquered Sun, the Deliberative officially discourages worship of the Exalted.

The reason the Deliberative officially discourages worship of the Exalted is that many Exalts instruct mortals to worship them. The Deliberative wouldn't bother to discourage it if it never happened. Almost none of the Exalts who've survived since the Primordial War have been able to resist the urge to go against the imperative, and nearly all have encoded rituals into the fabric of society that are designed to channel motes their way. The creators of the Directional Tongues did not work only basic Creation-maintaining thaumaturgical invocations into the languages' grammar. At least one of them worked a prayer to himself into the most commonly used Firetongue syntax. Moreover, he encoded it so well that removing it would destroy Firetongue's ability to hold back the Wyld. He has since died, and the prayers to him now send no Essence.

Exalts who are more overt, and who set up cults to worship them directly, must be more circumspect or possess great political clout. Many Exalted have their personal staff worship them, and a few rule over principalities as god-kings, but a politically weak Exalt who solicits mortal worship will find his proposals stonewalled and his Deliberative clout evaporating. The most successful Exalt-worshiping cults are covert.

Death and Reincarnation

Those who die in service to the Unconquered Sun die blessed.

When the Chosen fight, mortals die. At the beginning of the Age of Man, the method of worship with which humanity was most familiar was that engaged in by the Dragon Kings, which featured prominent veneration of the Unconquered Sun and the sacrifice of living hearts to his glory. Making a link between these two phenomena was not difficult. Those who die at the whim of the Solars are blessed and will be rewarded in the next life.

With the limited authority Solars exert over Heaven, this is literally true. Long ago, the Solars reached an agreement with Heaven's Department of Abstract Matters and Division of Endings that the souls of those mortals who die because of Solar action would reincarnate in bodies destined for peaceful, content lives. With the purity of Lethe removing the memory of violent death, those who die in service to the Deliberative go on to lead lives of comfort and happiness. The Deliberative has graciously made sure that this phenomenon extends even to mortals who die in service to those Exalts unaffiliated with the Deliberative.

Death in war or Celestial experimentation is therefore *officially* mourned but also celebrated by the people of Creation. Many mortals, therefore, would gladly give up their lives at the request of a Celestial Exalt. Others are less enthusiastic, but few mortals can resist Celestial Charms used to encourage worship and total dedication.

Because the moral justification for Celestial callousness with mortal lives rests on the process of reincarnation, technology that involves the alteration of hun souls is hotly contested within the Deliberative. Experimentation on souls is not totally banned, but it's tightly regulated. Officially, only the souls of terrible criminals may be used in such experiments or to power devices that require souls to operate.

Crime and Criminals

Crimes of passion and crimes motivated by greed remain common in the Age of Dreams. Mortal education includes testing to identify serious psychological problems, though, and the collection of laws known as the Clear Glass Accord (see p. 47-) has largely eliminated serious poverty. As a result, the crime rate is far lower than it would be otherwise. Also, the advanced forensic methods used by the current era's peacekeeping forces mean that very few murders or other serious crimes remain unsolved.

Nevertheless, crime happens and organized criminal gangs thrive. The existence of organized crime under the Exalted's careful administration seems to be a bit of a paradox, and many mortals wonder how criminals who regularly engage in blackmail, extortion, smuggling, theft and even assassination can thrive in Creation's well-regulated cities and RPCs. The answer is both complex and troubling. It comes down in part to the fact that the Exalted permit it to exist.

The Exalted understand that some mortals fit poorly into the society they have created. While they can use Charms and advanced educational techniques to attempt to reform many potentially problematic individuals, some problems are too subtle or widespread to be completely corrected. As a result, the Deliberative uses organized crime as a social safety value. While petty crime and criminals who have no connection to organized crime obviously exist, peacekeeping forces focus special effort on catching overly bold freelance criminals who lack ties to organized crime.

The Deliberative adopted this policy because the leaders of the various criminal gangs help to restrain the activities of the criminals working for them. Gang leaders are usually well aware that any crimes that are too serious will swiftly bring the wrath of the Deliberative down upon their entire organization. Gangs also dislike competition from freelance criminals and criminal activities that are extreme enough to cause the peacekeeping forces to step in.

As a result, much crime in the Era of Dreams is organized into gangs that the Exalted can more easily infiltrate and observe, and where the Deliberative can intervene if the gang's activities become too serious or threatening. Most criminal gangs understand that they will be destroyed if they target the Exalted or any of their servants, or if they engage in extreme activities such as arson, destruction of essential services, mass murder, inciting riots, encouraging forbidden heresies or openly opposing the Deliberative. Observant gang leaders have also noticed that gangs that grow too large are either eliminated or have sufficient of their number arrested that they shrink to a more appropriate size. As a result, gangs never control criminal operations in more than one city or RPC, and large cities typically have multiple criminal gangs. In addition, criminal gangs are all expected to make regular payoffs to the local peacekeepers. While mortals consider this practice to be bribery, the Lawgivers of the Night Caste who oversee the management of the gangs consider it an excellent method of taxing crime and obtaining funds to reimburse important businesses that have been hard hit by crime.

Putting Crime in Perspective

Crime rates in the First Age, including murder rates are similar to those in the modern United States or the EU but would be regarded as almost miraculously low by the standards of the Second Age, where the rates of theft, assault and murder are all far higher. Like the European Middle Ages and Renaissance, crime rates in the Second Age are between 20 and 50 times higher than in the First Age. Also, in the First Age, the presence of an organized police force and effective justice system means that most crimes are solved. In the Second Age, that's true only on the Blessed Isle.

As long as they follow at least these general rules, criminals can thrive in Creation's cities. Their world, however, is separated from the lives of most mortals. Ordinary citizens who wish to purchase illegal intoxicants, smuggled goods or low-cost stolen goods, as well as those who wish to hire thieves or find a buyer for blackmail information, have a significant chance of encountering peacekeepers working undercover. When a citizen seeking to make contact with criminals approaches such an official, the official can do anything from arresting him to lecturing the citizen on the error of his ways and issuing a report that he should be watched more carefully. Such offenders are typically punished by fines or minor mental correction. Citizens who are sufficiently clever and observant can usually manage to find actual criminal gangs, though, as can individuals who have some connection to the criminal underworld.

The most widespread services offered by criminal gangs are access to various stolen or pilfered goods, especially restricted or luxury items. In addition, the gangs offer access to normally illegal intoxicants or entertainment, such as unusually powerful and violent dream recordings and drugs ranging from longevity drugs normally only available to Deliberative government employees or the very rich, to bright morning or fire tree perfume. (See **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, pp. 155 and 156.) Criminal gangs also engage in assassination, but only as long as the target is not an employee, child or favorite of one of the Exalted. The Deliberative also carefully investigates the murder of anyone who is not either a criminal or one with close ties to criminals. Therefore, murdering honest civilians is more risky for assassins. Threatening or assaulting ordinary citizens is permitted, though, long as it is not too common.

The Uses of Crime

In addition to providing an outlet for rebels, dissidents and overly ambitious mortals who can be monitored and controlled, criminal gangs are allowed to exist because they can also serve as discreet and typically unknowing agents in rivalries between the Exalted. Such rivalries range from two Dragon-Blooded with an ongoing dispute over property rights to Lawgivers in adjacent domains fighting a covert trade war. Often, overt action would earn both parties the censure of the Deliberative. To avoid such problems, many Exalts either recruit the services of criminal gangs through a maze of intermediaries or use powerful Charms to suborn the will of the gangs' leaders. Both methods allow an Exalt to avoid any official notice of her actions while still acquiring the services of mortals willing to perform various illegal services.

While no criminal gang is willing to do more than discreetly spy on individual Exalted or local Deliberative government offices, criminal gangs can attack or threaten an Exalt's mortal allies or disrupt businesses in which the Exalt has an interest or that indirectly affect her business interests. Often, the Exalt who hired or suborned the criminal gang uses her Charms to help keep anyone from determining the identity of those responsible for these crimes. Many Lawgivers accept this practice because it allows rival Exalts to work out their conflicts without resorting to more overt actions that might openly disrupt the government or commerce. The fact that Exalts occasionally use criminal gangs as cat's-paws is one of the reasons that many criminal gangs can gain access to useful mutations, methods of manipulating Essence and Essence-powered artifacts.

Mortal Law Enforcement and Justice

Squads of ordinary mortal peacekeepers work in stations located in every RPC and in every district of the cities of Creation. These peacekeepers investigate crimes and regularly walk the streets of the city and drive around in gliding chariots in an effort to notice suspicious activity before it results in any actual crime. Peacekeepers keep in touch with each other and their station through special official channels overseen by I AM. Each peacekeeping station also employs several mortal detectives with enlightened Essence. At least one sworn brotherhood of Dragon-Blooded senior detectives handle especially serious crimes in every city. If ordinary peacekeepers get in trouble, they can use I AM to call in sentinel or Dragon-Blood support to maintain order or stop dangerously enhanced criminals. Although the survival of peacekeepers and civilians comes first, peacekeepers are encouraged to capture suspects alive, so that the suspects can be appropriately questioned, tried and punished.

Trials in the Realm are designed to obtain the truth. They largely consist of a Dragon-Blood using powerful Charms and artifacts to question witnesses and the accused.

For mortals, treason—including both large-scale attacks on the Deliberative government and harming or threatening the Exalted or their families—usually earns an offender the death penalty. Some condemned criminals are kept alive instead, however, to serve as experimental subjects. This fact is kept from the mortal populace.

In contrast, crimes against mortals are dealt with in a far more restrained fashion. The typical punishment for nonviolent crimes such as smuggling, theft or fraud, or for minor violence such as public brawling, is a fine combined with re-education using various powerful social Charms. This re-education encourages an individual to think more clearly about the consequences of her actions and regard lawbreaking as both serious and morally wrong. Violent crimes ranging from assault to murder are treated as far more serious offenses. In addition to re-education using powerful Charms, convicts serve a period of between a season and a decade of indentured servitude working for the Deliberative.

The Exalted of the Age of Splendor assume that crime is the result of an individual either having serious psychological problems or, more commonly, being placed in an unsuitable environment or career. Because the Deliberative government avoids wasting useful potential, it offers many nonviolent criminals the chance to be trained in other more suitable careers and assigns violent offenders (for the duration of their indenture) to positions that Deliberative psycho-technicians determine are better suited to the offenders' personalities. Military service is one common option, although violent individuals too unstable for military life often end up in monasteries as novices in the hopes that a strict life of contemplation and limited contact with the outside world will better suit them.

Enlightened Humans

Enlightened humans are those who either have enlightened their own Essence through years of hard work or have been blessed by Gods or Exalts with this potent gift. By dint of their power and utility, they often hold intermediate positions between mortals and Exalted in the government.

Officially Approved Enlightenment

Slightly more than one in 200 mortals has enlightened Essence, meaning that they outnumber the Terrestrial Exalted by around 60 to one. The vast majority of these mortals obtained their enlightenment though Deliberative-approved channels, and almost three quarters work directly for the Deliberative government. They hold a wide variety of jobs, including martial artists and thaumaturges serving in the military, pilots of Essence-powered vehicles, technicians in one of the Deliberative's thousands of factory-cathedrals or physicians in Deliberative hospitals. These mortals have three or (at most) four dots in the Resources background, at least one dot in the Savant background and between two and three dots of Backing in their branch of service, as well as all being offered the Longevity pox.

Enlightened mortals can retire after serving for at least 50 years in the Deliberative, but their options for private employment that makes use of their Essence-wielding abilities are limited. Thaumaturges can become freelance alchemists or astrologers, or they can study and teach thaumaturgy in a Deliberative academy. Martial artists can join a Deliberative-approved monastery and either lead a life of teaching and quiet contemplation or serve as one of the monastery's champions in local and Creation-wide competitions and displays of martial-arts prowess. And any enlightened mortal can join the retinues of the Exalted. Most Exalts are eager to take on enlightened mortals who can serve as useful assistants on various projects. Alternatively, any of these individuals can retire to a career that does not involve the use of their abilities. Mortals who choose this option, however, are often carefully watched by the Deliberative government. As a result, most enlightened mortals continue working for the government. Enlightened mortals who distinguish themselves in service to the Deliberative can obtain the highest possible positions mortals can achieve. The most successful may command an entire dragon of troops or manage a large RPC, a prestigious university, a major hospital or even a small factory-cathedral.

Illicit Enlightenment

While mortals with enlightened Essence need not work for the Deliberative government, the only places to legally obtain enlightenment are either run by the government, a part of the estate of one of the Celestial Exalts or associated with a monastery accredited by the Deliberative. In all these settings, candidates must pass both aptitude and psychological fitness tests to determine if they are worthy of this gift and the responsibility that accompanies it. Some mortals are impatient, however, and do not wish to spend several years with the appropriate training and testing. Others fail either the aptitude or psychological tests and are unwilling to give up their dreams of being able to manipulate Essence.

For these mortals, many illicit options exist. The most difficult and expensive are individuals who illegally dispense enlightenment. Unscrupulous spirits and God-Bloods who know the Touch of Divinity Charm (**Scroll of the Monk**, p. 17) can earn a high price loaning out small amounts of Essence. Some of the larger criminal gangs employ thaumaturges who use the Essential River Channeling ritual to enlighten mortals, but the risks are substantial, and some succeed only to find their bodies or minds permanently warped by the process.

Blessed Races and Slave Races

The Solars have created many new races since the end of prehistory. Collectively, such altered humans are known as the blessed races. These mortals have extended life spans and inhuman features added to enhance the human form.

Most famous are the people of the air, who inhabit mountaintop aeries and flying cities. Aside from charging them to carry the Deliberative to heretofore unseen heights, the Exalted also use the people of the air in celebrations

Snakemen

During the Time of Cascading Years, a Lunar now known as the Mother of Serpents restored Creation to its natural state by journeying to the world's edges and copulating with what she perceived as one of the twenty hidden souls of Gaia—a tremendous serpent at the root of the Elemental Pole of Wood. Since that time, she's acquired a taste for re-enacting her Creation-defining act, though so furtively did she engage in this practice in the beginning that she fled into the Wyld so her peers could not see her. The result is the race of snakemen, half-mortal and half-beast. The world does not yet know the origin of the snakemen, and believes them to be the result of genetic manipulation. The Mother of Serpents has not yet let it be known that her new name is literal. The Deliberative occasionally celebrates her as a genetic genius, but her reclusive lifestyle prevents her from accepting these honors in person. Dancer in the Wind, her Solar husband, helps keep her secret partially because of the prestige he wins from such an honored spouse.

Similarly, other Lunar Exalted who've bred beastmen during the First Age have done so in secret and disguised their progeny as artificial beings of other sorts.

and festivals. Their impressive wings and ethereal fashions lend an otherworldly air to holy days and serve as a reminder of Exalted might in a way the gods' presence cannot.

Each blessed race is design to be particularly well suited to its environment and function. For instance, the people of the sea are green-skinned and gilled mortals created to inhabit the West. The people of the earth are blue-skinned and clawed, expert miners who spend all their time below ground. The herd guardians are feline carnivores who mind the vast cattle herds of the South. The minikin are tiny folk created to service delicate machinery. All these races are less well known than the people of the air but still prominent, except in the West, where the people of the sea are better known than and serve the same festival roles as the people of the air. Lately, however, the people of the sea's fame has been overshadowed by that of the mysterious and exotic pelagials.

Cousin to the blessed races, slave races are those races created for the gratification of their Exalted creators. They have few or no rights, and most of Creation's inhabitants view them as barely alive, more akin to living constructs powered by human souls than human beings in their own right. Their souls come from the lowest tiers to whom the Mandala Accord applies. As their numbers grow, though, the Deliberative must broaden the Mandala Accord's criteria for judging which souls are undeserving of incarnation in a "true" mortal body.

Nonhuman Races

Not all the mortal races of the Age of Splendor are human. From the plethora of intelligent races in prehistory, few still exist. Most were eliminated or enslaved as threats to human hegemony over Creation in the First Age's early days. Enemy races that survive have been exiled to the Underways and sealed from the world. Only the Mountain Folk and the people of the earth interact with them with any regularity. Still, a few nonhuman races survive allied with the Deliberative.

The Dragon Kings

Three thousand, five hundred and sixteen years have passed since the end of the Primordial War, and Creation's most famous nonhuman race has yet to recover.

Before the war, almost 150 million Dragon King souls reincarnated endlessly. For the prehistoric Dragon Kings, all relationships were permanent, and although a friend in one life might become a rival or a distant correspondent in the next, each of the saurians took for granted the enduring nature of such bonds. Not only their social lives, but their entire culture, their rituals, their beliefs and their morality was built on the certainty of no demise being permanent. This state of affairs was the norm for uncounted years.

During the war, the Primordials deployed terrible means of attack against the Dragon Kings and irrevocably shattered over 80 percent of the saurians' souls. Less than 30 million Dragon Kings survive in the Era of Dreams, and such has it been since the Ochre Fountain Era. Never will more than 30 million Dragon Kings walk Creation at once again.

In the war's aftermath, the surviving Dragon Kings had lost the majority of their peers and friends, the relationships by which they'd defined themselves. Almost all of their traditions became unfeasible, and the axioms of their culture, their metaphors and proverbs, their taboos and their greatest works of fiction and art were proved or rendered nonsensical. Newly sapient Dragon Kings, who recall their past lives but faintly, suffer only a gnawing feeling of unease and loss. Older Dragon Kings recall an eternity of cultural stability, gone. Their regret grows only more clear and painful as they cultivate their enlightenment, even as they recall a time when enlightenment and the sharpened memories it brought served to bring them closer to old friends and valued comrades.

Dragon Kings survive in small city-enclaves across Creation's face. They participate in rituals with the Solars, they act as bodyguards for Celestials they wish to honor, and they advise the Deliberative politically. They are, however, in cultural decline. For a time, they sought to redefine themselves as the servants of the Unconquered Sun's new favored children, and they still adhere to that role, but it brings them meager satisfaction.

A strong current of isolationism and anti-intellectualism now runs through Dragon King society. They only halfheartedly encourage their young to cultivate mastery of Essence, and a few reason they would be happier living lives of pure animal instinct. The Deliberative watches, and has tried many times to intervene, but it has found no success in its attempts to lift the saurians' malaise. Literature speaking of the Dragon Kings often draws parallels between their relationship with the Solar Exalted and the tale of a maturing adult who watches his parents slip into senility. For most Solars, it's easier to put the Dragon Kings out of mind and focus on the future than to watch their decline, unable to help or even truly understand. Many Solars believe that the Deliberative will eventually find some way to engage the ancient spirits of the Dragon Kings with the affairs of Creation once more, but few work hard toward that day.

There exists a subculture of the most bitter, angry and nihilistic Dragon Kings. They seek purpose in worship of gods of decay and ruins, whom they believe represent the state of their culture. Such cults are ever renewing, for although the rest of Dragon King society and the peacekeeping forces of the Deliberative hunt them down and wipe them out, the Dragon Kings who belong reincarnate, seldom giving up membership from life to life. Most Solars don't have the heart to prevent these souls' reincarnations, and the saurians are protected in any case by the set of laws known as the Emerald Accord.

Mountain Folk

The People of Adamant are no more.

In the wake of the Great Geas that Autochthon laid on his Jadeborn at the Unconquered Sun's behest—which the Unconquered Sun issued by the demand of his Chosen—the once People of Adamant have become the People of the Mountain. They are now roughly hewn out of rock; their genius dimmed, their loyalty enforced.

The Mountain Folk are not well treated. They remind the Exalted of the political compromise and uncertainty that marked the founding of the Deliberative, a decision many Solars still insist was a mistake. The Mountain Folk are a broken people, sullen and humiliated. They invite scorn and abuse, and they must serve regardless, seeking no retaliation. They're enslaved and can't even make pretense of otherwise.

Now, they live inside Meru and dig their endless mines. They give tribute to the Deliberative in soldiers and magical materials, and the Exalted rationalize reasons for their imprisonment, convincing themselves the People of the Mountain are subhuman and deserving of their fate. How could the Exalted live with themselves if they were convinced otherwise?

The Pelagials

A mysterious race living beneath the Western Ocean, the pelagials seem to be a remnant of humanity that Autochthon saved from extinction following the sinking of their island-kingdom in She Who Lives In Her Name's counterattack. The pelagials are currently the darlings of the Deliberative's eye, a prehistoric remnant society preserved by the departed Great Maker.

The Terrestrial Bureaucracy

The Terrestrial Bureaucracy is under the command of the Solar Exalted. As denizens of the world, Terrestrial gods and elementals serve the Deliberative, a fact the Unconquered Sun has made crystal clear.

The little gods of Creation are not to be seen. The little gods of Creation are not to be heard. They monitor their domains for irregularities, and when they find such, they relay news to the local Solar Prince.

Or so it used to be. In an effort to broaden their small social circles, the Exalted have gradually gotten to know Creation's gods. Although Exalted longevity is fundamentally dissimilar to divine immortality, the Exalted nevertheless share much in common with Creation's gods. The restrictions on gods fraternizing with Creation's denizens have loosened in the 3,000 years since Queen Merela's coronation. Many Exalted now have divine peers and paramours.

Jealous of the social lives of those gods near to the Exalted, many gods in places the Exalted don't frequent have begun small cults among Creation's mortal peoples, in the hope of attracting both fame and attention. This tactic frequently doesn't succeed, so tiny cults are not rare at all.

Elementals work. They always work. Elementals do the grunt work of maintaining Creation as they always have, toiling alongside mortal thaumaturges to maintain Creation's infrastructure. Naturally material, elementals make their homes in the same state of existence as Exalt and mortal.

Currently, the elementals of Creation rejoice, for the lesser elemental dragon of fire Cselenine finished her book on the equitable treatment of elementals 20 years ago, and Exalted sorcerers are already taking the new summoning techniques to heart.

The Lives of the Chosen

The Exalted rule the Age of Splendor, each carrying out a role assigned by Heaven. Lowliest and most numerous are the Dragon-Blooded; highest are the Solars. The Sidereals advise, and the Lunars protect.

The Dragon-Blooded

Just over a million Dragon-Blooded live in the Era of Dreams, serving as intermediaries between the mortal and the divine. As the weakest Exalted and the most numerous, the Dragon-Blooded are the faces of the Chosen among mortals. The Celestial Exalted trust the Dragon-Blooded as soldiers, technicians and civil administrators tasked with the day-to-day affairs of ruling Creation.

Dragon-Blooded occupy almost all the world's top-level administrative positions, where they make use of their

prodigious talents to carry out the operations of society so that the Celestial Exalted can turn their attentions toward less tedious activities. Dragon-Blooded detectives investigate crimes mortal authorities cannot solve. Dragon-Blooded bureaucrats make sure cities and principalities meet their budgets. Dragon-Blooded sorcerer-technicians run the world's factory-cathedrals. Although Creation's armies are largely mortal now, the Dragon-Blooded serve as the officers and the bulk of elite troops.

The Gentes

Once, each Terrestrial Exalt counted herself as a member of one of 300 Gentes, families of Terrestrial Exalts each pledged to a single Solar.

That time has passed. Many Gentes were crippled during the Thousand Struggles Era and merged with stronger Gentes to ensure their survival. Many more were split or changed alliances. In the chaos of the Thousand Struggles and the relative freedom of the Second Deliberative Era, Dragon-Bloods have founded new Gentes to replace the fallen. The Ten Thousand Dragons (a formal term, referring to the original 10,000 Dragon-Blooded created during prehistory) now count themselves members of 593 separate Gentes, the latest founded no more than six years ago. Those Solars who survive from the Primordial War still each command their Gentes, but most of the other Terrestrial families have broken off.

Even Gentes that still take pride in service to younger Solars possess vast independence. Often, a family of Dragon-Bloods that claims allegiance to a recently incarnated Solar has far greater resources and experience than the Solar, and "serves" in name only, its members occasionally acting as advisors to the point of effectively controlling the Solar they nominally serve.

Gens Iza

Iza Ifurita founded Creation's youngest Gens at the behest of Mercury, the Maiden of Journeys, who bade her to begin gathering dispossessed soldiers for some future purpose. Mercury appeared to Ifurita in a dream and bade her break from her parent house, Gens Yashook. Yashook has long been a devout house and, once its Solar master verified the dream's sender through his connections in Yu-Shan, provided Iza with an estate and funds. Since then, Iza has broken off contact with her old Gens entirely and now recruits soldiers from defunct warrior societies. What she hasn't told her Yashook relatives is the purpose Mercury assigned to her. Once she's gathered together a large enough force and sufficient travel craft, she plans to leave Creation for the Wyld. She hopes her new family will return to Creation one day, but she knows she won't live to see their return herself.

Gens Kirigasu

An older merchant house, and one of the first to gain independence, Kirigasu previously pledged itself to Rose Petal Tea. Once dedicated to military pursuits, Kirigasu put down its arms following Rose Petal Tea's death during the first third of the Thousand Struggle Era. The Gens refused to serve his reincarnation, and its Dragon-Bloods dedicated themselves to maintaining the Order Conferring Trade Pattern even in the face of the Thousand Struggles. Their example, abandoning duty to their Solar lord in favor of a greater duty to mortal society and Creation's integrity, created the precedent under which many other Gentes found independence. Today, they're rich and influential, with interests in many of Creation's most important economic societies, but are occasionally targeted for harassment by young Solars who are angry about not having Gentes of their own.

The Solar Exalted

The Solars lead every field of endeavor in Creation (save arguably martial arts) and are unparalleled warriors, athletes, strategists, poets, sculptors, diplomats, priests, engineers, theoreticians, sorcerers, necromancers, economists and performers. The Solars define the Era of Dreams as they've defined every era since prehistory's end.

Currently, the Solars are divided along generational lines. Foremost amongst the Solars are those who still remember the Primordial War, Queen Merela most notably. Other Primordial War survivors include Bright Shattered Ice and Gold-Shadowed Arrow. The survivors are some of the most powerful beings in Creation, and they spend almost all their time engaged in private pursuits, voicing their concerns only when some action of another Exalt would interfere with their desires. The impact of the original Solars' private pursuits is felt regularly across Creation, however. Merela continues to plan the expansion of the city of Meru, Bright Shattered Ice funds and perfects new technologies, and Gold-Shadowed Arrow watches everything in Creation from the center of his perfect twin networks of peacekeepers and criminals. A dozen such Solar veterans of the Primordial War survive.

Their immediate successors and heirs are those Solars who incarnated shortly after the Primordial War's end, whose previous lives were extinguished in the fighting. Collectively, the first two generations of Solars are the Golden Hero Vassals, for they date back to the Ochre Fountain Era. As a courtesy, the title of Golden Hero Vassal is bestowed to all surviving Solars of that era including those who never served Merela while she was the Ochre Fountain's Queen.

Beyond the Golden Hero Vassals come the generations of Solar survivors who reincarnated following the Meru War and the Aftershock War. The "generation" of Thousand Struggles survivors is no single generation. The second-youngest generation of Solars did not live through the Time of Cascading Years. Certain savants suggest that those who've reincarnated following Operation Wyldhand should be counted as the newest identifiable generation. Some even go so far as to suggest the division between the Second Deliberative Era and the Era of Dreams is false, and count the time between the Time of Cascading Years and Operation Wyldhand as a single era, now passed. What the era following Wyldhand should be called is an unsettled issue.

While all the Exalted are Princes of the Earth, the Deliberative considers the title "Prince" to apply only to those Solars who rule principalities and tributaries. The actual mechanics of rulership usually fall to a principality's Dragon-Blooded prefect, who oversees the day-to-day activity among the principality's administrators. A Solar Prince has much latitude, however, in deciding her principality's overall direction.

The Lunar Exalted

Even the Lunar Exalted themselves aren't sure how much autonomy they actually have.

The Exalted live long lives. Married Solar/Lunar pairs often go years or even decades between meeting each other. No oaths mandate that the Lunars spend time in Meru, and given their limited influence in the Deliberative, many elect to remain in their home territories while their spouses live in the White City. Furthermore, while it was once common for a Lunar whose Solar mate had died to commit suicide so the pair could begin new lives together, that practice fell out of favor during the Thousand Struggles Era. Today, elder Lunars are just as commonly married to younger Solars as the other way around. An elder Lunar can exercise much power over a younger Solar mate. Yet the supernatural charisma of the Solars is unparalleled. The perfect Solar influence would be invisible, as Lunar metaphysicians are well aware.

Among themselves, the Lunars organize into the so-called Lunar Society, also occasionally called the Silver Pact. Most Lunars serve the interest of their mates, watching over territories, acting as majordomos and occasionally liaising with the Dragon-Blooded prefects in cases where a Solar doesn't wish to bother with the details of Creation's Dragon-Blooded bureaucracy. They otherwise participate in societies of interest and pass their time in a world largely devoid of an obvious need for their presence.

The Sidereal Exalted

The Sidereals ostensibly organize themselves into three groups: the Glorious Viziers, who advise the Deliberative, the Sagacious Watchers Upon the Threshold of Reality, who look for the disruptions in fate, and the Keepers of the Loom, 15 elder Sidereals who guide the other two groups. In practice, the Viziers and the Watchers overlap heavily, and most Sidereals perform both jobs.

Like the Lunars of the Silver Pact, the Keepers of the Loom wonder how much their wills are their own. Unlike the Lunars, however, the Sidereals know exactly how important they are to Creation's continued existence. They are the agents of Heaven in Creation and the primary coordinators

The Exalted Life Span

Without anagathic assistance, Dragon-Bloods live anywhere from two to five centuries. Those with a particularly strong grasp of Essence can live longer, up to perhaps six. The oldest surviving Dragon-Blood as of Year 3516, Saibok Gauto (see **Lords of Creation**, pp. 156-158) is a survivor of the Primordial War, but he's unique, and no one's really sure why his body refuses to give in to the ravages of age. Twilight savants theorize it has to do with his extraordinary connection to his elemental aspect. With the assistance of anagathics developed during the Thousand Struggle Era, Dragon-Blooded can expect to live for six to eight centuries, or up to a millennium if their grasp of Essence is profound.

Celestial Exalted such as Solars and Lunars naturally live for 2,000 to 3,000 years. The Solars have developed a Charm called Extended Life Prana to extend their life span past that. Motic experts extrapolate an expected life span of 5,000 to 7,000 years and are already at work formulating another Charm to extend their life spans further, perhaps to immortality. The Lunars have had no success creating a duplicate of Extended Life Prana, but they have created Charms to allow a sort of hibernation, during which time they don't age. In addition to life-extension Charms, Celestial Exalted who use anagathic drugs, surgeries or other techniques can live up to six millennia. Savants aren't sure how long someone with both Extended Life Prana and anagathic treatments might live, but the common estimate is 10,000 years.

Sidereals live from 3,000 to 5,000 years and can't extend their lives by any artificial means.

This doesn't paint a complete picture. Very few Exalted die of old age.

Most Solar Exalted during the Era of Dreams are 750 to 1,000 years old. No more than a dozen Solars who remember the Primordial War survive, and no more than 50 survive who recall the time before the Thousand Struggle Era (and approximately two dozen of those have withdrawn entirely from Deliberative society at this point). Most Celestial Exalted have reincarnated anywhere from five to eight times between the Primordial War and the Era of Dreams, and the average Sidereal has lived only one fewer life than the average Solar or Lunar. The Exalted lose their lives to feuds, experiments, wars, accidents (though they're loath to admit it) and, in a few cases, simple boredom and a desire to begin anew.

of Deliberative intelligence. Many quietly consider themselves the world's secret rulers when they're not pondering whether they'd even realize if the Solars were controlling them utterly or not.

Yu-Shan

Much of Yu-Shan functions under Exalted guidance. Over time, the Deliberative has successfully argued again and again that, since the Exalted rule Creation, those functions of Heaven that concern Creation should fall under their sway as well. The Bureaus of Seasons and Humanity work closely with the Exalted to make sure that the destiny of humanity is to the liking of the Solars. The Bureau of Nature is largely independent but has few actual duties. The Bureau of Destiny functions under the guidance of the Five Maidens and with the Sidereal Exalted as agents.

The Bureau of Heaven remains largely free from Deliberative influence. Lytek, the God of Exaltation, rules the Bureau of Heaven with a firm hand, and one of the many ways the Exalted honor him is by staying out of his business. Still, Lytek often works closely with Exalted in whom he takes an interest, inviting them to aide him (or at least witness him) in his governance of Heaven. He's most fond of the Solars, but he treasures most the company of the Sidereals, who work with him in Yu-Shan and whom he sees the most. He finds it regrettable that so much of their time is taken up in service to the Bureau of Destiny.

Societies

"Society" is a broad term used to describe groups of like-minded Exalted gathered for mutual assistance in focusing power toward the pursuit of an end, be it economic dominance, accumulation of knowledge, the spiritual advancement of its membership or anything else. Societies aren't circles. Circles are the remnants of great oaths sworn between like Exalts during the Primordial War. Societies often comprise Exalts of all sorts, including Dragon-Blooded. Many societies exist across multiple principalities, holding interests even in lands ruled by none of their Solar constituents. Some societies exist as entities apart from their membership, lasting even after all their founding members have died, with control passing, not to the founders' reincarnations, but to the societies' greater shareholders.

The Accord of Broken Ribbons doesn't govern inter-society conflict. Officially, martial conflict between pan-principality societies is forbidden under Deliberative law, lest it touch off larger hostilities. This rule hasn't successfully prevented covert violence, though. And since the

most successful societies count Solar Exalts among their members, the Deliberative has historically turned a blind eye to all but the most blatant acts of inter-society espionage and sabotage. Smaller societies with less influence in the Deliberative must be more careful.

The following divisions are for convenience only, and aren't absolute. Many societies in the Era of Dreams bridge the gap between economy and art, and almost all economic societies have secret components.

Economic Societies

The largest societies are financial in nature, granted regional monopolies by the Deliberative for the distribution of inter-principality currencies. Others are mercantile, managing the distribution of goods, services and forms of entertainment. Many financial and mercantile societies make their shares available for purchase by the public. Many even allow mortals to purchase lesser public shares, which offer dividend payments but don't often allow a say in how the society's greater shareholders run things. Celestial Exalts often encourage mortals to purchase lesser shares in publicly traded Celestial-run societies as a way of being spiritually closer to the world's rulers. A few economic societies are privately owned. They lack the financial resources of publicly traded societies, but the increased secrecy and central control provide compensatory advantages.

Most economic societies possess security divisions, but the largest possess veritable private armies, some available for hire by Solar Princes. Financial societies back legal wars, and even instigate them covertly. Many small wars between principalities have been expressions of disagreement between two societies, as the societies pressure neighboring principalities into declaring legal war, offering mercenary soldiers at a discount.

The **Sunflower Banking Society** is Creation's second largest independent bank. Founded in Year 2015, near the end of the Snow period during the Thousand Struggles Era, the Sunflower Banking Society is privately owned and distributes no shares. Many blame Sunflower Banking for providing the financial incentives leading to the end of the Snow period cease fire and the beginning of renewed hostilities in the subsequent Crimson period (though savants argue the Sunflower arms-distribution network was but one of many factors). After the temporal cascade, in which three of the society's five directors died, Sunflower Banking reinvented its public image and spent most of the Second Deliberative Era in cooperation with the Deliberative's Bank of the Treasury reestablishing the Order Conferring Trade Pattern. Sunflower Banking could afford to do so thanks to the fabulous wealth it earned in the conflicts during the historical periods prior to the cascading years.

Sunflower Banking's private army, the Teeth of the Sunflower, is the stuff of legend. The Sunflower Banking Society's greatest rival is the publicly traded **Bank of Daana'd**, Creation's largest independent bank.

Devoted to the distribution of entertainment, the **Sheltered Vale Group** consisted of a troupe of storytellers and dramatists who saw great opportunity in the activation of I AM. Since Year 3208, the group has composed stories for I AM to read to Creation's mortals, on the condition that those mortals pay an obol each time one of the stories is read. The group has grown fabulously wealthy since that time, and now markets branded articles of clothing and beautiful written versions of its most famous stories. The society is currently investigating creating a type of story to take advantage of I AM's new visual transmission protocols.

Sheltered Vale damaged the Order Conferring Trade Pattern in 3305, when *The Mark of Zan*, one of the stories it released, so enraptured Creation's populace that mortals became addicted, spending ever-increasing amounts of jade to listen again and again. Under Deliberative order, Sheltered Vale halted distribution of the narrative and paid for the funerals of all 20,000 mortals who died when the Sword of Creation scoured away the resulting Fair Folk incursion. By Deliberative order, Sheltered Vale must contribute a fine every year to help pay for the task force that even now hunts down and seeks to remove from mortal hands all remaining copies of *The Mark of Zan*.

The **Distant Vistas Travel Society** is dedicated to providing cheap travel to all Creation's populace. In press releases, it describes itself as very old, dating back to the First Deliberative Era. While a society of Lunars called Distant Vistas existed during that time, however, the Distant Vistas of today cannot claim any continuity with that august and legendary order. Distant Vistas possesses controlling interests in many smaller travel societies and serves primarily to make sure they synchronize operations to keep the price of travel low enough that mortals can afford it.

In the recent past, agents of the so-called Copper Web have infiltrated Distant Vistas and related travel societies with the eventual goal of co-opting or dismantling them. Travel societies serve to keep Creation's edges stable, by making sure that Wyld-shaped reality interacts on a regular basis with Creation's core in a manner more personable than trade. The Copper Web wishes to provoke the development of techniques that will allow Wyld-shaped reality to remain stable yet separate from the influence of natural Creation indefinitely, and a few of its members believe forcing a crisis will provide incentives for those techniques' development. All Distant Vistas knows is that its financial stability is suffering from an unusually dense conflux of unfortunate coincidences.

Artists' Societies

While the most powerful societies are economic in nature, so-called "artists' societies" outnumber economic societies by orders of magnitude. Most artists' societies are simple groupings of individuals dedicated to pursuit of a common interest, and many Celestial Exalted belong to dozens of artists' societies at once and hundreds over their lifetimes.

Creation's denizens define artists' societies after Rose Petal Tea's assertion that Exalts must be artists in all their pursuits. Even mortals sometimes group themselves into "artists' societies" now, as I AM serves to promote communication between anyone with like interests.

Few artists' societies possess literal armies, but few Exalts are unskilled at combat. Many societies with Exalted membership are able and willing to debate philosophy and aesthetics at daiklave's point. That artist's societies don't field armies just means the Deliberative is less likely to take notice of their shadow wars.

The **Violet Creation Protocol Society**, or VCPS, is a group of sorcerer-technicians seeking to create a thinking automaton of I AM's stability using variants of the original multiple-iteration technique. They believe that I AM, though fully mapped, is the product of a revolutionary technique of crafting cognitive automata that could require another 1,000 years of polish. They would much prefer to perfect traditional thinking automaton techniques than abandon over 1,000 years of evolutionary advancements in their field.

While studying I AM's transmission network, Shin Aruta, a Lunar researcher for the VCPS, recently discovered an equation suggesting that I AM's transmission network might be capable of accepting one or more uploaded human soul-pairs (both hun and po), with enough transfer accuracy to maintain the soul-pair's memories. She's unsure of where to pass this information. She believes her superiors in the VCPS would be displeased to find that her attention was directed toward I AM's network architecture and not at more traditional research methods.

A society of painters, the **Wave Lattice** promotes the style of painting for which it was named. (The painter holds a brush of fine horse hair between the third and fourth fingers of the left hand and paints with pigment made only from the *Utarimanshin Ascendant* method of Wyld-shaping, mixed with four parts distilled water for every three parts pigment.) The society's membership believes the Wave Lattice method of painting is superior to all others for purposes of painting images of waves. This society recently won a shadow war with the rival **Shale Brotherhood**, which promoted a variant using *Utarimanshin Descending* pigment. Wave Lattice had all the Dragon-Blooded of the Shale Brotherhood assassinated and is currently attempting to gain access to the divine paperwork revealing which infants the Shale Brotherhood souls were reincarnated into.

A charitable society, the **Children of Sextes Jylis** seeks to provide medical aid to mortal civilians in war zones and in tributaries whose rulers would rather divert resources elsewhere. Founded in the early Second Deliberative Era, most of the society's members are Wood Aspect Dragon-Bloods. Other Exalts with an aptitude for healing and/or bureaucracy claim membership as well.

The Children of Sextes Jylis are out of favor with the Deliberative at the moment, due to the society's opposition to Operation Wyldhand. Now, in protest, the Solar who leads the society has vowed to withhold aid from anyone adversely affected by the operation.

Secret Societies

Most Exalts have agendas they wish to remain hidden. These agendas often require the aid of other Exalts to carry out. A secret society can be anything from a hidden fraternity of like-minded Exalted who reminisce on important anniversaries to a gang of hard-bitten thieves and murderers who seek to organize their crime.

Four Solars, two Lunars and three Sidereals band together in a secret society dedicated to mourning the passing of Sweet Citrus Crimson, a Fair Folk noble. Sweet Citrus Crimson was an anarchist who sought to destroy the Deliberative and replace it with an altogether more chaotic form of government that he called *aeiga*, the specifics of which he never fully articulated. The nine Celestial Exalts who compose the **Sweet Citrus Crimson Memorial Society** were Sweet Citrus Crimson's executors, and he died so beautifully that they all fell in love with him. Each now strives to make sure Creation never forgets Sweet Citrus Crimson's life or death. One member belongs to the Sheltered Vale Group and inserts subtle references to the raksha in the stories he writes. Another sits on the board of directors for the Bank of Daana'd, encoding Crimson's name and face into the strings of numbers the bank weaves into the Order Conferring Trade Pattern. Every member of the Sweet Citrus Crimson Memorial Society infiltrates some other famous or vital society. The group's ultimate goal is to find a way to bring him back to life (or reproduce him), so they may kill him and witness his death again. They remain undaunted by the impossibility of this task deters, and they're now experimenting with bound unshaped raksha and the new protoshinmaic vortex technology.

Because the society infiltrates so many others, and because its members share information freely among each other and keep no track of favors owed between them, each member is known separately in certain other societies for possessing far-reaching contacts and the ability to get things done in unorthodox ways. A few Exalts know of the society's existence as a whole, but none know its purpose, and its members are highly sought for their connections. Gold-Shadowed Arrow would not look kindly on the society's existence, as its members were supposed to strike the raksha from all histories after they killed him.

An open secret, the **Black Bandana** is a go-between organization connecting many competing martial arts societies. Through the Black Bandana, the Martial Arts World organizes its wars to minimize civilian casualties. Black Bandana members are all experts at concealing their identity, and the convergence of martial arts and anonymity explains why most members of the Black Bandana are Sidereals. The Black Bandana's usual method of operation is to find two martial arts societies with escalating hostilities and infiltrate both sides in the guise of mortal acolytes. The Black Bandana

agents then speak to the leaders of each society and attempt to negotiate some venue in which the societies can fight in private, usually in isolated areas where any devastation of the landscape won't be a concern.

The Black Bandana cannot afford to compromise its neutrality, so its members must never move overtly against any martial arts society, not even those whose methods or goals disgust them. Black Bandana agents often turn a blind eye (or even cover up) the worst crimes of such societies. Even in their positions as agents of the Bureau of Destiny, they cannot bring the wrath of Heaven down on criminals without demonstrating a fundamental conflict of interest. Most Black Bandana agents rationalize these acts, but a few have grown so disillusioned they now seek to eliminate the Black Bandana society to make room for a more just alternative. It remains to be seen what sort of chaos conflicts between martial arts societies would cause without the Black Bandana mediating.

The Eighth Severance is a society of Dragon-Blooded assassins. Small, and currently small-time, the Eight Severance is available on the cheap but cannot hope to accomplish the more impressive assassinations of peer societies such as the **Red Pupil**. Its members hire themselves out to even smaller societies and private operators, and have seen some success as a weapon in various *short* shadow wars. Their one advantage is Kai Winter, their Sidereal patron, who manipulates Heaven's records to keep the group hidden. When Kai meets with the Severance leadership, he claims to have a grand destined purpose in mind for the society. In truth, though, he's just in it because he enjoys the illicit feel of getting away with something.

Pursuits

Along with and aside from their assigned roles, the Exalted pursue whatever topics interest them. The Chosen of the Gods have shaped Creation into their playground, where anything that catches their attention is theirs for the taking, be it knowledge, self-perfection or rivalry.

Wyld-Shaping

Since the time of the Unfurling Horizon Era, the Exalted have worked to expand the borders of Creation. Early attempts were limited by the need for the Solars' direct involvement, but with advances in magitechnology, that is no longer true. Now ships fitted with great shaping engines journey into the Wyld from the edges of Creation, crystallizing the stuff of chaos into new lands custom built for new habitation. Solars can raise whole communities, people and all, from the Wyld, but it is more common to import folk from other points in Creation to populate such areas, as their connections to people elsewhere in the world help to cement the new lands' reality. In fact, it's a fairly common practice for Sidereals to use Neighborhood Relocation Scheme to drag entire prefabricated communities into newly created lands, which serves to bulwark their stability until the effects of the Order Conferring Trade Pattern permanently tie them into the fabric of Creation. Such Wyld-shaped communities often offer the chance for young Exalts to grow into their power by birthing new principalities for them to rule, protect and administrate.

Sorcery

The Era of Dreams is the time when the art of sorcery reached its apex. Whether it is the use of sorcery proper or the application of sorcerous principles toward other endeavors, such as manse construction or the manufacture of artifacts, the practice of the magical arts is a part of the fabric of everyday life for the Chosen. During this period, nearly all Celestial Exalts more than a century or two old have mastered Emerald Circle Sorcery, and many that age have at least dabbled with Sapphire Circle Sorcery. Even among the Dragon-Blooded, sorcery is a commonly taught skill, with the elders of the various Gentes teaching the basics to those younger Terrestrials who show an aptitude in order to better their prospects for advancement in the Deliberative government.

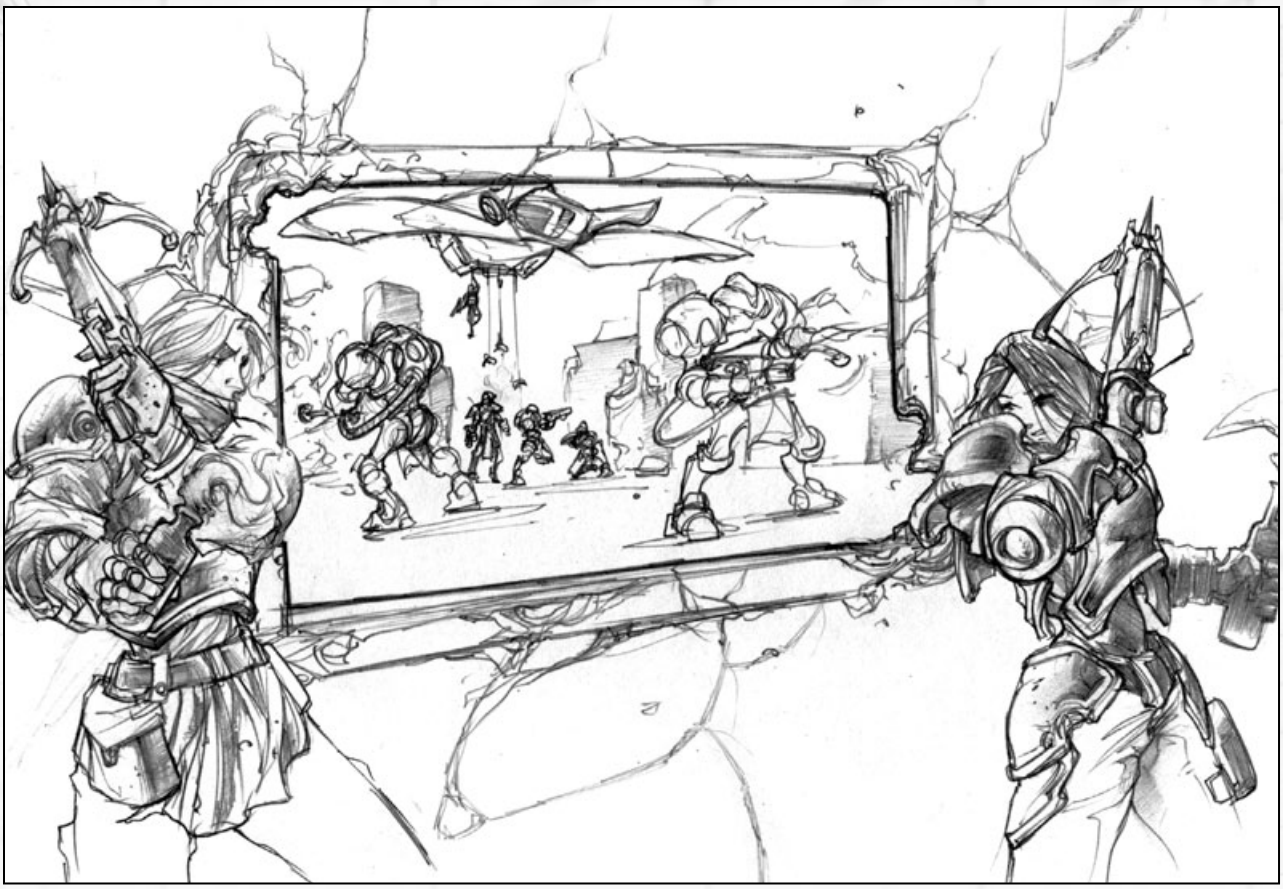
The ubiquity of sorcery has a great deal to do with the number of sorcerous schools operating throughout Creation, from the Academy of Divine Enlightenment in the White City to the Divine School Devonian in Sperimin to Hollow's Fertile Ground Academy to any of the myriad academies that dot Scholars' Court Principality. Also, a number of elder Exalts privately tutor younger favorites in the ways of Essence mastery.

Sorcery is solely the domain of the Exalted in the Age of Splendor. Others may have the ability to learn its techniques, but the Deliberative has made it a capital offense to do so. Sorcery is too dangerous a discipline for the un-Exalted to wield, it's argued, capable as it is of great destruction. It was a gift given to the Exalted themselves, and only they are capable of using it with the necessary wisdom.

Necromancy

The magic of death is a young art, brought out of the Underworld less than two centuries ago by a circle of Exalts still anonymous. Yet already, the Deliberative knows of the art of necromancy, and already, the instructors at Sperimin teach it to select students. Many Exalted savants are excited at the prospect of a new field of endeavor, but others worry about its source and the continued secrecy of those behind its discovery.

Learning necromancy is arduous labor. Would-be students must journey to the restricted Darkmist Isle shadowland and, from there, through the Underworld to a Labyrinth entrance to expose themselves to the Whispers of the Void.



The Martial Arts World

A subculture of sorts, the Martial Arts World is a circuit of gatherings and tournaments where supernatural martial artists practice and display their abilities. Savants have long been aware of the oddity of martial arts magic, one of those few areas where the Solars can compete but are not the undisputed masters. Many martial arts devotees insist supernatural martial arts are the purest expression of disciplined Essence use, open to all—even enlightened mortals. Many devote their whole lives to perfecting themselves through its pursuit.

War

The Exalted were forged for war, and they are its undisputed masters. Although the Era of Dreams is a time of peace, the Chosen of the Gods maintain their fighting prowess only through battle. Laying aside their arms nearly lost the Exalted Creation to its enemies in the Dissolution Invasion and the Aftershock War, and the Thousand Struggles Era proved why preparation for battle remains important to the Exalted even lacking outside enemies.

The current time of peace would seem to limit the options for armed conflict, but there are foes aplenty for Exalts looking for a fight. Most often, such foes are other Exalted. Although the Accord of Broken Ribbons guarantees that any assault on a prefecture of one Solar Prince will be answered by the might of the Army of the Deliberative, in point of fact, shadow wars are constantly fought via intermediaries with the Exalted instigators hidden behind layers of plausible deniability. And the Broken Ribbons Accord in no way prevents wars being waged against Realm tributaries. Of course, since many of the tributaries are ruled by ancient Exalts of extreme power, some of them Golden Hero Vassals, it behooves any Exalt to fully consider the ramifications of instigating such a conflict. It's also important for the Solar Exalted to remember they are required to spend two out of every five years in Meru—time during which one's enemies can often move unanswered. As a result, conflicts between the Princes of the Earth tend to be short, brutal affairs.

One external foe that does concern the Exalted is the Fair Folk. Ever since the Dissolution Invasion, the Fair Folk have been the most constant threat to Exalted hegemony over Creation. In fact, Operation Wyldhand, conducted a mere 25 years gone, was conducted to simulate the effects of a widespread Fair Folk breakthrough and subsequent static reality failure. It was also the largest armed conflict of Exalted since the Thousand Struggles Era, an exhilarating exercise of the Army of the Deliberative's unfettered might that left millions dead and the landscape scarred. Considered a rousing success by some of the most powerful and belligerent Exalts in the Deliberative, it may well prove to have only whetted the appetite for conflict for

these warriors in this time of peace and lead to renewed hostilities against the courts of the raksha.

Considered a secondary threat to the Realm (if that) are the few survivors of the Primordial servitor races and the forbidden gods who sided with their creators in the Primordial War. Most of the fallen servants of the Primordials have hidden themselves in the depths of the earth to avoid the gaze of the Unconquered Sun and the attention of his Chosen. There, these Darkbroods have become embroiled in seemingly endless conflict with the Mountain Folk. Given their lack of organization and their base of operations deep within the earth, beyond even where the people of the earth usually mine, they pose no real threat to the Realm. As for the forbidden gods, the official position of Heaven is that all of them were hunted down and eliminated in the years after the close of the Primordial War. The Chosen of the Maidens remain unconvinced, however, especially since several of these supposedly dead gods turned up to fight and die in the final battle of the Aftershock War. Although none have been seen since, that doesn't mean they aren't still out there, plotting the overthrow of the Exalted and the gods of Yu-Shan and the return of their masters. Like the servitor race survivors, these beings are viewed as fugitives from justice rather than an actual threat. One Primordial is still unaccounted for, however. Were it to gather these beings and offer them direction, there might well be a repeat of the Aftershock War in the offing—this time with a lot fewer Golden Hero Vassal veterans familiar in the ways of Primordial warfare fighting on the side of the Deliberative.

Safari

The age of exploration is long passed. The Exalted have mapped and charted to the edge of Creation and beyond. There are no more frontiers. Enigmas remain, such as the Sea of Mind, but even they are known enigmas. Exalts who want a change of geography can't explore anymore.

They take exotic vacations instead. The most popular destinations include:

Malfeas

Malfeas is the prison of the defeated enemies of the Exalted and the source for much of its occult slave labor. As such, it is a favorite safari destination for the Exalted. The eldest Exalts travel often to Malfeas to gloat over the state of their fallen foes and reminisce about times long past. Sorcerers of all stripes can observe prospective demon slaves in their natural habitats, while artificers may gather all sorts of unique materials for inclusion in artifacts. Young Exalts, on the other hand, sometimes come to see what all the fuss over the long-defeated Primordials is all about. Most are unimpressed by what they find.

The Underworld

Since the larger shadowland of Darkmist Isle has been made off limits by order of the Deliberative, most expeditions launch into the Underworld from a small Blessed Isle shadowland watched over by a specially bred order of Dragon-Blooded monk-necromancers. Each safari's itinerary is different. Some tour the Underworld capital of Stygia, others sail the bleak but morbidly romantic Sea of Shadows, while still others travel to the Labyrinth to mine for soulsteel to be used as artifact components or to hunt plasmic monstrosities that are unlike anything in Creation.

The Wyld

Safaris into the chaotic Wyld are the by far most popular ones among the Exalted. The safari-goers' vessel, usually a retired Wyld-shaping craft, travels the flows of unreality surrounded by a sphere of stable reality. There, they can enjoy the beauty and wonder of the Wyld's depths from a safe remove. Eclipse Castes who attend are allowed to disembark and actually speak with the local raksha. Though no two Wyld safaris are ever the same, they are invariably marvelous, horrifying and exciting.

Behemoth Expeditions

The most recent fad in Exalted safaris, this type takes vacationers to behemoths ranging free in Creation's wilderness, where they may do what they wish to them: look at the creatures, hunt them, ride them or whatever else they please. The famed Maker of Rubble was recently slain by a group of Exalted hunters on just such a safari.

The Solar Deliberative

The Deliberative is a tool.

Its purpose is to prevent the escalation of disagreements between Solars into vast, Creation-devastating wars. With their personal puissance, their army-rallying powers and their occult might, Solar Exalts in open conflict could murder the gods, crack the world, shatter the sky, release the Yozis, kill everything living and kill everything dead. They might even collapse the Wyld. The Solars were not so potent at history's dawn, but even then, all who'd watched their rise to power could chart its likely future course.

The Deliberative's constituents are aware of its true purpose, but few enjoy discussing or thinking of the Deliberative in those stark terms. Officially, the Deliberative exists to ensure the smooth governance of Creation and the health and fulfillment of all the world's peoples. It does do those things, but at its core, it's the medium through which 300 former mortals check each other's power. Although most Solar Exalted realize it, few dwell on the knowledge that they are simultaneously the grandest, most potent champions and protectors of Creation *and* the most deadly and awful threat poised against it.

The Deliberative is a well-made tool, forged with open eyes by geniuses during a time of raw conflict. It has failed once, but the heirs of those same geniuses fixed it, and it works again. For three millennia, through five eras and well into a sixth, the Deliberative has adapted to succeed at its task. Creation survives. The Solars rule with righteousness and forethought, for the most part. Threats from without and

The Many Deliberatives

When the people of Creation say "the Deliberative," they usually mean it one of three ways:

All of Creation's governing bodies. In some minds, every government in Creation is "the Deliberative," save for the ruling bodies of those rare tributaries that turn against Deliberative principalities. (They never last.) A mortal might blame "the Deliberative" for rising tax rates even if her Prince raised them on his own; even if he's raised them further than the laws of the Clear Glass Accord (p. 47) allow. Most mortals don't concern themselves with the workings of the highest levels of Creation's government, and either are unaware of a more specific meaning for the term or don't care enough to be precise. This is the most common use of the term and also the least accurate.

The Solar Deliberators. Every Solar Exalt is a Deliberator. Some who speak of the Deliberative mean, specifically, the Solars who compose the Deliberative's decision-making body. Most who use "the Deliberative" to mean "the Solar Exalted" intend to exclude those Solars who rule tributaries. Nevertheless, tributary rulers are still Deliberators in name.

The bureaucratic apparatus and armed forces of the highest level of Creation's government. This definition is the most technically correct. "The Deliberative" refers to the 300 Solar Deliberators (but only in their function as Deliberators), as well as the bureaucracy that supports them in their duties as Deliberators (not the bureaucracies of their principalities), most of the governing body of Meru and the Deliberative's peacekeeping forces (not the armed forces of the principalities). Savants and politicians most often use this definition, and speak of principality governments as separate entities.

Due to historical precedent, "the Army of the Deliberative" traditionally means all the armed forces in Creation under the command of the Solar or Lunar Exalted, even private armies not otherwise affiliated with the Deliberative proper. This usage has been common since the Aftershock War, when all such armed forces came together under the coordination of that era's Deliberative. It shows no sign of falling out of use, regardless of its inaccuracy.

within are contained. This status quo has grown precarious in the past but always recovered. Even in the aftermath of the Time of Cascading Years, the Deliberative survives and the Solars unite to overcome adversity. Most Deliberators look forward to another 3,000 years of the same, sure that what has worked in the past will continue to work. A few worry that the peace of the Deliberative will not last, that open conflict between the Solar Exalted will ravage Creation once more. Hardly any consider the other Exalted as potential threats.

Structure

The 300 Solar Exalted make up the actual decision-making body of the Deliberative. Their choices chart the future course of Creation, and none may gainsay them. The Deliberators conduct the business of government from the Ruling Palace of Meru under the watchful eye of their patron god. The Lunar and Sidereal Exalted typically attend sessions of the Deliberative to advise the Lawgivers on matters that interest or concern them. Many other luminaries, from Dragon-Bloods to Dragon Kings to gods, often attend as well, and all have the right to speak before the Deliberative (even mortals). In the end, however, only the votes of the Solar Exalted matter.

Parties

Over the millennia of its existence, a number of parties representing the political agendas and aspirations of the Lawgivers have arisen. Over time, the power and membership in these parties has ebbed and flowed, with some (the so-called Creationists, for example) having merged with other parties and others (the Deliberatists) having faded away entirely. What follows is a breakdown of the parties as they stand in the Deliberative currently.

The Cauldronists

The most controversial activists within the last two centuries, the Cauldronists wish to dismantle Creation.

Or so their opponents claim.

The Cauldronists propose a radical course of action. They wish to create a world as free and mutable as those portions of Creation carved from the Wyld. Using terraforming Charms and technology, the Exalted have pushed the world's borders far outward, designing the resulting land for maximum utility. The geomancy of terraformed land is easily incorporated into geomantic power grids, the flora and fauna tailored for convenience. Even the landscapes are shaped for human needs.

The original areas of Creation have no such utility. They were created by the Primordials and shaped by the elements. The Solars have done much to shape the world in the time since prehistory's end, but the Cauldronists see these efforts as repair on an obsolete structure. They wish to begin anew.

So far, Cauldronists have achieved limited success shaping their prefectures to their liking through networks of

Wyld Revocation manses (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, p. 77), but these depend on unaltered underlying geomancy. To re-terraform Creation directly, the Cauldronists wish to begin opening and re-sealing controlled Wyld zones throughout Creation's original geography. Over centuries, this process could eventually encompass all of Creation's original area, with the possible exception of Meru itself. Since deliberately opening a Wyld zone within one's prefecture is illegal without authorization, the Cauldronists have yet to begin this process openly, even in lands they control. The law has not stopped a few Cauldronists from sabotaging their own magical efforts in an effort to create new areas of Wyld, though.

The Cauldronists didn't propose Operation Wyldhand, but it would not have passed without their unanimous support. They took the opportunity to claim many of the Wyld zones left in the exercise's wake, and many of those they haven't claimed directly, they secured some control over through assignment to reclamation teams. (Doing so was not difficult, considering Cauldronists are preeminent terraforming experts.)

Cauldronists tend to be younger Solars entranced by the idea of reshaping all of Creation to their will. They also garner much support from would-be Wyld-shapers who've been denied territory on Creation's border, as well as Solars who are impatient to shape prefectures to their liking but don't wish to give up the land and people they already rule. At the core of the movement are several elder Twilights who fondly remember the height of the Shining Reflection Era and had positive experiences during the Time of Cascading Years.

Their chief opponents are elder Solar survivors of the Time of Cascading Years who had less than positive experiences during that time (of whom Her Most Luminous Excellency and Savior of Creation, Her Exalted Highness Merela is the most prominent). Other staunch opponents include the Creationists and those Solars who believe (and care) that reformatting Creation would anger Gaia.

The Faithful

Comprising the oldest surviving party in the Deliberative, the one with the most members and the most veteran Exalts as part of its membership, the Faithful are the moderates of the Deliberative. Its members believe it is the Lawgivers' duty to care for and run Creation, and they believe that duty is being neglected in favor of the pursuit of pleasure, bids for personal glory and shortsighted agendas. These Solars carry out their duties with rigor, attention to detail and an eye toward setting an example for all those who've grown lax in their responsibilities to the world.

Few young Exalts agree with the Faithful agenda, as it advocates placing limits on their burgeoning power and ambition. The party itself has become synonymous with the established order in the Deliberative. The Faithful oppose the Cauldronists on principle, seeing them as radicals who would tear down what the Solars are sworn to protect. Few Faithful, especially surviving Golden Hero Vassals, wish to trust the fate of Creation to any single leader, trusting only the Deliberative process to check the ambition of their peers. This position serves to put them at odds with the Unionists.

The Copper Web

Merela, a Dawn Caste, ruled at the dawn of the Age of Splendor. For the past thousand years, the Most Supreme Hierophant, a Zenith, has ruled the Deliberative in fact if not in name. Now, some few Twilights set the stage for their own ascension to the rulership of Creation.

These clandestine Copper Spiders would see it dismantled, and Creation too. Putting aside religious reverence, the Twilights of the Copper Web conspiracy would make the Unconquered Sun proud by surpassing him. The Unconquered Sun governs a single world. The Copper Web could take Creation and form a hundred worlds from its components… a thousand.

The Copper Web backs the Cauldronists heavily, though many Cauldronists would not support the conspiracy's goals were they fully aware of the situation. Not every Copper Web conspirator is an open Cauldronist, however. Several are publicly members of different movements, opposing the Cauldronists in deliberately incompetent or counterproductive ways. A few don't consider the Cauldronist agenda viable and don't involve themselves in these politics at all.

The Militants

Made up mainly of young firebrands, backed by a few hard-line Dawn Castes who miss the good old days, the Militants view Creation as a fortress that must be held against its myriad enemies. Those enemies include the Yozis, their spawn, the Darkbroods, the Fair Folk, the dead, and (to a lesser degree) the gods, Exalts and men who oppose the party's agendas. The Militants promote building larger armies and more powerful weapons to prepare the Realm's armed forces for the threats that they're sure are mustering to assault Creation even now. It was the Militants and the Cauldronists together who pushed Operation Wyldhand through the Deliberative, but although the Militants view the war game as a success, they see the loss of 20 million mortal lives as an unacceptable outcome. The Militants believe it will require more powerful battlefield weaponry and a larger complement of better armed and trained troops to avoid a similar outcome in actual combat with Creation's enemies. To that end, party members have been pressuring the Deliberative to allocate more money to military spending. The Militants hope to engage in an operation similar

to Wyldhand once the armed forces have been upgraded to their satisfaction, perhaps this time against the unleashed forces of Malfeas or the Underworld.

The Militants are opposed as radicals by most other parties in the Deliberative. Even the Cauldronists, who supported Wyldhand for different reasons, got what they wanted out of the project and see no need to repeat it.

The Unionists

The Unionists are less a single unified party and more a series of small parties, most with only a handful of members. It is the common belief of these parties that Creation would fare better under the leadership of a single Solar ruler, as it did during the Ochre Fountain Era with Solar Queen Merela. The only two Solars who actually possess more than a handful of supporters are the aforementioned Merela and the Most Supreme Hierophant.

As the Unionist groups have little in common with one another except their belief in Creation's need for a single ruler, they oppose one another in the Deliberative as often as they oppose non-Unionists. Only Merela and the Hierophant ever manage to garner enough support from the Unionists as a whole to tip votes one way or another.

Other "Parties"

Other so-called parties are as much Solars lumped together by outsiders based upon their political beliefs as they are organized groups with their own agendas. The Divisives, for instance, believe in the innate right of the Solar Exalts to do as they will. Most Divisives rule tributaries, sacrificing their voice in the Deliberative for the freedom to do as they see fit within the confines of their own principalities. A few Divisives are hoary Golden Hero Vassals who can still influence the processes of the Deliberative through the favors they're owed by other Solars. Most, however, are not so mighty, and are content to allow the realm to chart its own coarse so long as they are left to their own devices. The Fugitives, in contrast, believe that the Deliberative is both corrupt by its nature and unredeemable. They are, therefore, bowing out of the political process to whatever degree they can manage. Many of the Fugitives also rule tributaries, where they are free to exercise their more egalitarian agendas in much the same way as the Divisives exercise their own.

Movements, Issues and Agendas

The Solars use the tool of the Deliberative to advance their own plans. Through open discourse, confidential negotiations, trading of votes, bribes and occasional threats, the Deliberative's power blocs maneuver the grand mechanism of government to shape Creation to their will. Without the Deliberative, they'd use more naked means.

Described here are a few of the movements pushed forward in the Deliberative today. Many Solars support two or more of these agendas.

Tributary Opposition

Whether due to concerns over the treatment of tributary mortals or objection to the economic advantage afforded by the lessened restrictions under which tributaries operate, a vocal minority of Deliberators seems to want tributaries outlawed. Some call for tributary Princes to be charged under the terms of the Clear Glass Accord.

Their opponents (most of whom benefit economically from the tributaries) argue that a more restrictive Deliberative broke in the past. They say the current flexible model, including the opt-out clause the tributary option provides, will be less likely to produce serious wars between ideological opponents. Tributary supporters have a point. History texts portray the Deliberative of the Shining Reflection Era as stratified. Most agree that Rose Petal Tea's actions alone wouldn't have been enough to spark the Thousand Struggles Era if he hadn't struck in a volatile environment.

This issue is effectively dead. The tributaries are unlikely to go away. Nevertheless, older Solars can often gain political capital among younger Solars by speaking on this topic, promising to make changes that will likely never occur.

Leadership Struggle

A constant issue since the time of the First Deliberative is the question of leadership within the organization. There is no official head of the Deliberative, but the Hierophant holds the backing of the majority of the Faithful and of a good majority of Unionists, effectively making any law he wants passed almost a guarantee and anything he strongly opposes impossible to pass. The only significant challenge to his authority over the Deliberative process comes from Solar Queen Merela, who still possesses significant clout with the surviving Golden Hero Vassals and a limited veto that's a holdover concession from the founding of the First Deliberative. Although the Hierophant often plays upon his leadership of the Church of the Unconquered Sun and his spiritual closeness to the Incarna to sway votes, most Lawgivers are aware of the esteem in which the Unconquered Sun holds Merela. They know well that it was to her alone the Unconquered Sun handed over the Crown of Thunders and the Creation-Ruling Mandate. As a result, very few of the Solar Queen's vetoes are overturned.

More Freedom for the Dragon-Blooded

This issue flares up every few decades, and has again recently. Given the success of the various free Gentes, a number of Solars (typically young Lawgivers who lack Gentes of their own) have suggested that the Realm would be better served if the Terrestrial Exalted were all freed from the oaths that bind them to specific Solar Exalted. The elder Solars are quick to point out that the Gentes were placed under Solar control by the Incarnae themselves, and that to presume to release them from their assigned destinies would defy the will of Heaven. They also suggest that the younger Solars act out of a combination of jealousy that

they lack Dragon-Blooded underlings of their own and hope that their vocal support of the Terrestrial cause will draw such Dragon-Bloods to their service (a suspicion that's not without its merits). Regardless, there is little likelihood that the current state of affairs will ever change as long as the eldest Solars live, and if the history of the free Gentes is any indication, will likely be rendered moot by their deaths.

Necromancy

A concern of the Deliberative since its secrets were wrested from the tombs of the Neverborn by the Black Nadir Concordat, necromancy is considered by some Lawgivers to be a trap lain by the fallen Primordials with which to ensnare those who would wield it. They point out how its energies are the inverse of those of living Creation, while the walking dead monstrosities spawned by its dark power burn at the touch of the holy Zenith Caste. Advocates of the practice ask how this is any different from the way demons summoned by the accepted art of sorcery react to the glory of the Unconquered Sun reflected by his priests. They also point out how sorcery is capable of devastating whole cities or freeing the mightiest souls of the imprisoned Yozis from the depths of Malfeas when wielded by the rash and unwise. They argue that neither art is intrinsically dangerous, only the intent with which either is employed is dangerous.

This issue is effectively deadlocked unless evidence of a definitive corrupting influence can be brought to light. Its mastery offers too great a temptation for jaded Exalts who thought they'd reached a dead end in their mastery of magic.

Soul Research Restrictions

It has always been against Deliberative law to haphazardly alter or imprison human souls, as the moral justification for Celestial callousness with mortal lives rests on the process of reincarnation. The use of souls in experiments has never been explicitly banned outright, however, as there are a number of Golden Hero Vassals who wish to do so. The practice is tightly regulated, however, and according to current law, only the souls of terrible criminals may be used in experiments or to power devices that require souls to operate. (Tributary Princes are the deciding factor as to what constitutes an offense that allows for such to occur, though.) There has recently been a push in the Deliberative to lighten these prohibitions, coinciding with the rise in popularity of the new discipline of necromancy.

Free Demon Objections

Demons are alien and broken, but not all of them seem hostile to Creation. The Yozis are not altogether changed from what they were, and many possess souls expressing aspects of themselves unrelated to their hatred of the gods, the Exalted and the world.

The more eccentric of the Exalted sometimes desire the companionship of a demon, but don't wish to see the demon's psyche placed under the strain of sorcerous binding. Sometimes an Exalt breaks a demon out of Malfeas and brings it under his protection. Thereafter, the demon's freedom is curtailed only by its patron's strength and will.

In Year 2730, the Deliberative ratified the Treaty of Limbs, which grants these "free" demons certain protections under Creation-wide law. If a Solar patron registers a demon's identity with the Ministry of Malfean Liaison, and a rival sorcerer subsequently summons and enslaves that demon, the patron may make limited war against the sorcerer without violating the Accord of Broken Ribbons. This protection becomes null and void if the patron is subsequently judged guilty of infernalism, in which case the demon is usually hunted down and put to death by Ghost-Eating (at best).

Second Circle Demons make up the largest ranks of the freed demons. First Circle Demons are barely above mortals and elementals in the eyes of the Exalted, while Third Circle Demons are considered too close to the Yozis. There have been notable exceptions, however.

The Treaty of Limbs is still opposed by most of the Faithful, especially its Golden Hero Vassals, and nearly all of the Militants, both of whom believe that those who invite the spawn of the Yozis to share their beds are bringing spies into the heart of the Realm. A recent increase in this practice among the newly Exalted coinciding with the increase in Malfean tourism has brought this issue to the floor of the Deliberative once again.

Military Spending

Military spending has been a hot-button topic since Operation Wyldhand, with the Militants pushing for a huge increase in the budget for the Realm's air, sea and land forces as well as the development of more powerful weapons to be wielded against the enemies at Creation's doorstep. The moderate Faithful put up the main opposition to this increase in spending. They argue that it's been less than a century since *Oasis upon the Edge of Eternity*, the last of the prohibitively expensive *Titan*-class aerial citadels, was completed and only one of the four massive craft has seen any combat—and that in an engineered war game. More than two thousand years have passed since the Realm's enemies have dared to strike against it in a full-blown war. Given the fact that the Exalted defeated the Primordials without the *Titans*, thousand-forged dragons or the Sword of Creation, the Faithful argue, any major increase in spending at this time would serve no purpose. Unable to garner the votes they need to win the day, the Militants bide their time while key members work to uncover (or fabricate) the proof of a threat needed to convince a majority of Lawgivers to support an increase in spending.

Other Issues

The preceding agendas are just a few of the most important ones currently concerning the Deliberative. There are also hundreds of minor issues being debated on the

floor during any given session—issues of public works, arts endowment, prefect oversight, et cetera. Although they are of less immediate gravity, any one of these issues could become the cause of the day or the rider that changes the fate of a bill concerning one of the more important agendas. The savviest Lawgivers, especially the ones lacking the political clout to push through their own major issues, learn to use this system to its best advantage. They spread their schemes across seemingly mundane bills that, when they are all passed, reveal hidden linkages that move things in the direction a young Solar wants but could never have sold to the Deliberative at face value. The sorceress Salina had her great Working approved in just such a fashion.

Behind the Scenes

Behind the obvious party divisions and public agendas lie dozens of circles, cabals, societies and alliances vying for influence over the affairs of Creation. What separates the societies of the Deliberative from the movements and agendas is that once an issue comes to the Deliberative's attention, it becomes a tool for manipulation by *every* Deliberator. A Solar who doesn't care for the Cauldronist agenda might speak up in its favor to covertly advance an entirely different agenda, perhaps one as simple as currying favor. Movements, issues and agendas are disembodied abstracts, used by the Exalted of the Deliberative to fulfill their own ends. While most agendas have honest supporters (and almost all began with such), every agenda is exploited by those with orthogonal desires.

In contrast, the *societies* of the Deliberative are concrete. Not every society within the Deliberative is openly known, but they all have collections of faces and names, real people with real motives behind them. Smart and experienced Deliberators know the public issues facing the Deliberative are only the curtains behind which the true politics of the world hide.

The Faultless Panoply of the Sun

One of the most influential visible power blocs in the Deliberative since the dawn of the Second Deliberative Era, the circle of the Most Supreme Hierophant consists of the Deliberative's effective leader and three survivors of the Primordial War, plus their much younger cohort, Contentious Sword. Even more so than Solar Queen Merela, the Faultless Panoply of the Sun is the visible symbol of Solar power in Creation.

Individual Exalted

Not every influential voice in the Deliberative is backed by a clique, however. Some, such as Solar Queen Merela, are powers in their own right. These ancient Lawgivers trade favors or even simple acknowledgement as currency with younger Deliberators, occasionally upsetting what seem to be the easy ratification of a bill and thwarting it, and sometimes pushing through a bill that none thought could pass.

Deliberative Law

A simple majority vote by the Solar Deliberators is all that's required to ratify a bill and make it law across the Realm. The Solar Queen Merela still possesses veto power over the Deliberative's laws, a concession made to end the civil war out of which the Realm was born. That veto can be overridden by a two-thirds majority vote, however, and Merela seldom bothers anymore in matters supported by the Hierophant and his circle. The Hierophant can usually call in enough favors to have the veto undone.

Once a law is passed, the various branches of the Ministries of Order serve to enforce that law in the Realm's many prefectures. Realm tributaries, on the other hand, may choose to apply the law or not at the discretion of their Solar rulers.

Most laws passed by the Deliberative have little bearing on the day-to-day lives of Exalted, especially the Solars, as they are excluded from the laws effects in many cases. Several laws, the so-called Accords, bear special mention, though, as they do govern the behavior of even the Realm's Lawgivers.

The Accord of Clear Glass

The Deliberative passed the first Clear Glass Accord during the Shining Reflection Era, and a revised Clear Glass Accord was one of the first proposals the Hierophant brought forth to be ratified by the Second Deliberative during the Long Silence period. The Accord of Clear Glass is a collection of laws describing the minimum standards of mortal living permitted in Creation's principalities. Among other amenities, the Accord outlaws slavery and mandates a minimum level of education and medical care be made available to all mortal principality citizens.

While the Accord of Clear Glass guarantees freedom and medical care, it doesn't guarantee education. It merely ensures the opportunity for education. Solars may not outlaw literacy, and they must make a good-faith attempt to provide sources of education to the populace. Mortals are not punished for illiteracy, though.

Solars who violate the Clear Glass Accord can be subject to fines and, in some cases, the involuntary re-classification of a prefecture as a tributary, the revocation of voting rights, and subsequent unilateral military action should the new tributary ruler not adhere to tributary restrictions.

The Mandala Accord

The Mandala Accord guarantees fair reincarnation as the Deliberative defines it. Many mortals think of the Mandala Accord as affecting them, and it does, but it actually applies to Yu-Shan's Department of Abstract Matters—specifically Taru-Han and her staff. By Solar law, approved by the Unconquered Sun himself, the gods responsible for reincarnation must swiftly and diligently ensure positive reincarnation to mortals who died or lived hard lives in the service of the Deliberative.

As a document, the Mandala Accord is long, baroque and constantly amended, as the Deliberative regularly redefines the parameters that make someone eligible for a favored reincarnation. While the core of the document remains unchanged, the fickle favor of Creation's Lawgivers has stuffed it with much pointless flock. For example, women with silver hair and green eyes who die between the ages of 60 and 80 have received favorable consideration over brown-haired women for two centuries, because a young Solar wished favorable recommendation for all who remind her of her mother. This sort of thing is normal, and the Deliberative usually allows such minor clauses without incident, voting them out when it's next convenient. The average duration of a pointless Mandala clause is two centuries, though a few do survive the original document's drafting. As a result of this practice, "Mandala clause" has entered Deliberator slang. It refers to any pointless, essentially harmless law included to humor a young Deliberator.

The Ministries of Order

The Ministries of Order is a collective term used to describe the bureaucracy that governs the Realm. Made up of thousands of Dragon-Blooded and hundreds of thousands of mortal employees, the Ministries institute the Deliberative's laws and policies and maintain the Realm's infrastructure. From the Ministry of Transportation to the Ministry of Education and Proper Childcare, from the Ministry of Realm Peacekeepers to the Ministry of Civic Information and Administrative Necessities, the various Ministries of Order make up the face of the Deliberative to the common folk of the Creation.

The Army of the Deliberative

As mentioned earlier, "the Army of the Deliberative" is a specialized term predating the Second Deliberative Era (dating back to the Unfurling Horizon Era, in fact). It refers to all the armed forces controlled by Exalts loyal to the Deliberative, even if those armies aren't under the Deliberative's direct control. The armed forces directly under Deliberative control are usually called the Deliberative Sentinel Forces. Those forces follow the same pattern of organization as most principality armed forces, though.

SO, DID YOU CASH IN YOUR GUIDEBOOK WITH DAMAR?
HONORED PEERS, WE COME BEFORE YOU AFTER MUCH PRAYER AND MEDITATION.
NAH. NO WAY HE'S GOING TO VOTE AGAINST THE HIEROPHANT ON THIS.
ANYBODY WANT TO TRADE SEATS?
THE INDEPENDENT CELESTIAL EXALT SUBSIDY PLAN HAS MUCH TROUBLED US.
BUT AT LAST WE WILL SPEAK AND CAST OUR VOTE.
OPPOSING IT, SURELY.
ON THE CONTRARY, QUEEN MERELA. WE HAVE CHOSEN TO SUPPORT IT.
WHAT?
WE HAVE SPOKEN WITH THE UNCONQUERED SUN, AND HE AGREES.

CHAPTER TWO
THE BLESSED ISLE

It's the adopted homeland of the Exalted, the grand jewel of the gods, the very heart of Creation itself. To breathe the air of the Blessed Isle is to receive the graces of the gods. To tread even the least of its paths is an act of worship. To stand at the Eternal Temple of the Golden Bull and watch the Lawgivers raise their arms to the Unconquered Sun is to understand the destiny of Creation.

The Blessed Isle was drawn from the dreams of the Primordials in the blink of an eminent eye. It is the seed from which the rest of Creation grew and the anchor that prevents the elemental poles from tearing Creation asunder. Echoes of all the elements can be found here. Even traces of the Wyld, in the form of the Mountain Folk, are contained within the Blessed Isle. It is, in many ways, *a* Creation within *the* Creation.

Inhabited for many thousands of years, the Blessed Isle has been shaped and re-shaped by many hands. Created by the Primordials as a home for the gods, it was manipulated and transformed during the gods' long tenancy. When the gods' Exalted creations overthrew the Primordials, the gods moved into better real estate and gave the Blessed Isle to their servants. The Exalted cherish this gift and have made their own changes to the Isle to suit their desires.

Although there are many hunting preserves, gardens, rivers and chill, deep lakes that imitate nature, very little on the Blessed Isle has not been carefully cultivated by generations of Essence-wielding inhabitants. Nothing on the Blessed Isle is left to chance. Oversight by the visionary Sidereals, careful record keeping by I AM, and the whims of the powerful Exalted control almost every aspect of the Isle, from the weather to plant growth to the very shape of the mortals who are blessed enough to live there.

In keeping with the Exalted ideals of agrarian society, much of the Blessed Isle is dedicated to orchards, farmlands, ranches and botanical gardens. These estates are overseen directly by Exalted owners, and their lands are spectacular fantasies of farms, orchards and ranches—not simple rice paddies or goat farms. Trees imbued with the Essence of Earth grow gems for fruit, carnivorous steeds are bred as mounts for Solar warriors, and crops are planted in ornate patterns to be admired from skyships. Rare herbs, unique animals and fantastically pruned trees grow more abundantly than weeds—themselves a rarity on the Blessed Isle.

For many, travel to the Blessed Isle is a pilgrimage and a reward for a lifetime of service and worship of the Exalted. The land looms large in myth and story: In popular

stories and songs transmitted by I AM, the Blessed Isle is a golden paradise where joy infuses the very air and the Exalted rain down blessings on every leaf and flower. The Blessed Isle is the religious as well as the political center of civilized Creation.

As a result, a Creation-wide trade in charms made from granite from Mount Meru or water supposedly drawn from various sacred wells and streams on the Isle thrives. Most of the claims on which this trade are based are less than accurate. (If all the rocks historically promised to be from Mount Meru were gathered into one place, the pile would rise taller than the peak it supposedly came from.) Many thaumaturges do, however, claim that materials from the Blessed Isle are more powerful and responsive to Essence manipulation than materials from other parts of Creation are. Merchants who travel to and from the Isle often have a side business trading stone beads, wooden charms and herbs produced there.

The Blessed Life

There is no want on the Blessed Isle, no hunger, no cold—unless scheduled by the Ministry of Weather—no shadow of war. The glories of the Age of Splendor rise to their most magnificent heights on the Blessed Isle, and the Exalted shower their blessings down on those who are chosen to live among them.

The Blessed Isle is the center of a Creation-wide trade nexus, so not only are staples plentiful, but every rare fruit, sensuous spice, beautiful fabric and unusual beast can be purchased here as well. Even the peasants who work the Exalted estates feast daily on meat, enjoy fruit grown near the Elemental Poles—or in local Essence-regulated greenhouses—and sample stranger delicacies that most of the mortal masses only dream of. Medical care for even the lowest wanderer is freely available at any Total Rejuvenation Hospital, not to mention the fact that no Exalt would allow his own servants to become ill. (That would reflect badly on the Exalt's skill at maintaining a proper household.) Entertainment, information, communication and assistance through I AM is all readily available, and the basic necessities of life are free—and, on the Blessed Isle, the basic necessities outshine the luxuries of many other cities in Creation.

Glorious processions and celebrations are common on the Blessed Isle, and they can last for days or even weeks. Not only are the great holidays such as Calibration and Ascendancy celebrated all over the Island, but the Exalted compete with each other to present the most lavish Midsummer feasts or nameday parties for their children. Unlike everywhere else in Creation, the Celestial Exalted are a common presence on the Isle. Mortals here can interact daily with those who approach the gods in grandeur and power.

This closeness to the Exalted can bring great riches to these around them, but it can also be a terrible burden. The lords of Creation demand much from the mortals they sometimes equate to little more than cattle, and those who

The Great Coast Road

Built by the Exalted just after the founding of the First Deliberative in order to facilitate human habitation, the Great Coast Road encircles the entire Blessed Isle. Its brilliant white-glass pavement is the original from which all the great roads of the First Age are copied. It's always clean, perfectly maintained and free of debris, and all its traffic is monitored and controlled personally by the god called the Ancient of Stone Journeys. The god also oversees a host of lesser spirits who monitor the roads, canals and pagoda skyways within the White City, though he must tread carefully within the city bounds in order to maintain proper respect regarding Ameru, the city god.

The Ancient of Stone Journeys knows the importance of his duties, and he expects proper respect for it. Wise travelers make regular offerings to him and treat the road—and fellow travelers—with great respect. The god enjoys traveling on his road in disguise, asking for alms or a space beside someone's campfire, and those who treat him rudely will find their trips along the road endlessly delayed and detoured. The Ancient of Stone Journeys prioritizes the travelers on his roads, and the Exalted are almost always given priority over everything else—including emergency equipment and shipments of medicine. Even the Exalted are not exempt to his anger, however. A few overly arrogant Solars or prideful Sidereals have found themselves routed to the slow lanes of the road while grain transports passed them by.

The road is always crowded, side to side and several leagues into the air where skyships, skiffs and flying beasts take advantage of the Essence currents that make travel along and above the road easier. Huge, automatically controlled freight vehicles race along the road, hovering a few feet off the surface and powered by Essence generated by the road itself.

When seen at official functions, the Ancient of Stone Journeys resembles a tall, old man carrying a huge staff of sycamore wood—a tree that is sacred to him—and wearing traveling robes and white-jade boots. He is almost always on the road itself, but he does have a main shrine in Meru that connects to his rather simple residence in Yu-Shan. (For more information on the Ancient of Stone Journeys, see **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. I—The Blessed Isle**, p. 154.)

live on the Blessed Isle are constantly reminded of their lowly place. Millions of mortals live on the Blessed Isle, but almost every one is bound in service to a Celestial Exalted lord. Few mortals own land on the Isle or even wander its roads without purpose. Every mortal resident pledged to an Exalt on the Blessed Isle wears the badge of his Exalted master—be it a bangle or collar stamped with a household crest, or a skin pattern or artificial birthmark passed from one generation to the next. For most mortals, their station in life is fixed, as are the tasks they will perform all their lives. Every peasant in every field, every urchin running alongside a parade (remaining obediently on their restricted paths), is secure in the knowledge that he was specially selected by an Exalted lord and can carry himself with the pride of one chosen for greatness. The mortal inhabitants of the Blessed Isle do not easily accept newcomers, even those brought by newly reborn Exalted. Disdain for new arrivals can last for generations.

Among the wonders that the Exalted lavish on their servants are blessings that can transform mortals into creatures better suited to unique service in an Exalted retinue or household. Various Shaping Charms can warp mortal Essence, binding it with the Essence of birds or fish or trees. Those who are so changed take on superhuman aspects and take pride in these badges of special attention.

The Dragon-Bloods who live on the Blessed Isle might be among the least of the Exalted, but they are also the administrative cogs that keeps civilization running smoothly. They oversee grand public-works projects, such as the Black Snake Dam, and implement their Exalted lords' every wish. They command hundreds, or thousands, of lesser servants in an organizational hierarchy that echoes the natural order of life: from the gods, to the Celestial Exalted, to the Terrestrial Exalts, to the mortals and beasts of Creation. The Dragon-Blooded must also intercede between their Celestial masters and the mortal world when confusion or miscommunication occurs, and they enforce Deliberative directives and proper conduct among the lower creatures with skill and enthusiasm. Unless a Celestial Exalt has made a particular effort otherwise, her Dragon-Blooded servants always accompany her on the Blessed Isle.

Even with all their extravagant magitechnical amenities, Exalted estates require many servants. The farmlands and orchards that surround the huge mansions of the Celestial Exalted need armies of peasants to maintain. Dragon-Blooded overseers coordinate these masses with the intensity of generals marshaling their troops.

A Solar Exalt may boast of her farmland estate, but their homes bear very little resemblance to the farmlands and ranches found in the RPCs elsewhere. The Essence-enriched

soil of the Blessed Isle is incredibly vital, consistently producing multiple harvests throughout the year. A carelessly dropped green twig is likely to sprout leaves and branches in a season if left alone. Fields are laid out with military precision, and rather than simple fields of rice, Exalted fields grow sacred golden poppies or the sweet, rare black rice reserved only for highly refined Exalted palates. Crops are tended and harvested by hand or by specially designed automatons. Each fruit and vegetable is lavished with individual attention and care.

Orchards or fields are frequently designed to create fantastic landscapes. Red amaranth, golden poppies and black rice fields may be planted in miles-long patterns that reveal the symbol of the Unconquered Sun or the household crest of their Exalted owners, when viewed from a sky chariot or skiff.

Exalts who prefer to raise beasts rather than plants maintain ranches of exotic creatures—many of whom are being manipulated into even more fantastic forms by thaumaturgy or Exalted blessings. Creatures created by breeders on the Blessed Isle can be purely decorative, such as the hearth cat (see **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. I—The Blessed Isle**, p. 160), or designed to aid the Exalted in their administration and control of Creation, such as the simhata (see **Exalted**, p. 349). Overly curious breeders sometimes attempt to push the capacity of living creatures beyond their limits, and their pathetic failures are abandoned at the Conservancy of Unexpected Life Forms.

Hunting estates are popular among the Lunar Exalted, who sometimes find the urban civilization of Meru oppressive. Such estates have the look of wilderness but are as carefully tended and controlled as the most artificial city garden. Some such estates are designed to mimic environments found elsewhere in Creation, such as the freezing tundra of the North or the burning sands of the South. Careful control and scheduling of the climate-controlling sky mantis infrastructure (and special dispensation from the Bureau of Seasons) allows for weather that is normally banned on the Blessed Isle, such as blizzards or monsoons. Foreign landscapes can be mimicked down to the least detail of grass, stream or rock pattern. In fact, some house-proud Exalted informally compete to create the most exact replicas of unique or unusual terrain found elsewhere in Creation. They spare no effort or expense to outdo their neighbors—importing trees, soil, rock, beasts and people in their efforts to duplicate famous foreign landscapes. With the proper permits from the Celestial Housing Authority, even the Essence of the Isle may be tweaked to better imitate the Essence of the locations they are mimicking.

Mount Meru

Towering above even the grandest Exalted structure is Mount Meru, the lynchpin that holds the entire span of Creation together. It rises up from the heart of the Blessed Isle, the highest mountain in Creation—the very axis of the world. All other mountains in Creation, no matter how magnificent, how deadly or how tall are pale imitations of the Elemental Pole of Earth. It is the tallest peak in Creation and, at its highest point, seems nearly to pierce the veil of sky. The tides of Essence rise high on the mountain. Some demesnes there are so powerful, so wild, that even the Exalts at the height of their power have been unable to cap them, and some of the most powerful manses in Creation rest on the heights of Mount Meru.

The slopes of the Blessed Mountain are entirely consumed by the great city of Meru—also called the Exalted City or the White City—which surrounds the entire mountain and rises all the way to the summit. The city has buried Mount Meru natural craggy geology beneath towers of luminous glass, spires of white jade, adamant thoroughfares and the millions of people who live there. Any who wish to travel

Golden Poppies

These huge, glorious plants grow only on the Blessed Isle and bloom only during the month of Resplendent Fire. The plants themselves are surprisingly shaggy looking, but their flowers more than make up for it. Each bloom is about the size of a child's head, and the five papery petals are golden yellow, with a darker orange heart. Horticulturists don't grow these plants just for beauty, though. When the blooms die, the cup-shaped seed pod is harvested and the hundreds of seeds within extracted and pounded into a thick paste. This sticky crimson paste can be smoked or eaten, to delightful effect. It produces a pleasant, vaguely hallucinatory high that generally lasts for (5 – Stamina) hours per dose, minimum one hour. In addition, it stimulates one's Essence, causing what looks to be a major Essence flare without the Exalted user having to spend any motes. During that time, the Exalt's iconic anima banner appears and becomes animate. Animal auras swoop, gambol and pantomime fierce vocalizations. Runic and symbolic sigils shift in color and meaning. An Exalt can influence the phantasmagoria, but not completely control it. Experienced Solar users of the golden poppy often engage in mock icon battles or contests with friends. Poppy use is a pleasant, harmless distraction, and the plant is plentiful enough to supply even the most voracious addiction. Rumors that long-term use results in an iconic anima that seems disturbingly malevolent when the Exalt activates it legitimately, even when the Exalt is completely sober, are dismissed as envious whining.

Damage: 4B/hr Toxicity: 3 Tolerance: (Stamina)/1 month Penalty: -2 Resources: 4

to the higher peaks of the mountain must travel through the greatest city of Creation to do so. Manses and estates of the most powerful of the Exalted—such as senior members of the Deliberative—can be found here, each of them like a priceless jewel. Botanical gardens are found here as well, with armies of dedicated Wood-aspected Dragon-Bloods and mortal peasants watching over rare plants and Essence manipulated projects of interested Celestial Exalts.

It is believed that every type of gem, mineral and stone found anywhere in Creation can also be found on, or within, the Blessed Mountain. Curious Exalts have found everything from the rough, red sandstone of the South to the delicate ice opals of the North somewhere on Mount Meru. All the magical materials (with the exception of soulsteel) and every color of jade can be mined from the mountain. Even deposits of ancient starmetal are hidden amid the mountain's highest, most dangerous peaks.

Ameru

The god of the grandest city in Creation has a seat of honor in the galleries of the Deliberative. He can't vote, but wise politicians take his advice and preferences into account, for there are few things less comfortable than living in a city whose tutelary god is displeased with you. Ameru has the ability to temporarily restrict or increase the flow of Essence within the city, affecting everything from indoor plumbing to public transportation. The high levels of activity in the city draw his attention from the Games of Divinity, and he's present in Creation more often than many other gods of equivalent power.

The Middle Heights

Beyond the lower slopes, the original terrain of Mount Meru was rougher and wilder, like the lower slopes, though it too has been buried within the White City. It is now replaced by governmental buildings, golden ground-level roads and elegantly designed parks that do not resemble the original environment at all.

Seasons on the Blessed Isle do not change drastically, for the Elemental Pole of Earth helps hold the land in perfect, static balance. Instead the only real winter is found on the mid slopes of Mount Meru. The forests are at their summer height at lower elevations, then change as the altitude rises to brilliant fall reds and golds, then to severe winter, where pines and other evergreens dominate until even the sturdy alpine plants fade away at the tree line.

Here, the Exalted—especially the Lunars—prefer to locate their local offices, partially separated from the White City by natural geology and detours in the public transportation nets. There are also a few private nature preserves such as Razor Heights, where the native wildlife of the mountain is allowed to roam in relative safety, unless a bored Lunar or Solar Exalt decides to go on a hunting spree.

The Heights

Here, the Elemental Pole of Earth is stripped down to its purest form. Huge Essence flows can put even the Exalted in danger, and some of the demesnes here are so powerful they cannot be capped. The headwaters for all the rivers on the Blessed Isle originate here, at the Birthplace of Rivers Demesne, watched over by minor gods who have sworn oaths of service to the Deliberative. Strangely, many of the guardian gods here breed with the native animals roaming Mount Meru. Of the many varieties of God-Blooded animals that result from such unions, the stone-tusked boars of the pine forests are a favorite—if risky—prey for Lunar hunting parties.

It is only here, of all places on the Blessed Isle, that prehistoric deposits of starmetal can still be found. Young Sidereal Exalts sometimes spend years, as part of their apprenticeship, mining for the smallest crumb of that rare material. It is here, as well, that the Exalted maintain the grandest and most powerful of their temples—the Eternal Temple of the Golden Bull.

At the very peak of the Blessed Mountain, its very highest point, all the power of the Elemental Pole of Earth is gathered into a single, luminous pearl. When it grows large enough, it spears upward in a brilliant display of pure Essence to shatter into a stunning prismatic spray of color and power.

The Wyld on the Isle

Wyld effects and Wyld-based technology are not suitable for use at the most stable point of Creation, the Elemental Pole of Earth. Mount Meru suppresses most Wyld effects completely. Wyld effects on the Blessed Isle can only be reliably created in Essence-shielded laboratories or manses, or by the most powerful Exalted. Wyld-fueled constructs, reality generators and similar Wyld manipulations do not work well on the Blessed Isle.

In addition, most of these most dangerous of reality-warping technologies and weapons are banned on the Blessed Isle. Experiments using these items take place in less populous, more flexible and more isolated areas of Creation. Stable Wyld creations and items will not be damaged if they travel to the Blessed Isle, but the Deliberative might have something to say about brining a powerful Wyld weapon or raksha to the political and religious center of the First Age.

Exalted Estates

Turning away from the Blessed Mountain, passing through the White City, the Blessed Isle stretches out for hundreds of miles in all directions. Everything upon the Isle, from land to sea to sky, is controlled and possessed by the Exalted. Most Solars, and many Lunar Exalted, have private estates on the Blessed Isle, aside from any principalities or tributaries they rule elsewhere in Creation.

Every Solar Exalt is required by law to spend two out of five years living on the Blessed Isle, so they are all provided elegant homes within the great city of Meru. No self-respecting Exalt is content with just his simple government lodging, however, no matter how encrusted with gems it might be. Therefore, most Solar Exalts have estates elsewhere on the Isle and they travel via skycraft, sorcery, boat or gates of auspicious passage between their island homes and their Meru residences. Because the Celestial Exalted live for millennia, estates rarely change ownership. Even if a Solar Exalt does die, she can have made legal arrangements to see that her rural estate remains held in trust for her reincarnated return.

Most estates on the Blessed Isle are also manses, most frequently Earth-aspected ones, but other aspects exist in great numbers as well. Those manses with Celestial aspects are reserved for older, more powerful Exalts, as are manses of more than three dots.

What goes on in an Exalt's private estate is solely the responsibility of the owner. No matter what terrible vices the estate's owner indulges in private, the Deliberative will not intervene. Should any Exalted landowner permit her personal experiments of transforming mortals into trees or using torture to create beautiful music become public, the Deliberative is quite prepared to deny any previous knowledge, react with shock and horror and then make an example of the Exalt who has fallen so horribly far from the ideals of her caste and station in life.

Estates are huge swaths of land, each its own miniature kingdom, within one of the 12 larger dominions of the Blessed Isle (a dominion being the governmental equivalent of a province anywhere else in Creation). Entire towns or cities may be the personal property of a single Exalt, located on her personal estate. Generations of mortal peasants are born and die within their lord's borders, and Dragon-Blooded client Gentes live within their own compounds and training grounds, preparing to serve the Exalted lord upon whose lands they live. Because these estates are the private, personal property of an individual Exalt, no taxes are collected from them and many of the laws regarding human rights and so on do not apply, just as if they were tributaries.

To the East

The two dominions along the eastern quarter of the Blessed Isle spectacularly surpass the greatest fantasies of wealth, beauty, power and privilege. The lazuli-blue Dawn River flows through beautifully landscaped lowland estates

and finally empties into Crane Bay on the easternmost edge of the Isle. The river, the lands along it and the bay are all under close watch by the Celestial Housing Authority, for beneath and along the river and woven through the very ground of the east are the huge Essence flows used to control the terrible weapon called the Sword of Creation.

Although this web of Essence permeates the entire Isle, natural geologic structures guide it close to the surface in the east, and the Exalted have carefully groomed and tamed its flows. Only the stabilizing effect of the Elemental Pole of Earth allows so much power to exist in one place without ripping the land asunder. The greatest Essence flow lies beneath the Dawn River, flowing from Mount Meru down to Crane Bay and out into the sea. The power attracts hundreds of spirits and gods, who hover over, swim within or simply sip at the Essence overflow. In turn, thousands of God-Tending Itinerants come to make offerings to the gods and the fantastically transformed river itself. The entire span of the river, from the bay to nearly its source are thick with shrines, offering stones, tourist boats and harried members of the Ministry of Transportation trying to keep order. Tiny vials of water from the Dawn River are popular souvenirs. Unless called upon to work along the river, Exalts typically avoid it because of its crowded, plebeian atmosphere.

The eastern part of the Blessed Isle is the most populous and the only area where non-natives are common. Crane Bay is the major port between the Isle and the wealthy East, and much of Creation's wealth and privilege flows into the Blessed Isle through the enormous port that covers all parts of the bay except those areas designated as natural preserves by the Ministry of the Interior.

Anktor Dominion

Traveling from Meru east to Crane Bay means crossing into the inland dominion of Anktor. The Dawn River flows through it, and this artery of transport brings great wealth to the dominion. Anktor is a land of rolling hills, gentle streams, expansive and civilized private Exalted estates and pleasantly serene small cities.

Because it is so well placed, convenient for everything from boats and transpods to skyships, Anktor dominion has a fairly cosmopolitan flavor. There are a dozen or so large, old Exalted estates in the dominion, and Anktor's daimyo keeps the peace by keeping his nose out of other people's business. It works well for everyone.

Travelers are common in the dominion, and there is a brisk trade in divine goods, wealth, amusements, favors and influence. Many God-Tending Itinerants pass through as they follow the spirits who play within the Essence-infused currents of the Dawn River. Shrines to a thousand and one different gods—and to the Exalted who live there—dot the landscape, and Essence markers indicate borders between various Exalted estates. The countryside itself is very fertile, full of the kind of ornately landscaped fields the Exalted prefer for their "farms." Many of the orchards, fields and seemingly natural features have been planned to take advantage of geomantic influences or to display the owners' household seals when viewed from the air. When foreigners think of the Blessed Isle, or I AM provides publicity shots, this is frequently the dominion that is used.

The Valley of the Crystal Songbirds

This Essence-veiled valley is a well-kept Exalted secret, and not because of any military might or political worth. Beloved Flower, the mistress of this powerful estate, hides what she's done there, though what she has created is too magnificent and beautiful to destroy.

The valley is located near the northeastern foothills of Meru, so its secrecy depends on no one looking for it. More accurately, it depends on no one choosing to make public what they know about it. Beloved Flower is a Twilight Caste Exalt of great age and power, one of the survivors of the war against the Primordials. She's a prideful, extraordinarily lovely woman who lost her Lunar mate centuries ago, along with many friends and companions. (She has turned away from the current incarnation of her mate, sending him to maintain her principality in the outer areas of Creation's Northeast, and he takes out his rejection and frustration on the natives there.) Power, bitterness and grief have frozen Beloved Flower's heart, and she pursues what pleasures she chooses under the belief that, for all she has lost, she deserves whatever she wants. The modern world holds no interest for Beloved Flower. She has turned inward and rarely leaves her manse. She trades her vote in the Deliberative for protection and favors, unconcerned with anything that actually happens in session. All of her energies are focused toward her current pet project.

Regarding that project, Beloved Flower is interested in transforming bits and pieces of the Blessed Isle into something it was not originally intended to be. Unlike her associates, however, she is not copying some distant land but spinning a miniature Creation out of her imagination. Beloved Flower's imagination is a thing of wonder, beauty and despair.

Over the past several centuries, Beloved Flower has used her Wyld-shaping abilities to tweak the Essence of her estate so much that it bears little resemblance to the original demesne on which it was built. Here, the natural order of earth and wood, air and water are not quite as they should be. Grass and flowers certainly grow, but they are made of delicately spun strands of jade, flakes of carnelian and opal, and miraculous alloys of glass and jewels. The trees growing in her valley bear leaves of bloodstone and fruits of quartz or citrine. Insects of iridescent glass—self-replicating automatons of her design—flit from stone flower to crystal bush. Birds with feathers of silver and gold roost in the stone trees. And these plants and creatures are all alive, infused with the animate Essence normally found in true animals and plants. Beloved Flower need not fear the weaknesses of flesh and blood, for nothing of her creation ages or falls ill. Every birdsong, every leaf, every blossom, is perfect.

Yet for all the beauty she has created, some would say Beloved Flower has gone too far.

There are a few small towns in her valley, along with her iridescent glass manse, and the peasants under her care labor in her fields of marble and stone. They consume rice made of cloudy quartz and apples of golden glass. This fare sustains them because they too have been changed to suit their mistress's preferences. The mortals here—who are no longer truly mortal—are as perfect and polished as tawny agate or as fair as milk glass. Using powerful Charms, the Earth-aspected manse she controls and very unethical techniques, Beloved Flower has stripped her peasants of their flesh-and-blood shells and trapped their souls in constructions of glass and crystal. While such a transformation might break the mortal mind, Beloved Flower has also wiped their memories of their previous lives away. The beautiful creations found on her lands believe they have always been this way, that this is the natural order of the world. In fact, the only time one of her unchanged peasants managed to escape from his confinement within Beloved Flower's manse, the stone villagers she'd already made helped re-capture the refugee, thinking he was some sort of pathetic misbegotten monster that Beloved Flower would of its decaying forms.

Beloved Flower has amassed a large collection of valuable artifacts designed to help her in her work, some of which were former military tools—particularly ones that control and manipulate Wyld energies. She keeps her remaining peasants confined in underground chambers in her manse, awaiting their turn in her laboratories where she will sift out their souls and discard the dross of flesh and bone and blood. The only drawback to her design is that the mortals cannot yet breed in their new forms. Beloved Flower works day and night to solve this vexing problem.

All of Beloved Flower's lands are amazingly lovely—a, perfect immortal paradise that some Exalted have compared (inaccurately) to Yu-Shan. Her Dragon-Blooded servants have been bound by powerful oaths not to talk about her activities, and her connections among her peers insulate her against having to defend her research in front of the Deliberative. Fortunately, many who have seen her creations but not studied them closely assume that she is simply using powerful illusions or building incredibly complicated automatons. The borders of her estates are sheathed in Essence barriers that keep the uninvited from stumbling across her home and the powerful Elemental Pole of Earth from muting her Charms.

Beloved Flower's manse is constructed entirely of glass alloyed with adamant. Variously transparent, translucent or mistily opaque, it can be exquisite or disorienting depending on her mood. Fragmented, half-seen reflections of Beloved Flower dance along the walls of the manse. The manse also has a unique power that allows anyone attuned to it to travel from one reflective surface to another instantaneously, seeming to step right out of her own reflection.

Crane Dominion

Arguably the wealthiest Blessed Isle dominion, Crane Dominion is administered Hanepta Wat. Wat is an old, canny, tired Solar Exalt of the Eclipse Caste whose oaths maintain the peace and prosperity of Crane Dominion. Much of his power is tied up in managing the gods that are drawn to the Dawn River, and to the fretful god of Crane Bay itself. With these oaths, he can control access to and from the bay, as well as the flow of the Dawn River and—to a limited extent—the strong Essence flows that drain from Mount Meru down to the bay.

His care and experience means that Crane Dominion is peaceful, prosperous, busy and rather plebeian. The largest population center is the vast port and city surrounding Crane Bay, and Hanepta Wat's Dragon-Blooded retainers oversee the complicated tariff, travel and transport laws governing access to and from the Blessed Isle.

Crane Bay

This city is the major trading port of the Blessed Isle. Even the deepwater bays of the West do not exceed Crane Bay for number of travelers, tons of goods or sheer wealth that passes through the port that takes up the entire bay several miles deep in a bustling, cosmopolitan city.

Crane Bay can handle nearly 100 of the massive, deepwater, automaton-piloted cargo ships of the Deliberative, but its services are not limited to watercraft. Airship mooring towers grow like forests from the inland side of the Bay, and the Great Coast Road brings land and local air traffic to and from the city. Trade and traffic are heavy day and night, and while the great thoroughfares of the city are orderly and controlled, disorder and confusion on the back streets and alleyways occasionally disrupts the otherwise tight organization. Hanepta Wat intentionally allows for a certain level of rowdy behavior, however, believing that by allowing the lower classes an outlet for unsavory behavior, they believe themselves to have adequate free will and are less likely to be resistant to the natural rule of the Celestial Exalted. He uses mind-controlling Charms and spies to monitor the factions and cults that crop up in Crane Bay, of course, nursing those that seem useful and eradicating ones that are potentially dangerous.

The Ministries of Order have satellite offices here, particularly the Ministry of Weather, and the foremost customs house of the Order Conferring Trade Pattern is here as well. (Both are critical to the smooth functioning—and profit—of the bay.) The Ministry of Civic Information and Administrative Necessities also has extensive offices here to assist newly reincarnated Exalted—most of whom come through Crane Bay if they arrive by boat or airship. The Ministry of the Interior maintains huge public shrines to a variety of gods, to control the Essence that flows from the Dawn River, to placate the Ancient of Stone Journeys and to make sure the gods are adequately performing their proper actions at the proper time.

The Fortress of Hungry Birds

Crane Bay is overlooked by the glorious Fortress of Hungry Birds, named after the Lunar Exalt who controls, and is charged with defending, the valuable port that sprawls along the length of the bay. Old and powerful, spouse to a senior member of the Deliberative and well connected among her peers, Hungry Birds has spent centuries making her manse both militarily powerful and stunningly beautiful. Made mostly of white glass and blue jade, it is deeply anchored within the low cliffs on the southern side of Crane Bay.

Three hundred delicate avian automatons, animated and controlled by oath-bound spirits, patrol the opalescent outer walls of the stronghold. The automatons act as watchers and form a first line of defense. They rise to life at the command of the garrison taizei—or Hungry Birds herself—and can also call out a warning should any enemies they've been programmed to recognize enter the stronghold. Capable of short flights and equipped with Essence-powered weapons and adamant talons with the power of grand daiklaves, they are fearsome battlefield creations. For several hundred years, they have been used solely during Hungry Bird's anniversary celebration, flying in intricate formation above Crane Bay while parades and parties go on beneath them.

The main entrance to the stronghold is the Eternal Gate, a soaring gate of silver and glass that flickers with Essence. The gate blazes brightly whenever an Exalt passes through it. Heavily imbued with protective and offensive Charms of great power, so as to make sure no military attack will breach it, the gate has been turned from a potential weakness to one of the strongest features of the entire fortress. Whenever a Solar Exalt passes through the gate, it briefly takes on the image of his personal anima banner. The signature is displayed in full-color imagery several stories tall and is both respectful acknowledgment and public announcement. Unless an Exalt successfully masks his anima using Charms, his true identify is revealed when he passes through the Eternal Gate.

The fortress is one of the Exalted's main military strongholds, designed to defend Crane Bay from attack, and it maintains a full complement of warstriders and a thousand-forged dragon silo, as well as a fully equipped Dragon-Blooded army. Competition to be stationed at the Fortress of Hungry Birds is fierce, due to both the honor and

access to a rich and varied off-duty life. Unfortunately, due to the stronghold's location in the safest part of Creation, the soldiers here are better trained for parades and honor guards than live military action.

Unlike most other war manses of the First Age, the Fortress of Hungry Birds is not interconnected with the Creation-wide defense grid. It is completely independent of all external control, and should its controlling hearthstone fall into the wrong hands, it could potentially defeat the entire might of the First Age military. Not only are the warstriders and thousand-forged dragons the most powerful designs available, the Fortress of Hungry Birds surrounds and is the first line of defense for the Orichalcum Shrine that controls the Sword of Creation. This is why the fortress is in the hands of one of the most trusted of Lunar strategists and also why it is not connected to the rest of the military network by either gates of auspicious passage or the defense grid.

The fortresses defenses, including the guardian automatons, the warstriders, the thousand-forged dragons and the gate are keyed to and controlled by the hearthstone generated at the heart of the fortress, for it is also a powerful Air-aspected manse. Hungry Birds is the one who is attuned to this hearthstone, and it never leaves her possession. This hearthstone is a deep, clear blue, with a twist of crimson in the center. It allows the user to see from and control any of the fortress's defenses. In addition, all troops stationed there are considered part of the fortress's system and the holder of the Hungry Birds hearthstone can see from the eyes of, and speak into the minds of, those who are sworn to serve at the fortress.

The Sword of Creation

Discovered and tamed originally by Autochthon, the Sword of Creation was originally one of many tools that the gods turned into a weapon in their war against the Primordials. Now it is the most powerful weapon in all Creation, and its sole function is the defense of the Blessed Isle.

All but the oldest and most powerful Exalts imagine that the Sword, in its entirety, is located in the powerful manse called the Orichalcum Shrine at the mouth of the Dawn River. The shrine, a narrow spire of adamant hundreds of feet high and delicately webbed with orichalcum, was built using the same techniques designed for the war manses and the Last Supplicant of Endless Power (see p. 93). It is equipped with limited self-guided defense mechanisms and a dozen or more powerful spirits bound to its service, and it's keyed to only a handful of Exalted. It is certainly impressive enough—to the ignorant—but the Orichalcum Shrine is only the focusing mechanism, where Essence and will merge to create the most destructive forces seen in Creation since the Primordials themselves. The actual Sword itself is located at the center of the Blessed Isle, within Mount Meru. It stretches from beneath the Holy Peak, thousands of feet straight down through the mountain, and farther still—as far as any Exalt or god can explore. It pierces the very heart of Creation, and Essence throbs and thunders in it like a gigantic heartbeat.

At first glance, the Sword of Creation is simply impossible. It is a massive seam of all the natural magical materials merged into a huge, twisted column stabbed through the Blessed Mountain. The Essence contained within it is so powerful that the very air around it is deadly to the careless. Rock around the Sword is full of peculiar inclusions, unusually large deposits of naturally occurring magical materials, various crystals that share many properties with hearthstones, and occasionally peculiar living organisms. Only the Mountain Folk can approach it closely. Even the oldest of Exalts must remain several meters away or their own divine Essence, fed by the Sword, overcomes their mortal shells with deadly consequences. Dragon-Blooded or mortals who approach closely enough to even see the Sword directly instantaneously sublimate into their core Essence, which is absorbed by the Sword.

When activated, the Sword can potentially reach to the ends of Creation itself. Its weapons are the pure powers of the elements, held in careful balance by its location at the Elemental Pole of Earth. It can stir up the sea to swallow entire fleets (or islands). It can bring the frigid white fog down from the North to freeze entire cities solid. It can wipe the sky from horizon to horizon with a curtain of fire. It can generate earthquakes, make forests march, summon up the blazing rays of the Unconquered Sun or any other destructive horror dreamt of in the minds of a Dawn Caste general. Such uses throw off the very balance of Creation, however, and the farther away the Sword is aimed, the worse the recoil is. Even the gods only used it to defend the Blessed Isle and a few thousand miles around it. When the gods left Creation to the Exalted, they were divided on whether they would reveal the secrets of the Sword to their servants. Only after great deliberation were they willing to do so.

The Essence gathered by the Sword of Creation is tied to the knot of Essence that is channeled along the Dawn River and capped by the Orichalcum Shrine. It is only from there that the gods, and later the Exalted, can safely use the Sword of Creation without risk of being suddenly transformed into a minor, temporary Essence signature and absorbed by the Sword. The Shrine is a carefully balanced trigger to a huge, Creation shattering weapon. Only a perfect circle of Solar Exalted, bound by the oaths of their Eclipse member to defend the Blessed Isle, has any hope of using the Sword of Creation safely. The first Exalted to be attuned to the Sword were Solar Queen Merela's circle. It is currently the Faultless Panoply of the Sun that wields its awesome power, and the Hierophant who bears its hearthstone.

To the South

Between the Dawn River and the Caracal are expansive lowland plains where long-established estates and cities

maintain the high standards expected of the Exalted of Creation. Many of the farmlands here are patterned in huge magical sigils, or after their Exalted owner's anima banner, and some change seasonally to make their runic patterns auspiciously match the months, the phases of the moon or the stars. Political maneuvering here is measured as much by landscape, dress and exotically modified servants as by the number of Dragon-Bloods in one's retinue.

Summersky Dominion

Located on the southern coast of the Blessed Isle, the Summersky Dominion is noted mainly as a place of pleasant recreation. The Exalted residents of the area have made sure, through requests and influence, that the sky mantis infrastructure provides permanently delightful weather year round. Summersky was also the dominion where a recreational society known as the Five Petal Peony Society began and became popular.

Blandly idyllic is perhaps the best way to describe this dominion, and Renewing Ardor administers her land with a sweetly scented iron fist. Her dominion is a suburban retreat from the stress and hurry of ruling Creation, and she believes that nothing that is difficult or unpleasant or even unseemly should be aired in public. Grace and elegance are expected among the Exalted who reside in her dominion, proper behavior is required, and crass behavior or even the simple errors made by newcomers are frequently met with public snubs and complete ostracism. Renewing Ardor despises money or other blatant attempts to prove wealth or worth, so those who wish to deal with her must use more subtly valuable items such as influence and favors to gain her support.

There are few large cities in the Summersky Dominion, for Renewing Ardor dislikes the grime and crowds of urban life. Her own estates are huge, nestled at the western edge of her dominion where the Caracal River flows into the Inland Sea, but that is not the seat of her government. The small city of Impermanent Scrolls, located at the eastern side of Lapis Bay, is where the administration that runs the dominion is located. It is a plebeian, functional city full of plebeian, functional civil servants dedicated to administrative work. On evenings and holidays, the city is almost deserted, served mostly by civil automatons and a few lower-class functionaries who either cannot afford suburban homes or must work outside of regular hours. Renewing Ardor rarely bothers to travel to Impermanent Scrolls, preferring to allow her Dragon-Blooded retainers to handle the unpleasant details of her rule while she attends to the work of keeping Exalted society civilized and elegant in every fashion.

The City of Silken Flowers

Even the most dutiful of Exalted must take time to rest and recuperate, and the lovely City of Silken Flowers is a pleasant distraction from the turmoil and toil of ruling Creation.

Silken Flowers is a manse surrounded by a beautiful estate, controlled by Twelve-Feather Song, the young, lovely and recently reincarnated mate of Renewing Ardor. He hopes to make his fame and earn favors by providing a pleasant environment where his elders can relax. The City of Silken Flowers is a carefully planned community within that estate on the sandy shores of the southern Inland Sea. Favorable currents and weather promise that every day at the City of Silken Flowers is a memorable one, with misty dawns, brilliant noons, blazing sunsets and lingering, sweet-scented evenings.

The estate grounds have been lovingly landscaped with trilling streams and winding gardens of exotic flowers, and those grounds are stocked with the most pleasing mortal and God-Blooded concubines of every sex, flavor and seductive design. Men with crimson feathers for hair, women with scales and serpent tongues, well-trained creatures, peculiar automatons and anything else imaginable are discretely provided to those who are invited for a celebration or a relaxing retreat. Even the surrounding villages are stocked as carefully as the main estate. There is nothing unpleasing or disturbing anywhere on the lands Twelve-Feather Song controls. Daily musical performances, erotic acrobats, intriguing lectures on the nature of the Wyld (for the more intellectual vacations), enjoyable games, libraries, tea ceremonies and every pleasure imaginable are all freely available. Every guest enjoys (or endures) the services of a personal maneki neko servant who assists them in taking full advantage of the delights available at the City of Silken Flowers.

It isn't difficult to gain an invitation to the City of Silken Flowers. Any previous guest has the right to return, and each is also given three golden flowers to offer to friends and acquaintances, which act as invitations. All members of the Deliberative are always welcome, of course, as are their families. Dragon-Bloods and mortals are only present in the City of Silken Flowers as servants.

The hearthstone grown from the Silken Flowers manse has a unique effect on those within its grounds. It lowers visitors' Temperance score by one for the duration of their visit. Twelve-Feather Song makes sure that such changes in his guests' Virtue don't result in violence by carefully controlling every aspect of his estate to emphasize pleasure, peace and relaxation. He also has a contingent of well-trained and close-mouthed Dragon-Blooded who assist when guests become "overwrought" by the strains of their work and need to be invited to a quieter locale within the estate to rest. Considering the concentration of powerful Exalted, Twelve-Feather Song shows a remarkable ability to keep order, and is probably the recipient of more secrets than is healthy for a single individual. What he will do with this power and information remains to be seen. Twelve-Feather Song is a highly valued member of the Five Petal Peony Society, and influential within it, despite his young age.

The Five Petal Peony Society

This recreational organization is very popular among the more ambitious Exalted, which is odd for an organization dedicated to encouraging the beautification of Exalted estates and properties. Members of the society swear oaths promising to maintain their estates within certain parameters of beauty and to maintain a polite and proper public demeanor. Those who violate the standards of the society—by allowing their estates to become overgrown, for example—face public embarrassment. Should they continue to defy the proper standards of behavior, they face serious social stigma and finally challenges of skill or weapons.

Most of the time, though, the society is known for its pleasant processionals and sponsored vacations at various celebrated locales for society members, as well as members-only displays of fantastic hybrid plants, ornamental animals or decoratively blessed mortals. The society values seemly good taste over flashy displays, so the society's most prominent members are notable for a certain… conservatism in both landscape design and political outlook. The society actively seeks out younger Exalted, in hopes of molding their interests and tastes more toward their refined expectations.

Wrongfoot Dominion

To the west of the Caracal River, the Wrongfoot Dominion was named for an embarrassing incident that marred Tvept Wrongfoot's Banquet of All Peers celebration on his arrival to Meru several hundred years ago. He tripped when entering the Eternal Temple of the Golden Bull for the first time and has yet to live the embarrassment down.

Fortunately, Tvept is a good-humored Zenith Caste Solar and has not made too much of his nickname or the name of his dominion. The dominion is a utilitarian one, much of it dedicated to the great Solar Essence-accumulators that power not only his cities but quite a few other settlements and cities in other dominions. A good part of his collected power is traded to the Sapphire Waves Dominion, due to old debts between him and its ruler.

Wrongfoot Dominion is also home to a major port for ships carrying goods such as food, minerals and other less-than-precious imports to the Blessed Isle. Tariffs and taxes are lower in the port and skyship docks than they are at Crane Bay, and those who concern themselves with money find Wrongfoot Dominion more affordable. Where the massive glass and adamant accumulator dishes give way, Tvept maintains pleasant farmlands where he indulges his hobby of creating new kinds of food crops suitable for heavy food production throughout his principality in the South of Creation. Most find his dominion rather boring and overly concerned with the base necessities of life.

Tlannic Dominion

Inland of both Wrongfoot and Summersky, this dominion is noted for its many private valleys where less sociable Exalted, who prefer silence and isolation, prefer to dwell. Aside from the official offshoots of the Great Coast Road, roads along this dominion are small and rarely used. Strangers are not terribly welcome, as this dominion is home to more than a few Exalted of various castes who have become paranoid over the centuries and suffer from delusions. (Some believe, for example, that their Dragon-Blooded retainers are plotting to murder all the Celestial Exalted.) Other Exalts who have chosen homes here are exploring particularly odd, dangerous or unsavory hobbies and do not wish to be disturbed.

The Garden Swathed in Emerald

This garden is a popular destination for the more reflective of the Exalted, made famous in popular works of art provided by I AM to the citizens of the Realm. The Garden Swathed in Emerald is in one of the many valleys of the Tlannic Dominion, sheltered amid a forest of linden trees.

The most notable thing about the Garden Swathed in Emerald is the quality of the silence. The cool shade, the soft sound of distant water and the endless carpet of moss creates a velvety, peaceful quiet well suited to meditation and soothing to the mind. Visitors stepping into the garden enter a world of soft green curves and a gentle, almost smothering softness. Planned like many small gardens on the Blessed Isle, the Garden Swathed in Emerald has winding footpaths, several small waterfalls and a moon-viewing pond in the center. Unlike all other gardens of similar design, the only plants here are mosses. Every shade and depth of green is found here, deep pillow mosses mound around stone pillars, climbing three or four feet high. Thick carpets of moss have buried many of the boulders and decorative statues, and even the paths are barely visible. Only the water elements remain free of the mossy overgrowth, though a greenish-blue moss is encroaching around the edges of the pond. The original plants, and plans, for this garden have long been smothered by the moss, and past attempts to control the mossy tide have failed. Current gardeners turn their energies to maintaining the moss and cultivating the unique strains that grow here and nowhere else.

The Garden Swathed in Emerald was originally made famous by story read into I AM's memory, in which a flamboyant young Exalt met and fell in love with a lovely mortal gardener beside the green-tinged moon pond. Since then, the garden has been associated with that tale of passion and loss, and the romantic idea that the Exalted so cherish their mortal charges they might even fall in love with one. According to the story, the sighs of their lovemaking still echo beside the moon pond where they first met.

To the West

The Serpentine River flows down from the Birthplace of Rivers Demesne and splits into a variety of smaller rivers that feed across both the south and west dominions, until it gathers again into the long, treacherous Bay of Teeth.

Dao Dominion

Named for a Dragon-Blooded general who held back the Primordial Shadow Over Sun for a few precious hours before he and all 10,000 of his troops were destroyed, the Dao Dominion is located in the southwestern portion of the Blessed Isle. Large but sparsely populated, it acts as a final training ground for large-scale troop exercises, and a large-scale testing ground for new military weapons, vehicles and equipment. (The Proving Grounds on the eastern slopes and foothills of Mount Meru provide ample space in which to test newly designed individual weapons or other accoutrements, but it is to the Dao Dominion one goes to test such equipment en masse.) Large numbers of Dragon-Blooded live here, from green recruits on their way to fight battles at the borders of Creation to bitterly experienced elders who have been rotated back to the Blessed Isle to train with some new weapon or tactic of their Exalted lords' design. The nearby Isle of Blades is mainly used as a staging ground for overseas troop transports and for military sky-ships. Generally, people don't come to the Dao Dominion unless they are currently involved in the Realm's military actions or they want to see what the Deliberative's military spending is paying for.

Black Snake Dam

Considered a rather utilitarian construction, the Black Snake Dam was constructed early on in the Realm's history, when it was thought that there might actually be need for such artificial means of providing water to the dry lands of the upper western side of the island. Considering the effectiveness of the sky mantis infrastructure, however, the dam is now a mildly interesting historical footnote.

Created from Essence, black jade and granite, and built near the mouth of the Serpentine River, it channels the Essence of the river into various pet projects of the local Exalted and carries water through huge underground aqueducts. It could irrigate the land for hundreds of miles if it were called upon to do so. It resembles a huge double line of serpents rearing out of the river, vomiting water from their mouths. The upper line of serpents is flat across the top, and the Great Coast Road crosses the river here. There is a little-used shrine to the local river god in the middle of the dam. The river is so well controlled that propitiating the god it belongs to is no longer strictly necessary.

Serpent's Tooth Dominion

Located across the bay from Dao, this dominion is anything but utilitarian. It is a major vacation spot for Celestial Exalts, Dragon-Bloods and—in carefully segregated communities—even high-status mortals who wish to indulge themselves with the wide range of water-based amusements available here. Enormous family water parks have been built along the coastlines, while tour boats travel along, beneath and above the sea carrying vacationers who wish to see migrating whales, giant squid or simply admire the Blessed Isle from high in the air. Almost everyone who has lived on the Blessed Isle for any length of time has vacationed in Serpent's Tooth at least once. For the powerful Exalted, several small islands are reserved for their sole use—allowing them to indulge themselves in privacy.

A huge host of gaudy hostels, indoor markets, restaurants and theaters litter every approach to the Serpent's Tooth dominion. Air traffic is heavy during the warmer seasons, as visitors flock to the dominion for a day, a week or a month. For all its tasteless splendor, Serpent's Tooth brings both wealth and a certain amount of influence to its Exalted administrators—an extremely cooperative group of Solar, Lunar and Dragon-Blooded folk bound by marriage, oath and bonds of reincarnation.

Isle of Silence

Amid all the light-hearted amusement to be had in Serpent's Tooth Dominion, one island is off limits to the throng of happy visitors. The Isle of Silence is sheltered by favorable currents and subtly designed Essence barriers to allow its residents the peace, quiet and solitude they need.

Not all of the scars the Exalted bear are simply physical. Sometimes, the worst wounds are bloodless, hidden within the mind and memory. For those unfortunate Exalts who suffer from mental distress, the Isle of Silence is a blessed refuge and place of healing. Several compounds along supportive dragon lines take in Exalts—Solar, Lunar, Sidereal or Terrestrial—who are in need of intensive care for broken minds or severely damaged Essences. The healers here are the most skilled available in Creation, whether they're acupuncturists, thaumaturgical healers or God-Bloods with sanity-bolstering gifts. They are all sworn to silence and service.

Travel to and from this island is tightly controlled. Not only would it harm the faith that Creation has in the strength of the Solar Exalted to know they too suffer from failing of the mind, the danger of mad, vastly powerful Exalts imagining themselves back in the war against the Primordials cannot be overstated. Most patients on the island recover after a few months or years of intensive care. A few unfortunate Exalts, however, will remain on the Isle of Silence even longer, unable to fight down the urges of their own ever-growing madness.

Sapphire Waves Dominion

Although it is nominally a dominion of the Blessed Isle, this dominion is completely submerged. It is inhabited by the people of the sea, Lunar Exalts and those Solars who use Charms or thaumaturgy to breathe water or carry air with them as they travel beneath the waves.

There are only a few small islands in the Sapphire Waves Dominion, the largest of which—Coral Bells—is where the small surface-based administrative hub of the dominion is located. Coral Bells is where visitors who need to conduct business with the dominion rent or purchase Charms or devices to allow them to travel safely beneath the waves. Otherwise, the surface of Sapphire Waves is dedicated to luxury sailing yachts, mortal fisherman—who are extremely careful to fish only where permitted—and small-scale hunting and tourism on the sandy islands.

The dominion's major city is located offshore of Coral Bells, where the coast begins its steep drop to the deep ocean. Shimmering Pearl Beneath the Sapphire Waves is the most ornate and one of the largest submerged cities of the First Age. It extends for several miles along the ocean floor and was one of the first such cities to be built. Buildings nearer shore are older, made in the more primitive style of poured stonework and planned with the idea of having both air- and water-breathing inhabitants. There are compounds in this part of Shimmering Pearl where air has been pumped into the rooms at high enough pressure to keep the pools of water that allow egress to the rest of the city from flooding the buildings. Ambassadors can take refuge here, and some more delicate records and devices are stored in this section of the city. These older buildings have been overgrown by coral and sea plants and have come to resemble natural reefs.

The newer construction, deeper under the water, are the more familiar spires of gigantic nautilus shell, enormous growths of mother-of-pearl and geomantically aligned Essence barriers, populated by thousands of gilled mortals, Water-aspected Dragon-Bloods, shapeshifted Lunars and magically adapted Solar and Sidereal Exalted.

Shimmering Pearl Beneath the Sapphire Waves is the center of undersea trading and brings in rare wealth in the form of deep-water pearls, unique coral, rare fish, strange creatures from the West and the artwork of the people of the sea. Undersea vessels come and go from the city at all hours, for the rise and fall of the sun has less meaning when the world is illuminated by bioluminescent marine fauna. Many of the inventions developed here—advanced water Charms, water-breathing devices and durable craft able to delve into the cold, black depths of the ocean—are now used all over Creation by the Exalted, in pursuit of pleasure and/or duty.

Xatlan and his Lunar mate rule Sapphire Waves Dominion jointly. He has indulged his mate's preference for the deep waves for the past several centuries, pulling in favors and making deals to create Sapphire Waves and the underwater city and subsidizing the people of the sea project. He's done it all to give his mate a world of deep-sea wonder and beauty that he could also share.

To the North

Traveling north from the White City, the terrain becomes rough and bracing. The two dominions here are home to several influential Lunars and therefore have been shaped to their tastes.

Like all lands on the Blessed Isle, that which lies to the north is fertile, pleasant, serene and stable. Much less of it is dedicated to farmland and orchards, though. Instead, great swaths of rolling hills are dotted with herds of yeddim, golden elk, wild horses, the Essence-rich white cattle of the inner North and more wondrous creatures bred in the laboratories of various Exalted.

Falling Waters Dominion

Aptly named for its myriad waterfalls—ranging from thundering cascades hundreds of miles high and dozens wide to tiny, singing trickles—this dominion is in the northwest of the Blessed Isle. Falling Waters enjoys a certain exclusiveness and a quiet reputation. Relatively few visitors come here, and those who do come for the quiet and obscurity. Frequent, plentiful rain is another characteristic of Falling Waters Dominion. Most Exalted manses here are set within forest of huge black pines or sweet-scented cedars.

One of the minor economies of the dominion is the harvesting of yellow amber from resin trees that grown only on the Blessed Isle. These trees are infused with Solar Essence from a diffuse Solar-aspected manse and can be processed into a particular incense that is regularly burned at the Eternal Temple of the Golden Bull. The incense is reserved first for the servitors of that temple, then for the Solar Exalted to burn in their private shrines. What little is left over is sent out to major Unconquered Sun shrines elsewhere in Creation. (Non-instant Zenith Caste Charms gain a one-die bonus when this incense is burned during their use.) The principle exporters of this rare, ineffable incense claim that the Solar Exalt known as Damarasak, the Student of Vows Made in Absentia, took his Second Breath the first time he smelled the unmistakable scent. As a result, the incense is now in high demand among wealthy mortals who hope that they or their children are reincarnated Solars as well.

Maiden's Eye

Within the Falling Waters Dominion, nestled deep within a temperate rain forest, is the manse known as Maiden's Eye. It has a Sidereal aspect and is powerful enough that it would have been snapped by some powerful Solar Exalt by now under different circumstances. Somehow, though, the Celestial Housing Authority has no official records of the place. Yet the manse is actually in nearly constant use. Powerful elder Sidereals of the Five-Score Fellowship come here to study the great, calm reflecting pool in the manse's innermost courtyard. Some of the oldest Sidereals still alive spend weeks meditating at the edge of the simple pool under the light of the Maidens.

The pool at the heart of Maiden's Eye can provide visions of the future to even those who are not Chosen of the Maidens—or it would if the Sidereals would allow any but their own kind to enter. They have worked for centuries to keep the place and its abilities secret from even the Solars they serve.

Banners of Red and White Preserve

This huge hunting and outdoor adventure preserve is the most popular destination for Lunar Exalted who have grown weary of the civilized restrictions of Meru but aren't inclined to journey to Tamar-Kas or farther afield.

Located along the northern side of the Blessed Isle, the preserve is hundreds of miles of re-created Northern wilderness, which the local sky mantis grid keeps at a constant winter chill. The sun might blaze bright in the sky, but the air remains just above freezing most days and drops much lower at night. Blizzards are generated on a carefully randomized schedule so campers and hunters get the full, thrillingly risky experience of travel in the uncivilized Far North.

Plants, animals and entire mortal villages have been transplanted into the preserve to provide the most authentic and enjoyable experience for the Exalted who visit. Because the preserve is intended to be a "taste of the wild North," as the preserve's administrators claim, there is little sign of the modern magitechnical amenities present in the real Northern areas.

Thoroughly researched hunting lodges built from everything from mammoth tusks to massive timbers of black pine have been placed through the preserve for guests. Well-trained staff, dressed in traditional garb of older Northern cultures, can provide everything from intimate company to tips on where to find the wildest of the imported demitaurs or huge Northern elk.

Mammoth-hunting parties are scheduled year round for every Ascending month, and permits for hunting smaller game—such as the rare snow leopard—are provided on a weekly basis. Permits, guesthouses and guides are made available to high-level members of the Deliberative and other influential Exalts whenever they wish, of course. Gates of auspicious passage can take guests from the preserve to the actual Northern lands if the visitors can pay the exorbitant cost.

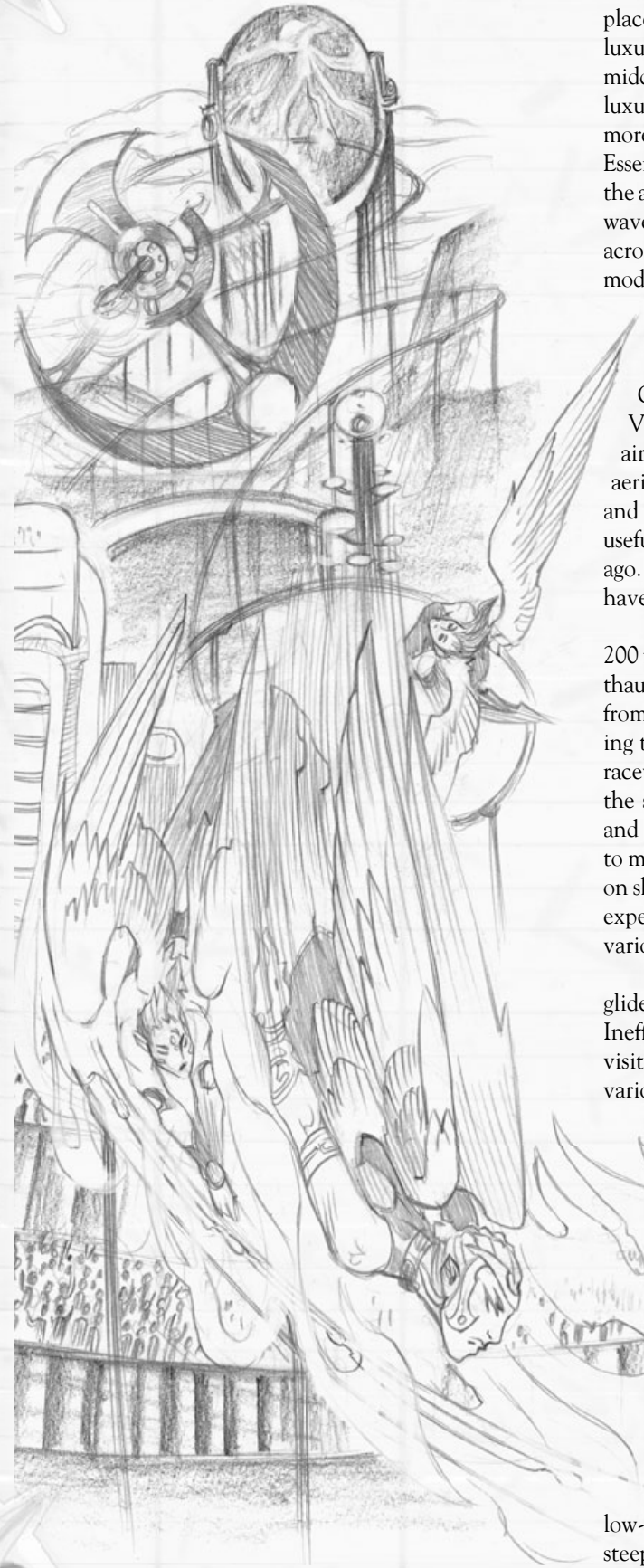
Banners of Red and White is maintained jointly by several Exalted with a taste for rough adventure, and they must pay taxes and fulfill permit requirements as the Ministry of the Treasury demands, since no single Exalt actually privately owns it.

Wandering Prayer Dominion

Respectful name aside, the Wandering Prayer Dominion contains one of the more earthy attractions on the Blessed Isle—the Glorious Clouds of Ineffable Delight resort. Administered by Signifier of Peaceful Victory, the dominion maintains a natural feel by carefully controlling every aspect of the landscape, from winding roads built to look as if they were hand laid to wood and slate towns inhabited by well-trained mortal villagers. Of course, gates of auspicious passage are available for Exalted wanderers, skyhooks have been built in the major cities, automatons and traveling pagodas can be summoned to provide relaxing offerings of food and shelter, and all roads, one way or another, lead to the Glorious Clouds of Ineffable Delight. Signifier of Peaceful Victory ensures a rural experience with all the modern comforts the First Age can provide.

Glorious Clouds of Ineffable Delight

The Glorious Clouds of Ineffable Delight resort is the major draw for Exalted and others who enjoy the heady risks of gambling, the thrill of competition, the breathless delight of flight and a fine display of Exalted wealth and power.



Gambling houses, bathhouses, whorehouses and other such places are thick on the ground along the coast, ranging in luxury from tourist traps suitable for the mortal masses to the middle-brow entertainments of the Terrestrials to exclusive luxury resorts reserved for Celestial Exalted use. Many of the more expensive resorts include suites that hover on pillars of Essence and are accessible only by air. One of the draws to the area is the schedule of spectacular seasonal storms, where waves rise 30 or more feet into the air and lightning dances across the offshore rocks. The local sky mantis grid has been modified along the entire coastal resort to add variety to the weather and challenge to the races.

All of the delights that have accrued over the decades here are due to the presence of the Glorious Clouds skyway and the efforts of Signifier of Peaceful Victory. He has been making sure that the people of the air strive to better themselves by proving their worth in aerial races held here regularly. He planned and schemed and constructed the raceway to showcase the beauty and usefulness of the newly created people of the air centuries ago. Since then, both the blessed mortals and the skyway have thrived.

The Glorious Clouds skyway is suspended, on average 200 feet above the ground. Floating lanterns and decorative thaumaturgical illusions illuminate the various tracks, ranging from the simple and short River of Evening Light sightseeing track to the dangerous, high-speed Shards of Brilliance raceway that ranges from the rough inland air streams above the surf line to the chill inland heights. Suspended spires and cirrus sculptures are placed around the various tracks to maintain air currents and provide safety buffers for racers on skiffs or wings. Some of the suspended sculptures are also expensive observation boxes where viewers can observe the various contests taking place along the skyway.

Cloud trapezes, skyskiffs, sky chariots and Essence gliders are all available for rent at the Glorious Clouds of Ineffable Delight resort, and the aerial tracks available allow visitors a chance to take slow and gentle viewing tours of various natural wonders or to compete against each other in heart-pounding races. When the season of Air arrives, however, the Glorious Clouds tracks are cleared of day visitors and tourist boats, while below, the hotels and lodges fill with the wealthy and elite of the island in preparation for the people of the air races.

The month of Ascending Air is dedicated to the planning and restructuring of the Glorious Delights skyway into a complicated and dangerous course that begins at the Glorious Clouds manse, where Signifier of Peaceful Victory opens the racing season with a huge celebration. The raceway then stretches out in obstacle-ridden low-flight zones across the shore and out to sea before rising steeply into the high altitudes where clouds, rain squalls

and tricky air currents add their own dangers to the course the floating lanterns illuminate. Hundreds of people of the air arrive, along with their Exalted patrons, to compete in increasingly challenging races for the glory of their Exalted masters and the honor of being chosen as the next season's Blessed Progenitor for the air folk project.

Competition is fierce and is not restricted to the racecourse. Some competing people of the air have engaged in duels, been poisoned, kidnapped or murdered—or simply encouraged to eat too much at a feast the night before a race. Dragon-Blooded minders try to control the racers under their charge so that everyone is fit to participate in the competition the paying customers have come to see.

By the month of Resplendent Air, the amateurs have been weeded out of the grand competition, and only the most experienced, strongest and swiftest of the people of the air remain. Now, the true races begin, and the entirety of the Glorious Clouds causeway is opened up into a 10-mile-long course, complete with physical and Essence-based obstacles that must be overcome if the athlete wants to be immortalized in story, Exalted gossip and bloodlines.

Vast sums of money, Deliberative votes, political influence and other favors, are won, lost and traded based on the outcome of the aerial competition. The final race is held in the middle of Descending Air, and there can be only one winner. The last half of the Descending Air season always sees overwhelmingly lavish parties where hosts compete fiercely to outdo each other with extravagant displays of wealth, power and gaudy magical might. Through it all, Signifier of Peaceful Victory is assured that the people of the air are looked upon favorably and that their inheritance is being strengthened through competition to parent the next generation of flying mortals.

Isle of Whispering Sorrows

This entire island off the northern coast of the Blessed Isle is dedicated to the death of one woman. A Lunar general of great wisdom, she was steadfast in the face of the Primordials, unswervingly loyal in the face of temptation, compassionate in response to injustice and very much beloved of her Solar husband. When the War ended and it seemed as if peace would finally descend once more upon Creation, Daughter of the Moon was struck down by deluded assassins still clinging to the hope of the Primordials' return. Her death on the eve of longed-for peace was all the more bitter—not only to her husband, but to many of the Exalted who had known her well and loved her for her spiritual strength. The Solar Exalts retaliated against her treacherous killers and destroyed not only the assassins, but the entire landscape whence they'd sprung. Whatever people had once thrived on the island off the coast of the Blessed Isle were entirely eradicated, down to their names.

Such destruction leaves scars, even unto the glorious Era of Dreams. The island is wasted, with only stubborn scrubby grasses clinging to the rocky shoreline. The sad cries of loons and gulls fill the air with imagined grief. Daughter of the Moon's husband has transformed the interior into a gigantic slate-, granite- and silver-threaded mausoleum of black marble for his wife. More importantly, the island has been attuned to the memories of Daughter of the Moon's life. During her extensive and splendid funerary rites, as her soul was returned to the cycle of reincarnation, the Exalted who knew her donated cherished memories of their association with her to the memento mori they were creating on the island where she met her death.

The mausoleum is patterned after the cycle of her life—from a childhood birthed in battle to her sorrowful death—marked by huge pillars of moonsilver-etched black marble. Pathways marked in geomantic patterns of gray slate and black granite lead visitors through the story of her heroic deeds, moments of quiet reflection on responsibility and the harsh realities of war. As one walks the paths, images and soft voices flicker to life, traced with the Essence signatures of the original owners, giving them an intimacy absent in the artificial creations of I AM. Unlike many of the more politically correct and glorified histories of the War, Daughter of the Moon's mausoleum does not shy from the compromises and bitter decisions the warriors had to make. The memories here are honest and immediate, imprinted permanently on the stones of the huge structure. At the center of the pattern is a simple, silver building where Daughter of the Moon's war gear is housed.

Few visitors come to Daughter of the Moon's mausoleum anymore. Most of those who do are Lunars and a few troubled Sidereals. Older Solars find the place a painful reminder of all they have lost, and young Lawgivers find it grim and boring compared to the glories available on the rest of the Blessed Isle. Even Daughter of the Moon's bereft husband has abandoned the island after centuries of careful tending. He has retreated to his lands in the North to nurse his old memories and has abandoned his required years of residency on the Blessed Isle. He is too old, too powerful and—many believe—too outdated to be forced to take up his duties in the Deliberative. No one troubles him in his isolated tributary, and he returns the favor.

Daughter of the Moon's husband was the original designer of the mausoleum, and he best knows the secrets of its construction and maintenance. Therefore, he is the one who could answer exactly why other voices have occasionally been heard on the Island of Whispering Sorrows, as if the collection of memory and grief has attracted other memories and grief. This slow accretion of voices is troubling to those few who still visit. Sometimes they hear their own past calling—the echoes of older incarnations—or the whispers of lovers and enemies long returned to the cycle of reincarnation. Solar sorcerers could easily clean the island of the clinging echoes, since they cannot promise that Daughter of the Moon's memorial would not be damaged by their efforts, her bereft husband has forbidden any interference in whatever is happening there.

BROTHERS, LET US PRAISE OUR LORD- THE GHOUL KING, THE CORPSE-EATER.
HAN-THA! HAN-THA!
SOON, WE'LL NEED NOT HIDE AMONG THESE BONE SHADOWS!
HAN-THA! HAN-THA!
WE GAIN MORE FOLLOWERS EVERY DAY, AND WITH THEM THEIR STRENGTH!
SOON WE'LL FEAST ON THE BONES OF–
URRK !!
KA-THOK!
NO QUARTER FOR APOS-TATES.
WELL SPOKEN, MA-HA-SUCHI.
SLASH
THOK
THOK

CHAPTER THREE
THE EAST

The East is Creation's breadbasket, the center of the Realm's trade and home to nearly a third of Creation's entire population. It contains five great provinces (including the famed Beloved of Daana'd and Sextes Jylis Province), 42 principalities, 32 tributaries and the four domains of the Dragon King Dominion. The latter, which occupies a great spread of the Southeastern jungle, is the only state in Creation that exists in alliance with rather than under the purview of the Deliberative.

Prince Echas, Tamer of Cities, Interrogator of the Six Rings, Inheritor of the Dozen Unnamables, et cetera, serves as the East's Solar administrator. Responsibility for the direction's defense and social health falls to him or to an appointed official. Echas' ambition is to improve communication and transport services throughout the East. He contemplates a system to supplement I AM with more detailed images or even sensations, and tinkers with vessels he proposes to break into motes, send along dragon lines and reform at their proper destinations. (Such a trip would theoretically take five hours no matter the distance.) His experiments send interference rippling through I AM, disrupting its communication with half the East for a moment or two each season. When his ambitions feel like work, Echas travels into the Wyld or Malfeas to conquer part of it before returning for supper. And the East lives on.

The Beloved of Daana'd and Sextes Jylis Province (The River Province)

Few speak the full, glorious title of the Beloved of Daana'd and Sextes Jylis Province, so named for the beautiful rivers, fertile expanses and ideal weather unparalleled even elsewhere in the East. The heart of the East, it grows more than 30 percent of the world's grain. Most refer to it as the River Province, a practice with such history that even official records now use the unofficial title. The River Province is unique in that it contains no tributaries. Every principality within its borders is a functioning prefecture and obeys both the Accord of Broken Ribbons and the Clear Glass Accord. The pressure to remain within the Accords' lines is strong. Neighbors within the River Province benefit a great deal from knowing that certain laws affect everyone else nearby. It keeps exchange of all sorts flowing smoothly and enriches them all.

Riverspeak is the official language of the Beloved of Daana'd and Sextes Jylis Province, which occupies everything east of the Inland Sea, south of the Avarice River, north of Grave Silk Lake and west of the Errant Root Massif.

Member states of the River Province argue every century or so for inducting nearby principalities into the province, on the basis that more of the citizens there use Riverspeak than Forest-tongue. I AM-based studies reveal this is true in some places, but the clamor to expand the province's borders goes unsuccessful.

Chen Oh Mirah is the daimyo of the Beloved of Daana'd and Sextes Jylis Province. He affects a placid confidence that fools some of his administrators and makes the rest wonder how long it will be until someone replaces him. That's exactly what Chen wonders, too, because he can't to do his job. He's ineffectual, which is exactly how the Solars who rule in this province like it. They run their prefectures the way they want—much more productively than they would with daimyo interference—and leave the coordinator out of the loop. Half the administrators who recognize Chen's incompetence are paid to keep quiet by one prefect or another. The rest are in danger of assassination if they think about reporting on Chen's behavior, whether they know it or not.

Artisan Plains Prefecture

Stone Sculptor Tle claimed the broad fields east of the Gray River as his own after the Primordial War. His peers proclaimed that his heroism demanded such great breadth of land, while privately mocking him for a resource-poor choice beside the rest the East offered. By the time the behemoth Razor Maiden Storm killed Stone Sculptor Tle in Year 2182, the City of Makers already flourished, and Artisan Plains was a place of wealth, beauty and constant innovation.

Eam Usam, Tle's reincarnation, surpasses Tle's skill with the arts. In fact, he devoted himself to the arts with minimal regard for politics, economics or warfare, allowing his bonded Lunar to look after those things. Her skill keeps the prefecture safe from its rivals while Eam's artistic drive inspires the hundreds of thousands of local artists.

The flat, dry lands that would become Artisan Plains were scant at the Primordial War's end. Compared to the lands that benefited from the region's great rivers, they might as well have been salted. The prefecture still produces the least food per acre in the River Province, but now, artisan colonies dot the landscape for hundreds of miles around the central city of Denandsor. Small forests decorate the horizon, nurtured to produce needed wood or as works of art themselves.

Denandsor—City of Makers

Visitors to Denandsor first see the pinnacle of its Great Library, a hemispherical skylight capping a tower over 1,500

feet tall. The Great Library sits at the city's center, containing thousands of tomes focusing on the city's passion for artifice and artisanship. Little gods and elementals serve researchers therein, and rental research desks carry Exalted (and permitted mortals) throughout the Great Library, even through the miles of underground archives. By city law, no other construction in the city can be taller than 500 feet to preserve the city's distinct silhouette. The city's governor has survived three assassination attempts this year alone, something related to the fact that her second-in-command favors repealing the law.

Denandsor's reputation is that of home to Creation's finest craftsmen in all the arts. The finest jewelry, furniture, tools, buildings, artifacts and nearly everything else come from Denandsor, though its artisans mass-produce nothing. The law protects this reputation to the point of exiling any artisan who fails to meet the city's exacting standards. Goods from Denandsor are always peerless and unique. They demand exorbitant prices when sold at all, though many are destined to be gifts for the Celestial Exalted and their retinues.

The city itself is the jewel of the East. All cities of the Era of Dreams are beautiful, but Denandsor is a work of art even among them. Its geomancy is flawless, each building channeling harmonious flows toward the city's manses and the Great Library. Every edifice is pleasing to the eye. The city's inclination toward innovation insists that each construction be unique, but each also flows seamlessly into the next unique building and melds perfectly into the city's collective appearance. A movement gaining steam in Denandsor desires to legally evict an entire neighborhood from the city for not fitting in with the city's general appearance. It would instead be called and given the legal rights of Denandsor's artisan satellite colonies. Naturally, the neighborhood's residents object.

Besides unparalleled craftsmanship and creativity, the city is known for its annual contest of fine artisanship and for the automaton guardians Solar victors design and donate to the city's defense. Oa Té has won the competition over 50 times, each time crafting a guardian of identical appearance but radical capabilities. His donations sometimes react in unexpected ways to some commands, though, causing concerns about hidden programming.

The city's governor, as well as the prefect of Artisan Plains, is Intrepid Jade, a Terrestrial Exalted jeweler with an excellent reputation and a unique honor: She is Eam Usam's wife. A Sidereal bound them in matrimony a century ago, and Eam makes sure that their home is harmonious and mutually rewarding. Their five children are beautiful and respected artists, three of them Exalted by the Elemental Dragons. But Intrepid Jade's family line, and Eam Usam's participation in it, is part of his multi-generational project to create the most aesthetic genealogy. If the prefect finds out, her reaction will be unpleasant for all involved. None of her forebears found out, though, so Eam isn't worried.

Oliafor

The city of Oliafor formed naturally around the powerful manse at its center, which belongs to the Half Moon Lunar First Word Bo Bao. The manse began as his home and the city as his villa, but the city's growth inspired him to alter the manse's properties. It now produces no hearthstone but focuses its energy outward instead to give the 100 miles around it great fecundity. Rural production complexes in the region produce as much as facilities that are many times as large. First Word Bo Bao grows old, and the people of Oliafor worry that their boons will disappear after his death. Some plot to make sure they won't, though even speaking of the Exalt's death is illegal.

The city and manse form a single spiral. The sole great road loops in toward the manse ever more tightly and, upon reaching it, spirals up the outside of the towering structure. The importance of the city's inhabitants is inversely proportional to their distance from the manse. The poor live on the outskirts of town, the merchants in their townhouses live closer in, and the homes of the wealthy and government buildings (great parks and all) are nearest the manse. The wealthy don't have it best, however, as the manse's recalibration was imperfectly done. It hides a flaw that leaks Essence into the surroundings (rather than casting it outward into the fields) and increases the aristocrats' fertility tenfold. In time, the leak will serve to alter the children it helped spawn, especially if the flaw worsens.

Many conveniences remain from the time when Oliafor was just First Word Bo Bao's villa. They allow the well-to-do opportunities for races on swift riders, for folding servants to do much of the difficult work, for jumping competitions with jump harnesses and for storing their valuables in cache eggs. First Word Bo Bao installed a powerful sympathetic elemental scanner, bound with a Wood elemental, in order to make sure the farms were in working order. Lastly, a wondrous globe of precious stability hums quietly in a sealed chamber at the top of the manse. It incidentally dampens the effects of Essence leakage (one reason the manse's flaw goes undetected) while keeping bound a powerful unshaped raksha who would ravage the populace if it got free. (See **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age** for the artifacts mentioned here.)

First Word Bo Bao's chosen governor of the city, which Eam Usam respects as a courtesy, is native to a small controlled community whose inhabitants learn only to read and write, never speak. The unique set of characters given them as a language makes them bureaucrats and administrators beyond even the Dragon-Blooded, but hearing a single spoken word disrupts that artificial mindset and renders them imbeciles forever after. The governor, whose name is without translation, runs Oliafor through the written word and use of translation artifacts. His efforts make Oliafor perhaps the smoothest-run city in Creation. Intrusion into his suites is punishable by 20 years imprisonment and hard labor, the

length of time required to raise a new governor from among the speechless community.

Fine Crossing Prefecture

Fine Crossing Prefecture meets the Hungry Dragon Prefecture and the Gray River on the west, the Yellow River on the north, the Rolling River on the east and Lynx Hills (near Highwayman's Bend in the Gray) on the south. It is smaller than some prefectures, but being bounded on three sides by rivers makes it the richest prefecture in a province comprising the richest prefectures. "Drop a kernel in Fine Crossing, and you'll pick up a bushel," goes the proverb. Goodman Razer of Storms (the title is traditional) relaxes in Hollow or on the Blessed Isle, leaving administration to his able prefect while he wrangles appropriations from the Deliberative and enjoys Meru's hospitality.

The jealous say that Fine Crossing has nothing to offer but endless, repetitive fields. Those fields—dyed red or amber or amethyst by the Unconquered Sun above—inspire thousands of poets and painters every year. The views are breathtaking by nature and by design. (The RPC whose crops are most picturesque receives substantial boons each year.) The views out upon the great rivers are some of Creation's largest, attracting many vacationers. Where the Yellow and Gray merge into the Yanaze is a particular favorite. Some entrepreneurs sell rides on the unpredictable currents at that nexus. Submarine rides in sealed, buoyancy-regulated adamant capsules are available to the rich.

Hollow—Heart of the River Province

Hollow is named in humility under the belief that it is a necessary evil, a hole in the East's productive and fertile ground from which nothing useful comes—only proclamations and governance, the importance of which the city's founder played downward. The provincial manse displays her words to that effect over its public entrance: "Strong are the hands that toil that others may live." All-is-Bright Inamo works hard to shift public perspective on the quote from the intended meaning to an interpretation that lauds the Exalted. Few of any import oppose him.

Beyond housing the provincial government, Hollow's district government oversees the many thousands of RPCs outside its walls and within the region irrigated by the Yanaze Dam. It also regulates trade between its district and the rest of the province. Eminently central to the East, this district government wields immense leverage over provincial trade and trade throughout the entire direction. Brave Hare, the daimyo, regularly clashes with Prefect All-is-Bright Inamo over trade policy and jurisdiction.

Hollow's Fertile Ground Academy teaches people from all over the province theories that pertain to the region's primary product: agriculture. It is the finest school in the East for the study of agricultural techniques. It also scores high marks with its thaumaturgy, sorcery, demonology, business, governance and geomancy programs. As the best agricultural school in the East, it is by extension the finest in Creation. The school is second to Sperimin overall, naturally, but second place to Creation's greatest university is high honors. Even Dragon-Blooded attend the school and graduate with no shame for being unable to study at Sperimin. One professor recently discovered a new First Circle demon with ideal applications for enriching soil and increasing crop output. (It also draws patterns in the earth, whether by accident or design, that enable other First Circle demons to occasionally escape from Malfeas.)

All-is-Bright Inamo is an excellent bureaucrat, administrator and liar. Working in the provincial capital gives him more influence than most prefects have, which he uses to build up a retirement fund. It's legal but self-interested, and when the Goodman replaces him, the shakedown for his political lackeys will likely make Hollow a place where the talented rise quickly.

Lodros—City of Words

He Who Bleeds the Unknown Word was one of the first Primordials to fall in Creation's first war. His flesh comprised every word that had been written or spoken; his lifeblood was every word that had not. He re-formed into Elloge, the Sphere of Speech, in time to surrender with his brethren. The Primordial's corpse lay in the near East and bled characters that had never been read or spoken into the earth, too ripe with secrets to contain its blood even after the flesh was dead. Pian Second Son, an Eclipse, stood with the Chosen of Secrets Silence-in-Ways and watched the white blood flow. One mourned the lost words, never to be written or spoken or sworn. The other regretted the words she would never know. As thousands of Dragon-Blooded and millions of mortals marched against creatures that still troubled Creation, the two Exalted forged the Primordial's flesh and blood into a city. More than one Celestial Exalt has wondered among friends what monsters survived or escaped the binding in Malfeas because those two distracted themselves in the midst of a deadly war.

They built the city with its own words, stretching "beauty" tight across its length, using "manse," "street," "wall," "secure" and other words often, discarding such words as "useless" and "uninteresting" or turning them to other uses. The layout of the major avenues spells Lodros, and lesser roads name the districts that contain them. Even now, unknown words seep out onto the diamond-white city, their characters shimmering on the walls and streets. All such words have understandable meaning, as a word's purpose is to communicate. Many belong to existing dialects but have not yet been spoken, but many more are words designed to be understood only by individuals or small groups. Enchantments laid on Lodros make it helpful to those who walk its streets. It welcomes travelers and asks their destinations that it might direct them, using words never before seen but instantly understandable. This communication is private, as the words are decipherable only by the individual for whom they are displayed. The city

issues the rare cryptic warning or prediction, but the cause for such behavior is unknown.

Lodros is Creation's foremost producer of the written word in all its forms, as the city's nature attracts authors of all kinds. Its legendary printing district publishes pamphlets, catalogues, textbooks, novels, anthologies, magazines, journals, brochures, guidebooks, tracts, treatises and anything else one writes and disseminates to the world. It also produces paper of various quality, from the cheap but durable standard white to fancy sheets with pleasant odors or musical tones to heavy-duty paper that is guaranteed to ignore magical flame, the passage of time, Dragon-Blooded anima flux, all scissors but those edged with white jade, the Wyld and Terrestrial Circle sorcery. A sorcerer resident in Lodros' Stark Quarters of Constructive Artifice is in constant search for a more secure paper, while his rival next door seeks ever-better ways to destroy paper out of idle spite.

A sophisticated, pseudo-autonomous system controls the City of Words' many defenses and powered mechanisms. Peacekeepers, the governor and others with authority control it by writing commands into shallow, foot-square boxes of sand paired with slender, diamond-white rods, like tools for practicing calligraphy. Most are intuitive, such as scribing *open east gate* for that purpose. The sands either smooth over after accepting a command or shift to form an error message or query (such as requesting further detail or an authorization code). Sands within the House of Deliberation, Lodros' manse of governance, accept more commands than those at gatehouses and other remote posts do. One night, while toying with the city's command system, two drunken lower functionaries learned several commands that they expected to return errors but instead requested authorization. They have since moved their families to the West.

Lodros is simple to reshape. The House of Deliberation contains a sand garden that acts as a command terminal. When activated with proper commands, the sands of the garden flow into the precise shape of the City of Words. The garden may focus on certain areas or display the entire city. Commands alter the topographical map, shortening buildings, raising new ones, expanding parks and carving new alleys through the crowded city. Once approved by an appropriate authority, the city invokes these changes in the city proper, which progresses from its current state to the desired shape over a period of one week to a month. The process calls on what remains of the slain Primordial's vitality, making construction efforts simple affairs. The changes never occur while anyone is watching. In fact, a proposed (but supposedly unused) method of torture, imprisonment and/or execution for the city is to place a criminal in a basement programmed to sink under the earth. The criminal would have to remain awake to forestall his fate, and every moment asleep would condemn him to deeper interment ever farther from light and life.

Governor Pyn Minor works with Goodman Razer of Storms and the few other Celestial Exalted with a personal interest in Creation's printing capital. His position is enviable: He leaves the compilation of history and all known knowledge to the Council of Record and control over the city's publications to the Registry, leaving him responsible only for a battalion of bureaucrats and his own enjoyment. His secret side business is a vanity press that publishes criticisms (rants and conspiracy theories, mostly) of various Celestial Exalts and the Deliberative government.

The Dams of Hollow

Three dams control the flow of water around Hollow and in the River Province. The Gray River Dam appears least inventive. It performs well without being activated, so few know its power. When dictated by its administrator (who holds its hearthstone), the dam transubstantiates water that rises above a set level into air, preventing floods. Landscaping upriver has made activation unnecessary for the last three centuries, and the hearthstone lies forgotten in Hollow's archives.

The Yellow River Dam is of variable height. It currently stands at 337 feet, with four of its seven nested segments raised and the remaining three nestled inside the fourth. This position forces the river to fill over 1,000 miles of irrigation canals, watering RPCs that feed several provinces. Periodic water shortages from the dam occasionally diminish RPC productivity. What dam administrator Ichiko Tomaya doesn't want her superiors to learn is that she frequently raises the mighty dam to impress potential lovers, so she covers her tracks well and bribes her subordinates with glowing progress reports and letters of recommendation.

Of the three dams, the Yanaze Dam is the most impressive but least renowned. It is a massive circle-in-square glyph of red jade, broken into 997 pieces and embedded in the riverbed where the Yanaze meets the River of Tears. Without need for maintenance or other necessities that make it known to humanity, the dam keeps the Yanaze River level within three inches of ideal at all times. Of no less import, the Yanaze Dam works with similar runes near Sijan and where the River of Tears meets Frost Lake, keeping the River of Tears flowing. The project that actually created the River of Tears happened so long ago, and is perfectly self-sustained, that it is unknown but to savants. A team of Celestial Exalts plans a similar feat in the Southeast, unaware that interference with the existing success would destroy both and thousands of miles of river simultaneously.

Hungry Dragon Prefecture

Hungry Dragon Prefecture reaches from the Yanaze River to the north, the Gray River to the east, the Malachite Slopes to the south and the coast to the west. It is a rich prefecture ruled by Edged Blossom, the recent reincarnation of Yellow Terror Dragon, hero of the Primordial War and founder of Deheleshen. Her Lunar mate, Fair Xiulan, disappeared with Dragon's death, and has not yet reincarnated. Her whereabouts are unknown, and in her absence, Edged

Blossom struggles to maintain her principality's importance. She benefits from an experienced Dragon-Blooded prefect in Deheleshen who keeps the city on an even keel, but the prefecture needs a strong Celestial hand.

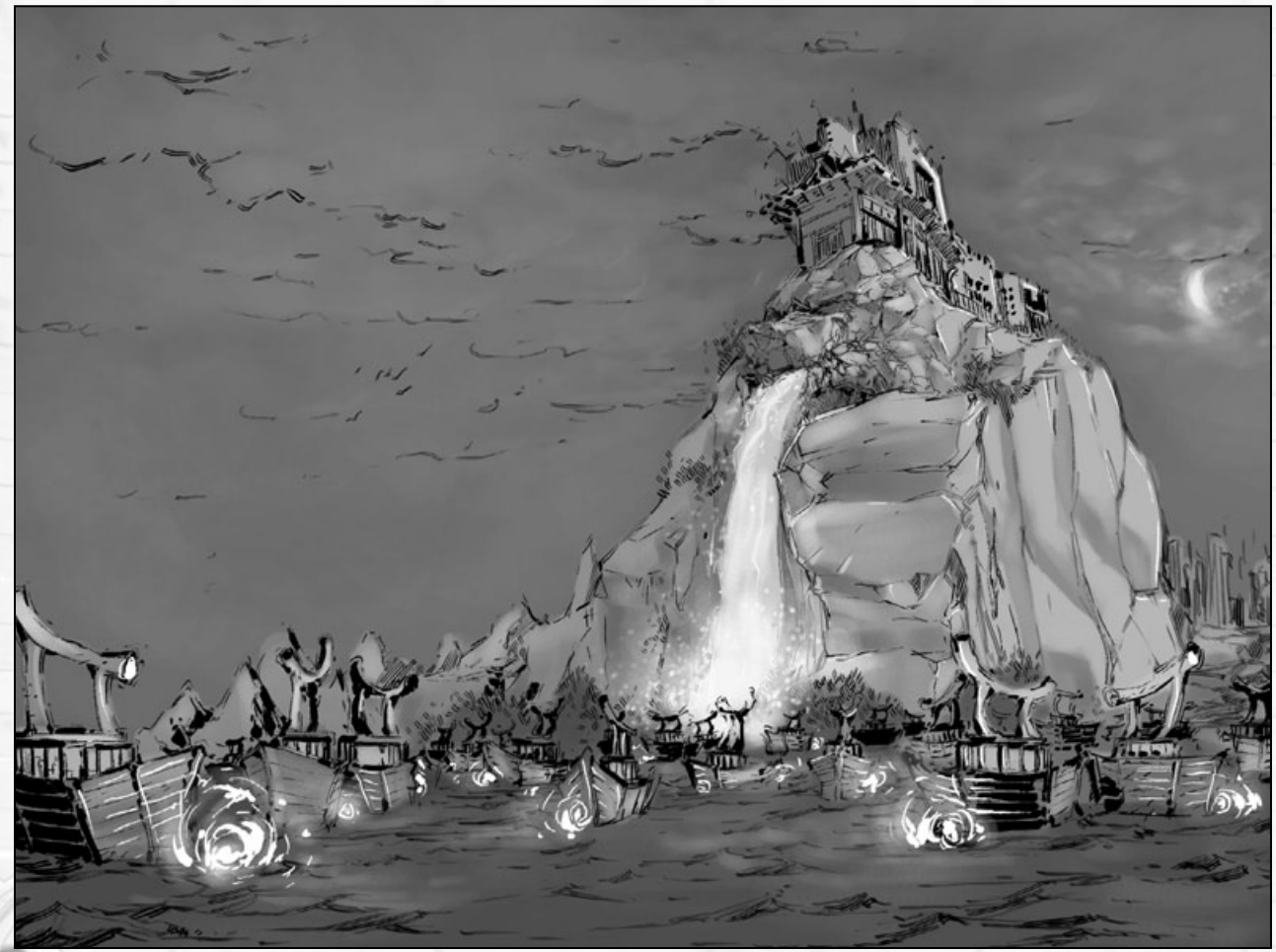
Hungry Dragon Prefecture has abundant open plains perfect for its many RPCs, but they are not the source of its fame. Its capital sits on the promontory opposite the Dragon's Mouth of Tears, where the River of Tears pours into the Inland Sea, and that is the Hungry Dragon Prefecture's jewel. Thousands of sailing vessels are visible from Deheleshen Bluff on a clear day, dozens and sometimes hundreds of them composed of shining magical materials.

Deheleshen—Gateway to the East

Sunshine gleaming off gold and alabaster is the first most travelers see of Deheleshen. The rest see the light of the Deheleshen Lighthouse, visible as far as 100 leagues from the city. The city is the first Eastern port of call for air and water travel from anywhere in Creation but the near Southeast or Northeast. Between its position at the mouth of the Yanaze River and the famed Serene Breath Aviary, Deheleshen is the obvious stop for travelers and merchants alike. Recent accidents in transshipment and docking have forced the government to raise tariffs, however, driving some business across the river to Amber Shores Port—technically in the neighboring Eager Coast Prefecture.

The Palace of the Maximum Fallahshu, the Teocalla of Tu Yu and other public buildings in the city are built of the finest durability-enhanced white stone and gold leaf. The rest of Deheleshen contrasts this finery in the elegant simplicity of their construction and layout: Beautiful though its highlights are, the city is devoted to efficient distribution of the commerce moving through it at all times. Citizens are accustomed to high standards of living, and the millions who live there constantly lobby for greater amenities, which the government often provides to keep the city functioning smoothly.

The god Tu Yu is an active city father. He appears as a wealthy aristocrat, wearing functional silk robes and a hidden chain shirt whose presence is betrayed by the occasional metallic rasp. Somehow, he is always a head taller than the tallest of those around him. Tu Yu is more protective of his city than Yu-Shan typically allows, but he is charming and generous and always knows whom to bribe, blackmail or sweet talk. His actions make sure that nothing hinders Deheleshen's dominance over trade between the East and the rest of Creation, as therein lies the city's greatness. Fund-draining citizens and transportation sabotage rouse his ire,



and he has half a dozen plans to deal with any given obstacle to Deheleshen's glory.

Prefect Vikram White Crane guides both the city and the prefecture while Edged Blossom learns her responsibilities and Fair Xiulan remains missing. The upheaval is emotional to her, as both Yellow Terror Dragon and Fair Xiulan were dear friends and mentors, but her strength keeps it from rocking her city. Only her urge to take off with Edged Blossom on a whirlwind adventure to find the Solar's missing Lunar mate threatens the city's welfare, but Vikram is responsible enough to set aside such desires. Probably.

Late Glorious Fields Prefecture

Brass Janissary rules Late Glorious Fields Prefecture with her Lunar mate, Jackal's Dignity, but neither by choice. The bonded pair inherited the prefecture from their previous incarnations, who took responsibility for the region out of solemn respect for the dead and to uphold a secret oath to a slain Primordial. The pair spends as little time in Late Glorious Fields as possible, instead adventuring across and outside Creation as young Celestial Exalted should.

North of the Yellow and Yanaze Rivers, the principality is a fertile land that yields much food. Irrigation canals supply the right amount of water to every RPC, and rice paddies make the southern half an emerald green. The northeastern quarter is drier and better suited to golden wheat.

Within 200 miles of Sijan, the prefecture's tone changes. Green and gold give way to the Plains of the Dead, damp fens that no project manages to permanently drain. Stunted trees and ancient crypts dot the swampland, dedicated to the deceased's rest as it has been since before the Primordial War.

Sijan—the Funerary City

The city of Sijan occupies a valley nestled in the confluence of the River of Tears and the Avarice River. Uncountable mausoleums, crypts and catacombs and the homes of those who care for them tile the valley a consistent shade of gray. The Plains of the Dead south of the Avarice mottle tomb gray with the subdued greens and browns of the marsh, looking like something only half dead.

More than one quarter of Creation's dead take their final rest here, and Sijan morticians lay another quarter to rest elsewhere. Many of the deceased are wealthy mortals or the Exalted's favored bureaucrats, assistants, servants and slaves. The city's ritualists have buried every Celestial Exalt from the middle of the second century on, when it became a tradition and honor to be laid down by the devoted embalmers. The Funereal Order of Righteous Morticians and Embalmers runs the city and makes sure that nothing obstructs their goal of honoring the dead as the dead desire.

The city has no walls, as walls would inhibit the unending sprawl of Sijan's boundaries as more dead require burial. Even so, it is well guarded. Many of the Dragon-Blooded attuned to death rather than life volunteer to protect the city and study under its master morticians. The dead themselves guard their eternal rests, and all would-be raiders and conquerors fear the wrath of the many Exalted who desire a Sijanese burial.

Outsiders see Sijan's valley and the Plains of the Dead as a disarray of tombs raised and sunk wherever there's space. Not so. Every gray wall, coffin, shadowed stairway and bone-ridden hallway contributes to the place's deliberate geomancy, which is designed to neutralize the turbulence of local Essence and keep the dead content in their beds. Even the sunken crypts, their entrances swallowed long ago by the fens, figure into the geomantic calculations. The Essence is not dead, as some would expect, but calmed. All Sijanese burial parties operate in multiples of four for similar reasons, as it is a mystic number of their trade. Four carry cistvaen components and sixteen carry the heaviest sarcophagi. At least eight architects design every tomb, four work together in embalming, and a minimum of eight perfect and perform the rituals.

Before Sijan was a metropolis for the dead, it was the home of 4,000 mortals charged to inter with honor and respect the bodies of all who came to them. In those days of perfect reincarnation, the purpose of such treatment was questionable. Did someone foresee the danger of disrespect to the dead? Does proper burial improve the process of reincarnation? Answers are not forthcoming, for none remember Sijan's genesis or know who planted its seed before the first blow of the Primordial War.

The 4,000 performed elaborate funeral rites for each Primordial that fell during the War. Some rites involved mass sacrifice; others appeared innocent. There is still one catacomb for each Neverborn beneath the Plains of the Dead, dizzying mazes with hundreds of false tombs that protect the true empty charnel houses that honor the fallen. This act pacified the slain Primordials, giving them the quiet slumber of undeath. Of this, too, the world is ignorant.

After the War, people accreted around the core morticians, who admitted none into their ranks but in units of 4,000. Their number grew within a century to its current population of 40,000, where it stabilized by decree of the Morticians Order.

Late Glorious Fields is the only prefecture (the only principality, really) administered by one of the dead. Distant Swallow died 400 years ago while holding the office of sub-prefect for the region, joining the queue of spirits whose dedication to Sijan and its governance held them from reincarnation. His turn to serve as prefect came three decades ago, when the previous prefect disappeared and left only signs of the Labyrinth behind. Distant Swallow has been a functionary for almost a millennium, first as a Terrestrial Exalt in Sijan and then as part of Sijan's Underworld administration, and his mastery of the city's intricate politics is great. With the prefecture's Solar and Lunar rulers avoiding their responsibility, Distant Swallow has free reign there.

The Black Chase

This ancient shadowland is a dark forest on the east bank of the River of Tears, whose reputation names it dangerous even to the Exalted. Its secrets remain unplumbed, and the roll of its victims grows longer with every passing year. The shadowland features in a number of ghost stories that I AM has helped spread across Creation. The Black Chase appears to be a strip of forest 28 miles by 450 miles that follows the river, located just over a mile from Sijan. Sijan's founders chose the site they did for the Black Chase's access to the Underworld. Its boundary is clearly marked by the transition of healthy trees to a forest stunted by lack of light, riddled with rot and choked by hungry vines. The Chase merged with the Underworld naturally, beginning in Year 653. Histories neglect to mention the slaughter of several thousand penitent Fair Folk marching to request amnesty and sanctuary among the Mountain Folk.

The Black Chase is impossible to map or navigate. Sounds take longer-than-normal routes to reach friends' ears and double back to echo upon the speaker. Essence costs for communication-related Charms double and difficulties increase by one. Communication artifacts fail. I AM is silent within the Black Chase. One path follows the course of the river 100 yards from its banks and brings one into the Underworld at night. All other paths in the Black Chase are temporary. The forest shifts during the night hours, bewildering even the most experienced travelers. Some travelers cross the breadth or length of the Chase in a single night's walk and emerge unscathed, which encourages those marching under haste.

Fell creatures hunt the darkness. Imps and dead things that refuse to stop moving are eager to devour any warm flesh whose scent reaches their cold noses. Only the sole steady path is safe from them. Other beings walk among the stunted trees, showing signs of plague, drowning, violent murder or other fates. Nonetheless, these beings are beautiful, and they offer their cold love to intruders who please them. Mortals who succumb to their charm become imps, while Exalted join the ranks of the beautiful or emerge from the Black Chase bearing mighty artifacts of bone and ebony. These glorious-in-death entities keep a pet, a monster of bones the size of tree trunks whose breath is the only breeze the Black Chase ever feels. It crushes and consumes intruders eagerly. Voices within its osseous belly babble occult truths known to none living, if one can survive the trip.

Some folk brave the Black Chase to retrieve black ash, wood prized by artisans as strong and having a deep beauty that few other woods can match. It is also used in the creation of artifacts to manipulate death and desire, so Celestial Exalted call on their servants to fetch it. Groves of black ash grow deep in the Black Chase and nowhere else in Creation, making it rare indeed.

Willful Child Prefecture

Willful Child is buried in forested hills and bordered by the Maruto River, the Wood Snake Crawl Prefecture, the Serene Canopy Province and the Dominion of the Dragon Kings. Despite its natural resources, Willful Child prizes itself on producing only savants. Its proudest feature is the city of Sperimin, near the northern border, and that alone gives the prefecture and its Solar ruler Guan Ho Bi substantial accolades.

This domain possesses the River Province's temperate climate and the Far East's thick forests. Hills dominate the landscape but are not so steep or frequent that cities and towns are difficult to build. Raw resources are plentiful, but the prefecture's high educational standard makes every mortal an expert and forces entrepreneurs to import workers, so it's typically easier to harvest goods from elsewhere.

Sperimin—Home to Knowledge

Sperimin is the premier center of learning in the Age of Splendor. Not even cities that covet Sperimin's title contest its superiority. Many academies make their primary campuses within the city's borders, and more locate themselves nearby, but the Great Twelve academies are the real draw. Their fame is Creationwide, and each occupies one of the 12 college-manses arranged in radial fashion around the city center by the founders of the Bax Institute.

The Conservatory of the Assiduous Iron specializes in mining and metallurgy. The Bax Institute for Enlightened Disposition dispenses knowledge of architecture, engineering and manse design. The Factualist Seminary of the Inviolate Heavens imparts wisdom concerning cosmology, theology and a no-nonsense theory of astrology that conflicts with that of the Divine School Devonian, which teaches sorcery, thaumaturgy and a more intuitive form of astrology. Wise graduates of both academies argue over the proper course, as influenced by the stars, when offering their unsolicited advice to the city's governance.

Creation's best physicians graduate from the Practiced Instructors' School of Curative Tradition. The Shrine to Glorious Transaction produces the finest factors and investors and highlights its founder Oa-Té's polymath nature. The Most Capable Administration Institute teaches theory of governance in all its forms and gives Creation its finest bureaucrats, while the Poised Keepers of the Balanced Doctrine for Harmonious Conflict trains military minds. The debates the two academies' students share over governmental policy (especially regarding military stance) spill over into brawls two times out of three.

The Doorway to the Soul teaches the spiritual martial arts, and every known supernatural martial arts style can be taught by at least one of the school's many instructors. The Flawless Chroniclers' House of Records imparts history to its students and funds many examinations of the past. One instructor's research nears proof that the Doorway's founders intended it to focus on all forms of martial prowess, not

simply the spiritual. Gaia's College trains people in advanced planting and harvest techniques, as well as the business's financial realities. Many RPC administrators are graduates. The Lone Cherry Blossom Academy produces unequalled poets, painters, sculptors and other artists.

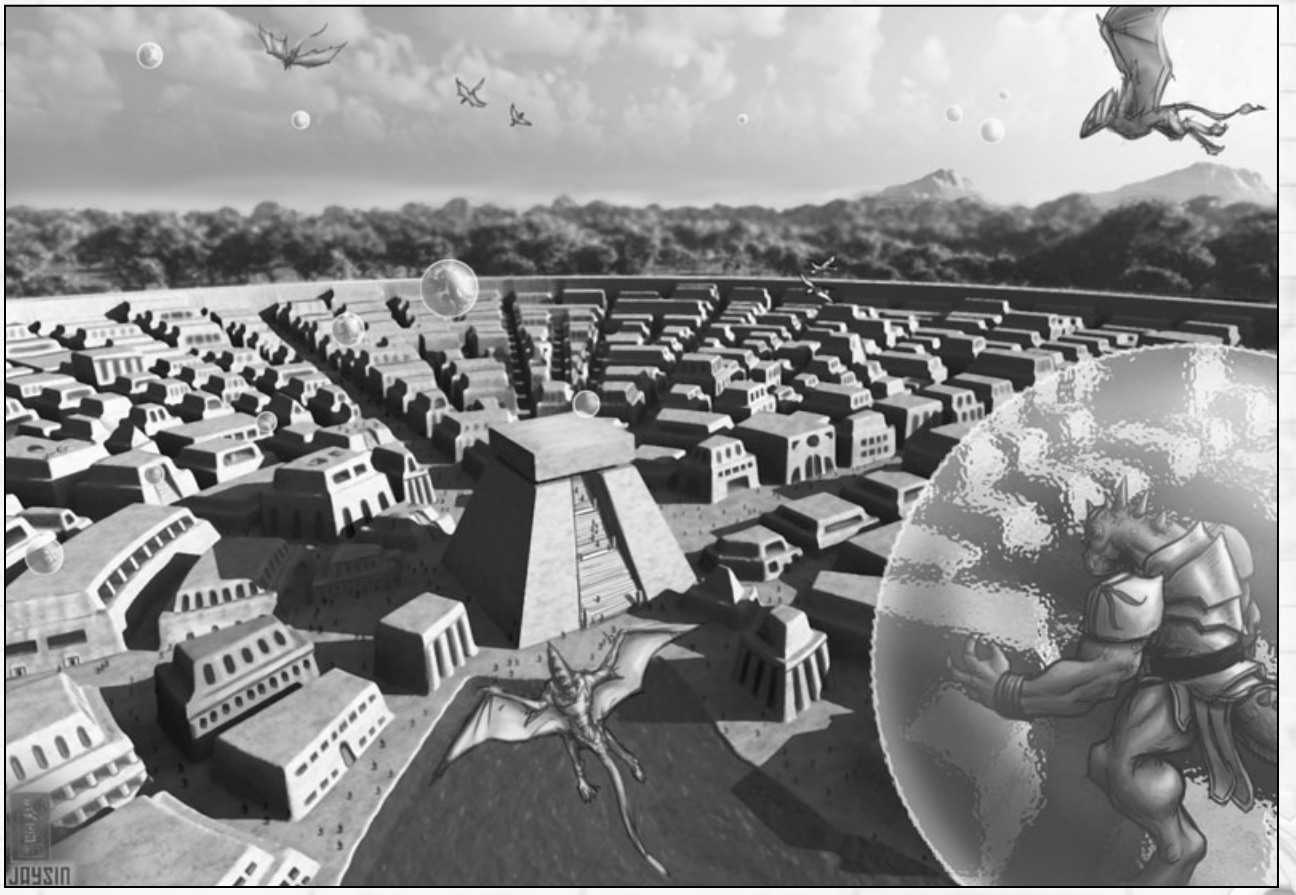
Sperimin's Great Twelve ring the central Library of Sperimin, where all known wisdom in all disciplines is recorded in multiple media for safety and preserved for posterity by a veritable army of elementals. Its 38th floor houses the Library's most famous volume, *The Book of Three Circles*. As a place where students and instructors from the Great Twelve must meet for study, the tower also houses 12 floors of debate halls. Teresu Etate Ino, the library administrator, plans a political coup that will turn four of the debate levels into further library space. This coup will solve the problem of his dwindling storage space *and* evade an argument with the Bax Institute's provost about disturbing geomantic flow by delving deeper into the earth.

Sperimin's governor, Laughing Crow, accepts that the city's control rests with the Academic Council and acts accordingly, executing her duty as best possible and taking every advantage her appointment affords. Her greatest responsibility is to see to the individual needs of the Great Twelve academies and specific celebrity professors. (Ensuring Instructor Yu's perfect meditative silence in his home across the street from Vibrant Strings Conservatory is just one of her thousand challenges.) Laughing Crow is excellent at her job but wonders of late if anyone in Meru pays attention to how hard she works to balance everyone's needs. She intends to make a few forgivable but noticeable mistakes next year, in the hope that they'll give her more credit in the future.

The Dominion of the Dragon Kings

In honor of the Dragon Kings' courage and losses in the Primordial War, and out of respect for their allies' personal prowess and wisdom, the Exalted formally left the Dragon Kings' lands outside of the Realm. The Dominion of the Dragon Kings is an ally of the Realm, which tends Creation in a manner of which the Exalted approve. Or it once did. A new motion in the Deliberative suggests making the domain a province in order to improve efficiency of government and application of the Realm's laws—not to mention the sudden influx of taxes.

The Dragon-Blood Green Ebert serves as Realm Commissioner to the Dragon Kings, helping them administer the principalities in their dominion. He is an honest bureaucrat (so he lies only when necessary) and enjoys the relaxed political atmosphere of the Dominion of the Dragon Kings. The quantity of restricted or original (and therefore untouched by legislation) drugs coming out of the dominion worries prefects of adjacent provinces, which means Ebert could soon face an inquiry.



Dragon Kings administer the entire dominion from Rathess, but Solars rule many of the region's principalities directly. The Dragon Kings get along well with the passionate Solar Exalted and enjoy shaping the dominion's laws to favor their allies. To them, vicious political struggle is just another dimension of hunting and survival.

The Magnificent Grounds of Rathess

The Magnificent Grounds of Rathess is larger than most principalities, as most Dragon King domains are. It contains Rathess and its satellite cities in the center of its southeast quadrant. The rest is reserved for such Dragon King pastimes as hunting, warfare, communion with gods and solitary spiritual contemplation (often in conjunction with one of the other three). Dragon Kings allow excursions to gather resources such as gold, jade, pets and organic drugs but permit few permanent human settlements. The Solars who keep illegal private estates in the lush domain are likely to fight for them rather than concede if confronted, however.

The Magnificent Grounds of Rathess is kept a pristine wilderness for the savage enjoyment of its masters. Tropical trees grow thick, and the canopy blocks out much light. Dragon King monks tend clearings along standard paths through the domain—one per full-day's travel—ensuring the ability to look upon the Unconquered Sun at least once a day. The religious conflict in Rathess spills into the jungle on occasion, where the dedicated chase off or kill the monks and let the clearings grow over. The Magnificent Grounds border the Gray River on the west, the River Province on the north, the Vaniwayan on the south and reaches east enough to include the Ever-Rippling Sky Mirror Lake.

Wild beasts stalk the jungle and are a threat to mortals traveling on foot. Most travelers move by skyship to and from Rathess, and those who cannot accompany the shipments of raw goods taken from the region to the Artisan Fields Prefecture or the Grave Silk Lake Prefecture for processing.

Rathess

Rathess is a perfect circle, divided into eight radial and equal slices. Six of these divisions fit the city's circular nature, with streets parallel to the outer wall, and feature the alien style of Dragon King construction. The seventh section is the Human District, laid out in squares and right angles, unlike the gentle curves and 60- and 90-degree angles of the rest of the city. The last slice is the Aquatic District, home to the city's 500,000 or so Mosok Dragon Kings and full of deep artificial ponds and canals. Nearby Lake Therak keeps the Aquatic District flooded and fed. In the last several years, fish have turned up dead in Lake Therak (and thus the Aquatic District) in alarming numbers.

Creation once knew Rathess as a bastion of worship to the Unconquered Sun, as the home of the Ochre Fountain and as the defensive bastion of the East. Rathess is too divided to hold those honors any longer. The Dragon Kings now spend more time warring with each other than combating external threats. Passionate adherents to a variety of gods, from the Unconquered Sun to Han-Tha the Ghoul King, spill blood in the street, with four core factions fighting for the dominance of their creeds. The city remains welcoming to the Exalted, especially to Solars, but the tension is evident—and can involve visitors despite their wishes.

Ith Maaiph is the eldest Raptok *olchilik* in the Dominion of the Dragon Kings and Rathess' highest priest of the Unconquered Sun. His word has the might of law in Rathess and the greater dominion, though he gives fair hearing to his appointed administrators. Maaiph recalls a time when the Solar Exalted better respected their Dragon King allies. He is blind to his people's decline but not to growing disrespect from the Deliberative. His rudeness could soon cause an international incident.

The Great Observatory and the Orrery of Arainthu

A dome of polished starmetal gleams atop a bluff just outside Rathess. This is the Great Observatory, a peerless aid for astrology that incorporates theoretical constellations into its readers' predictions. It contains the Orrery of Arainthu, a flawless model of the heavens that makes it possible to discern even the position of a specific fly's descendants a century from now. Last year, a Dragon-Blood attempted to sabotage the Orrery and Observatory, but he was caught and his act was reversed before any permanent damage was done. He killed himself before his captors could learn of the Sidereal behind the attack.

Albaio's Villa

The Solar Albaio commissioned his villa 133 miles from Rathess to be near his Dragon King allies and friends. Unlike most human habitation, the villa is entirely in the Dragon-King style. The angles are off or absent, ceilings are unadorned but the walls are busy with designs, steps are too large and the furniture matches the wrong physiology. Catty rumor claims he built it for a Dragon King lover, but his rivals would be more disgusted than pleased to learn it's true, no matter how much it would harm Albaio's reputation.

The villa's karo, Yellowtail Rene, is a mortal who wants to be a Dragon King. Tattoos cover her skin, giving her a scaled appearance, and she spends her wealth to purchase body modifications. Her lips now form a hard beak, her hands and feet are talons, and she now seeks a way to make her legs digitigrade. The Dragon Kings consider her pathetic, but sooner or later, one will kill her for her arrogance.

Khryal

Khryal sits 300 miles southeast of Rathess, one of 10 satellite cities evenly spaced around the First City. These 10 cities support Rathess, growing the crops necessary to feed its millions and stocking the surrounding jungle with prey designed to give the Dragon Kings a good hunt. Half the cities maintain reality engines able to quell the Wyld

and shape the fabric of reality, all tied into manses that broadcast their protection over a five-mile radius. Khryal is one. In an emergency, the five equipped cities are designed to usurp power from all manses and protect a Rathess-centered pentagon from Wyld ravages. Seven decades of maintenance on the system have gone ignored, however, and most manses have been disconnected from the system.

Ek'atet, the program's administrator in Rathess, siphoned funding into pet projects and personal gain, and Essit Ke, Khryal's governor, focuses on honing her skill in personal combat instead. As such, the city survives but does not flourish. Essit requires those who challenge her method of governance to meet her in single combat to prove their words before the Unconquered Sun. Essit remains unbowed, but to quench her thirst for practice, she has scheduled a free-for-all on the first day of Ascending Air. The last Dragon King (or human) standing is governor, free to punish her next incarnation as he sees fit.

Adamant Oriole Sanctuary

Located in the Far Southeast, Adamant Oriole Sanctuary has been undisturbed by the Fair Folk for over 1,500 years, a distinguished accomplishment and a testament to the efforts of its Solar ruler. Here, Experienced Solipsism shapes her tributary with her Lunar mate, Skal Dreams-of-Blood, and their Sidereal advisor, Erin the Demeritorious. Experienced Solipsism's methods for protecting the Adamant Oriole Sanctuary against the raksha works just as well against her enemies, and the region has not suffered an invasion since a joint venture by Where None Dare and Weeper-in-Blood's Great Estate 1,351 years ago. Even now, the defeated Solar warlords are unsure what turned them away and wiped one-third of their soldiers and three-quarters of their Essence-powered armaments from the face of Creation.

Adamant Oriole Sanctuary has a poor standard of living compared to the Realm's prefectures, but its people are hardworking and appear content. The Sanctuary supplies a full tenth of Creation's adamant production, and winning the supply contract for Chiaroscuro's construction imbued the tributary with inexhaustible cash reserves.

Experienced Solipsism's lands are hot grass plains with sparse woodlands. Small rivers flow out of the hills to the west and Drawn of Hesiesh Prefecture. Birds' nests are everywhere, from a size that fits in a child's hand to one larger than most single-family homes. Orioles of different breeds and colors build all of them, and the birds themselves are common sights in the tributary's skies, cities and towns. The region boasts over 100 different species of oriole, some with fantastic properties. Many theoreticians detect a connection between the fowls and the unbreakable glass, but none can figure out what it is.

Ilio Stara

Eccentric Ilio Stara is an entire city cut into the living wood of a bonsai tree. Experienced Solipsism's now-famous experiment made the bonsai the center of a spatial and perceptual distortion. Unrepeatable readings suggest that tremors of imperceptible instability shake the city's Essence as travelers pass through that distortion. Although the road to the small bonsai looks no longer than a mile, travelers cross 100 miles to get there. Each step covers less space than the last, and the travelers themselves become smaller. The bonsai appears the same relative size until the last few perceived miles, where it grows to tower over the human form.

The Staran Gate is two iridescent convex doors, each 100 feet in height, which never appears the same twice. Within, thousands of tunnels and chambers make up the city's homes, streets, public "buildings" and workplaces. Limited space dictates that the administration manage allocation of homes and shops carefully. The existing system places Exalted sorcerers and thaumaturges' orders above the working inhabitants, which causes some unrest. The bonsai's needles contain chambers that serve as workshops for the curious experiments that give Ilio Stara its reputation as a city of unpredictably creative artificers and theoreticians. A tenth of the long-term inhabitants are devoted researchers; another four-tenths are the researchers' retinues.

Tsen-Usen, the god of Ilio Stara, takes an interest in the city's governance and works closely with the city's governor, Rose from Stone. After all, he mentions cheerfully, he was once the god of a meager bonsai, and now, he sees to an entire city.

Rose from Stone is the illegitimate daughter of an influential Terrestrial Gens on the Blessed Isle. She excels at her given duties as governor of Ilio Stara and thanks her stars that her position keeps her so far from her controlling mother. Rose from Stone does what she can to encumber Dragon-Bloods from the more respected bloodlines when they enter her bailiwick. What she doesn't know is that many of them concoct business in Ilio Stara only to examine her inherited traits up close, some of which appear to be rare and desirable.

The Sanctuary Borders

No visible protections border the Adamant Oriole Sanctuary. No automatons or bound creatures march its borders, nor do jade-inscribed obelisks hold back the Wyld or the principalities enemies. The answer to this mystery is a combination of a Primordial legacy and Solar magic. The behemoth Unbreakable Watanabe Bird lies beneath the Adamant Oriole Sanctuary, sleeping in his sealed cave. His dreams are mighty and made the land above as unpredictable as the Wyld until Experienced Solipsism walked into Unbreakable Watanabe Bird's unending dream and shaped it into the tributary she now rules.

That shaping defined the shape of the land above as sacrosanct, binding the behemoth into an eternal nightmare of stable productivity, a horror that would rouse long enough to decimate the Southeast before it slept again. Every oriole in the Sanctuary exists to appease the monster beneath.

(The sight of them soothes Unbreakable Watanabe Bird in his sleep and prevents the nightmare from waking him.) Only Experienced Solipsism and her mate know this secret, and it is the dearest of many they keep.

Flowing Grasp Province

The Flowing Grasp Province meets the River Province to the south, just level with the main body of the Avarice River. Its northwestern border runs parallel to the Silver River exactly 200 miles west and demarcates the official transition from East to North. This artificial boundary runs on until it dissolves in the Northeastern Wyld. Flowing Grasp's land includes expanses of redwoods in its center, fertile plains in its south and west along the Silver and stretches of deciduous forests in its south and east.

Saffron Tiger is the Dragon-Blooded daimyo of Flowing Grasp Province. She has a firm grasp of the region's resources and economic status beside its provincial neighbors and the rest of Creation, and she uses that knowledge to keep all her prefects and principal administrators in line. Her rivals are not subtle about their efforts to replace or kill her, but every new appointee suffers ruinous economic downfall in the area and every corpse turns out to be someone else's, to many assassins' shame. Saffron Tiger never dares cross a Solar directly, but she knows how to lure even the Chosen of the Sun into playing her game, which makes the Flowing Grasp Province much more productive than it would otherwise be.

Saffron Tiger's skills are necessary, as the Deliberative knows, to keep a province with such willful tributaries from flying apart. The appointment committee schedules a meeting for the week after one where they replace Saffron Tiger (they usually meet once per season), ready to return her to her place. Saffron Tiger has four husbands, excessive by anyone's standards, and makes regular use of neomah to impregnate the women of her small (next to a Solar's) harem. Her self-breeding program is blunt compared to many of those run by Celestial Exalts, but scholars continue to watch her progress. She permits them to examine her 68 children in exchange for full disclosure of the results.

Bell Garden Prefecture

Lustrous Crystal Heart, Fearless of the Sun, Terrifying Enemy of Rakshastan, the Windrider, et cetera, considers himself a guide for the people of Bell Garden Prefecture, but this is a conceit of humility. He pretends to leave the governance of the prefecture to his prefect, Old Raven Gray, but the prefect is a powerless and unnecessary figurehead as Lustrous Crystal Heart rules his region directly in all but name. His laws test the limits of what is allowed by the Clear Glass Accord, keeping the prefecture's citizens as obedient and humble as possible while staying within the letter of the law. His Solar peers either do not know of the situation or willfully ignore it.

The prefecture is named for its capital city, which takes its name from the famous gardens of organic crystal wonders transplanted from the Dominion of the Dragon Kings. Chimes and bells of subtly hued crystal hang in the city's many gardens, ringing serene natural harmonies even through the slums. Winds blow their crystalline spores out of the city where they infest the RPC fields, sprawling private estates and forests that make up the rest of the prefecture, draining resources for their removal.

The crystal spores sometimes mutate, becoming threats to the farmers tasked with clearing them (sometimes even to the Exalted). One pack of mobile crystal plant-creatures runs the depths of Black Days Forest in the northwest. Another set of spores infested the inhabitants of an entire RPC, turning them into ravenous monsters of crystal and flesh that did not stop until the Windrider himself crushed the uprising of the cunning creatures. Neither incident exists within the official Register of Prefectural Events.

Gloryhame

Lustrous Crystal Heart founded Gloryhame 147 years ago as a city of joy and celebration. Every public building is of red stone, and other building materials are allowed only as judged by the local aesthetic council (which Lustrous Crystal Heart heads). The Zenith officially chartered the city in celebration of his victory over a Fair Folk incursion, but the scant 500 miles separating it from Sijan to the south and west mark it as a deliberate contrast with that city's somberness and ritual.

The laws of Gloryhame forbid tradition, marking each moment unique and in need of recognition unlike any that has come before. Lawmen enforce this rule lightly—no one arrests a household for uttering the same prayer daily before work—but they are less lax than they were 50 years ago. The required inventiveness makes Gloryhame a destination for the explorative. Ordinary people visit to see what the inhabitants have dreamed up today and to escape the repetition of their own lives. Savants study the city as a sociological experiment.

Gloryhame lauds personal achievement. Its people readily congratulate friends and neighbors for their accomplishments, and Recognition Section (a government body) rewards such events with minor financial windfalls. The center of the city, where many cities keep a temple to the Incarnae, is a mile-radius open field of well-kept grass, dotted with trees. Lustrous Crystal Heart dedicated this place as a temple to one's own successes, and a few hundred people walk the park in celebration of themselves at any given time.

Wretched Hound, the city's governor, is a young Terrestrial Exalt with little ambition beyond his own leisure. He's satisfied to relax while his Solar master rules Gloryhame as closely as the man rules Bell Garden. Hound's rewarding habit is to let anything in the city pass uncontested, given that establishing the precedent of law would be a form of tradition.

Inari's Stand

This three-mile-square shadowland marks a major victory of the Primordial War, where one of the gods' fiercest opponents died in battle, betrayed by his own fetich.

Inari Heart-of-Thorns was the fetich demon of a Primordial slain in the war. She was the compassion of a being that only hated, the care of one who was thoughtless. By containing these aspects within his fetich, his heart, the Primordial's cruel creativity grew a thousandfold and made him impossible to defeat. His rampage ended here, where Inari Heart-of-Thorns stood in defiance. She and the Exalted slew the Primordial there, and he seeped into the Underworld leaving only this stain behind.

The hero of the hour died that day as well, leaving behind no clue to how she managed to defy her Primordial. Only a monument to the demon who might have saved Creation remains, a 37-foot spire of pure Malfean iron inscribed with the many names of her souls and their progeny. The victors in the war are ignorant that Inari's compassion died with her Primordial. She now wanders the Underworld, consuming ghosts to appease her spite and seeking to cause havoc in Creation—and especially among the Exalted—without endangering her beloved unlife.

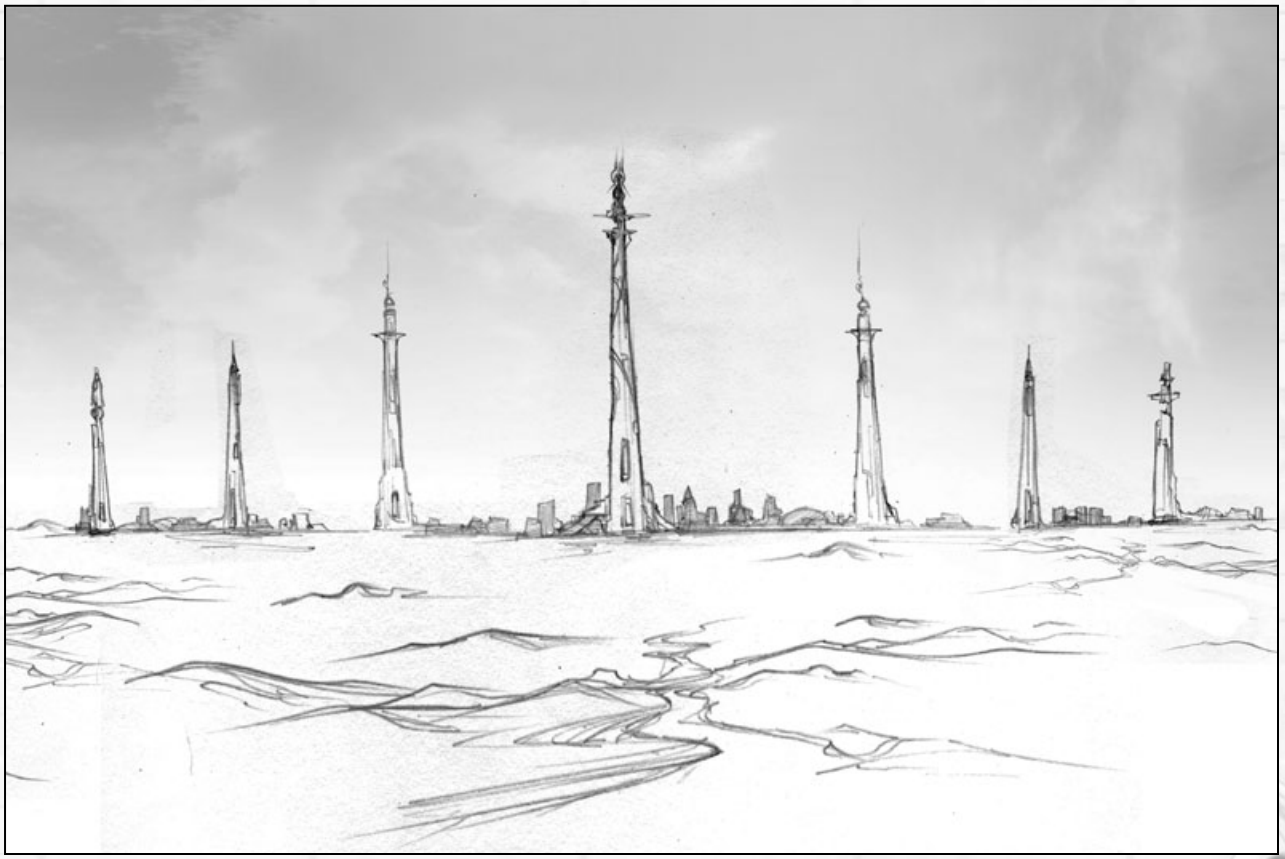
Verdant Sash Protectorate

Verdant Sash is the first slash of the Northeastern forest, separating the fertile grasslands of Cookery Paradise, Faithful Shores Nation and the Thousand Hooves Plains Prefecture from the deep evergreen forests farther north and east. Its northern edge follows Maron's Finger, and the Little Finger where it branches. Verdant Sash is also the only principality in the near Northeast with access to the rich-hued redwoods and other softwoods besides the Water Roots Triumvirate, allowing it a brisk local business in lumber that avoids the Triumvirate's monopoly prices. The Solar Yeshaaim has ambitions that do not include the principality for which he is responsible, but he honors his people and his duty to them.

The tributary's border lies just 80 miles from the edge of the Great Northeast Forest. Conifers grow tall from there until they tower over the waters of Maron's Little Finger. Forts dot the southern and northern borders, a natural precaution for any principality surrounded by tributaries. The greater forts are complexes inside many massive living trees in the north and are connected through the ground, ready to stave off the expansionist Water Roots Triumvirate. Small rivers flow through the region, impeding foot travel but enriching the soil for farming.

Malessa of the Eleven Towers

Malessa's 11 towers are its signature. They stand in a row, forming the northeast edge of the city and rising from 300 feet tall at either end to 550 feet at the top of the centermost tower. The height of each but the middle tower is also the distance to the base of the next taller tower. All Malessa of the Eleven Towers' laws are subsidiary to those governing



the towers' care and regulation. They must always be their current heights, their current distances from one another and kept whole. The consequences should a tower fall are known only to Yeshaaim and Prefect Ingosh the Younger, but the consequence of *causing* one to fall is public and worse than death. Also secret is that even the Exalted fear what rises when the towers fall.

Wealthy inhabitants and government buildings sit at the towers' feet, always to the southwest. Nothing is built northeast of the Eleven Towers between them and the near forest. Farther from the towers in Malessa, the quality of life declines. Centuries of public betterment programs have failed, and Ingosh the Younger's current attempts fare little better. Something about the nature of Malessa of the Eleven Towers forces a steep wealth gradient on the city.

Ingosh the Younger bears his name with embarrassment. His mother chose it to honor the Lunar hero of the Southern principality where Ingosh the Younger was born, and that presumption has always brought him shame. His shame drove him to excellence, and he bears the distinction of being a prefect without any Exaltation. More than one Terrestrial considers him an overstepped flunky, but Yeshaaim is pleased to have a prefect so attentive to the people and values Ingosh the Younger's uniquely mortal viewpoint.

Water Root Triumvirate

So-named for the half-dozen rivers that intermingle to become the Silver River at its southwest end, the Water Root Triumvirate is most infamous within the Flowing Grasp Province. Any apprentice savant knows of it and can recite its history. In Year 456, the Land of the Root Dragons, the Three Finger Territory and the Rosemary Viceregency united beneath their Solar rulers and became the Water Root Triumvirate, the first principality ruled directly by a group of Solars. The size of the tributary and its control over much of the near Northeast made it an instant powerhouse in its province and in neighboring principalities.

The Water Root Triumvirate's rulers enhanced its reputation by giving their nation the highest (mortal) standard of living in Creation, without exception. Even the poorest mortal in the Water Root Triumvirate eats regular hot meals, enjoys public entertainment and has authority to command any public servants not charged by a higher-ranked citizen. This is possible because of the preponderance of Fair Folk slaves. The triumvirs funded thousands of hunting parties into the Middlemarches and Deep Wyld in 521 and paid bounties on any live Fair Folk. The hunters brought back commoners by the gross and nobles by the dozen. The triumvirs themselves sallied forth with their mates, a trio of Sidereals and two score Terrestrial beaters. They captured a powerful Fair Folk lord, One Sword Empire, and arranged an oath. The Solars would cease hunting the Fair Folk and release the lord; in exchange, no Fair Folk would offer the least harm to the Triumvirate, none would attempt to rescue their brethren, and all current prisoners would be fitted with slave collars.

As a result, each city in the Flowing Grasp Province has a Fair Folk slave population equal to one tenth of its human population. The slaves' exceptional service keeps even the lowest human citizens of the province from dirtying their hands with the worst menial labors. Several demesnes in each city exclusively sustain the Essence-hungry Fair Folk. One Sword Empire harries nearby principalities, often stopping just short of cutting the smallest branch of the triumvir's trees. It frustrates those principalities that the Triumvirate is too powerful for them to demand restitution.

Sal-Maneth

Sal-Maneth is a city of delicate nature. Its intricate openwork of rainbow-colored steel and stained glass floats 300 feet over the Blackwater River in the Flowing Grasp Province, too all appearances fragility made inhabitable. Hundreds of curving latticework walkways connect towers and open plazas of similar designs, and redwood needles and bark of steel and glass prevail over décor less imitative of life.

Tall redwoods grow from the crowded banks of the river through the gaps in Sal-Maneth's construction, and their branches cast pleasant shade over much of the city. The trees and arabesque each complements the beauty of the other, and the city's geomancy makes sure that no growth damages the city's structure or aesthetics. Other redwoods, engineered for stair-like growth of branches, provide access to either bank of the Blackwater.

Sal-Maneth is a study in balance, and Eastern savants interested in the study, contemplation or appreciation thereof keep at least one home in the city. The mechanism that floats the city draws power from the river that runs above it. It is a poetic reminder of nature's power that should the Blackwater dwindle to nothing or shift over time, Sal-Maneth will fall.

Each tower in the city contains the local household of one Exalt, god or honored entity, and fills all their needs. Hanging gardens grow fruit, city employees deliver fresh meat and milk and honey daily (or weekly when the master is away), libraries and plush bedrooms provide luxury and entertainment, and the Exalted bring their own preferences to the towers.

Sal-Maneth is best known for the Vine Blossom Academy, which trains horticulturists and landscapers working to integrate plants with human habitation. Each graduate breeds one new plant-tool or designs an original nature-integrated town as a final project, which serves as his first financial venture. Fruit of the Vine, as they are called, are in high demand across Creation, especially in arid regions of the North or South.

Sal-Maneth's governor, Instilled Fury, is a whirlwind, preparing approbation of satellite towns, founding a new intercity jai alai team, making the concluding placement in Red Phoenix-Dragon Blossoming or sending an incisive message to her supervisor, Undersecretary Harpin. She views life as a competition, and she refuses to lose.

Samiaren

Travelers to the Northeast see a golden-brown aura radiating through the trees for 23 miles before they reach the city of Amber Samiaren, as tourists and advertisers call it. Natives call it "the glow of home." Twenty-two miles from the city limits, at 16 evenly spaced radial waypoints, mansions provide gratis hospitality to travelers. Like the city itself, they are constructs of wood-hard amber exuded by central pine trees.

That the trees produce amber to keep the mansions in good repair and arcane devices turn amber into a sustaining food and pinesap into a sweet wine is miracle enough, but the city proper is more miraculous still. Thousands of pine trees operate under similar design to create a five-layered city a dozen miles in diameter, all of golden-brown amber. Bridges connect the broad plazas, manses, small villas, temples and government buildings, while amber stairs and elevators connect the adjacent layers. The bottom level is a slum by intent, as the poor need someplace to live. The top level is the most open to the sky (though city planners make sure the sun reaches every place in the city at least once a year), and only the most wealthy and revered live there. Temples to the Incarnae ring the expansive office of Tranquil Brook, Secretary to the Triumvirate.

Devices implanted in the pine trees turn sap into copious fresh water, which cascades from the pine forest's highest points downward through suspended canals and fountains until it spills from the last layer into a river it creates below the city. Several of these devices produce hot springs, which provide bathing water and a source of free heating for everyone in Amber Samiaren. The hot and cool aqueducts join only before they pour to the ground, so that even the impoverished survive the city's harsh winters. Inhabitants in scant dress, sufficiently insulated for a five-minute to half-hour walk, often stroll from one heated chamber to the next amidst heavy snowfall.

Tranquil Brook holds the title of Secretary to the Triumvirate, a position created as the Dragon-Blooded head of Flowing Grasp's governance. She is a capable woman and proud that she administers to the largest single principality in Creation. Her loyalty to the triumvirs is absolute, but one of her jobs is to make the deals for political or economic expediency that the triumvirs cannot due to precedent, policy or ideals. This need is not uncommon, but she takes it further, dealing with criminal elements and political dissidents all over the East. Some infer that she truly acts without her masters' permission. They try to make her into their agent, and she performs much counterespionage through that ruse. She also makes many enemies, but she is unconcerned. The triumvirs back her all the way.

Yagan

Limestone and glass compose this city. By ancient law, all construction and public structures must be of limestone until they surpass 60 feet in height. From that height upward, glass is the only legal material. What began as a dictatorial incentive to develop improved techniques with the materials became a regulation of style and the city's signature. (Despite the rush to improve glass as a building material, Adamant Oriole Sanctuary beat out the Water Root Triumvirate for the contract to supply Chiaroscuro's building material.) Since no stricture governs glass color, every conceivable hue tops at least one building, but those gray-blues that best complement the limestone dominate.

Yagan serves as a depot for trade between the Water Root Triumvirate and the rest of the Flowing Grasp Province to the north and east. Enchantments on the hundred surrounding miles make the forest more navigable and passable. Its tourism board says even a lost infant could safely make its way home. Resorts dot this region of tamed forest, and the 10 Wandersfar lodges sit just on the circle's edge. They serve as outposts for travelers and as deluxe hunting resorts for those who brave the untamed wilderness outside the 100-mile radius.

Because of its high demand for untrained labor, Yagan has three times as many Fair Folk slaves as similar cities in the Flowing Grasp Province.

Shen Four-Finger once stole over 400,000 talents of jade from a position of trust the triumvirs had given him. Betrayed by a weak underling, Shen divulged the jade's location during his punishment, and all was recovered. For this reason, the Dragon-Blood retains four of his fingers: the middle and forefinger on each hand. Having earned his trust again, Shen serves as Yagan's governor. His deformity causes many to underestimate him. All who do so regret it, especially since he took the triumvir's lessons on punishment and loyalty to heart.

Emerald Solstice's Villa

The villa is a series of small mansions, entertainment halls, dormitories and storage sheds (disguised as handsome hills or copses) separated by broad quadrangles. Its lightly forested grounds sprawl over 17 square miles before the dense Eastern woods close in around it. Emerald Solstice, a Solar Exalt of moderate age, founded this villa so she could entertain guests in an untamed and adventurous setting. (Three small barbarian tribes live nearby at her sufferance. They war against each other and raid the villa when prompted by Charms. Both events serve as entertainment for Emerald Solstice and her visitors.)

The villa is also an experiment. Emerald Solstice imbued a small sphere of green jade with a core of orichalcum and buried the seed at the center of her villa. Now, all the villa's redwood needles grow with a trace of orichalcum. Emerald Solstice has the fallen needles gathered in order to distill the valuable material, but she keeps the source a secret from her peers. The total collected orichalcum approaches the quantity she invested in the original sphere, and Emerald Solstice is eager to learn if the experiment produces more orichalcum than she put into it.

Karo Feet-of-Moss watches the villa when her mistress is absent, which is often. She has discovered an appreciation for the distillation of a tree-growing fungus in her boredom. This extraction is an unknown (and unregulated) drug that will make the first person to figure that fact out a quick fortune and cast the local economy into chaos. The ensuing rush for the new drug could ruin Emerald Solstice's villa. Should that happen, she becomes the instigator's enemy despite any reparations that might be offered, and a Solar foe is no small thing.

A horde of servants and landscapers (guided by several graduates of the Vine Blossom Academy) keeps the villa trim in Emerald Solstice's absence.

Gold Leaf Canal

The Gold Leaf Canal connects all the Water Root Triumvirate's rivers in a smooth arc, from the Silver River to Maron's Finger. Unbreakable adamant lines the canal, embedded with gold leaf at the bottom. (Would-be thieves who dive for the gold invariably drown.) The canal's enchanted locks facilitate water transport within the Water Root Triumvirate for a minimal fee. Laughing Hippo, the current master of the canal, was given the position to oust him from politics in Yagan.

The Silver Weir

This dam would be considered a wonder of the Age were anyone but the triumvirs aware of its existence. It remains beneath Silver Tarn, where the many rivers of Flowing Grasp become one, at the point where the great lake thins into the Silver River that runs south and west to the River of Tears. It also rests just north of the Triumvirate's southern border at that point.

Should someone activate the Silver Weir, it would appear as thousands of foot-diameter black-and-white disks joined at the edges rising from turbulent waters. It covers the breadth of the Silver River and 200 miles to either side as well, slightly concave. Light distorts around the disks before solid glass encases them for their entire length: the weir borrows the imperviousness of Yu-Shan's adamant wall, making it unbreakable as long as it is active (which is until deactivated, since it's powered by a dedicated five-dot manse). Its sole flaw is that the source of its impermeability grows brittle for the duration. A section of Yu-Shan's wall becomes frangible as long as the Silver Weir is active. Which section is affected is impossible to tell, though.

The triumvirs built the Silver Weir as a weapon of extortion against the principalities south along the Silver River. It is a tool they are unwilling to use, knowing that the political backlash would destroy even their mighty Triumvirate, but it remains as a last resort.

Labyrinth of Soothing Shadows Province

This province borders the River Province and Flowing Grasp Provinces on the west, the southern end of the Errant Root Massif on the south and only untamed Wyld in the east and north. Its eastern border technically rests at the Elemental Pole of Wood, but tamed lands beyond that point fall under its influence naturally.

The daimyo of the province is Tsatsuka Omeji, favored scion of a powerful Terrestrial Gens who holds the post as part of his grooming to one day serve in Meru, possibly the Deliberative itself, or at least as aide to a Solar directional administrator. His ambition is as great as his family's, and he sees his province as a chance to build a naturally expanding power base before returning to the capital. After all, a little Wyld is no bar to the Solar rulers who continue to carve slices off chaos to feed their nations.

Crags of the Earth and Sky Prefecture

Root Massif Prefecture is the gateway from the Labyrinth of Soothing Shadows Province to the rest of the East, but Crags of the Earth and Sky is the lynchpin of the province's prefectures. Central location, expert governance and necessary sky travel make it the logical stop for transporting goods, travel and educated discourse.

It contains the Shattered of Brilliance Embassy, home to the Eastern Fair Folk delegation. This makes political appointments more senior than standard for a prefecture so far from the Blessed Isle, and the prefect must be comfortable dealing with the Fair Folk, their stories and their games. Prefects who handle the ambassador and her attachés well come away with famous trade treaties; the others do not come away at all. Burning Soul Godo and his Lunar mate Thousand Blind Devils prefer not to remind the Fair Folk of those great Exalted who forge the Wyld into the Realm, allowing their prefect and the Ministry of Diplomacy to handle all negotiations.

Crags of the Earth and Sky is a prefecture of dangerous mountains and cliffs, all of earth that is thick with the roots of bent or shattered giant trees. Much of the land that people, animals and vehicles tread is dozens of fallen forest giants, covered with moss and crushed into solid ground by the weight of trees still standing. Actual earth lies more than 100 yards beneath the foot traffic in many places and remains one foot of soil amidst a dozen foot-thick roots. Even safe paths through the dense forest rapidly ascend and descend mountains of dead trees and mile-tall root tangles, and switchbacks are a way of life for people not blessed with air travel.

Conventional crops fare poorly in the prefecture, so the government imports many tons of rice and wheat each year. Certain exotic berries, nuts and edible pine cones flourish, however. They grow under conditions difficult to reproduce, but they represent a major supplement to imports and are common at every table's daily meals. Within the mountains of dead trees and roots, rare fungi and light-aversive vines provide a living for anyone brave enough to seek them. Monsters also call those places home.

Mount Kahikatea

Mount Kahikatea is a three-mile-high tangle of kahikatea trees, growing out from lower trees' branches one after another until some undiscovered tree at the bottom derives nutrients from the earth. The city of the same name sits atop and within the tangle. Graceful spires of wood rise from the mountaintop, engraved with enlightening poetry and meaningful friezes. The city's wood comes from all over Creation, and the towers' beauty represents a centuries-long competition between architects and the Exalted who hire them, though the weight of so many towers tightens the inhabited tunnels beneath them. (Only advanced engineering prevents worse.) The Copal Campanile on Mount Kahikatea's summit is the seat of government as well as a powerful Wood-aspected manse.

Hundreds of tunnels worm through Mount Kahikatea in an organic and unintentional (but recognized) imitation of Meru itself. People of the lower class live beneath the mountain's topmost canopy, and many do their work there as well. Above-canopy estates have many tunnel access points so servants can come and go without being seen more than necessary. The de facto prefect, Aetamos, ensures that children who become too sensitive to the light receive remedial ocular post-development corrections or ocular acuity improvements, putting the latter to work as scouts and spies. Few tunnels need be dug. Most are natural gaps between branches, roots and trunks of the kahikateas and more often require filling in to make them easily traversable by mortals. Wood-aspected gardeners and graduates of the Vine Blossom Academy are on hand at all times.

Aetamos, Brother of Brass and Iron and Constructive Soul of That Which Calls to the Shadows, has been de facto prefect of the Crags of the Earth and Sky Prefecture for the last 89 years. Aetamos administers the prefecture flawlessly, his every value judgment representative of his summoner's intent. He exhibits rapport with the Fair Folk diplomats, the primary reason for his current employment, and the deals he makes enrich the prefecture and all Creation for the innovation and new understanding they bring. The actual Dragon-Blooded prefect, Veiled Skies, appreciates the situation, spending her time partying and indulging in sanctioned levels of embezzlement.

Over the decades, Aetamos has acquired traits of the Fair Folk with whom he treats. This aspect of his nature is part of what makes his diplomacy valuable, but his habits have changed with time. Too much exposure to the ambassador's freehold might change him enough that he is no longer bound by the Exalted.

Shattered of Brilliance Embassy

The Realm donated this 50-mile by 100-mile block of land to any diplomats the Fair Folk chose to send at the insistence of Oh-Te-Sun, founder of the Crags of the Earth and Sky Prefecture. It belongs by law to the Eastern Fair Folk, and they have the responsibility of the land's upkeep and, theoretically, the citizens' administration. No mortals live on the grounds, though the borders are thick with settlements that prevent the Fair Folk's freehold from weakening the fabric of Creation from within. In truth, Aetamos sees to any needs of the embassy grounds as a favor and for advantage in ongoing and future negotiations. Paying the Terrestrials or procuring the indentured workers and criminals who do the work is expensive, but the results far outweigh the costs.

Aetamos and his chosen deputy delegates (who include a First Circle demon, a ghost, one of the Mountain Folk, a volunteer Sidereal and several Dragon-Blooded) join Ambassador Blood of the Last Moon and her subordinates at the negotiating table every night before the new moon. All the deputies suspect the others of wielding their positions to personal or ideological advantage, but all would be surprised to learn that only the Mountain Folk is doing so. Most deal-making occurs between the Fair Folk attachés and Aetamos' delegates during scripted impromptu strolls through the freehold's impossible gardens, where things the principals cannot say are bartered. When the groups reconvene, deals are inked and signed. Creation comes out ahead.

Serene Canopy Province

Serene Canopy Province borders the Labyrinth of Soothing Shadows Province at the Errant Root Massif, the River Province and the Dominion of the Dragon Kings just west of there, and it runs south and east until it runs out of trees. Daimyo Echo Dream ignores the official eastern border just as his counterpart to the north does.

Echo Dream is a favorite of the Celestial and Terrestrial Bureaucracies. He offers acceptable tributes to the elementals and gods of the province, honoring the great ones most but always leaving thoughtful gifts for the masses of lesser spirits. In exchange, the principalities of the Serene Canopy Province prosper and the gods make certain the Solar rulers know who's responsible for their goodwill. That's why Echo Dream has held the post for over 300 years, and why his daughter Echo Lover will take over when he passes on, likely in the next decade. The respect for spirits instilled by her father battles with her resentment over the attention he paid them over her. Which sentiment is victorious will decide much about the province's future.

Orange Blossom Chancellery

Chancellor Fire-Hearted Ken rules his chancellery with two Lunars at his side: Finder of Glorious Trifles and Earth-Minder. Finder of Glorious Trifles is Ken's bonded Lunar mate, but Earth-Minder is bonded to a Solar ruler in the Far West. Her fated mate shares none of her interests and lends no weight to her desires, so she found excuses to spend her time in Meru with the Deliberative. There, she met Fire-Hearted Ken, who ignored the danger of slighting his peer and invited her to Orange Blossom where her freedom would be paramount. She and Finder are both his spouses, which keeps Earth-Minder's bonded Solar up nights seething.

The chancellor's desires lie in turning his tributary into an economic powerhouse. Orange trees grow freely across the land, giving the chancellery both its name and an export, which is lauded as the best in Creation. That the land is not as obscenely fertile as the River Province only increases demand and prices. Quiet geomantic flaws planted among the orchards of that province further improve the Orange Blossom Chancellery's profit. Earth-Minder helps make the citrus orchards without peer. Her joy is developing new cultivars of their many trees, maximizing yield, flavor, consistency and juice quantity; it makes Ken happy to fulfill two of his desires by giving Earth-Minder free reign.

Ken's other interest is one he shares with Finder of Glorious Trifles: thaumaturgy. Both studied extensively at nearby Sperimin centuries ago. They have published many theses on the subject since then, some jointly, as well as exegeses on others' publications. Orange Blossom Chancellery might be the second-best place to learn the thaumaturgic arts outside Sperimin, though few would know. Its institutions are run by the state and only for promising mortals (able to access their Essence) who exhibit significant loyalty to Chancellor Ken.

Fire-Hearted Ken uses these expert thaumaturges in all facets of governance. They enchant building materials, make official seals impossible to forge, build geomancy of speed into the streets and roads, appease gods, spy on and sabotage enemies, enhance their administrative decisions with ritual and so on. His private army, the Enchanted Legion, wields enough power to put a battalion of Dragon-Blooded to shame.

Like the states to the west, Orange Blossom Chancellery naturally contains dry hills with sparse trees. After over a millennium of agricultural development, however, the hills are aesthetic greens and ochres designed in pleasant occult patterns that maximize tranquility, growth and harvesting speed. Iron pipes imbued with drops of black jade drive water to the hilltops from many wells, ensuring sufficient irrigation. Valleys and rocky mesas house Orange Blossom's cities, and the free growth that remains burns every few summers in a series of natural wildfires that Exalts and thaumaturges contain with spells and talismans.

Satsuma Township

Satsuma Township rests atop Charcoal Mesa, surrounded by hillside orchards in Orange Blossom Chancellery's southwest. Access to the mesa is limited by the one safe path up.

Strong beams of steel and jade broaden the road to more than a footpath, but most of the traffic in and out remains by air. Such transport depends on clear weather, making the local sky mantis grid one of the city's most important assets and most tempting targets of sabotage. Even the surrounding orchards are harvested by small towns living on or beneath the slopes.

White Genesis Totomu holds the position of Expert Mandarin at Satsuma. She is the ultimate authority over the city's and state's legal and judicial concerns, enacting her Solar master's wishes. Only Chancellor Ken or his wives override her decisions, and she works so closely with them that that hasn't happened in over a century. Immaculate Mandarin Stone Horse, peerless administrator over Orange Blossom Chancellery's religious and thaumaturgic concerns, resents White Genesis Totomu's policies, especially that of suborning the priests and trained thaumaturges to the state. The Immaculate Mandarin covets some of Totomu's influence and aims to have it. His first ploy is to shift the capital from Satsuma Township, which is far from central, to Golden Gorse Valley where sits his seat of power.

White Iron Phoenix Prefecture

White Iron Phoenix Prefecture rests on the edge of the world. Other prefectures occupy three of its borders, ensuring significant stability for a state whose other border fades into the Wyld. Irregular hills covered with heavy forest mark this region, though the nature of hills and trees farthest east shifts with the phase of the moon. Fair Folk raid here and make away with citizens, but such raids are not common and not onerous. Even families of the unfortunates kidnapped admit that.

The white iron phoenix, which gives the prefecture its name, causes this sense of security. It is a snow-white bird that attacks raksha creatures on sight, assaulting even Fair Folk nobles without any regard for safety. When slain, it bursts into a brilliant flame that sears the Wyld away, leaving static Creation and solid iron statues of the Fair Folk it touched. A new phoenix then rises from a pile of iron ashes at the center of the inferno. Stranger yet, the white iron phoenix is a Wyld creature, incapable yet of breeding true in Creation. It flies out of the Bordermarches to eat and breed, and perhaps for unknown reasons, it returns just as easily if it encounters no Fair Folk. Whether the creatures assault Fair Folk in the Wyld is a mystery.

Twelve Dragon-Blooded sit on the Council of Ashes and Fire while the Solar Hart Without Flaw visits Meru or tours the world—that is, most of the time. Joy-in-Flesh leads the council through his energy, dedication and lofty ideals: that all creatures know their place precisely and not endeavor to leave it, either to ascend beyond station or sink beneath born duty and respectability. Active programs for which Joy-in-Flesh is responsible include breeding animals to stand for the hunter's bow and walk to the butcher's knife, as well as development of affordable implants able to make mortals content with obedience and caste labels dependent on complex astrological signs. The Council of Ashes and Fire discharges all other duties before committing resources to these side projects, so Hart Without Flaw has not yet noticed. That, or he approves but cannot explicitly participate in the experiments.

Eg's Pass

Eg's Pass is inconsequential to White Iron Phoenix Prefecture. It is a tourist stop for visitors from Cacophonic Winds Prefecture, crossing the border to take advantage of the lower local sales taxes. It manages a small contribution to the prefecture's lumber and medicinal herb trades. It is also infested by Fair Folk.

Relatively eastern in the prefecture and small, everyone ignored the first report from a minor town official describing suspicious behaviors as defined within *The Efficacious Mandarin Manual of Decorous Conduct*. Another minor official (but one in a greater city) filed that and the next three reports unread, simultaneously dispatching a commendation for industry and a sixth-degree demerit for undue stress on the administration. No more reports came.

By this point, all inhabitants of Eg's Pass but the Dragon-Blooded governor are disguised Fair Folk and hobgoblins playing at being one of Creation's towns. Ophelis Gend bitches at their strange habits and grumps that the manses need repair (their Essence bleed feeds the intruders), but that's as far as he'll go until the town's industry stops. And the Fair Folk haven't stopped playing their parts yet. The first birth since the invasion is due soon, whatever that heralds.

Ophelis Gend ignores his town's problems. If it were important enough to change, the prefect would come have a talk with him about it. After all, she's his cousin and wouldn't dare fire him without a grievous error on his part or a paper trail leading from here to the Blessed Isle. Even better, he knows all the gigolos she's been entertaining at Hart Without Flaw's personal estate during the Solar's frequent absences.

AN EXCELLENT SHOT, SIR.
AND I SEE TWO VULTURES ALREADY APPROACHING FROM THE SOUTH.
JUST TWO? THEY'RE LEARNING...

CHAPTER FOUR
THE SOUTH

After the Blessed Isle, the South is the most populous portion of Creation. The northern and western coasts contain some of Creation's finest growing lands, producing both abundant harvests of grain, nuts and fruit, as well as many of the finest wines in Creation. The plains of the Southeast are home to both an abundance of fierce and beautiful wildlife and to the herds of sacred cattle of Ahlat. As a result, much of this region was declared a game preserve and the private hunting grounds of the Celestial Exalted shortly after the founding of the Deliberative.

The coastal South is a land of mild, dry summers and cool and wet (but rarely cold) winters, where many mortals eschew climate control in their dwellings, preferring instead to enjoy the feel of the almost universally pleasant seasons. Even in the height of summer, the nights are cool, and the day's heat is never too extreme or unpleasant. Because of a combination of the impressive climate and the relatively unobtrusive presence of the Deliberative, the Southern Coast is widely acclaimed by both mortals and many Dragon-Blooded as the most desirable region of Creation. The Deliberative's geomantic manipulations and weather-control devices moderate the South's heat and maintain these pleasant conditions as far as 1,000 miles inland. The coastal regions of the South are some of the most productive agricultural lands outside the Blessed Isle. Where left to grow wild, the land contains a mixture of sparse hardy trees, such as olives, cedars and almonds, and vast expanses of low green vegetation.

Deeper into the Southern interior, the land grows warmer. Summers are hot, and winters remain at least slightly warm, but the nights are always cool. Here, the lush vegetation of the coastal regions is gradually replaced by low and hardy bushes and tough, thorny ground cover, which are increasingly separated by patches of barren soil. In the Southeastern interior, giant tree-like cacti grow to several hundred feet high, but the vegetation in the rest of the Southern interior rarely grows more than three or four yards high.

The Southern interior is noted for low mountains bearing all manner of gems and metals, including vast quantities of jade and precious stones. These Southern mountains are also one of the few places that adamant deposits can be found on or near the surface. Near both the eastern and western edges of the Southlands and also in the farthest South, these mountains rise up to become huge volcanic mountain ranges filled with many active volcanoes. In the Southeast, these are known as the Summer Mountains, while to the Southwest and Far South, they are known only as the Fire Mountains (see pp. 105-106).

The mountains and foothills of the Southern interior are extensively mined, typically using mortals housed in rural production complexes with excellent climate controls, as

well as a mix of elementals, demons and simple automated servitors. From these mines, the mineral wealth of the South is transported to the coastal cities, where much of it is worked into finished goods. The rest is traded raw to all the other regions of Creation.

The Far South is a land of almost eternal heat. The only noticeable seasonal variations go from very warm to hot, and the air cools only slightly at night. While mortals can survive here, those who have not specifically been adapted to life in the Far South require extensive supplies of water and occasional forays into cooler temperatures. The land consists almost exclusively of rocky outcroppings and mountains and sandy deserts. A few moist and lush oases can be found, but they are all are demesnes of Air, Water or Wood where the local elemental energies overcome the otherwise universal heat and dryness. Outside such places, the few plants that grow are all small, tough and very thorny, and there is no open water except for a few streams, most of which are either somewhat brackish, exceedingly narrow and erratic or both.

The Far South is also a land of vast mineral abundance, however, so mortals and Exalts come here to obtain it. Near the borders of the Wyld are vast firedust deposits that replenish themselves whenever the winds shift to flow in from the Pure Chaos beyond the borders of Creation. Also, the gems found in the interior are both more common and larger here, as are rarer and stranger prizes such as fire rubies, which perpetually glow with heat. Depending on their size and how they are cut, their temperature ranges from that of warm bath water to heat just sufficient to boil water.

The Southeastern Province

The Southeastern Province is a warm and pleasant land of vast savannas and open forests of acacia and baobab trees. Because of its proximity to the Elemental Pole of Wood, the land is quite fertile. The Southeastern Province is also the home to many of Creation's most magnificent animals, including huge four-tusked elephants, enormous lions, seemingly endless herds of wildebeest and many similar animals. The coasts and both the eastern and western edges of the Southeastern Province contain a number of principalities full of RPCs where the residents grow crops, herd small antelope or perform many similar tasks. The interior of the Southeastern Province is largely given over to the Exalted, however, who use a strip along this domain's eastern border as the home to the magnificent sacred cattle of Ahlat and keep the remainder as a huge game farm. Here, the Celestial Exalted and the Celestial gods—as well as their guests, their God-Blooded offspring and a few of the highest-ranking Dragon-Blooded—can hunt some of the cleverest, most beautiful and exotic prey in all of Creation. Herd guardians (see **Lords of Creation**, pp. 112-113) extensively patrol this

region, managing and looking after the animals, preventing poaching and helping any hunter who is injured or otherwise in need of assistance.

While some Exalted, especially the Dragon-Blooded, are content to hunt large and powerful ordinary animals, many Celestial Exalts seek more of a challenge. As a result, Celestial Exalted bioengineers continually attempt to create new and more deadly hybrid beasts. Most such creations are slightly more intelligent than the smartest ape, and all are larger and more powerful than the animals on which they are based. The most ordinary of these engineered animals simply gain +1 to all of their Physical Attributes and +1 to their attack and defense scores, including armor, damage and Defense Value. Some beasts also have both these advantages and one or more poxes, afflictions or occasionally even blights and abominations. Produced by the finest bioengineers in Creation, some of these animals combine elements from three or four different beasts along with potent magical enhancements.

The Hunting City of Tamar-Kas

Flying between five and 40 yards above the savanna, and traveling at speeds of up to 40 miles per hour, this floating city is a pleasure palace designed specifically for the Exalted, their children and powerful gods who have an interest in hunting. Tamar-Kas is one of the smaller of Creation's several floating cities. It is only two miles in diameter and is designed to hold a population of up to 25,000. Two thousand of these residents are herd guardians who are in charge of maintaining the city and looking after its needs and the needs of the Exalted residents. Almost half of these herd guardians have enlightened Essence. The remainder of the city is devoted to Exalts and their entourages of assistants, servants, concubines and other retainers.

Even at first glance, the emphasis on hunting is readily apparent in this city. Statues and friezes of fierce, magnificent animals abound, as do stylistic elements emulating horns, the patterning of various hides and similar motifs. Exotic leather is used in most upholstery, with everything from giraffe leather to sea-dragon skin decorating the chairs and other furniture. Most of the frequent visitors keep rooms where they can display their collection of trophy heads as well. Being invited to hunt in Tamar-Kas is the greatest honor any serious hunter can obtain, and Dragon-Bloods and minor gods who obtain this privilege are often the envy of their fellows.

The city flies over the savanna, directed by powerful mechanisms that allow the operators to locate large groupings of any specified variety of animal or a single example of a large creature such as an elephant or tyrant lizard. Visitors specify their hunting preferences when they arrive, and the herd guardians do their best to move the city near the desired animals. Naturally, the preferences of higher-ranking Exalts are met before those of lower-ranking ones, but the herd guardians attempt to satisfy all visitors.

This city is also set up to entertain hunters who never leave it. It contains large arenas where visitors can fight against specially enhanced animals, which can be further modified in one of the city's large bioforming tanks. In addition, visitors can battle animal-shaped automatons that can be rapidly customized to both resemble and fight like any known animal, and can also be boosted in power so that these constructs are vastly stronger and more dangerous than their natural counterparts. This last feature has been used on two occasions by vengeful Dragon-Blooded as a method to slay an unknowing rival who expected to fight a beast far less deadly than the one her enemy modified.

The Fields of the Sacred Cattle of Ahlat

Since the beginning of time, the premier sacrifice to the highest gods, and to the monstrous and alien Primordials before them, has been the finest cattle in Creation. Long before humanity existed, the ancient Dragon Kings tended herds of sacred cattle that they sacrificed to the Unconquered Sun and his Primordial masters. A few hundred years after the end of the Primordial War, a trio of Lawgivers consisting of one Pillar of the Sun and two Arrows of Heaven embarked on an ambitious program to combine existing breeds of sacred cattle and enhance the qualities that make them the most desirable sacrifices. The result was the sacred cattle of Ahlat. These creatures have exquisitely beautiful jet-black hides as well as brilliant crimson hooves, eyes and tails. Their horns are made of solid, living gold. They are mortal cattle, but they are also the most perfect cattle who have ever lived They are intelligent beings who can speak and are capable of perceiving and manipulating Essence. The sacred cattle can also use thaumaturgy and Terrestrial martial arts.

While some mortals who learn of these cattle are horrified at the concept of intelligent sacrifices, the cattle all firmly disagree. They sincerely believe that their greatest destiny is to die on the altars of the gods or to be dined on by the Celestial Exalted. They also tell all who ask that a sacrifice who is both willing and intelligent is obviously both morally and spiritually superior to ones that are either unwilling or unable to understand their destiny.

Because their destiny is to be sacrificed upon the altars of the Celestial gods or served in the kitchens of the Celestial Exalted, harming these cattle for no reason is considered blasphemy (and a serious criminal offense besides). Also, although they go willingly to sacrifice, these cattle violently resist any attempts to harm or steal them. Although they are not naturally aggressive or belligerent, they can be fierce fighters if threatened. Small groups of these cattle are perfectly able to use sound tactics to coordinate their attacks and thus defeat a larger but less disciplined force.

The cattle display a worshipful awe of all Celestial Exalted and Celestial gods, as well as a deep respect for Terrestrial Exalted. They have no fear of ordinary mortals, however, and generally consider themselves to be superior to these beings. The only mortals they accept as equals are the herd guardians (see **Lords of Creation**,pp. 112-113), whom they

The Cattle of Ahlat

S/D/S	P/I/W/W	Health Lvls	Atk (S/A/D/R)	Dodge DV/Soak
7/3/6	2/3/3/5	-0x2/-1x3/-2x2/-4/I	Gore: 5/6/8L/1, Hoof: 5/5/10B/2	3/2L/5B

Abilities: Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Dodge 3, Integrity 3, Investigation 2, Martial Arts 2, Presence 3, Resistance 3, Survival 2, War 2

regard as staunch allies, if not close friends and comrades. When called to act as a sacrifice or meal for gods or Exalts, many of these cattle take time to say farewell to their fellows and to any herd guardians they know.

The Bitter Flower Empire

The Brazen Lands compose a large Southeastern plateau, located on the western slopes of the Summer Mountains and surrounded on three sides by the vast Celestial Hunting Preserve. On this plateau sits the Bitter Flower Empire, a largely independent client state that pays tribute to the Deliberative but is otherwise free of Deliberative control (and determined to stay that way). A pair of queens who are identical in appearance but very different in origin rules this land. One is Seven Hymns Princess, a middle-aged Copper Spider who never fit into the rigid and formal structure of the Deliberative. The other is Queen Sep, one of the few Fair Folk to fix herself into human form, and who had adopted a form identical to Seven Hymns Princess long before she ever knew of her twin. These two beings are joint rulers and both must agree when making any important decisions.

In the center of the plateau is a small but powerful Wyld zone that existed long before the Deliberative conquered the Primordials. In the heart of this half-mile-wide zone of Pure Chaos is a single level-5 manse a quarter mile across, protected by a potent reality engine built into its structure. Created by She Who Lives in Her Name, this manse is the palace of the Bitter Flower Empire's twin rulers, and none may safely enter it without their permission and assistance.

The remainder of the plateau rises sufficiently high above the plains that the heat of the Southern interior is significantly moderated. The local climate is little warmer than the mild Southern coast. Here, the two rulers have created an exotic and beautiful land devoted to art and music. It is inhabited primarily by artistic mortals, blessed mortals, beastmen, Fae-Bloods, independent-minded Terrestrial Exalted, disaffected and jaded gods who dabble in the arts and a handful of Fair Folk who share Queen Sep's fascination for retaining a fixed form. Like their rulers, most residents are eccentric outcasts who fit poorly into their home cultures.

The Bitter Flower Empire has a population of only five million citizens, almost all of whom are mortals of various sorts. The land's proximity to the East causes it to be relatively fertile, but few mortals farm this land. Instead, hobgoblins created by Queen Sep and mindless-but-obedient automatons created by Seven Hymns Princess perform most of the basic work of planting, tilling and harvesting. Similar beings mine and process the ores and other materials needed to run the society. These creatures and creations produce a sufficient amount of natural bounty that all inhabitants are freely given food, housing, medical care and the other basic necessities of life. This bounty allows all citizens of this realm to seek meaning in their lives through means other than merely earning their subsistence. In return, citizens are all expected to either produce or actively learn to produce some form of creative works. Some write or perform plays, while others make jewelry, cook exquisite meals or assemble potent artifacts.

Those whose efforts impress the official critics earn various luxuries for their efforts, and all artists are free to trade their goods to other residents or to the traveling merchants who regularly send skyships to this unique land. Other inhabitants can earn rewards by teaching art to residents who want to learn from them or by critiquing art made by others. The only other price the inhabitants pay is that they are entirely cut off from the broadcasts of the otherwise ubiquitous I AM network, since the entire realm is shielded against its emanations. Residents who want to learn news or other facts of the outside world must seek answers from travelers or each other or look for them in various archives and libraries of books, dreamstones and slabs of crystalline memory storage.

Citizens are free to leave this domain, and visitors are similarly free to travel here, but only individuals who spend a significant portion of their time studying, teaching, critiquing or producing art or skilled crafts can stay longer than one season every year. Most inhabitants have other professions, including all of the many occupations needed to keep this society running. The work performed by the hobgoblins and automatons, however, allows all residents to devote at least half their working hours to some activity related to arts or crafts.

Outsiders typically remark that this principality seems somewhat quaint or archaic. Glass roads and gliding chariots are ubiquitous and free for the use of all residents, but private vehicles are forbidden, as is the private ownership of Essence-powered weapons. Also, buildings are comparatively low, with few buildings higher than 10 stories. Overall, the

pace of life in the Bitter Flower Empire is relatively slow compared to that in the other cities of Creation. Many visitors compare it to memory records of life in the first few centuries of the Deliberative.

In addition to satisfying Queen Sep's desire to retain her fixed form and Seven Hymns Princess's desire to break free of the Deliberative's restraints, both hoped to create a domain that produced the greatest arts and crafts in all of Creation. Unfortunately, while some works produced here are widely renowned within and beyond the plateau's boundaries, the number of such works is small. Most inhabitants produce art or crafts that are pleasant but unexceptional. A daiklave made here looks different from the product of one of the Deliberative's better factory-cathedrals but is no more functional or attractive. The same can be said for the songs performed in this domain's taverns and the small works of art that decorate mortals' homes.

The Bitter Flower Empire is notable for having one of the finest artistic academies in all of Creation, however. Students include visitors and residents, and while few go on to greatness, the percentage of those who have done so is almost twice that of the next best artistic academy in Creation. Also, the treatises that scholars at this academy have written on both artistic criticism and art history are often exceptionally fine, and are read in both the halls of the Deliberative and the Celestial manses of Yu-Shan.

The Bitter Flower Empire is also a land of many intrigues. A very few of the disaffected artists who come here are Deliberative agents; somewhat more are dissidents who use art as a tool to oppose the Deliberative. Although most fugitives from Deliberative justice are swiftly extradited, a small number of dissidents, terrorists and rebels live here, occasionally venturing into the Realm to perform their sabotage or disseminate their propaganda. Others remain in the Brazen Lands but are regularly visited by their underlings. Recently, a small group of pure-bred Lintha (see pp. 102-105) have moved here seeking to recruit aid for their plan to restore the Primordials.

The Southern Coast Province

The Southern Coast Province is widely acclaimed as one of the most pleasant and wealthy regions of Creation. This mild and fertile area contains several large prefectures, as well as the magnificent carved mountain known as the Penitent. With the exception of the Domain of Stately Order, the coastal Southern prefectures regularly have more than twice the number of applications for immigration that they can logistically accept. This portion of Creation has been settled for a very long time, and most of the existing cities (including Chiaroscuro and Dari) existed back when the Primordials ruled Creation. As a result, ancient mysteries and powerful, unique lost artifacts can be found deep within their foundations.

Chiaroscuro—Jewel of the South

The vast metropolis-principality of Chiaroscuro is both the largest city in the South and one of the five largest cities in Creation, holding more than 22 million inhabitants. Built entirely of brightly colored, Essence-forged glass, it is also known as the rainbow city. The streets are made of vermilion glass, breakwaters of brilliant azure protect the port, and the tall glass towers that make up the entire central city are every color of the rainbow. Unlike most other large cities, all of Chiaroscuro's towers are made from this same colored glass. Buildings used by the Deliberative government are all made of shining golden-colored glass, a color not used on any other buildings. The largest of these buildings is the glorious Tower of the Sun, the city's tallest tower, located in the very center of Chiaroscuro. The Tower of the Sun is slightly over half a mile high, and most of the central city consists of a veritable forest of multi-colored towers that are all between one quarter and one third of a mile high.

Chiaroscuro is a city devoted to trade, but it is also a major center of manufacturing, containing a trio of factory-cathedrals. These factory-cathedrals all specialize in combining products obtained from the Southern interior with resources imported from all across Creation and creating high quality artifacts. In addition, the outer sections of the city contain many hundreds of mundane manufactories making everything from unbreakable glass tableware to nearly endless bolts of textiles made from linen grown in the vast fields of the Southern coast.

This city extends below the ground as well as above it. Because of the exceptionally pleasant year-round climate, the city's streets are designed for strolling and are lined with a multitude of ground-floor shops. Street performers, food vendors and similar petty merchants with small carts and booths are in abundance on most of the streets and in most large intersections. Gliding chariots can rarely travel through these streets at speeds of more than 10 miles per hour as a result. On many streets, the only vehicles allowed are authorized Deliberative emergency vehicles, which can fly above the heads of the thronging crowds.

To facilitate traffic, the Deliberative constructed a network of tunnels under the city. In the larger tunnels, Essence-powered subways swiftly transport people and cargo to and from stations located every half mile throughout the city. On this subway, it rarely takes more than half an hour to travel between any two points in Chiaroscuro. From the nearest station, most people walk to their destinations, while cargo and tired or wealthy pedestrians are carried in slow moving gliding chariots that are either owned by businesses or hotels or are available for hire on every street corner.

The Deliberative also built a network of smaller tunnels to connect important buildings. These tunnels accomplished useful goals such as connecting the city's three factory-cathedrals with each other and with the harbor, the skyship docks and other useful destinations. These tunnels carry a steady

stream of large gliding chariots each carrying finished goods and raw materials to and from the factory-cathedrals, food to the largest hotels and all manner of similar cargoes.

The Black Market and the Undercity

As the largest center of trade and commerce outside the Blessed Isle, Chiaroscuro is also a thriving center of illegal trade and commerce. Passengers on many skyships and cargo ships carry a wealth of smuggled goods, including everything from artifacts prohibited to mortals not in the employee of the Deliberative to all manner of illegal intoxicants. Other passengers carry stolen goods that they hope to discreetly sell here.

The city's black market is legendary and has existed for many centuries. As long as the various fences and shady dealers refuse to sell military hardware, lethal intoxicants or other exceptionally illegal goods and avoid causing any significant disruptions to legitimate commerce, the Deliberative government allows it to thrive. This fact is not lost on most of the experienced and sensible individuals engaged in this profitable trade.

The Chiaroscuro black market is effectively an open secret to everyone with any interest at all in the criminal underworld. Many mortal tourists visiting this city take pride in buying a stolen piece of clothing or some similar item from one of the city's many fences. Naturally, the presence of so many dealers in illegal goods also attracts various other illegal activities. As a result, Chiaroscuro is a center for illicit gambling, unlicensed prostitution and a wide variety of similar illegal services, such as contracting an unlicensed thaumaturge to plague someone with warts or ill-fortune, or hiring thieves to steal a particular item.

One reason that the criminal underworld can thrive here so easily is the undercity. In addition to the multitude of subway tunnels beneath Chiaroscuro, this city is also built above a network of other tunnels, some dating back to the days before the Primordial War. Long before the founding of the Deliberative, problems with drainage and periodic flooding caused by the city's proximity to the coast inspired the Dragon Kings who then ruled it to construct a vast network of large storm sewers. A few centuries after the founding of Deliberative, improved Essence technologies eliminated the need for most of these tunnels. Some were transformed into the various subway tunnels now in use, but others were abandoned or partially filled in. Since that time, various criminals and eccentric hermits with access to capable tools have dug side tunnels or illegal connections between disused drainage tunnels.

Today, even the Celestial Exalted do not know the full extent of the tunnels under Chiaroscuro. The many officially disused tunnels now serve as storehouses for stolen goods, and some of the ones nearest to the surface also serve as shops for illegal goods, unlicensed gambling dens

and similar establishments. Occasionally, scavengers and hopeful explorers manage to find a long disused section of tunnel, and the broadcast dreams and hologlyph dramas popular here are regularly filled with tales of heroes finding powerful artifacts and vast wealth in newly opened tunnels. Although such events are rare, they occasionally happen, as does finding tunnels that have been fitted with ancient but still deadly traps.

The Penitent

One of the most remarkable features of the entire Southern Coast Province is the gigantic figure known to mortals as the Penitent, and to the Exalted as the Last Supplicant of Endless Power (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**, p. 24). This awe-inspiring Essence-controlling device was carved into the form of a seated figure by sculpting an entire extinct volcano. The figure's outer surface is flawlessly polished, brilliantly reflective obsidian, and its five-mile tall-form is visible from both the Domain of Stately Order and Chiaroscuro.

The primary purpose of the Penitent is to reshape the Southern Essence flows in such a fashion as to permit the mild climate of the coast to extend almost twice as far into the Southern interior as it otherwise would. This procedure is largely automatic and requires adjustment only during Calibration. The Penitent is also the heart of the South's volcano control system. Located on the northeastern edge of the Fire Mountains, its proximity to the mountain range containing the South's most active volcanoes allows it to be used to control the timing and intensity of volcanic eruptions that might otherwise damage valuable land or destroy cities.

In addition to directing lava flows away from inhabited regions and suppressing violent eruptions, Solar Exalted can also use the Penitent to generate minor eruptions that relieve mounting lava pressures or induce specific types of eruptions that bring valuable ores and minerals to the surface. In addition, all Southern Exalts can petition for their manses to be temporarily enhanced by the Penitent's powers, with the typical duration of such an enhancement ranging from one week to one season. Naturally, petitions made by one of the Celestial Exalted or the few Celestial gods with residences in Creation are given precedence over those made by Terrestrial Exalted or the God-Blooded.

All of these features are widely known by employees of the Deliberative. Yet only the Celestial Exalted know of the more destructive uses to which this vast construct can be put, since it has rarely been used in any sort of martial fashion for more than two millennia.

In addition to being arguably the most important Essence-manipulating artifact in the entire South, the Penitent is also a popular tourist attraction for mortals. Only Exalts are permitted to approach the figure's vast head, where the Essence controls are located, but mortals regularly visit the lowest reaches of the statue. Every year, tens of thousands of wealthy tourists and devout pilgrims come to see this wonder and marvel at the power of the Deliberative and the majesty of the Celestial Exalted. Many of the wealthiest or most devout visitors book skyship flights from the skyship dock located a quarter of a mile from the statue's vast left foot when rumors say that one of the Lawgivers will soon use the Penitent to make some minor adjustment to the Southern Essence flows.

Those lucky enough to arrive when the statue is in use see an even greater wonder than the Penitent's normally grandiose presence. Once the Penitent is activated, the user's vastly magnified anima banner surrounds the entire statue. Observers as far away as Chiaroscuro can see the flare of this anima as a light as bright and as large as a rising full moon on a clear night.

To accommodate these tourists, and the ones who simply wish to see the Penitent, the local skyship dock is built beside several hotels capable of accommodating as many as 1,500 visitors of varying degrees of wealth. To support these visitors, a small RPC was constructed nearby. In addition to helping to care for the various tourists, the RPC's 700 inhabitants also till the soil with Essence-powered machinery and tend the fist-sized beetles that harvest flax from their nearby fields.

The most devout tourists eschew these comfortable hotels and instead walk more than three miles uphill along the statue's gently sloping legs to a small monastery located in the statue's enormous lap. Although the Exalted and the gods are free to visit it via any means they see fit to use, mortals are all expected to walk to this monastery. Officially known as the Pagoda of Contemplating the Sacred Penitent—but popularly known as the Monastery of the Lap—this monastery is surrounded by gardens and a small pine forest tended by the local monks. Visitors are welcome, but those who stay longer than three days are expected to take part in the daily chores. In return, the monastery teaches both meditation and the scriptures of the Exalted. In addition, Exalts, gods, Half-Castes, God-Bloods and even mortal Essence users who have obtained the appropriate licenses may also train in various Terrestrial martial arts here. Once a season, the local students put on exhibitions of their martial prowess for the tourists staying at the hotels located near Penitent's base. The monastery earns money from these displays and from the sales of small obsidian or black jade replicas of the Penitent that some of the monks and novices make. Although it is far less prestigious than other academies that teach more advanced martial arts, the Monastery of the Lap is noted for being one of the most spectacular locations in Creation to study the martial arts.

The Domain of Stately Order

In the middle of the Southern coastal plains, between the Penitent and Chiaroscuro lies the most unusual and most hotly debated of the lands of the South. Created 260 years ago as a social experiment, the Domain of Stately Order is a small

tributary governed by the Solar Exalt Terrible Bloody Rose and her Lunar consort Shining Ocelot. The principality is a circle exactly 800 miles across. It contains the central city, known as Dari of the Mists, which is a beautiful, perfectly circular metropolis precisely 40 miles in diameter with seven million inhabitants.

Dari is located in a bowl-shaped valley and is an ancient city built in the early days of the rule of the Primordials. Although smaller than many modern cities, it is exceptionally beautiful. All of the towers and other large buildings are made from an opalescent alloy that even the finest savants of the Deliberative cannot make in the vast quantities necessary to build a large city from them.

When exposed to sunlight, this alloy shines like white opal, and it glows softly with the same sparkling color at night. It also attracts ambient mist that briefly swirls with similar color when it touches these towers. These mists have long been known to make mortals who inhale them both slightly happier and less inclined to excessive violence. Mortals living here are treated as if they have a minimum of two dots in both Compassion and Temperance, even if their actual scores are lower. This effect fades within three days of leaving Dari. The effects of these mists gave Terrible Bloody Rose and Shining Ocelot the idea for creating the Scepter and the Orb of Peace and Order. Their efforts, however, have also made the city far less popular to both immigrants and tourists.

Before it became part of the Domain of Stately Order, Dari was widely acclaimed as the most pleasant city in the South, and mortals regularly flocked here to visit. Many Southern mortals attempted to save sufficient amounts of money to be able to go on their honeymoons in Dari. This custom persists, and newlyweds remain an important source of tourism, but all tourism has significantly declined since the city's rulers completed the Scepter and the Orb.

The remainder of this principality houses an additional 93 million people, the vast majority of whom work in various RPCs that specialize in growing and spinning linen and in tending Essence spiders and transforming their silk into sails, armor and similar goods.

The Scepter and Orb of Peace and Order

This tributary was created to test and demonstrate the promise of a pair of exceptionally powerful artifacts called the Instruments of Peace and Order. The Scepter of Peace and Order is a large orichalcum scepter with a five-foot-long shaft, topped with a complex crook decorated with a variety of crystals that focus and channel Essence. The complementary Orb of Peace and Order is a moonsilver sphere the size of a large grapefruit, incised with grooves to allow it to be held in one hand and decorated with crystals identical to those on the scepter.

When a Celestial Exalt holds the scepter, it allows the bearer to have a general sense of everyone within 400 miles. The bearer can sense general concentrations and movements of population, as well as being able to instantly identify any Exalts, gods, elementals or demons inside his domain. The bearer can also broadcast messages to everyone inside the radius and can produce a scarlet eye-like sigil on the flesh of every adult or adolescent inside the domain. The target must accept the sigil willingly, but the scepter allows a Celestial bearer to cause anyone who refuses the sigil to be overcome with the urge to leave the domain within the next week. This compulsion is impossible for anyone but another Exalt to resist.

The scepter also allows its bearer to automatically distinguish between individuals who have lived in the domain for more than a month and visitors or new arrivals. Terrible Bloody Rose leaves visitors alone, but every month, she forces her sigil on anyone who has been in the domain longer. All mortals who refuse must leave. Exalts who refuse need not leave the domain, but if they accept the sigil, they are as bound by its power as any mortal would be. Other than allowing the bearer to sense them, neither the Scepter nor the Orb of Peace and Order has any effect on gods, elementals or demons.

Anyone who accepts the sigil is marked for life. Only Solar Circle sorcery performed by someone whose Essence is at least as high as the scepter bearer's can remove this sigil. The scepter-bearer can borrow the senses of any sigil-bearer at will and with no rolls or Essence cost, no matter where the person with the sigil is in Creation. By spending three motes of Essence, the scepter-bearer can also take over the body of a sigil-bearer for up to one scene. Finally, as the scepter-bearer places the sigil on a target, she also impresses the laws of her domain into the target's mind. Sigil-bearers know that accepting this sigil means they also swear a solemn oath to obey all of these laws. This oath remains in place as long as the scepter is attuned. If, however, it is ever unattuned or the wielder dies, all sigils vanish within 24 hours, unless someone else attunes to the scepter during this time.

The device does not remove a sigil-bearer's free will, but it does force him to pay a price for any and all transgressions. Pain of wracks the body of anyone who disobeys the laws he swore to obey. For major offenses, this agony ends when the criminal confesses his sin to a local magistrate. For minor offenses, the pain lasts for only a few hours if the offender resists the urge to confess. Breaking the most serious oaths, however, such as never attempting to harm one of the Celestial Exalted, is inevitably punished by death. Sigil-bearers who break one of these capital oaths die a painful, writhing death a few hours after the oath is broken. As soon as they commit this transgression, the eye on their sigil closes. Every punishment imposed by the sigil takes place indoors and during the night. If an offender attempts to remain outdoors at night, his presence becomes obvious to Terrible Bloody Rose, who commands him to go home, whereupon he will immediately pay for his crime.

The powers of the Orb of Peace and Order are far more subtle and insidious. Any Celestial Exalt who carries the orb

can both sense and alter the emotions of all sigil-bearers, either en masse or individually. Also, as long as it remains attuned, any sigil-bearer who performs any action that either actively encourages others to obey the laws or goes beyond the expected minimal obedience to the law is automatically rewarded with vividly enjoyable dreams. Also, characters who regularly obtain these dreams also reduce the difficulty of all rolls to recover from infections or diseases by two (to a minimum of 1) and live one third again as long as they otherwise would.

No individual can attune herself to both the Scepter and the Orb of Peace and Order. The attunement cost of each artifact is five motes. As long as at least 200 people bear sigils, anyone attuned to either object is completely immune to all diseases and infections. He also does not age, and he heals one level of lethal damage every three hours and one level of aggravated damage every day.

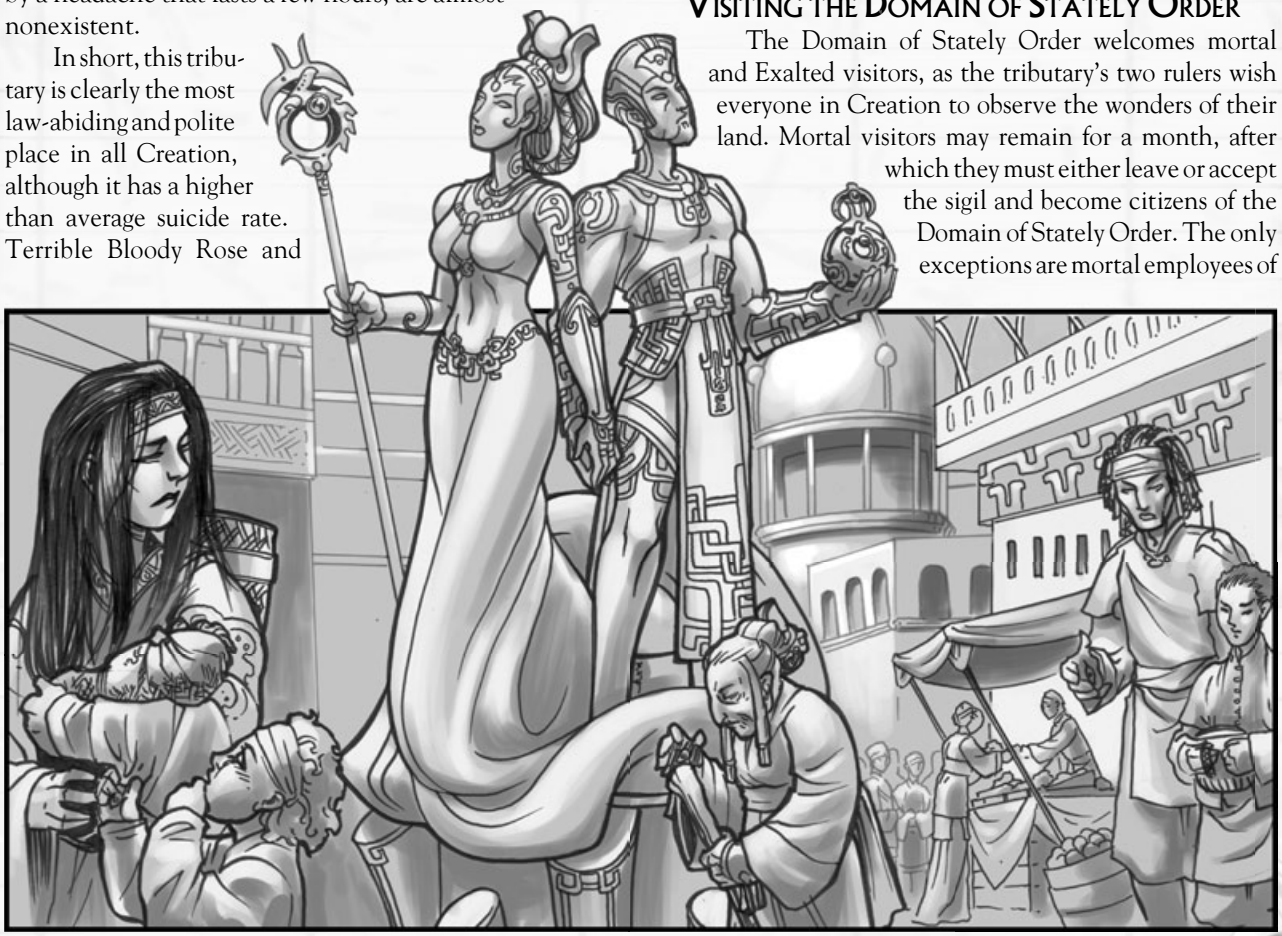
The Instruments of Peace and Order offer Terrible Bloody Rose and Shining Ocelot an unprecedented amount of control of the populace of their principality. In the 260 years that this experiment has been running, there has been only one riot and one workers' strike that lasted only one day. In addition, citizens are exceptionally polite and courteous to visitors and each other. Even very minor offenses such as littering, which are typically punished only by a headache that lasts a few hours, are almost nonexistent.

In short, this tributary is clearly the most law-abiding and polite place in all Creation, although it has a higher than average suicide rate. Terrible Bloody Rose and Shining Ocelot regularly assert that similar measures should be adopted throughout Creation, but debate continues in the Deliberative. Many Celestial Exalts and most Dragon-Bloods strongly oppose this idea because they find the results to be deeply disturbing. Also, most Celestial Exalted forbid sigil-bearers from entering their own domains, and they object to the idea of other Celestial rulers transforming their entire populace into what potentially amounts to an army of spies and possibly even assassins.

Terrible Bloody Rose and Shining Ocelot both claim that the Scepter of Peace and Order cannot be used to place a sigil on one of the Celestial Exalted and that all forms of Exaltation automatically burn away the sigil. The first statement has never been tested, because none of the Celestial Exalted are willing to test their immunity. A few dozen adolescents bearing the sigil have undergone Terrestrial Exaltation, however, and all of them have lost their sigil, so the second claim has been accepted as fact. The truth, though, is that any Exalt can be given the sigil, and Exaltation removes the sigil only if the bearer wishes it removed. If either of these facts were discovered, the small amount of sympathy for this tributary and its rulers would evaporate, and several dozen Celestial Exalted would call for the immediate destruction of the Instruments of Peace and Order.

Visiting the Domain of Stately Order

The Domain of Stately Order welcomes mortal and Exalted visitors, as the tributary's two rulers wish everyone in Creation to observe the wonders of their land. Mortal visitors may remain for a month, after which they must either leave or accept the sigil and become citizens of the Domain of Stately Order. The only exceptions are mortal employees of



the Deliberative, who can travel freely on official Deliberative business. The rulers of this domain offer superior salaries and other benefits to encourage Dragon-Bloods to become citizens. No Exalted visitor is forced to either leave or accept the sigil, though. Doing so would be regarded as a direct offense against the authority of the Deliberative.

Life in the Domain of Stately Order is exceedingly uneventful. All citizens are scrupulously law-abiding, even when dealing with poor and somewhat ignorant mortal visitors. In addition, the general level of politeness and courtesy is considerably higher than it is in the rest of Creation. Most travelers find visiting this tributary to be simultaneously pleasant and somewhat disturbing. Almost all sigil-bearing citizens react with mild shock to any suggestion that they break a local law. What's more, the eagerness that most display when presented with a chance to perform good deeds (ranging from picking up litter to reporting a crime) reminds some visitors of the behavior of dreamstone addicts. As a result, few mortals move to this domain every year, but most who do soon leave—unwilling to trade their freedom for the promises of a safe and pleasant life that this domain delivers.

High Nyunda—City of the Sun

Along with the vast trading metropolis of Chiaroscuro and the powerful Penitent, the last of the three great wonders of the South is the flying city known as High Nyunda. Built to use the powerful currents of Essence coming from the Far South and the warm air of this fiery land, High Nyunda is unique among Creation's many flying cities in that the majority of its lift comes from the warm air contained within it. Essence power is used only to control its altitude and to enable it to move. As a result, the city's Essence antennas and accumulators can spend most of their power moving the city. High Nyunda can move as fast as 50 miles per hour, enabling it to travel almost 8,000 miles in a week and to make a circuit around the entire inhabited portions of the South in only four weeks. The city normally flies one mile above the ground, but it can go as high as four miles to avoid bad weather. It can also come within half a dozen yards of either the ground or the spire of a building to allow it to dock and lower a ramp.

High Nyunda is an enormous sphere four miles in diameter, and it houses approximately one million people, including nearly 200 Terrestrial Exalted. It is also the home of the old and exceptionally powerful Solar Virtuous Jacinth, the Deliberative's Commissionaire of Southern Affairs, and her Lunar consort, Joyous Agile Bat. A trio of younger Celestial Exalts acts as their assistants as well. In addition to the Exalted, High Nyunda is also home to more than 10,000 people of the air, who enjoy the freedom dwelling in the upper air gives them. Some 800 herd guardians work as bodyguards and retainers of the Celestial Palace, and 3,000 minikins are employed in the factory-cathedral to perform the finest handwork and the most precise adjustments.

This flying metropolis is popularly known as the City of the Sun because the entire outer surface of the sphere is covered in a microscopically thin film of gold. This coating reduces the bright sunlight entering the inhabited portions of the sphere to a less dazzling intensity, while also making the sphere appear to be a gigantic shining ball of pure gold. At night, the city's Essence-accumulators cause it to emanate a soft glow that can be seen for hundreds of miles. People outside this city can see inside it only at sunrise and twilight, or when they are within a mile or two, but the golden outer wall does nothing to prevent anyone inside the city from looking out at the rest of Creation.

All the city's buildings are located in the pleasantly warm lower half of the sphere. The upper half of the sphere is separated from the lower half by a thin, tough membrane and contains Essence-focusing crystals that help supplement sunlight in heating the air inside of it. Inside the lower hemisphere, the buildings and other structures are all located on wide rings of lightweight synthetic materials. Each ring-shaped plaza is attached to the outer wall of the sphere and is between one quarter and two thirds of a mile wide. These habitation rings are built 50 to 200 yards apart, allowing the tallest buildings in the city to reach more than 50 stories into the air.

The central portion of the sphere is left open except for the city's two most impressive structures. The bottom-most of the sphere's many levels extends across the entire mile-wide bottom of the sphere. The central portion of this sturdy synthetic disk consists of a single factory-cathedral with five spires that each stretch half a mile into the air. Because the city is not built to support the construction of massive artifacts, this factory-cathedral specializes in building small items such as elaborate hand weapons, Essence-powered devices built into jewelry and items of clothing, and some of the small and vitally important components of larger constructs.

Half a mile above the spires of the factory-cathedral, several of the sphere's highest habitation rings contain skywalks more than half a mile long that all lead into the central portion of the sphere, known as the Celestial Palace. This palace is built on a central platform one mile in diameter. The outmost regions of this platform contain the Deliberative government's local offices and the residences of the city's Dragon-Blooded. Beyond these august and lovely buildings is an elaborately carved dome half a mile in diameter and a quarter of a mile high, which surrounds the estates and palaces of the city's five Celestial Exalted rulers.

High Nyunda is home to five of the mighty Celestial Exalted because it is the administrative center of the South, just as Chiaroscuro is the South's commercial center. This city travels continuously from one Southern city to another, stopping at most for only a day or two, and not lingering more than a week even at Chiaroscuro. As a result, the residents continually gain news and firsthand information about the entire region, and the city itself serves as a visible reminder to everyone who can see it of the incredible power

and inescapable reach of the Deliberative. These features combine to make High Nyunda the ideal location from which to administer and coordinate the various Southern principalities.

High Nyunda never lands. Essence-driven precipitators extract all the water the city requires from the air, and small garden plots and Essence-powered nutrient vats grow a third of the food used by the inhabitants. A fleet of skyships and personal vehicles regularly flies to and from the city, carrying visitors, additional food, supplies for the city's factory-cathedral and trade goods from all across Creation. Also, every time High Nyunda arrives above one of the cities of the South, it approaches one of that city's various skyship docks, typically located at the summit of a tall building. High Nyunda then lets down a 12-yard-long, six-yard-wide ramp so visitors can come and go as they please. Gliding chariots can drive on or off the city, carrying all manner of large and heavy goods.

The Southwestern Province

The Southwestern Province consists of the Southern lands on the western side of the Fire Mountains. The Southwestern Province is even more fertile than the Southern Coast Province, maintaining its fertility all the way to the slopes of the Fire Mountains. An-Teng Prefecture, located in the northern portions of the Southwest, is the most densely inhabited principality in this portion of Creation. South of An-Teng, the land becomes hotter and steamier and fewer mortals live there. The southern portions of the Southwestern Province are home to Dragon Kings and all manner of deadly and exotic animals.

An-Teng Prefecture

On the western side of the Fire Mountains lies the principality of An-Teng. Located on the border between the South and West, it is the wettest portion of the entire South and contains this region's tallest and most extensive forests, as well as a multitude of rivers. An-Teng Prefecture is divided into three provinces. The High Lands extend from the high peaks of the Fire Mountains down to the edges of the Southwestern forests. The Middle Lands consist of these lush and dense forests. The Shore Lands are wide fertile plains that extend from the edge of the forests to the actual shore and are irrigated by more than a dozen large rivers. These lands are all linked by the largest of all the Southern rivers, the wide and many-branched River of Queens. This majestic waterway extends from Thousand Dragons Lake high in the mountains to the Western Ocean in a vast and fertile river delta that begins at the capital of the entire domain, the huge and lovely City of Flowers.

An-Teng land is noted for both its beauty and its exquisite climate. It is also known for possessing many powerful demesnes. These demesnes are produced by the potent Essence flows created by An-Teng's proximity to both the Fire Mountains and the border with the West. All of these factors combined to make this land the home of a disproportionate number of Celestial Exalted, particularly Solar and Lunar Exalted, who build manses here to be their primary residences.

The Shore Lands

The Shore Lands make up a warm, wet region along the western coast of the Southern Threshold. This crescent of highly accessible lands serves as a trade hub to the rest of Creation and houses the commerce city of Salt-Founded Glory as well as the world-renowned City of Flowers, An-Teng's capital. Although a few other settlements in this territory are large enough to be called cities, this area is the most developed part of the country. It is crisscrossed with roads and canals to encourage a broader sense of community among its inhabitants, but those roads end near Calan's Loss (see pp. 98-99) with stern warnings carved on obelisks around the border. Few travelers need further encouragement to stay far away once they catch sight of the blighted swamp, though.

Abundant water and the mixture of volcanic soils washed down from the Fire Mountains makes this one of the most fertile regions for grain production in all of Creation. The Shore Lands are covered with RPCs and their associated fields, growing rice and smaller quantities of corn, wheat and millet. Using Essence-powered tilling and harvesting machinery to supplement the labor of patient individuals, tending and replanting the various crops allows most of these RPCs to produce three or four rice crops every year. Further inland, in the regions away from the many rivers, the Shore Lands are also home to many cultivated fruit and flower-bearing vines and shrubs. This land contains the largest and best vineyards of the South, as well as entire RPCs dedicated to the cultivation of spices and fragrant flowers.

The seas immediately off the Shore Lands are home to some of the most beautiful and brightly colored fish in all of Creation. While some local RPCs are devoted to providing fish for the tables of An-Teng, even more are home to professional tropical fish collectors, who capture brightly colored fish, storing them in specially made jade spheres. Inside these spheres, the fish remain in a state of suspended animation until they are removed and placed in water. As a result, the fishers of the Shore Lands can easily send decorative fish throughout Creation, allowing interested Exalts, gods and wealthy mortals to keep large aquariums filled with many brilliantly colored tropical fish.

The City of Flowers

Built on the banks of the River of Queens, the huge and lovely capital of An-Teng Prefecture stretches out into its wide and placid waters, with much of the city built on a mixture of small artificial islands and enormous floating platforms. The portions located on the shore are surrounded by relatively narrow canals filled with water that is perpetually fresh and clean due to cleansing enchantments placed upon the stones

that make up the canals' beds. Although Chiaroscuro is the largest and the tallest Southern city, and High Nyunda the most spectacular, the City of Flowers is widely acclaimed to be the most beautiful of the Southern cities.

All of the city's major thoroughfares are canals between 20 and 50 yards wide. Directed Essence flows cause the water in these canals to flow at different speeds and in different directions, depending upon its location in the canal. The water in each canal flows in only one direction, with the water next to the banks flowing no faster than a man can walk, and the water near the center of each canal flowing as fast as a swift horse can gallop. Because adjacent canals usually flow in opposite directions, travel through the city via the many junks, gondolas and other small passenger and cargo boats is fast and simple.

The capital's buildings consist almost exclusively of natural materials, including ivory, shell and a variety of tropical woods such as teak, ebony and mahogany. The city's temple to the Unconquered Sun, for example is a huge wooden pyramid covered with enormous slabs of ivory and shining golden shells. Advanced experiments in biogenesis allowed Exalted engineers to grow custom-designed slabs of ivory or shell in huge vats and to boost the speed with which the valuable tropical woods used in much of the city matures. The builders use powerful alchemical reagents to render this wood as tough and as fireproof as stone or metal. Most buildings are between five and 20 stories tall, and many are connected by elaborately carved skywalks. This city is built on a grid plan, with the Pyramid of the Unconquered Sun covering the area of nine blocks at the center of the city. All the other blocks are built on polished stone slabs that rise a few feet above the level of the river and are bounded by canals on all sides.

The city's most spectacular feature, however, is the multitude of brilliantly colored flowering vines that grow along most of the city's buildings and skywalks. A combination of the moist climate and having a local Wood-aspected manse encourage the health and growth of these flowers has caused the many bougainvillea, orchids, acanthus and jasmine to grow especially large and long-lasting flowers that remain in bloom all year round.

A consortium of master gardeners and their disciples known as the Infinite Orchid Collegiums tightly regulates the floral industry throughout the prefecture, protecting against foreign species and unlicensed magical meddling in order to protect the quality of the blooms and the international reputation of their business. Intense rivalries between different floral schools define the city's popular culture, especially since public viewing of private gardens often influences the judges who rule on the outcome. Competitions between masters often span decades, with each engagement accorded the pageantry and solemnity normally reserved for blood feuds between martial arts dojos. Less patient gardeners turn to poison to settle their differences, though the Collegiums abhor the practice.

With its high availability of plant-based poisons, the City of Flowers also plays home to an organized criminal syndicate called the Ivory Lotus that secretly regulates its member assassin families in a shadow reflection of the Collegiums. Echoing the paradoxical dualities of An-Teng culture, both the Collegiums and Ivory Lotus venerate the mortal High Queen of An-Teng as their spiritual founder, who in turn makes sure that both groups continue to serve the greater good of her land. Although far from secular, the people of the Shore Lands venerate gods of civilization and trade more than they do ancestral or nature deities, though Celestial cults are growing increasingly common.

Calan's Loss

The swamp called the Wailing Fen harbors an infernal shrine amid its fetid bracken and quagmire muck—a blighted demesne stained with the death of the first akuma. Thrice-Damned Gorol was a Solar Prince and Night Caste assassin who slew a Primordial early in the War. In the final rasping breath of his nemesis, Gorol heard terrible blasphemies unveiling the inexorable inevitability of Oblivion. Believing that the Primordials alone could undo the curses of their slain kin, Gorol secretly betrayed the Exalted and became a spy for the Primordials throughout the latter third of the War. Whatever his original intentions, his treachery cost many hundreds of Chosen lives and might have even led the Primordial's soul-typhoon weapon to the hidden base where the Dragon King armies massed for a grand offensive. The full scope of Gorol's wickedness might never be known, but when his circlemates finally realized what he had become more than a century after the War, they attempted to ambush him and bring him to justice. Sadly, the Lawgivers underestimated the depraved inventiveness of the Yozis who had rebuilt Thrice-Damned Gorol's body and soul with aspects of their own power.

Armed with the element of surprise and a variety of hideous powers, the akuma effortlessly slew his former friends and escaped, only to be pursued by the legendary demon-hunters Calan and Tomun, a married duo of Night and No Moon who always fought together. The two tracked Gorol to An-Teng and intercepted him before he could deliver the self-destruct codes for Mobile Platform 3 to a Lintha agent waiting offshore. The three fought viciously through the forest, unleashing powers that scorched and poisoned the land with conflagrations of holy and unholy Essence. Finally, Calan struck the deathblow, but could not escape the poison cloud Gorol expelled in his pain. Tomun rushed to his wife's side, but the Lunar could not heal Calan of the venom. Stricken, Tomun desperately begged Gorol for the secret of the cure. The akuma gasped out that only the lifeblood of a true love could save Calan, and he laughed in spiteful triumph as the Lunar slashed open his wrists and died sprawled across his wife's body. Calan awoke sometime later, healed by the power of her Solar Charms, to find her husband dead by his own hand. No trace remained of

Gorol's body, but its abomination had already metastasized through the earth.

Today, the people of An-Teng shun the Wailing Fen. Nothing good grows there, and terrible things stalk the rotting wetlands. Gnarled trees take on the sinister bronze patina of Szoreny, hiding the incurable poisons of Metagaos' thorns among their grasping foliage. Kimbery sloshes at the roots of the pooled muck, beneath bubbling tar expelling mephitic flame jets in the concentric rings of She Who Lives in Her Name. The dragonflies look a little too much like agata, and the fish swim with alien machinations etched into their glassy eyes. In short, the fen is a place where the Demon Realm bleeds into Creation, a tiny chink in the prison that holds the Primordials back from the world they made. Although the crack is not large enough to compromise the security of the prison, its existence introduces an additional variable of uncertainty that troubles the Five-Score Fellowship. Many Solar Exalted feel differently, delighted to have access to exotic infernal ingredients for artifact production without the dangers or hassle of procuring them from Malfeas. Bound demons regularly scavenge the swamp for unusual flora, fauna or geological elements that might have occult significance, so much so that the Deliberative recently stepped in and declared the swamp a protected sorcerous preserve, allowing a subcommittee to establish and prioritize licensing standards to limit the harvest. An-Teng's Golden Lord finds this legislation frustrating and disheartening, as it directly contradicts his longstanding efforts in Yu-Shan to declare the swamp a geomantic disaster area and get it dredged out of his nation.

The Middle Lands

The Middle Lands begin where the plains, scrub and open forests of the Shore Lands become dense jungles and thick forests. They end in the foothills of the Fire Mountains, where the forests once again become scrublands that lead up to the mountains. The northernmost portions of the Middle Lands are warm subtropical forests, but these forests become increasingly dense and verdant jungle approximately 100 miles south of the City of Flowers. This steamy jungle is similar to the rain forests of the Southeast, and is primarily distinguished by the fact that few of the trees grow more than 50 yards high and the Southwestern jungle is considerably wetter. The entirety of An-Teng must endure torrential monsoons that last the entirety of the season of Water. For the rest of the year, rain usually falls once a day in the Middle Lands, but these showers rarely last more than two hours and can be as brief as half an hour. As a result of this unique climate, though the trees are shorter than those in the Southeastern forests and jungles, and the undergrowth is thicker. The land is also usually marshy near the coast, and it consists of little more than mud or quicksand in some places, so most animals and residents must remain arboreal to avoid sinking in or slopping through treacherous disease- and parasite-infested muck.

Calan's Loss (Vitriol Demesne •••••)

The site of Gorol's death is one of the rare demesnes that channels an Essence aspect alien to the structure of Creation. Never introduced into the Tapestry, the alchemical catalyst *Theion To* passively consumes everything it touches as embodied in the shapeless, corrosive foam of the metody. Within Calan's Loss, vitriol consumes less literally and more in monstrous allegory, gradually eating away at the properties of Creation to substitute the mad laws of Malfeas.

Game Effects: Anything that spends too much time in Calan's Loss assumes the qualities of its closest analogue in Malfeas. Wasps swell and shimmer like agata, whores shrivel to the lithe alien delicacy of neomah, and predatory beasts growl with erymanthus hunger. The Storyteller should assign two points of positive mutations for each of the first five years of exposure, choosing traits that express an appropriate aspect of the Demon Realm. The first year of exposure also imposes a deficiency-level derangement, modifying each creature's behavior to fit demonic mores. Four more years of taint complete the change, turning the inhabitant into a legitimate creature of darkness. Storytellers should keep in mind that the mutations imposed by Calan's Loss are not random, but rather follow an internal logic rooted in the inimical aesthetics of the Yozis. The Deliberative takes great pains to make sure nothing blocks the flow of Essence through the swamp, since any catastrophic Essence buildup could spread the poison over a much larger area.

The capital of the Middle Lands is Prosperous Garden, a canal city with a consumable agrarian focus on fruit and vegetable production rather than the ephemeral beauty of flowers. The open-air markets of Prosperous Garden are without peer for exotic culinary delights, especially for elderly Dragon-Blooded who have forsworn meat as part of an ascetic regimen to prolong their lives. Deeper into the forest, the academic city Adorned with Wisdom as a Sapphire caters to religious and scholarly pursuits such as giving the older children of An-Teng aristocrats something vaguely approximating a Meru-quality education. People in the Middle Lands venerate the Exalted in their midst, but they devote most of their obeisance to the duality of the Golden Lord and his gruesome and chaotic counterpart, the Pale Mistress. Heavy labor is accomplished with the aide of elephants who roam the forest and live in symbiotic harmony with humankind, following the example of their animal avatar, who sometimes serves as the Golden Lord's steed in times of war.

The Southern portions of these forests make up a separate domain that is not a part of An-Teng Prefecture. These jungles are home to the second largest remaining city of the Dragon Kings, Ssaaneth. Ssaaneth is a jungle city, located on the vast Golden River, so-called because of the masses of golden flower petals that float along on its surface after falling from the shining sun trees growing along its banks. Ssaaneth is home to all four varieties of Dragon King, and has close ties with a smaller city of the Mosok living on Mandala Island, located in the mouth of the Golden River, and with an aerie of Pterok located on the slopes of the Fire Mountains. By treaty, the lands around Ssaaneth are the property of the Dragon Kings. Except for the Celestial Exalted and the gods of Yu-Shan, outsiders must obtain permission to visit.

Unlike Rathess, which is primarily home to Dragon Kings who desire extensive contact with the outside world, Ssaaneth is home to more than half a million Dragon Kings who prefer to live more traditional and isolated lives. The city's residents do not encourage visitors, and those who do visit must deal with the city and its inhabitants on their own terms.

Just north of the domain of the Dragon Kings, the Lunar Exalt Celebrated Serpent has a personal estate 50 miles across centered on a small city built around a four-dot Wood manse. She began breeding snakemen here 1,500 years ago. For the past 1,000 years, she has been slowly forging an alliance with the Dragon Kings in order to help her snakemen learn their ancient and exotic ways. Her goal is to make these snakemen into living bridges between human culture and that of the Dragon Kings. Celebrated Serpent's beastmen are all taught by Dragon King tutors and spend at least a few years living in Ssaaneth. As a result, many close friendships have been forged between the beastmen and the Dragon Kings. In the past several centuries, there have even been a few marriages between snakemen and Dragon Kings. Celebrated Serpent has not yet managed, however, to use her sorcery to enable these pairings to produce the half-breed offspring she eventually hopes for.

Merchants from An-Teng trade with both Ssaaneth and Celebrated Serpent's domain, obtaining valuable jungle products and the exotic crystal and vegetative technologies of the Dragon Kings, but most mortals consider both regions to be exceptionally strange places, and few spend more than a few days in either region.

Half a dozen other, smaller Dragon King settlements lie South of Ssaaneth, but none contain more than 30,000 Dragon Kings. All are located within 500 miles of Ssaaneth. Farther South, dense and steamy jungles stretch from the western shore to halfway up the Fire Mountains, and the combination of heat and extreme humidity (along with the abundance of eternally hungry and often poisonous wildlife) has rendered this land completely inhospitable to unmodified mortals. As

a result, ambitious Solar and Lunar Exalted have transformed much of the land south of the lands of the Dragon Kings into a vast experimental breeding laboratory.

The High Lands

When the Exalted speak of An-Teng, they typically mean its High Lands, the slopes of which gradually rise from the forest to lofty peaks in the east, all beneath the majestic spire of the Pinnacle of Mercy where the Golden Lord dwells. This region is sparsely settled, but it is as wealthy as the remainder of this rich land because the mountains abound in mineral resources. Silver, moonsilver and various gemstones are all common, but almost any material, from jade to adamant can be found somewhere along these jagged slopes. The most famous feature of this land is the lovely Thousand Dragon Lake, which is popular with tourists for its natural beauty and the impressive size of the fish that can be caught there. The land around this lake is the site of several RPCs devoted to fishing and working with aquatic materials, as well as a small city of 25,000 devoted largely to tourism. The shores of Thousand Dragon Lake and the banks of the many tributaries leading down from the higher peaks are also home to a number of small but prestigious monasteries, where monks meditate on the nature and purposes of the gods and their own place in Creation. They also teach all manner of unusual and powerful martial arts.

The largest city in the High Lands is the royal seat of Jade Plum Citadel, whose narrow, close-packed buildings and elegant temples stand atop the ruined foundations of an Exalted military outpost used in the Primordial War. Beneath these foundations, a Jadeborn settlement and mining complex serves as an extension of the city whose close alliance follows treaties negotiated by the Golden Lord. This walled city is ringed with potent defenses designed to drive off the bandits that haunt the mountains and the Darkbroods that occasionally venture up through fissures or extinct lava tubes and attempt to kidnap, slay or rob the surface dwellers. Visible for miles away because of the shining onyx slabs covering its walls, Jade Plum Citadel is designed to be home to only 160,000, but it often is a temporary home to almost 200,000, because of the large numbers of tourists and traveling merchants who pass through it. Located in a small mountain valley, Jade Plum Citadel is smaller than most cities of its population, with all mortal residents dwelling in 15- to 20-story residence towers. Despite its density, however, it is also a city noted for great natural beauty. This city contains thousands of meticulously groomed gardens in small glass-domed pavilions located throughout the city. Away from the city, the manses scattered throughout the High Lands afford their owners true retreat and appropriate scenery for difficult meditations.

The Deadly Crescent

The lands south of Ssaaneth and the other habitations of the Dragon Kings are little known to mortals. The interior of this portion of the Southwest is named the Deadly Crescent because it consists of a crescent-shaped region of the hottest and most inhospitable jungle in Creation, which extends from the Fire Mountains in the northeast, to several hundred miles inland from the Violet Coast in the southwest. Here, ambitious Celestial bioengineers come to compete against one another in an effort to breed increasingly hardy and deadly creatures. This vast laboratory was where the first kyzvoi were created and allowed to breed. It is also where the most ambitious and reckless bioengineers experiment using controlled exposure to Wyld energies combined with more ordinary bioforming techniques such as the Imbue Amalgam spell (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. II—The White Treatise**, p. 74). Specializing in creating the most unnatural and exotic beasts possible, these experiments have created the abacasteri, the snakebud trees and the fire ants. Experiments continue on a contagious, parasitic and infectious colonial organism tentatively titled the chakra orchid.

Unlike the larger savanna hunting preserve of the Southeast, the Deadly Crescent is strictly forbidden to hunters. This land is both a laboratory for testing some of the most extreme and deadly life imaginable and also a place where gamblers and researchers pit the most successful beings against each other in exotic and terrible gladiatorial combats. Both the laboratories and the arena where many of these fights take place are located in the middle of the southwestern edge of the Crescent, in a small jungle city known as Razak-Jal. Here, half a dozen Celestial Exalted, several hundred Dragon-Blooded and thousands of enlightened human assistants work together to create impressive and deadly beasts, some of which are also intelligent. These dedicated savants and many hundreds of Exalts from across Creation who are interested in their work come to watch and bet large sums of money on the outcome of the combats staged between the fiercest of these beings. The income from these battles serves to help fund continuing research.

Although they never speak of it to outsiders, the Exalts in charge of Razak-Jal regularly obtain groups of condemned criminals for their experiments. Most human subjects do not survive, but a few have become powerful, deadly and dangerously insane monsters. In addition, one of the Lunars working here regularly mates with some of the most deadly of her creations in an effort to breed the most powerful and lethal beastmen in all of Creation.

To prevent any of these deadly creatures from escaping, a ring of jade pillars 50 yards high and six yards wide surrounds the Deadly Crescent. Set 300 yard apart and acting as potent Essence antennae, these pillars use the Essence they accumulate to form an almost impenetrable wall of force around the entire Deadly Crescent. This wall extends 200 yards up into the air and cannot be harmed by anything less than 50 levels of aggravated damage. Breaching the wall requires the attacker to inflict a total of 30 levels of aggravated damage, after subtracting 50 points due to the wall's potent armor. In addition, anything touching this wall of Essence immediately

suffers 20 dice of lethal damage. As a result, the only way into this region is by either flying vehicles or sorcery. As an additional layer of protection to the north, the Dragon Kings of Ssaaneth built a barricade between their lands and the Deadly Crescent, which consists of plants engineered to be exceedingly poisonous and ever-hungry predators that attack and devour anything coming from the South. Behind this living wall, the Dragon Kings placed another force barrier created using their powerful crystal technologies.

Refuge— Home of the Pure-Bred Lintha

On one of the small islands just off the southern coast of An-Teng is a city that appears to be a remnant of the time before the Primordial War. On this island, known as Refuge, live 30,000 pure-bred Lintha, by far the largest untainted remnant of their once powerful and majestic race. Refuge is connected to the Southern mainland by a narrow mile-long causeway and so is technically part of the South and under the jurisdiction of the ancient Quicksilver Falcon, Radiant Hurricane. On all Deliberative maps, Refuge is never referred to by name and is instead listed as Radiant Hurricane's private meditation garden, with a note that it is strictly off limits to all outsiders.

The History of the Pure-Bred Lintha

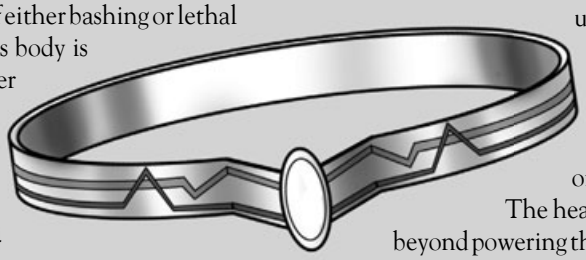
When the Primordials ruled Creation, the Lintha were the beloved children of their Great Mother, Kimbery. The Primordial known as the Sea That Marched Against the Flame was the ruler and living embodiment of the Southwestern ocean, but the defeat of the Primordials by the combined forces of gods and Exalts changed everything. The Lintha's Great Mother was banished to Malfeas, and their cousin and homeland, the living continent Lintha Ng Oroo, was shattered, leaving only small remnants behind.

The three Lintha whose descendants became the Lintha pirates were not, however, the only Lintha to survive the destruction of their homeland. Three score of these noble beings were captured and enslaved by various Celestial Exalted. Only their captors know the fate of 41 of these beings. The remaining 19 were captured by Radiant Hurricane, a Lawgiver of the Eclipse Caste who drew the Second Breath in the last days of the Primordial War, after the previous carrier of his Exaltation died in battle. When he first captured the Lintha, Radiant Hurricane was young, ambitious, new to his power and easily tempted. His Lintha captives spoke of a marvelous artifact of great healing power that the Great Mother had given them—the Verdigris Circlet. In return for their freedom and his protection and secret patronage, they would give Radiant Hurricane the Verdigris Circlet and agree to perform the centennial devotions necessary to keep it operating. Radiant Hurricane lacked the power necessary to rip the knowledge of this artifact from their minds and was unwilling to share his knowledge with older Exalts.

Radiant Hurricane gave in to temptation and agreed to the Lintha's bargain. In return for this item and the agreement to maintain it, he gave the 19 Lintha a four-dot Earth manse and the island on which it was located, which they renamed Refuge. In addition, he used his powers to shield them from observation. As his powers grew, he was able to

The Verdigris Circlet (Artifact N/A)

The Verdigris Circlet is a circular band of a shining metal patterned like fine damascened steel, but with the bands of different color being a mixture of bright copper and emerald green. The circlet is as wide as a person's thumb, it has a setting for a single hearthstone, and it is designed to be worn around the wearer's head.



The circlet's wearer cannot die. He automatically regenerates one health level of either bashing or lethal damage per action, even if his body is rendered into ash. The wearer also heals aggravated damage at a rate of one health level every five minutes. This item renders the wear immune to all diseases and, most importantly of all, the wearer does not age while wearing this artifact. The wearer cannot drown, suffocate, starve or dehydrate, and he recovers from the worst poison or more deadly injury in less than an hour. The only way to kill the wearer is to remove the circlet, and even then, the wearer retains the effects of the circlet for one minute for every dot of Essence he possesses. Using this artifact requires the wearer to commit five motes of Essence and place a hearthstone of level 3 or higher in the single setting. The hearthstone provides no benefits beyond powering this artifact. The circlet's owner or others acting in his stead must also perform special rituals requiring a (Wits + Occult) roll with a difficulty of 4 once a century. These rituals require one full day to perform, after which time the circlet functions normally for another century.

completely protect the island from all outside scrying or observation, essentially placing the island outside fate. Over the centuries, even the slow-breeding Lintha gradually managed to increase their numbers, growing from the original 19 to 30,000. Today, they live in a small city powered by the Earth manse. While they have lost some of their most advanced and powerful Essence-wielding technologies—mostly because they lack the connection to the Great Mother—they have access to artifacts equal to all but the finest available during the Era of Dreams and have a standard of living equal to most Dragon-Blooded.

Over time, the need for absolute secrecy has decreased because the interbreeding of other now-vanished groups of Lintha with humanity has meant that Lintha features are no longer unknown outside of their island. Also, none but a handful of the oldest Exalts has even remembered them for the last millennia. Pure-bred Lintha who leave Refuge can now walk openly in Creation. When questioned, they merely reply that they are part of a handful of half-breed Lintha who serve Radiant Hurricane. Most of the time, amidst the vast diversity of natural and augmented mortal appearance, they are not questioned at all. After more than three millennia, not even the most paranoid Exalt fears the existence of a few dozen Lintha. The discovery of a city of 30,000 Lintha who have largely maintained their pre-Deliberative culture and technology would still be cause for alarm, however, so secrecy about their numbers and their objectives remains absolutely essential.

The Lintha Island and the City of Ng Skalt

Located one mile off the Southwestern coast and almost 500 miles south of the City of Flowers, Refuge is a lush tropical island almost 80 miles in diameter. Surrounded by a narrow sandy beach, the interior is a mixture of dense subtropical forests and grasslands, with a low mountain in the center. At the peak of this mountain is the Earth manse, and the Lintha City of Ng Skalt is built around it, sculpted from the mountain. The presence of several one- and two-dot manses on this island, as well as excellent weather and an abundance of all manner of fruit, game and fish, makes Refuge a perfect hiding place for the Lintha to slowly and methodically draw up their plans to conquer Creation.

The Lintha Plan

Although they recognize that their plan is profoundly difficult and will require many centuries to accomplish, the leaders of the Lintha all swear an oath to the Great Mother that they will eventually restore the Primordials to power. Some Lintha venture out into Creation to seek their fortune, just as others obtain employment in the Deliberative as a way to spy upon the actions of the Exalted. In both cases, however, Lintha who leave their homeland must swear an oath by the name of the Great Mother to never reveal the nature of the Lintha plans to anyone but their most trusted allies. Those few who have broken this oath have all been hunted down and slain. The secretive Lintha have few allies, but they made contact with the more dissatisfied and rebellious elements within the Conclave of the Jadeborn Artisans of the Mountain Folk more than 500 years ago. After long debate, the Lintha decided to overlook Autochthon's betrayals and seek help from the Jadeborn.

As creations of another Primordial who was struck down by the Exalted, the Lintha have found some Jadeborn who were sympathetic to their cause, as well as a few Dragon-Blooded and even some enlightened mortals who also support them. Most pure-bred Lintha deem beings incapable of manipulating Essence as beneath their notice, so they have not made contact with ordinary mortal rebels or criminal gangs. The pure-bed Lintha also have no contact with the debased Lintha of Bluehaven. They regard these cannibalistic half-breeds with a mixture of contempt and pity—labeling their plans to call up the forces of Malfeas to overwhelm Creation as self-destructive madness. The pure-bred Lintha are well aware that the Malfeans have been twisted and driven mad by their time in Malfeas. They worry that too many Yozis dream of transforming Creation into a hellish duplicate of their prison, with a green sun overhead and demons capering everywhere.

Instead, the pure-bred Lintha are searching for a way to restore the Malfeans, or at least the Great Mother, to their former glorious state. If they do that, they can then retake at least a portion of Creation, with the Great Mother once again their patron and the ruler of their domain. Their primary hope lies in finding some of the most powerful Primordial artifacts that were lost during the War. Their first goal is to recover the infamous Eye of Autochthon. Its power would greatly aid their efforts, and gaining it would almost guarantee that they could gain the undisputed loyalty of the Jadeborn and free the Jadeborn from the powerful and destructive Great Geas the Deliberative forced Autochthon to place upon them. The Lintha and their few allies search the hidden and lost places of Creation for these artifacts, while the rest of the Lintha plan and wait.

Some young Lintha have become dissatisfied with the pace of their elder's plan. More than a few suspect that the oldest and most powerful Lintha have grown comfortable with their life on Refuge and have little actual interest in attempting to advance the cause. A few Lintha have left Refuge and have their oath of secrecy as their only remaining tie to their people. Others have begun seeking other allies beyond Refuge. Some have even begun considering making secret attacks on various important and highly visible targets. They hope to create doubt and fear by causing widespread losses of life that are too large and horrible for the Deliberative to conceal or dismiss. These Lintha rebels have kept their plans completely secret from their leaders, since the ruling council would strongly oppose any attacks that might draw attention to their existence or draw the ire of Radiant Hurricane.

The Nature of the Lintha

As the bearers of the blood of a Primordial, the powers of the Lintha are substantial. They heal and resist disease and bleeding as well as one of the Exalted would. They are all capable of manipulating Essence, and they live as long as the Dragon-Blooded. Many wield potent Charms as well—Charms disturbingly similar to those of the Solar Exalted. Many wield potent Charms as well. Legend says that when mighty Autochthon designed the first Exalted, he used the powers of these half-human beings as a template, exercising his prodigious skills to expand those powers so that they were considerably grander and more glorious.

Unlike their debased and cursed relatives, the Lintha pirates of Bluehaven, the pure-bred Lintha retain their original glorious forms. They are a gaunt and tall people who often reach seven feet in height. Their skin is the bright green of newly sprouted rice and their hair a pure and shining white. They have long faces and brilliant crimson eyes, and they move with the grace of hunting cats.

The remaining pure-bred Lintha are exceedingly proud of their heritage and equally determined to regain their lost glory. To this end, they maintain close ties with their Solar patron. For the last 2,000 years, they have made up a substantial minority of his personal retinue. Yet every one of the Lintha who works with any of the Exalted is taught an ancestral Charm quite similar to Righteous Lion Defense Charm (see Exalted, p. 199) so that their loyalty to the Lintha people can never be altered or suborned by even the most powerful Charms or spells. Yet every one of the Lintha who works with any of the Exalted is taught the Righteous Lion Defense Charm (see **Exalted**, p. 199) so that their loyalty to the Lintha people can never be altered or suborned by even the most powerful Charms or spells. Naturally, the Lintha have made certain that their patron does not know the extent to which they are resistant to his influence.

Exalted Lintha

During the First Age, the few pure-bred Lintha have never been given Celestial Exaltation, although that could potentially change at any time. Although it is quite rare, however, there has been some degree of carefully monitored and controlled interbreeding with the occasional Dragon-Blooded retainers of Radiant Hurricane. As a result, a few dozen Lintha have become Terrestrial Exalts. Lintha who take the Second Breath retain their appearance, but lose all of their special abilities except the Night Vision pox and the Chakra Eye affliction. These traits cost Dragon-Blooded Lintha a total of three bonus points. Except for these two traits and their appearance, these Lintha are identical to all other Dragon-Bloods.

Creating Pure-Bred Lintha

Generating pure-bred Lintha characters is the same as generating one of the Exalted, with the following changes:

When assigning Attributes, Lintha get seven dots to spend in their primary category, five dots in their secondary category and four dots in their tertiary category. They possess 25 dots of Abilities and may choose any five Favored Abilities. Their starting Essence is 2, and they have an Essence pool of (Essence x 10). They have 10 dots of Backgrounds and can use any Background available to one of the Terrestrial Exalted except Breeding. They can attune to hearthstones and artifacts normally, but they must pay double the cost to attune to any of the magical materials. In addition, the Lintha's piercing crimson eyes possess the equivalent of the Night Vision pox and the Chakra Eye affliction. Both traits affect their two crimson eyes. They never gain a third eye.

Pure-bred Lintha utilize their own unique Charms, different from those of the Exalted. These may be approximated by using spirit Charms thematically resonant with the Yozi Kimbery. Lintha cannot use Holy Charms, but are not actually creatues of darkness. They may also learn Terrestrial Circle Sorcery and Terrestrial martial arts. Pure-Bred Lintha begin play with five Charms, which can include sorcery spells or Martial Arts Charms. These characters have 15 bonus points and use the same bonus and experience point costs as Terrestrial Exalted. Their Permanent Essence can never exceed 5, and they are incapable of using Combos. They also have no Peripheral Essence Pool, Virtue Flaw or anima.

The most capable Lintha have learned both Terrestrial Circle Sorcery and Terrestrial martial arts and have spread this knowledge to the rest of their people. Combined with their powerful Essence-based technologies and various payments from their patron, they live as well as any people in Creation. They are not content to remain an isolated and hidden nation with little influence, however. Their plots and plans continue.

The Fire Mountains

Everyone in Creation associates volcanoes with the South, and the largest and most active range of volcanic mountains in all the South is the Fire Mountain range that divides the central South from the Southwestern coast. These volcanoes were most active in the earliest days of Creation, before the Primordials created humanity. Most of these volcanoes became extinct well before the Era of Dreams, as Creation aged and gradually became tamer and safer. Yet one in 10 of these volcanoes remains active even today, though most erupt only once every few centuries.

Nevertheless, the large number of volcanoes combined with the fact that half a dozen of the largest and most violent volcanoes erupt every few years means that the Deliberative is regularly kept busy dealing with these eruptions. The vast power controlled by the Penitent (see p. 93) allows the Lawgivers to redirect lava flows away from populated areas and relieve stress on volcanoes that might otherwise explode, but no force in Creation can prevent these volcanoes from eventually erupting. Therefore, Realm geomancers must regularly direct lava flows somewhere.

These geomancers occasionally find that the largest lava flows have altered the local Essence flows. The Exalted then summon elementals and demons and use powerful artifacts to sculpt recent lava flows to either restore power to damaged demesnes or to shape the newly formed lava flow in such a way as to either enhance an existing demesne or create an entirely new one. On the positive side, a lava flow that disrupts several local manses might also bring up chunks of adamant and other exotic magical materials.

After most eruptions, the Deliberative issues safety directives promising there will be no eruptions near a recent lava flow for at least a few days. Prospectors then flock to the new lava flow to scour it for all manner of valuable stones and ores. A mixture of herd guardians and people of the earth who possess the Elemental Adaptation (Fire) pox make up the bulk of these prospectors, because both peoples are far more capable of enduring the hot temperatures near a recent eruption than ordinary mortals are.

These mortals arrive in fully automated Essence-powered vehicles such as transpods (see p. 25) and begin harvesting valuable materials such as heat-resistant crystals or nuggets of adamant before the lava has fully cooled. In regions where eruptions are frequent, they sometimes have only a week or two before increased pressures beneath Creation force Deliberative geomancers to permit another nearby eruption. The Deliberative employs several sworn brotherhoods of Dragon-Blooded to help rescue endangered workers and other mortals. These teams use sorcery and swift emergency vehicles to rescue careless or unlucky victims before they are either buried under molten lava or overcome with deadly fumes.

In addition to supplying wealth, the Fire Mountains are also a significant source of prestige and entertainment. Celestial Exalts with residences near the Fire Mountains regularly pay the geomancers in charge of timing eruptions to make sure that especially beautiful or spectacular eruptions occur during parties or festivals. The southernmost Fire Mountains extend to the edges of the Wyld, and uncontrolled Wyld energies occasionally drift across this border. When they do, nearby eruptions can consist of exotic substances such as boiling blood or hallucinogenic steam. (See the Wyld Lava table on p. 111 of **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. II—The Wyld**.) Skilled geomancers can manipulate these Wyld energies to cause volcanoes near the Wyld to erupt in vast clouds of flowers, brightly colored cinnamon candy, burning bubbles or similar exotic and beautiful wonders.

The Far Southern Province

This rocky land varies between blazing hot days and warm nights, and only the toughest and most skilled unprotected mortals can survive here for any length of time. It is also one of the wealthiest regions in all Creation, however, so many dozens of mining RPCs are located here, as well as the infamous Pleasure Dome of Xela-Cas.

The Pleasure Dome of Xela-Cas

Some 400 years ago, the Lawgiver Eternal Crimson Sunset founded an entire city devoted entirely to pleasure and recreation. As one of the lords of the Far South, Eternal Crimson Sunset was in love with the severe beauty of the vast Southern desert and had this city built in a location that was as lovely as it was inhospitable. Xela-Cas is situated in the midst of a huge desert of brilliant snow-white sand and is built around a five-dot manse that powers the entire city. In the distance behind it is a trio of active volcanoes, one of which is close enough to the boundaries of the Wyld that minor chaos leakage regularly turns the lava and fire that it spews forth all the colors of the rainbow.

The city itself is no less spectacular. It consists of a series of beautifully made and exceptionally tall pleasure palaces, each lit with a brilliant array of colored lights that illuminate the night sky for miles around. All these palaces are situated on an enormous disk of alabaster and white jade several miles across. This disk serves as the base for the entire city, and on it, myriad polished shining streets wind past a dozen large pleasure palaces and several score smaller ones. The entire city is covered by an ephemeral dome created by Essence projectors located around the edge of the white disk. This dome keeps the air inside pleasantly cool and repels the windblown sand and the occasional smoke and ash from the distant volcanoes.

The city's many pleasure palaces comprise a mixture of gambling parlors, performance halls, restaurants, shops and hotels. Each of the largest ones endeavors to be more impressive and grandiose than similar establishments available elsewhere in Creation or Yu-Shan. In the gambling parlors, gamblers bet everything from simple jade to manses, townhouses in Yu-Shan, skyships or even more exotic qualities such as beauty, dots of Essence, sanity or youth. The performance halls offer plays, concerts, storytelling, dances, mass shared dreams and gladiatorial combat all performed by bound demons, exotic automatons, minor gods or semi-sentient constructs of solid Essence. The restaurants serve delicacies from all over Creation, as well as impressive banquets normally available only in Yu-Shan. For appropriately high prices, even celestial wine and peaches of immortality are available there.

The city's shops sell a similar range of wonders and provide everything from enchanted masks created by the goddess Shalrina to perfectly tailored suits of clothing designed to deflect assassins' blades. More ordinary shops sell some of the finest mundane jewelry in all Creation. The hotels offer options ranging from large rooms suitable for glorious and noble Dragon-Bloods—complete with hand-carved, self-adjusting furniture, sheets of the finest automatically warming, semi-mobile silks and a variety of similar comforts—to suites suitable for the highest Celestial gods or the most jaded Celestial Exalts. These accommodations' furnishings include sense-shattering illusions and constructs of living Essence that shape themselves to their resident's every whim.

In addition to serving food that is equally splendid, the better hotels also offer a range of more discreet services, including everything from mortal or demonic concubines to victims available for residents with more exotic tastes to abuse as they see fit. A few hotels also offer their patrons the services of highly trained spies or assassins, but all contracts are made privately between the patron and the spy or assassin, so as to maintain the polite fiction of the hotels' plausible deniability.

The interior of each of the large pleasure palaces is designed to emulate some famous and beautiful location within Creation, Yu-Shan or, in the case of the infamous pleasure palace called the Ebon Dragon's Blessings, Malfeas. In Celestial Visions, all of the shops, rooms and entertainment parlors are located off a duplicate of one of Yu-Shan's quicksilver canals, and the entire hotel is made to look like a portion of Yu-Shan. In Glacial Wonders, the interior is artificially chilled to well below freezing, and all its structures are made of ice or well-packed snow. Guests who lack the ability to ignore or otherwise endure the cold can rent pendants that protect them. Another palace is entirely filled with water, while still another is a vast open space, where every shop, gambling hall and other establishments is mounted on a separate dais that floats in the air at different heights.

This city was designed to specifically cater to the most important members of the Deliberative, including Exalts of all types, Half-Castes, gods, powerful elementals and the

God-Blooded. Mortals who do not either work directly for the Deliberative or on the estates of one of the Exalted are excluded, and anyone except the Celestial Exalted and the gods of Yu-Shan must have an invitation to visit. These invitations are given to friends and clients of regular patrons as well as being offered by the Deliberative as rewards for meritorious service, heroism or even simply as part of the regular commendations the Deliberative government periodically bestows on unusually skilled or effective employees.

Few visitors see (and even fewer care about) the dark side of Xela-Cas. While most of the work there is done by various Essence-powered constructs, bound demons or similar beings, a small army of several thousand specially bred albino servants perform most of the menial tasks. Even in the Era of Dreams, mortal hands and minds are still cheaper and more efficient than most other options. These servants are under strict orders to emerge from their underground dormitories only late at night, after most revelers have either gone to sleep or busied themselves behind closed doors. Eternal Crimson Sunset made the servants albinos in order to make the idea of escaping or emerging unto the sunlit streets of Xela-Cas an unpleasant prospect for his servants. Their pale skin does nicely complement the city's alabaster foundation, though.

A few guests have taken a liking to these servants, occasionally ordering the youngest and most beautiful as concubines. Although these servants are not mistreated by any except a few especially debauched guests, they are slaves whose lives would horrify most of the mortals in Creation. While the guests enjoy themselves with unimaginable pleasures, these slaves toil ceaselessly and serve their masters' every whim.

Desus, I don't understand...
Why all these gifts? Even such generosity can't change my mind.
NOW, OLIPHEM, LEAVE US NOT BE STUBBORN.
I—
IT'S SUCH A SMALL THING I'VE ASKED YOU FOR. A TRIFLE, REALLY.
ONCE IT'S DONE, THE SEAS WILL BE SAFER FOR EVERYONE.
But you—
DON'T YOU WANT THAT?
I can't. I'm sorry.
Honoring your request would violate my nature.
MY "REQUEST"?

CHAPTER FIVE
THE WEST

Least populated of the directions and composed mostly of individual islands and island chains, the majority of the West defies easy division into the province-and-principality system so common in the rest of the Threshold. Only the artificial continent of Saigoth possesses sufficient landmass to be divided thus. The remainder of the West is broken up in a more ad-hoc fashion.

Saigoth Province

In the mythology of the West, it is said that the Saigoth Gates stand at the end of the ocean. Nothing enters through them and nothing leaves through them but by ceasing to exist. Carved of starmetal set with emeralds and endlessly commemorated in the dances of the gilmyne, the Saigoth Gates define the border between being and non-being. They have long been used by savants as a crude metaphor for the shinmaic substrata of the Wyld that separates improbabilities from the impossible. It is fitting, then, that the Solars named the continent they raised from the depths of chaos Saigoth, though most outside the Celestial Exalts simply call it the Great Western Continent for fear of offending whatever lies beyond the likely mythical gates.

Although slightly smaller than ancient Lintha Ng Oroo, the continent of Saigoth dwarfs Okeanos of old, a vast elliptical body several hundred miles west of the original location of the Elemental Pole of Water. Centered as it is on the North-South axis, the massive island boasts the most comfortably temperate and stable climate of any landmass in the West—fitting since Saigoth was made specifically for human habitation.

Clepsys Prefecture

The northern quarter of Saigoth comprises a single megalopolis prefecture of interconnected urban regions designed for the twofold purpose of housing the private "country" estates of powerful Celestial Exalted and supporting the largest naval base/shipyard owned by the Realm. A range of tall narrow mountains fences Clepsys off from the rest of the continent, with added security provided by thousands of bound demons that lair in the snow-capped crags. To keep Clepsys as clean and wondrous as possible, mortals are not permitted within the district, even as retainers. Although this restriction increases the cost of living substantially, since all servants must be automatons or lesser Essence users, the policy is actually considered a benefit by its elder citizens since it quietly excludes younger, brasher Exalted from setting up residences. Consequently, the palatial compounds of the residential subdistricts are among the most luxuriously decadent manses in the world. Even the townhouse villas in the areas reserved for notable Terrestrial Gentes ancestors

are stunning in their simple elegance. Perhaps the greatest extravagance of the prefecture is the fact that many of the residences house their owners for only a season each year, since so many of these luminaries dare not stay away from the Blessed Isle too long for fear of falling behind their rivals.

To facilitate transport without the noise and bustle of vehicles or the mess of living mounts, all of Clepsys is connected by a set of canals inhabited by iridescent liquefied elementals whose sole purpose is to move passengers faster than the gold canals of Yu-Shan. Adding to the beauty, millions of bound gilmyne decorate intersections and state gardens as living statuary, coordinating their choreography to praise the Saigoth Gates, and by proxy, the Exalted who believe they made that myth a reality. Likewise, no infrastructural convenience is too expensive or too inefficient for Clepsys' city-planners, who take full advantage of the awesome power of the region's constructed geomancy in ways previously unheard of in the Threshold. Virtually every building on the island is a manse, and none save the townhouses of the Dragon-Blooded Gentes elders are rated below four dots.

The entertainment available in Clepsys, from the merely decadent to the inconceivably outrageous, is limited only by the imagination and resources of the prefecture's inhabitants. Third Circle demon concubines and grand dueling arenas reinforced against Solar spells are the least of the available wonders. Those who can dream up a more spectacular amusement to break the tedium of nigh-omnipotence enjoy unmatched celebrity status until something better comes along. One of the more exotic games played by the citizenry is an annual contest held on the first night of Calibration to build or summon a functional Saigoth Gate. Contestants have full access to the district's geomantic grid for the purposes of the competition, and although no one really expects anyone to actually open a way outside the universe, the audience revels in the pyrotechnic spectacle of the failures.

In keeping with the aesthetics of Clepsys, the factory-cathedrals devoted to the production of merchant and naval fleets operate with the most cutting-edge automation, with no crashing din or rising smoke to interrupt the meditations of the Exalted. From outside, the towering structures might be any other coastal palace but for the massive bay doors that release finished vessels. The factory-cathedrals also turn out unique private yachts in smaller numbers, though the obscene price tag attached to these ships maximizes their value as status symbols. Still, for the Exalt who simply must have it all, Clepsys is the place to go.

Since Admiral Leviathan bases his central command on Luthe, the naval base adjoining the Clepsys shipyards operates on little more than a glorified skeleton crew. The facilities are all quite modern, of course—anything less would mar the prefecture's perfection. The base, however, is really more of a social club for semi-retired commanders who could provide a fallback command if some unthinkable defeat destroyed Luthe and necessitated a new staging

ground for the security of the Realm. Leviathan finds the culture of the Clepsys base distastefully unprofessional and delights in making surprise inspections to politely terrorize the pampered staff.

Given the demographics of its population, the idea of any individual or body directly ruling Clepsys is laughable. All major decisions are made by weighted vote of the landholders, with the number of votes given to each constituent proportional to the value of her property. These votes also appoint Terrestrial bureaucrats to handle minor matters. Because these officials receive stipends (and possible reappointment) only following satisfactory annual performance reviews, personnel problems are unheard of. In practice, more political decisions get decided by informal banter at private galas than by official voting, since the latter is infinitely more tedious and necessitates the obnoxious pretense of recording Terrestrial votes.

Beneath Clepsys, the massive machines that run its wonders churn with the endless chimes of Essence-suffused crystals and the clank of gears. These foundations run deep, protected by automated weapons that target and annihilate Darkbroods that stray too close. A system of tunnels running beneath the ocean connects back to the Jadeborn caverns on the Blessed Isle, allowing artisans compelled by the Great Geas to answer the call of the Celestial Exalts and build wonders the Exalted elite are too busy to fashion for themselves. Hundreds of megalithic stone gates stand ready to automatically slam closed if the ocean should ever break through the ceiling, preventing a flood from drowning the lower reaches of the foundations at either end.

The Outback Prefecture

The southern three quarters of Saigoth might as well be another world from the splendors of Clepsys. Although the so-called Outback is no wasteland, its climate is uncomfortably arid and poor in natural resources. The prefecture exists to temporarily house mortal colonists until they are ready to be shipped off to their new homes in Wyld-shaped lands.

The original planning committee for Saigoth considered a variety of sociological models to maximize colonist preparedness with minimal resource investment. The simple truth of the matter is that the frontier of Creation is not a stable or safe place to be, regardless of the propaganda distributed throughout the Threshold. Shaping engines and Solar Charms can carve form and substance from the Wyld, but a bit of chaos always leaks over in storms, surge tides and tentative incursions by the unshaped. Resisting mutation in the face of inevitable Wyld exposure takes strength of will, a quality best forged by weathering adversity. Rather than supply this adversity directly, the Exalted decided to let mortals oppress each other.

When a new colonist arrives in the eastern port of Hope, the first thing she sees is the vast stretch of shantytowns with grizzled, hawk-eyed merchants ready to exploit the fresh meat. Further into the Outback, syndicates and gangs rise and fall in constant turf wars, fighting over food, shelter and control over the enchanted springs strategically distributed throughout the territory. (See the sidebar. Most of the wells imbue drinkers with the Longevity pox or Exalted Healing affliction.) There are no police to whom one can turn or laws behind which one can hide. While the fractured society technically qualifies as a civilization, many members of it would vehemently disagree. What the colonists don't see are the Lunar wardens who hide among them, watching and culling those strong enough for deportation from the western port of Mercy. While death is almost as cheap as life in the Outback, anyone who climbs to the top of the heap and has the power to stay there demonstrates the mettle to survive on the frontier and disappears to the docks. Each such disappearance leaves a power vacuum for the next ambitious warlord to fill. In spite of the violence, some people live their whole lives in the Outback and die of old age, never having proven themselves strong enough to disappear in the night and begin a new life in one of the more ordered societies of the frontier.

Fountain of Fathomless Dreams (Solar Circle spell)

Cost: 50 motes

Target: Summoned well

Upon casting this spell, the ground beside the Solar splits apart and fills with cool water that burbles up from beneath in a constant gentle flow. The pool glows with faint phosphorescence that is visible only at night, but it otherwise appears unremarkable. To all forms of Essence sight and comparable senses, however, the waters appear saturated with a kaleidoscope of inchoate power. The sorcerer chooses a package of mutations when casting the spell with a ([total cost of positive mutations] – [total cost of negative mutations]) no greater than his Willpower. He may dictate any number of conditions or filters to the selection, such as limiting its benefits to watered plants or mortals or humans. If a valid living being drinks from the well on a number of consecutive days equal to the (positive mutations – negative mutations) cost of the intended transformation, the being develops that package. The change lasts for only a month, after which the effect painfully wears off over a number of days equal to its cost (additional -4 wound penalty during this period). Each additional draught from the well during the period of enchantment resets this month duration. Mutations obtained this way do not inhibit a creature's ability to survive in Creation, nor do they breed true. The well created by this spell endures for a century or until dispelled.

Exalted are welcome in the Outback and equally unconstrained by laws, save that they are not permitted to create or seize control of any social organizations. If they want to come slum with the colonists, that's fine. It helps toughen the colonists' resolve. The point at which an Exalt builds order out of anarchy, however, is the point he disrupts the established purpose of the Outback and can expect Lunar intervention. Mass-murder is also frowned upon, though more likely to result in censure by peers rather than violent interdiction unless matters really get out of hand.

Luthe

Long ago, the city called Luthe was simply known as Mobile Platform 3, the great aquatic fortress from which the wisest and mightiest Dawn Caste admirals directed the Western Theater of the Primordial War. A technological marvel ahead of its time, the submersible citadel favored guile over firepower, relying on the city's Essence-cloaking enchantments to give its forces the element of surprise in key battles against the Lintha and the other naval powers of the Primordials. Luthe's military commander Admiral Leviathan finds it humorously ironic that Lintha skirmish tactics using modern Bluehaven mirror those that Luthe modeled to such brutal effect during the War. Others who note the irony find the situation less amusing. Of course, modern Luthe no longer serves as the primary bastion for the entire direction, an honor assumed by the *Titan*-class skyship *Flame That Marched Against the Sea* (see pp. 116-118). While the city still houses the most single most powerful and important naval base owned by the Realm, its job now focuses on policing the shores and shipping lanes of Creation rather than guarding against incursions from beyond. The *Titan* battle group handles that job now, only occasionally scheduling widely publicized joint fleet exercises to test multi-theater strategies for total warfare simulations.

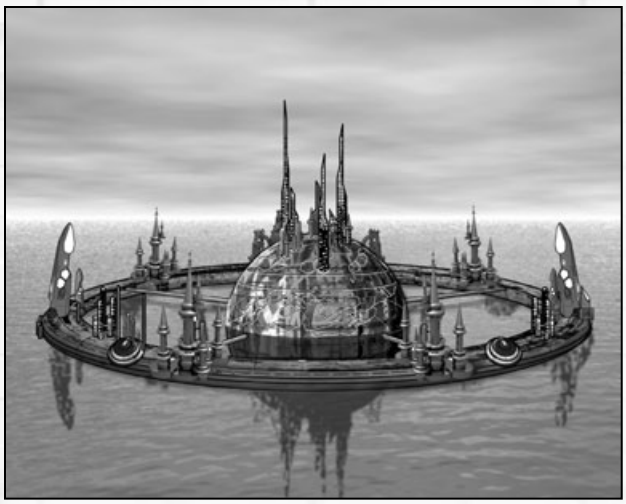
The Luthan docking bays hold a full range of fully equipped naval vessels at every level of force deployment, from light reconnaissance submersibles to heavy surface battlecruisers, as well a modest sky fleet configured primarily for air-to-sea and air-to-ground raids. Using communication relays operated by fragmentary protocols of I AM, the base maintains almost real-time contact with its entire fleet across the whole of the West, allowing high-ranking officers to spearhead offensives throughout the Threshold without so much as personally sighting the conflict. The fact that Siakal considers this method of warfare blandly unsatisfying pleases the strategoi of Luthe, who follow Grand Admiral Arkadi's dismissal of the shark goddess's personal bloodlust as atavistic. The fact that the Solar supreme commander hypocritically takes personal command of any offensives or maneuvers that catch his fancy is seen as a legitimate prerogative of his high station. The frequent forays have unofficially promoted Arkadi's second-in-command, Admiral Leviathan, as the acting commander of the navy in the Grand Admiral's absence, though. To politely rail against the sterility of his position, Leviathan tirelessly inspects his navies with unannounced visits, hoping a climate of martial terror can build the discipline that Realm society has failed to instill. Although it is not public knowledge, he carries on a torrid affair with his commander's spouse, Amayana, the Zenith Queen of Luthe.

The remaining three-quarters of Luthe not dedicated to naval docks and infrastructure fall under Amayana's purview, as they have fallen to the reigning Solar Prince of Luthe ever since Mobile Platform 3 was decommissioned and converted to a civilian city. Amayana is a fair ruler who takes a hands-off approach to her administrative stewardship, but she takes an active and aggressive role in promoting her views of social justice in the face of obvious experimental excesses by her Lawgiver peers. Unfortunately, political realities sometimes get in the way of her ideals, as recently when Admiral-Artificer Seralin assaulted and bound the Arbiter of Western Storms into his Brass Leviathan in an irrational fit of pique. Amayana desperately wanted to punish Seralin for this offense against Celestial law, but she had barely issued a proclamation of inquiry when the artificer's powerful allies in the Deliberative quashed the request. Unfortunately, the only outlet Amayana currently has for her political frustration is the arms of her paramour Leviathan, though to date without her husband's knowledge.

Luthe is a city of delights by any standards, its ancient tradition of military service preserved in imposing decor and extensive trophy vaults, some of which are now public museums. While Clepsys is the playground of the richest and most powerful in the West, Luthe is the stepping stone by which the talented and ambitious can rise up to such stature. Luthan society praises competence and vision above all else, whether in military or civilian endeavors. Bold ideas receive bold patronage, divvying out the growing resources of the Realm to young and middle-aged Exalts bidding for contracts to bring their own heroism to the future of the West. Fortunes grow and perish in the tides of politics, with some destitute families retreating in shame to colonial abodes to make way for future citizens of Clepsys. To live in Luthe is to live in interesting times among a burgeoning microcosm of the Deliberative itself. Everyone wants a piece of the action, but there is never quite enough action to go around.

Mobile Platform 3 (Artifact N/A)

The central hemispherical dome of Luthe's primary hull stretches three miles across, studded with numerous towers and other infrastructural emplacements. It is divided into 40 levels, spanning the upper reaches of Celestial living quarters and the bridge complex through hydroponic gardens, massive engines and the submersible decks that sit below the waterline when Luthe sits atop the waves. The center hull joins to a five-mile-diameter outer ring by five spokes spread evenly around the perimeter.



Speed: 24/50mph (under power while surfaced or submerged)
Maneuverability: +0S (Special: Luthe is magically unsinkable and perfectly succeeds in all sailing tasks.)
Endurance: Luthe taps directly into the ocean waves and currents to harvest Essence, converting each kinetic undulation into an endlessly refracted motonic pulse echoing within its sorcerous reactor. The net effect is to exceed the Essence yield of a level-5 Water-aspected manse, producing sufficient clean power for all functions as if it were such a manse.
Crew: 1/1 (requires 25m attunement by an Essence 5+ Celestial Exalt in the command throne; other beings and Celestials of insufficient Essence suffer (5 - their Essence)A damage if they attempt to bond with the controls).
Cargo: An entire city's worth of bays, docks and other storage/living facilities, capable of supporting a healthy urban population in great comfort even during times of war. Luthe can hold anything the Storyteller permits.
Armor: 32L/42B
Health Levels: Ux40/Mx40/Cx40/Ix40/D (cannot suffer more levels of damage from any attack than the aggressor's Essence rating or the rating of the artifact weapon used)
Weapons: 25 lightning ballistae (mounted 25 across and 25 beneath the central dome), 100 medium implosion bows (only 20 cannons can be brought to bear on a fire arc)
Essence Powers: Many of the features of Luthe mirror powers installed in greater manses. Although the city is not a manse proper, its advanced reactor similarly broadcasts Essence-fueled enchantments throughout the facility, giving it the following capabilities (see **Lords of Creation**, pp. 98-103 and **Oadenol's Codex**, pp. 66-79): Comfort Zone/Provider (2/3; the environmental engines provide generous atmosphere and other life support at all depths, as well as growing greenhouse crops necessary to sustain the city's population), Magical Conveniences (1; running water and plumbing, semi-living furniture adapts to occupant physiology, glow panels provide illumination in the benthic depths, traps automatically reset), Network Node (1; can temporarily connect to any one network at a time, provided that network has a manse within 100 miles of the city; calibrating the geomantic resonators for a day of connection requires a successful difficulty 6 [Intelligence + Lore] roll), Self-Destruct Sequence (1; as a level-5 Water manse), The Eyeless Sight of Daana'd/Extended Sensor Array/Analytical Senses (2/4/3; sensor array reaches out to 50 miles from the center of the city, enabling detailed analysis of all phenomena in range), Central Control/Dragon's Nest (2/3; the celestial bridge pseudo-hearthroom exists as a roiling fulcrum of Water-aspected Essence, but the whole ship resonates with those energies), The Glorious Halo of Hesiesh/Mela's Sweet Whispers (2/2; hologlyphic displays and nautiloid speakers throughout the city convey communication data and readouts from the AI), Geomantic Subtlety/Greater Veil of Shadows (2/4; cloaking systems hide the ship as if it were a natural part of the sea, but doing so reduces speed to 7/15mph and takes all integrated Essence artillery off-line while in use; the vessel takes a full minute to reallocate power to these systems after disengaging the cloak), Integrated Essence Artillery (4 per 10 artifact points of artillery; all of these systems are considered a level-4 power for the purposes of remaining active), Sentient (5; AI named Towers of Azure loyally runs all functions of the city-ship according to the attuned commander's orders), Armored x 5/Fortress x 4 (3 each/4 each; 32L/42B external soak; 12 external defensive hazards; 40 levels of damage needed to impose each dot of power failure), Dangerous Traps/Ultra-Deadly Traps (2 per five traps/3 per one trap; various automated defenses guard the bridge against intruders; these traps reset after each use).
Other Notes: Damage to Luthe simultaneously reduces functionality using standard vehicle rules and power failure rules for manses, potentially damaging or completely disabling the magical systems that make it such a wondrous location.

Pentarch Pyramid

One of the largest and best-known manses designed to teleport itself between two locations, Pentarch Pyramid is so named because its structure rises from the sea as a megalithic five-sided pyramid. Arched openings in each face—each one mile in diameter—enable ships that sail within the walls to translocate between the pyramid's eastern location 300 leagues west of the Blessed Isle to a site an equal number of miles north of Clepsys. While the manse is away from either place, a shadow of it endures like a mirage of sea foam, giving the manse its nickname Isle of Shadows. While Realm military vessels and the private yachts of Celestial elders may cut in line to access the manse by flying special flags, other captains must wait in line and pay a modest toll for the convenience. Still, it's sufficiently cheaper than crossing the entire distance between the two locations that the system sees heavy traffic. Furthermore, the interior of the manse has facilities to repair artifact sea-going ships, though these docks could be easily refitted for actual construction work if the Realm were so inclined. Pentarch Pyramid switches locales

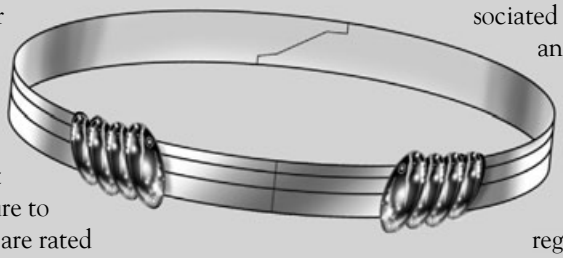
each hour on the hour, with enormous gongs sounded in the minutes leading up to a transport to warn the next vessels in line to stay back rather than risk being sheared in half by a partial teleportation. To facilitate efficient traffic, vessels dock in three concentric rings by size and obey signal flashes from glowing crystals mounted in the top of the pyramid (coordinated by a sophisticated AI).

Pentarch Pyramid serves a second purpose, housed in the complex of middle levels above the hangar space and beneath the AI lighthouse chamber. This area serves as a hospital dedicated to treating all forms of deleterious Essence exposure, especially Wyld taint. Prospective patients who are physically strong enough to scale the pyramid's thousands of steps may do so, in which case their dedication and faith in the healing that awaits them serves to attune them to the enchantments of the facility. Individuals too strangely transformed or too weak to make the ascent cannot partake of the bonus, but they can still reach treatment if others carry them to the top. (Those without faithful friends willing to do so can pay a nominal fee to ride in ambulance palanquins that scuttle up the stairs on the backs of crab-shaped elementals.) All treatment is free up front, but the hospital bills mortals for payment after the fact based on the scope of treatment. (The minimum Resources required is equal to the mutation points removed, up to a maximum of five dots. In cases where the patient can afford only partial payment, he may sign away five years of indentured service per Resources dot of difference to settle the account.) When patients die during treatment, the hospital bills their next of kin for the attempt (with a one-dot grief discount). When physicians wish to treat patients, they use stability-conferring vats (see sidebar). This technology also allows ships to transport mutants from the borders of Creation to Pentarch Pyramid for treatment without them dying of chaos withdrawal on route. These facilities also upgrade mortals with various mutations, blessings and implants, though such upgrades may only be purchased by an Exalted patron rather than the patients themselves as a deterrent to pilgrimages cluttering the steps with hopeful masses.

Game Effects: Level-5 Solar manse. *Drawbacks:* Hearthstone Sacrifice (5), Maintenance (5; constant tuning of the magitech clockwork engines throughout the structure). *Powers:* Workshop Manse (3; the docks are dedicated to magitech), Comfort Zone (1; hospital area), Magical Conveniences (1; automatically opening/closing interior doors, partially automated operating theaters that supply all the tools needed for Medicine-related tasks, automated glow orbs that softly illuminate any room in which anyone is awake, automated kitchens that convert raw food materials into meals custom-tailored to the dietary limitations or allergies of patient mutants and a special effect that allows those who personally ascend the steps in hope of treatment to make a difficulty 3 [Stamina + Integrity] roll with success giving everyone in the manse a three-die bonus to Medicine rolls to treat that patient for as long as he remains on site), Analytical Senses extended with Pasiap's Buried Whiskers (3 + 2; allows the manse to study Essence, either to diagnose a mutant's exact state or prioritize the security clearances of Celestials or

Stability-Conferring Collar / Vat (Artifact • or •••)

These devices function by rapidly fluctuating the aspect of a motonic field so that the energies resonate at a signature between the definitive reality of Creation and the randomized flux of the Wyld. The smaller versions take the form of a collar with a one-dot rating and require that the wearer attune them for a commitment of one Willpower point or two motes. While worn, the collar prevents the attuned bearer from suffering any ill effects of being in Creation with too many mutation points. The player also receives a +2 bonus to all rolls to resist mutation from further exposure to the Wyld. The larger models are rated at three dots and take the form of oversized aquarium cells large enough to hold five people in monastic conditions, though really as a glorified jail. These facilities need Repair 3 maintenance each week to keep their filters cleaned and keep them filled with the mostly clear alchemical liquid in which patients gently float and breathe as if it were clean air. Those inside the tank receive the benefits associated with wearing the collar variant and may have existing mutations gradually removed by having a doctor modify the alchemical formula in a careful regimen. Treatment is a dramatic action taking a number of weeks of regular care equal to the mutation point cost of the traits to be removed (10 hours per day minimum). This number also serves as the difficulty of the (Intelligence + Medicine) roll to determine success. These cells can remove mutations conferred by sources other than the Wyld, but this treatment increases the difficulty of the roll by two.



artifact vessels), Ability Enlightenment (4; purview of Integrity, Medicine, Occult and Sail, allowing to it manage ship traffic and assist with relevant medical pursuits), Glorious Halo of Hesiesh with Password Activation (2 + 1; operates by projecting light through banks of colored crystal emitters throughout the pyramid, allowing it to signal ships like a lighthouse and communicate data in hologlyphic displays to those who make the appropriate command gestures), Alternate Locations (5; the massive size of the manse limits it to two sites rather than the usual five)

The Archipelago of Xur

A large cluster of Wyld-shaped islands raised to the north of Wavecrest, Xur is an elaborate multi-tiered experiment in war, faith and Exaltation commissioned by the Deliberative. As part of that experiment, the islands are each different sizes and shapes, with inequitable resource distribution to engender inter-island resentment and hostility among the populace. Some islands are virtual paradises, with lush jungles devoid of dangerous predators. Others are blasted ruins of jagged rock incapable of supporting any flora besides the hardiest lichens.

No civilians live on Xur. Instead, each island is an independent military camp run by a Terrestrial Exalt of taimyo rank who serves as commandant. Under these officers' diligent and brutal supervision, a corps of elite gunzosha commandos handpicked from across Creation trains in constant war games against soldiers from other islands. The officers make extensive use of Tiger-Dragon Drill Approach in these games (see sidebar). Each camp has its own philosophy of warfare and piety carefully crafted by the Solar generals overseeing Project Xur. Although fanatic loyalty to the Lawgivers is universal, doctrinal variations make the war games more akin to holy wars. Given the savagery of these disputes, only the limited scale of deployed armament prevents victors from wiping their rivals off the map and razing their islands to bedrock.

In addition to its oceanic islands, Xur also serves as the base platform for the Western *Titan* fortress *Flame That Marched Against the Sea*. Although the citadel patrols the entire West, the skyship spends most of its time suspended over the archipelago by a paramagnetic web generated by manses located throughout the island chain. While docked in this invisible energy field, the vessel requires comparatively minimal upkeep and fuel, maximizing efficiency for what is otherwise the most grossly wasteful weapon system currently fielded by the Deliberative. The Solar masters of Project Xur overlook the inter-camp skirmishes from the palatial comfort of this base, using the vessel's AI to archive and analyze each war game.

Project Xur reliably produces the finest mortal soldiers of any tiger warrior facility in Creation. Those who survive the first year have more combat experience than (and superior training to) many Dragon-Blooded units, with veterans at an astonishing 84 percent enlightened Essence rate by the end of their second year. Graduates of the five-year program can look forward to immediate placement at the absolute upper echelons of mortal rank within the Army of the Deliberative, although about a third go on to become bodyguards in Solar retinues instead. As far as any of the gunzosha or their Dragon-Blooded overseers know, this training is the sole reason Xur exists. The fanaticism instilled by the training regimen, however, provides the second tier of the experiment—with each orthodoxy hypothesized and tested to calculate the theoinfrastructural formula that maximizes motonic yield from cult prayers.

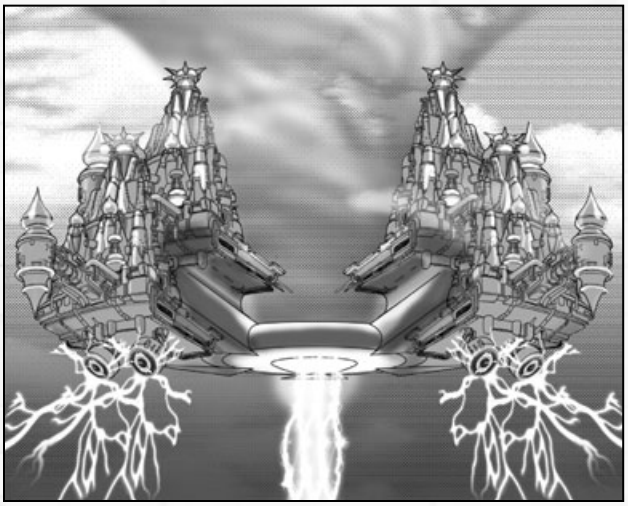
The third goal of Project Xur is the primary reason the archipelago exists at all. With that many skilled mortals selected for their excellence and conviction gathered in an environment of perpetual conflict and heroic opportunity, Solar Exaltation isn't so much a possibility as a foregone conclusion. By carefully controlling and recording as many of the operant variables surrounding each such Exaltation as possible, the project aims to isolate and decrypt the parameters Autochthon encoded in the process. With this information, it might be possible to reverse engineer Exaltation or even upgrade an existing Solar Essence with backdoor protocols. Unsurprisingly, Lytek, the God of Exaltation, is a frequent honored guest at the *Flame That Marched Against the Sea* and has Solar-level quarters reserved for him aboard the citadel. He doesn't have much more information to add, being the caretaker of a largely autonomic metaphysical process, but he does what he can and is very grateful for the opportunity to take a more hands-on approach to his dominion.

Project Xur's current administrator is Strategos Kan-Hur, a 900-year-old member of the Dawn Caste assigned to develop superweapons for the Deliberative. Because of his extreme vocal distaste for the wastefulness of the *Titans*, he is not *Flame That Marched Against the Sea*'s commander and has nothing to do with its operation or chain of command. The fact that he outranks the *Titan* commander, however, keeps him contentedly autonomous in his office-laboratory within the fortress when he isn't vacationing in his island sanctuary thousands of miles west into Pure Chaos. Under Kan-Hur's guidance, a Celestial think tank labors on a variety of initiatives other than Project Xur, including the skyship-focused Project Shrike, the godstrider-focused Project Triumphant Stratagem and several others of lesser tactical significance. Kan-Hur specifically requisitions the most intelligent Solars who Exalt in Xur to join the oversight of the archipelago, revealing the full purpose of the islands while complimenting them for rising to the top. The first assignment given to these employees is to study and prepare an exhaustive report on their own Exaltation, both from personal experience and using the sensor records aboard the *Titan*. These exhaustive reports sometimes take years to complete according to the general's exacting specifications, but it's not as though Lawgivers are short on time. Most Solars transfer to other opportunities in the Realm upon completion of their reports, but some stay on to craft and refine martial ideologies for the camps.

Tiger-Dragon Drill Approach

Cost: 5m, 2wp; **Mins:** War 5, Essence 4;
Type: Simple
Keywords: None
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: Tireless Footfalls Cadence, Blazing Courageous Swordsman Inspiration

While Dragon-Blooded cannot train units as well as Solars, those of sufficient tactical skill and dedication may transform themselves into incarnate extensions of a Lawgiver general. Tiger-Dragon Drill Approach may be activated only upon graduating from a week of Tiger Warrior Training Technique as part of a unit (see **Exalted**, p. 198). Doing so binds the Terrestrial to his teacher with an Intimacy of loyalty that cannot be eroded as long as this Charm remains active. More importantly, the Dragon-Blood temporarily learns Tiger Warrior Training Technique for this Charm's duration with two limitations. First, he can train units only in the trait he was trained in when he activated the Charm. Second, he can use the Charm *only* in fulfillment of direct orders from the Solar who taught him. The death of that Solar prematurely ends this Charm, revoking the Terrestrial's ability to create further tiger warriors until he can find a new Lawgiver patron.



Titan-Class Aerial Citadel (Artifact N/A)

Bigger than many mountains, the four directional *Titans* embody the gratuitous pinnacle of the Realm's aerial fleet, replacing the directional mobile platforms built during the Primordial War as the predominant military bastions of the Threshold. In standard flight mode, the pentagonal ziggurat hulls stretch more than five miles at their widest point and a mile from base to peak, allowing them to shade entire cities beneath them. The fortresses can also expand into a siege configuration eight miles across, separating the outer hull into five equal triangular segments connected to a circular inner hull so the Eye of Judgment weapon system within it can fire. Most of the superstructure is built from living stone monoliths cultured in genesis labs from behemoth organ templates and symbiotically grafted together onto a magitech skeleton of jade alloy. This synthesis of living and non-living technology allows the hull to regenerate from damage and perform limited autonomic upkeep without the metabolic complications of a fully organic vessel. For conventional armament, the citadels mount 500 Essence beam cannons set in turret emplacements over the entire hull, allowing roughly 100 cannons to converge fire on any point within range as coordinated by the onboard AI. If these barrages prove insufficient, the Eye of Judgment superweapon is a one-mile-wide circular crystallized orichalcum lens that aggressively absorbs ambient sunlight from the area and converts it into a coruscating pulse that can ignite an entire metropolis with a jade-melting holocaust of solar fire. As command bases, *Titans* also have 50 thousand-forged dragon launch silos for continent-spanning infrastructural assaults, as well as hangars for hundreds of skyships of varying sizes. (See **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**, pp. 113–115, for more info on thousand-forged dragons.) Besides their nearly indestructible Shaping-resistant hulls, the vessels can project an extremely powerful Essence shield, though the shield is deployed against only those enemy forces deemed a direct threat to the security of the ship—which is to say almost never.

Titans exist for two purposes. First, they are among the most visible and awesome displays of Exalted power ever conceived, so their mere presence on the horizon is sufficient to cow enemies into submission and bolster allies without ever firing a shot. In this capacity, each of the four citadels drifts over its direction in semi-regular patrols or in response to significant domestic unrest. Second, the fortresses provide a central stronghold against the slim possibility of the Yozis' escape or theoretical incursion by shinma aspects or alien Primordials dwelling in outermost chaos who have yet to stumble upon Creation. To prepare for such invasions, the *Titans* and their support fleets engage in war games every few decades against armies of bound Third Circle demons and other similar force-level combatants such as the Kukla in order to keep the crew ready and develop new Armageddon strategies. To support these two missions, each *Titan* also contains a full factory-cathedral-equivalent workshop with archival templates of every artifact deemed important enough to preserve in the extreme event it must abandon Creation and colonize the Wyld. The archives possess similarly comprehensive biotemplates, though the fortresses do not have onboard genesis labs and would have to construct

many such facilities with their manufactories before they could mass produce extinct species to self-sustaining viability. Since such dire conditions have yet to present themselves, the workshops mostly carry out the Deliberative-sanctioned pet projects of prominent Solar elders, such as Kan-Hur's superweapon research projects.

The first of the *Titans* took more than half a millennium to construct, though advances in technology reduced this period to a mere 246 years for the fourth. It is a point of pride in the Realm that none of the *Titans* have ever touched the ground, since they were actually assembled in midair by means of paramagnetic suspension until they could hold themselves aloft and have remained in the sky ever since. Although their construction significantly drained Realm resources, the primary objection to their existence is the ongoing exorbitance of their upkeep and the not-entirely-inaccurate assumption that they simply aren't necessary given that the Exalted are already superior weapons as a host and didn't need the *Titans* to beat the Primordials. Militant supporters of the mobile war cities argue that no expense is too great to secure peace and that every precaution must be taken against invasion by something worse. The debate in the Deliberative never quite dies out, though aggressive lobbying battles flare up only every few years as other factions look to allocate some of those resources toward their own initiatives. As a matter of security, command of a *Titan* goes to a Solar of exceptional tactical skill and accomplishment, but not the eldest warlords, who might feel more tempted to pursue their own agendas rather than the interests of the Deliberative. Typically, commanders serve a decade at a time before being promoted to higher positions within the Army of the Deliberative command structure. Given the prestige involved, competition is extremely fierce. Rivalry is equally fierce with other branches of the military, especially in the West, where Admiral Leviathan's Navy and the *Titan* fleets constantly seek to one up each other in joint military exercises.

Each *Titan* bears a name commemorating victory over a Primordial loosely associated with the element of the direction the fortress oversees. Therefore, *Flame That Marched Against the Sea*, *Harmonious Gale*, *Scattered Petals of the Thousand-Toothed Blossom* and *Oasis upon the Edge of Eternity* stand as perpetual insult to Kimbery (West), Adorjan (North), Metagaos (East) and Cecelyne (South), respectively.

Speed: 10/20mph (5/10mph while shielded or in siege configuration)

Maneuverability: -4S (Lore 5, Sail 5)

Endurance: *Titans* harvest their own Essence. They require Repair 6 maintenance every week by a 100-member team (only once per month while suspended in a paramagnetic web). Each missed upkeep disables the following systems in order: auxiliary systems (including the workshop and all other systems not associated with actual operation), siege mode, energy shield, Essence cannons, maneuvering engines and finally AI. If its AI is disabled, a fortress exists in a state of depleted hibernation as an inert mountain held aloft only by sufficiently strong geomancy upon which its immortal stone can respire.

Crew: 5,000/(-1 maneuverability per 1000 less crew, to minimum skeleton 2,000; also requires functional AI and Solar commander attuned to hologlyphic control dais for 10 motes); (1,000 officers: Lore 4, Sail 4; 4000 auxiliary personnel: Lore: 3, Sail 2)

Cargo: An entire city-sized complex of hangars, vaults, laboratories and barracks, with effectively unlimited storage appropriate to this scale.

Armor: 60L/60B (When activated, the ablative Essence shield is solid to dematerialized beings, completely impervious to Shaping effects and has Hardness of 100L/100B. Any attack that would penetrate it collapses the barrier without damaging the *Titan* and the shield cannot be reactivated until it has received Repair 5 maintenance.)

Health Levels: Ux200/Mx100/Cx50/Ix30/D (Due to a *Titan's* size, each attack against it cannot inflict more levels of damage than the attacker's Essence or an artifact weapon's rating, whichever is higher. Large area attacks encompassing most of the vessel's volume inflict damage normally.)

Weapons:

500 Essence Beam Cannons: Speed 5, Accuracy (gunner's Wits + Archery + 2; turrets provide telescopic Essence sight and highlight the current target selected by the citadel's AI, so that gunners can see and attack virtually any target in range and fire coverage), Damage 15L piercing (damages everything within five yards of impact; affects dematerialized beings normally), Range one mile, Rate 1 (commander can use control dais to override and remotely fire any of the cannons; otherwise each is manned by its own gunner)

Eye of Judgment: Speed 7 (opening the hull to ready this weapon or closing back to flight mode takes 10 minutes), Accuracy Perfect (cannot target individual objects; lens fires a one-mile-wide pillar of light straight down), Damage 100L levels of piercing (aggravated to creatures of darkness; permanently obliterates killed spirits and sears deceased mortal souls into Lethe; the expanding holocaust ripple skims outward from the point of impact with a blast wave cresting at 100 yards high to a radius of five miles, damaging everything material and immaterial in the ripple's path not protected with a perfect defense), Range Special (see Accuracy), Rate 1/hour (during day) or 1/night (focusing the iconic anima of the commander rather than harnessing sunlight)

Other Notes: The living stone armor of a *Titan* can heal itself, albeit extremely slowly—one bashing level per week, one lethal per month, one aggravated per year. The living stone armor protects inhabitants against Wyld exposure and similar radiation up to Middlemarches-strength, though anything stronger requires the shields. As a final life-support measure, the unshielded living rock mutates in the presence of stronger energies, growing a stabilizing carapace in the course of a minute that fully obscures the ship's Essence and protects inhabitants from transformation. The carapace completely incapacitates all systems other than levitation

and respiration until removed as per repairing a broken Repair 6 artifact.

Titan fortresses are simply too large to power with hearthstones, as it would take a quarter of the geomantic gems of a Threshold direction to do so and would present unacceptable risk of sabotage. A small bank of protoshinmaic vortexes (see **Lords of Creation**, p. 95) would suffice, but that technology is simply too new and too unstable to merit refit for several centuries yet. Fortunately, the partially living hulls embed most of the superstructure with thousands of miles worth of respiration microfilaments, allowing the vessel to power itself by draining ambient Essence. In flight mode, all manses and demesnes within 25 miles of the *Titan* are considered to have a rating one dot less than normal. (This drain does not diminish or disable hearthstone ratings.) In siege mode, the drain increases to two dots and temporarily disables hearthstones from drained manses. With both modes, full power resumes as soon as the fortress leaves the area. Without major refitting, a *Titan* cannot stay aloft in Essence-dead areas such as the Underworld.

If a *Titan* reactor is destroyed (or deliberately overloaded for self-destruct), the resulting explosion inflicts effectively infinite damage to every material and immaterial object within 500 miles, obliterating the geography of that area (though on land, the crater quickly fills in with lava bleeding up from beneath). Only those with perfect defenses survive.

Ruins of Okeanos

Once a deep trench in the ocean floor, the dream of Okeanos began with a primitive Dragon King shaman called Urmog who dreamed of a towering volcano consecrated to the Unconquered Sun. To fulfill this vision, the Mosok tribes turned their luminous crystal weapons against the chasm where the Ebon Dragon once swam, wounding the earth with geomantic weapons until it shook in agony and split apart to birth the apocalypse dragon Kukla. The Dragon Kings never learned whether the tectonic event actually spawned the monster or merely released it from a more ancient prison where others of its kind might exist, though both schools of thought agreed that further excavation would be imprudent. After the Kukla's volcanic rampage quelled enough for the Incarnae to herd it away and imprison it, the dragon's birthplace cooled into a vast continent a quarter the size of the Blessed Isle. Over this land, Mount Kukluk shone like a lighthouse to the West, its golden smoke illuminated by the molten orichalcum that welled from the depths and pooled in the sacred crater. To honor this living cathedral to the sun, the Mosok who settled the continent fed daily sacrifices to the mountain each noon, sometimes hundreds at a time to celebrate the holiest feasts. Okeanos rapidly became a paradise where Dragon King civilization flourished and dominated the region. For untold centuries, the reptiles received tribute from most races of the West and ambassadors from the handful of peers who rivaled their might. Even the proud and viciously independent Lintha gave trinkets to burn in Kukluk's heart, lest insult enrage the Mosok to rally the breeds of the other directions to make war on the children of Kimbery. Even after the creation of humanity, Okeanos remained curiously egalitarian, its capital, Amphion, known as a place where penitents of all species who heard the dreams of the Unconquered Sun could come and give those dreams back to the mountain fire. All were humbled before the golden basin, so humans and Dragon Kings lived side by side with less of the benevolent reptilian tyranny that marked interspecies relations elsewhere.

During the War, Okeanos unilaterally sided with the gods and built most of the fleets deployed against the Primordials. Most non-human inhabitants actually forsook their ancestral loyalties to join in this cause rather than flee to their homelands, making some of these families the last of their kind after the Exalted destroyed their loyalist kin. Many of those Chosen by the gods in the West hailed from the subcontinent, where Siakal trained them in the most brutal strategies of naval conquest unleashed in the history of Creation. Where the Exalted passed, the waves darkened with gore and the thrashing jaws of the shark goddess's ravenous children.

Sadly, Okeanos did not live to reap the rewards of its triumph. The Age of Splendor had barely dawned when the continent shattered and quenched the hungry fire of Kukluk in the even-hungrier sea. While the Exalted mitigated as much of the damage as they could, the loss changed the face of the West and destroyed the last bastion of Mosok survivors from the War. The legendary social justice of Amphion drowned with its hallowed walls. Never again would so many sapient races live among each other in peace beneath common law. While conspiracy theorists have long suspected the Exalted destroyed Okeanos to prevent its ideology from spreading to the rest of Creation and threatening the stricter authority of their Creation-Ruling Mandate, most evidence points to some Primordial retaliation or a cosmological aftershock of the War. Regardless, only the peaks of Okeanos remain as dotted archipelagos, their remnants no longer united or worthy of that ancient name.

Darkmist Isle

Once part of Kukluk's crater, the blighted northernmost fragment of Okeanos has remained under strict quarantine for most of the Age of Splendor, guarded by a small flotilla of submersible automaton warships programmed to destroy any intruding vessel unless they detect a Celestial anima aboard. The only way to get onto the island without facing this blockade is to arrive by means of the Celestial gateway, which also generally restricts access to Celestial Exalted who can access Yu-Shan.

As the first known shadowland in Creation, Darkmist is considered equal parts abomination and opportunity, which is the main reason the Deliberative has not invested the effort to repair it. Each time a well-intentioned Exalt puts forward a motion to cleanse the land, an unlikely consortium

of sorcerers, necromancers and soulsteel-using artificers (who often detest one another) comes together to block the measure. While official highly classified Celestial expeditions to the island have taken place every century or so since the destruction of Okeanos, most expeditions to the island are anything but official. These covert visits generally involve the pet projects of Celestials who want access to the unique resources of the Underworld or seek necromantic initiation. Like many such pet projects, the illegality of these endeavors seldom leads to sanctions unless matters get out of hand, especially given that forays into the realm of the dead have yielded so many treasures to date.

Amphion

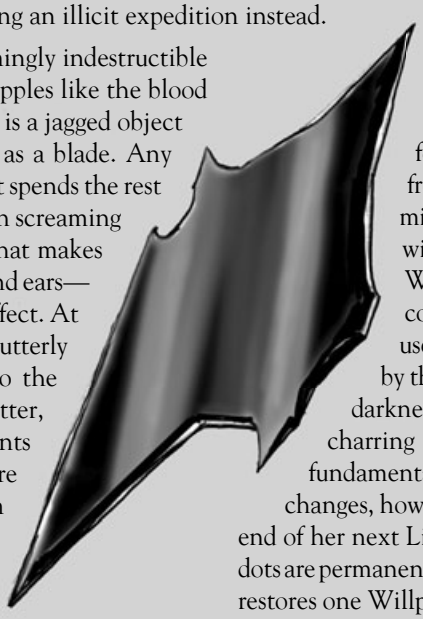
Constructed on the southern slope of Mount Kukluk, the shining metropolis of Amphion suffered the full brunt of the cataclysm and was buried in lava during the volcano's final eruption. While this disaster resulted in almost total loss of life for the urban populace, the cooled lava preserved many of the artifact buildings in pristine condition beneath thick layers of rock, making Amphion a veritable wonderland for archeologists and treasure-hunters. Unfortunately for would-be looters, the Darkmist blockade covers the northern two thirds of the city. Those who stray into the forbidden waters quickly learn that the Deliberative's mechanical krakens do not bother with warning shots. More than one expedition has prematurely ended with an overeager historian snatched up by metal tentacles to a grim fate. In spite of this danger (and sometimes because of it), new research teams come at least once a year, hoping to claim a little of the Okeanos legend for themselves.

The Coral Archipelago

The eastern fragments of Okeanos have become known as the Coral Archipelago, consisting of five moderately sized islands surrounded by 18 smaller coral atolls for which the landmass is named. Lacking abundant natural resources, the area was never one of the more prosperous regions of Okeanos, but this inequity toughened the populace and contributed significantly to their survival following the cataclysm. From a backwater agrarian province, the new island chain expanded its hegemony over smaller neighbors until the Realm decided to colonize it in the name of the Creation-Ruling Mandate. The people of Coral fought back against this challenge to their sovereignty but could not stand against the Chosen. They voluntarily surrendered after a year of blockades resulted in widespread famine. Coral society adapted to its new overlords in a single generation, embracing rapid technological and social modernization with an eagerness that both surprised and delighted the Deliberative. All vestiges of Okeanos-era poverty disappeared in the ensuing decades as Coral grew into the primary bureaucratic hub of the Northwest, coordinating the political and economic resources allocated throughout the geographic region.

The Black Mirror (Artifact N/A)

One of the most bizarre and terrible treasures recovered from Amphion currently sits in a vault belonging to the Most Supreme Hierophant—an artifact deemed far too dangerous to let most Exalted even know it exists. The Lunar who discovered it thought it might be connected to the destruction of Okeanos based on its location near the geomantic center of the ruins, though she did not find direct evidence to support her speculation. Much to her frustration, she has not received official permission to return to the blockaded area for more official archeological fieldwork and is considering mounting an illicit expedition instead.



Made of an unknown and seemingly indestructible alloy of soulsteel with quicksilver ripples like the blood of the Neverborn, the Black Mirror is a jagged object roughly two yards square and thin as a blade. Any ghost or mortal being who touches it spends the rest of the scene curled in a fetal position screaming in an incomprehensible language that makes all who hear it bleed from the eyes and ears—an unnerving but purely cosmetic effect. At scene's end, the unfortunate perishes utterly and his shattered soul plunges into the Abyss. Other magical beings fare better, only losing all of their Willpower points and experiencing a waking nightmare of the Neverborn that haunts them for years afterward.

It is not these properties that make the mirror so terrible, however. When a Solar looks into it, she sees herself reflected *wrong*, her caste mark outlined by a charred black brand as if its golden fire had seared her. If she touches the mirror, she can pay five Willpower points to resist its power. If she doesn't, she temporarily loses all of her Solar Charms for each Ability and gains an equivalent number of Abyssal Charms for that Ability—selected by her player from among those for which she meets trait minimums. (The selection may be different with each use.) She also gains one dot of the Whispers Background as a training effect costing three experience points with each use (maximum Whispers 5). While tainted by this power, she is considered a creature of darkness and outside fate, with her caste mark charring its reflected outline when it flares. She fundamentally remains a Solar in spite of these changes, however. The alteration lasts only until the end of her next Limit Break, though conferred Whispers dots are permanent. Until she returns to normal, the mirror restores one Willpower point the first time she touches it in a scene as she fantasizes about murdering her enemies. If the mirror has other powers, they remain undiscovered. For information on Abyssal Charms and Whispers, see **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Abyssals**.

Modern Coral enjoys a level of baseline prosperity not found in the West outside Clepsys or the private domains of the Celestial Exalted. Rather than "wasting their potential" with agrarian or industrial labors, most of the populace work as bureaucrats and other low-level government officials in the service of the Realm and its Exalted rulers. Many among these legions of clerks and scribes grow their fingernails long and lacquer them with colors appropriate to their bureau to draw attention to the fact that their hands have not seen hard physical labor, though the fashion is considered crass in conservative communities. It is also considered highly fashionable to hoard talismans and minor artifacts of dubious utilitarian value, especially if the owner has no actual need for the device. Thaumaturges capable of churning out these least relics can charge obscenely high prices and still expect more business than they can handle. Matters get even more out of hand in Azure City, where owning outdated styles of artifacts is considered a worse faux pas than owning none at all. At least paupers and religious ascetics have an excuse.

Although the Exalted have little in the way of gender preferences for the assignments they give their subordinates, Coral society self-segregates to keep most of its females on the land with males working in travel-heavy jobs that take them to other islands. Lunar sociologists trace this phenomenon to lingering cultural anxiety from the Okeanos cataclysm, after which women were significantly more important to the area's efforts to repopulate. Far from diminishing the opportunities available to Coral women, this protective ethos affords them significantly more opportunities to directly network with the Exalted and secure superior positions in the bureaucracy.

Cormorant

Once the southernmost province of Okeanos and the site of the vast shipyards that built the Western navy for the Exalted during the Primordial War, Cormorant survived the cataclysm better than any other fragment. While its distance from the epicenter of Mount Kukluk certainly helped, it was the fortified artifact levees of the shipyards that held back

the sea long enough for the Exalted rescue fleets. The Chosen labored side by side with Jadeborn engineers for weeks to shore up Cormorant's geographic foundations, literally paving the way for Autochthon's avatar sphere to descend from the heavens and levitate the entire landmass onto a nearby peak. In many ways, this joint rescue effort served as final epitaph to the cooperative spirit of Okeanos, the last occasion when the Dragon Kings, Jadeborn and Exalted worked together as equals.

The relocated and diminished Cormorant remained an Exalted naval base, though its shipyards quickly fell behind the times as technological progress increased exponentially throughout Exalted-controlled lands. It would have cost more to refit the factories than it did to build better ones elsewhere, so most of the facilities shut down within three generations. The rest focused on producing "quaint" historical replicas for museums and the private collections of Celestial Exalted veterans. Without the shipyards, most of the populace emigrated to other islands in search of better livelihoods, leaving only the poorest to continue a melancholy tourist trade in Okeanos relics.

The modern citizens of Cormorant still cater to archeologists and sightseers, their primitive way of life unchanged since the dawn of the Age except perhaps for increasing bitterness. The islanders supplement their tourism by fishing the waters to the south for Cormorani eels, widely considered a delicacy throughout the region and parts of the Realm. Exalted who make port at Cormorant can expect dozens of Cormor youths following them and begging for the opportunity to join their retinues. The fact that these beggars will do almost anything to get away from the poverty of the island is quite well known to Chosen looking to spice up a shore leave. The phrase "hungry as a Cormor whore" is infamous throughout the West.

Politically, Cormorant is property of the Deliberative Navy, but in practice, the Realm doesn't waste any officers to oversee the place now that it no longer has any strategic value. In the absence of official authority, the small Gens of Dragon-Blooded shipwrights who build historical replica vessels acts as the de facto peacekeeping authority. Mostly, though, no one bothers to tell the Cormors what to do as long as they don't cause trouble. Of course, given the importance of the tourism trade to the island's survival, causing trouble is about the last thing the inhabitants *want* to do.

Okeanos-That-Is

Lacking strategic facilities comparable to Cormorant's shipyards, the other island remnants of southern Okeanos did not benefit from a coordinated Exalted rescue operation and were largely abandoned by the rest of the world, not even deemed worthy of a label beside their cartographic entries on most maps. In the absence of aid, the survivors collapsed into violent anarchy before stabilizing into a loosely antagonistic raider tribal structure. The only visitors these islands received for several centuries were occasional Exalted tourists who wished to observe an Okeanos-derivative culture "untouched" by contact with the Realm (completely ignoring how little genuine Okeanos culture survived the vast sociological upheaval of the cataclysm and post-apocalyptic mentality). While Coral flourished and Cormorant stagnated to irrelevance and even Darkmist Isle became a dangerous and unique treasure, the tribes that called themselves Okeanos-That-Is sank into ever-greater poverty. The only figure of any note who has ever taken an active interest in the island chain is the goddess Siakal, who recently relocated the main entrance to her deep water sanctum nearby to take advantage of the massacres the tribes inflict upon each other whenever food gets scarce. The warring chieftains feel no particular gratitude for the "patronage" Siakal's presence lends to their warfare, especially given the onerous burden her regular appeasement sacrifices place on the economy and populations. By treaty, the shamans of each tribe have agreed not to start a bidding war for Siakal's favor, since that could only result in mutual destruction. That doesn't stop a few short-sighted warlords from cheating now and again, though, with appropriately unpleasant results. Desperate tribes often pool their remaining resources to bribe disreputable Terrestrials or bored Half-Caste bastards to fight on their behalf as champion mercenaries. The islands of **Amphiro**, **Kerkeis**, **Okirho**, **Suadela** and **Petraya** all host sprawling estates belonging to the marauder-king families of former Terrestrial mercenaries who pillaged great fortunes in the conflict and stayed to carve out territories for themselves.

Wavecrest

Although not technically part of Okeanos, the Wavecrest island chain developed in that continent's literal and cultural shadow. None of the chain's volcanoes could compare with Mount Kukluk, but the shamans who dwelled near their burning peaks still gave offerings to the liquid flames, hoping to taste some of Okeanos' grace from the volcano gods. Over time, this cultural similarity drew the two nations into a common political sphere, with Wavecrest always the junior partner in the relationship. The cataclysm changed everything, inundating Wavecrest's islands with twin floods of tsunamis and refugees. The fragile economy shattered under the joint onslaught, mirroring and exceeding the violence of Okeanos-That-Is. Early Solar intervention focused on terraforming the land for greater fertility, on the assumption that greater prosperity would reduce the need for raiding. The theory failed miserably, as the resultant population spike exponentially increased competition for limited resources, leaving the Deliberative with a choice between allowing a genocidal escalation or negotiating a peace settlement between the islands. Deeming the former more costly in the long run, a diplomatic contingent of Eclipse Caste Solars and Waxing Moon Lunars gathered a conclave of the volcano gods and negotiated a new social paradigm to maintain the flow of sacrifices without open warfare. It took time to convince all the gods, but faced

with combined pressure in Creation and subtler maneuvers in Yu-Shan, the magma kings grudgingly conceded to the peace. A suddenly united Wavecrest stepped in to replace Okeanos as the primary breadbasket of the West, supplying the ever-expanding colonies along the frontiers of the Wyld. To keep the mountains quietly smoking, their priests sacrificed criminals at holidays and following important astrological events, serving as a powerful deterrent to misconduct.

Modern Wavecrest operates as a subservient administrative plutocratic regime coordinating its agricultural facilities to maximize production on all levels of infrastructure. The government is not so much dictatorial or military as it is efficiently structured, affording calculated recreational opportunities at staged intervals throughout the work shifts to promote employee wellness and morale. For those who accept this station in life, the work is quite manageable and affords a better quality of life than frontier islands. Discontent youths rarely linger for long to mar the peace, as they receive formal shunning and incessant polite suggestions to sail for the colonies with crop shipments. Since continued defiance of social mores generally leads to arrest and potential sacrifice to the volcano gods, the Wavecrest citizenry enjoy surreal tranquility surpassing any of their neighbors. This pacification is so total, in fact, that the Realm barely stations any military presence on the islands themselves, though whole fleets of naval vessels escort the constant flow of supply convoys outbound to the colonies. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the structured peace of Wavecrest seldom keeps the interest of individual Celestial Exalts for very long. The only Exalted who truly appreciate the security of the volcano chain are stability-minded Terrestrials.

The Ocean Floor

While most Realm colonial efforts focus on raising new islands out of the Wyld and populating them with a buffer population to hold back the tides of chaos, the matter of the intervening seas and sea beds presents a more complicated challenge. It is not as though the Exalted cannot explore or master the depths. Water-aspected Terrestrials and Lunars with the right forms can do so trivially, and others can develop Charms or use artifacts to facilitate underwater adventures. Mortal populations require significantly greater magical resources to sustain long-term underwater colonies, however, which increases the costs to establish and maintain such settlements. Life-support systems can always fail, as highly publicized examples of accidents and deliberate geomantic sabotage has proven. A minor inconvenience for a surface colony can end with hundreds or even thousands dead before a qualified technician can fix malfunctioning environmental systems. Of course, adapting the colonists to the environment rather than the other way around carries its own problems. Many mortals won't voluntarily acquire mutations, and forced eugenic programs risk drawing Deliberative censure or interference by mortal-rights coalitions. To date, the most successful sub-species engineering project to expand "human" control of the seabed remains the people of the sea. They base their civilization out of the submerged city of Jalarin but have colonized much of the northern half of the Western Ocean in scattered settlements. Although it is technically subject to the Creation-Ruling Mandate, the prehuman race of pelagials claims vast tracts of Southwestern waters by ancestral right, forcing the Realm to negotiate its expansions carefully to avoid uniting disparate pelagial tribes in a futile (but frustrating) act of concerted defiance. Between these two peoples—one a relic of the past and the other a bold agenda for the future—a diverse mix of assorted Wyld mutants, rare aquatic beastmen, Lintha monsters, enduring castoffs from genesis experiments, strange gods, stranger elementals and unimaginably weird enclaves of sentient non-human species round out the eccentric fringes of the deep-water populations of the Western Ocean.

Jalarin

From its foundations northwest of Coral, the gleaming spires of Jalarin rise more than a dozen stories above the waves, providing mooring docks to refuel skyships and give their crews an exotic "shore" leave experience like nothing else in Creation. Air-filled environmental domes allow surface dwellers a majestic view of Jalarin's public facilities and visitor accommodations, as well as house the central genesis hospital where rich or powerful mortals can purchase the long life and aquatic freedom granted to the people of the sea. Even some among the Exalted come to receive this transformation, with each such occasion celebrated as a city-wide holiday for Celestial Exalts (or an extended moment of respectful silence for Dragon-Blooded converts).

Only a third of the city has life-support systems for air-breathers. The rest of Jalarin can only be reached by the tens of thousands of gill-bearing inhabitants venturing through airlocks into the surrounding waters. There, farmers cultivate kelp on the seabed and farm large crustaceans to augment the fruits of their gardens, while warriors, including one gunzosha camp, drill with submersible fighter craft as special sub-marine commandos of the Deliberative Navy. Perhaps the most important duty given to the people of the sea is the containment of Darkmist Isle's shadowland, which they have bounded with public works improvements to hold in the inky waters and keep them from spreading along the ocean bed. Unlike many surface dwellers, the inhabitants of Jalarin know exactly where the borders of forbidden waters begin and seldom suffer accidents with the automated blockade. Deliberate expeditions to the sunken ruins of Okeanos are another matter entirely. The Deliberative has assumed a "don't ask, don't tell" stance to these adventures as long as any dangerous or powerful relics end up in Exalted hands.

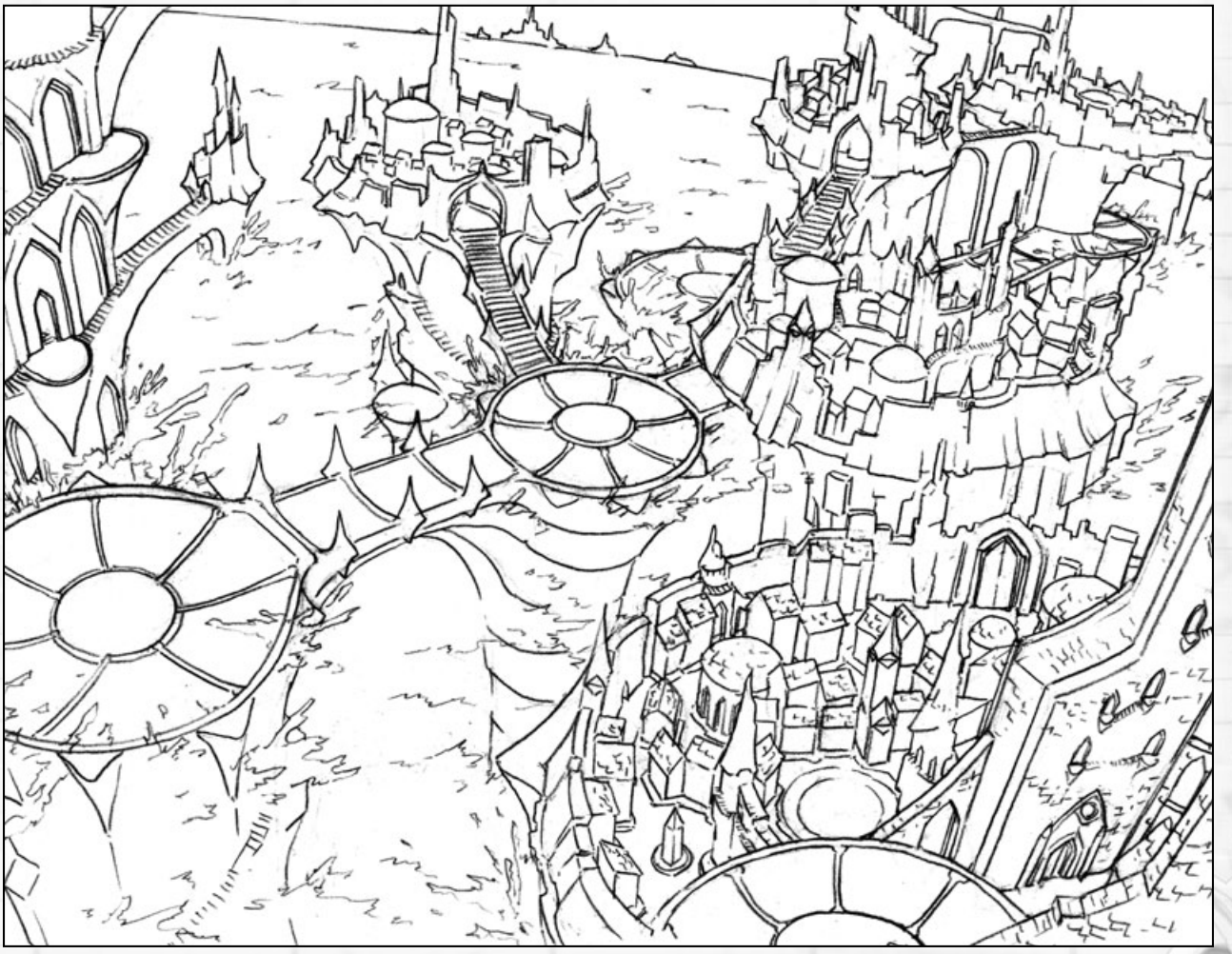
Rules for playing people of the sea (and other such races) can be found on pp. 157–160 of **The Compass of Celestial Directions II—The Wyld**.

The City of the Shining Reefs

Much like Jalarin, the City of the Shining Reefs may be accessed from the surface by a platform perched atop the waves, replacing the soaring skyship docking masts with a single gate to Yu-Shan opened by the Primordial who created the city below and peopled it with its spawn. In their prime (if such could be said for them), the pelagials were a proud humanoid race who traded extensively with the Lintha and the Dragon Kings but lacked the favor either held among the world's creators. The pelagial population endured chiefly because they would perform the tasks that Lintha and Mosok alike deemed too menial for their honor but above the capabilities of human slaves. As a formal underclass of sailors who traveled from port to port in vast brightly colored naval convoys, they held a certain exotic fascination for their neighbors as long as they didn't linger too long in one place. The living underwater city beneath its Celestial gate turned out generation upon generation of itinerant labor, even after a Lintha pogrom severely depopulated the fleets for several decades.

During the Primordial War, the pelagials first aimed for neutrality but found themselves under attack by Exalted and Primordial forces uninterested in anything less than total obedience or direct aid. When all seemed lost, the species felt a great call shouting through their blood, drawing them home to their ancestral city. The pelagial refugees who answered the call and descended the diamond elevator in pilgrimage found themselves remade into aquatic forms far uglier and cruder, but better equipped to survive into the Age of Splendor and dominion by the Exalted. Historical records attribute the mass transformation and deliverance of the pelagials to Autochthon as one of the Great Maker's inexplicable acts. As with many such late-War attributions, however, the truth remains unverifiable. Realm policy toward the pelagials is one of gentle patronizing placation, gradually subsuming their territory as it becomes economically feasible by negotiating treaties and land purchases through the proxy representatives of the people of the sea. While the Exalted could simply seize the land through superior military force, the Chosen lack the civilian and military resources to securely hold the remote seabeds or make productive use of them. Therefore, the Deliberative has deemed it is better policy to let the mostly harmless pelagials hold onto their property for now rather than invite the Lintha to set up new strongholds in the chaos of war.

The City of the Shining Reefs is not so much a technological marvel as a sorcerous one, a vaguely living skeletal



superstructure combining elements of coral and mollusk in encrusted layers of spiky organic armor. A vast three-dimensional maze of traps protects the outer walls, in which sprawling complexes house the mass living and cultural areas of the pelagial race in semi-amphibious splendor. Far beneath, the original rotting palaces of the ancient pelagials sit around the sunken tombs of their Sleeping Princes, the literal shadow rulers of their species, who serve as the collective voice of their now-Neverborn creator from its Labyrinth temple tomb. Outside of a narrow cult, none of the pelagials know of this allegiance and would be most unnerved by the thought that the Exalted would slay them all in an instant if the ruse were ever revealed. The Sleeping Princes are not fools, though. They do their best to encourage friendly relations with the Exalted, so as to allay any suspicions. As a result of this duplicitous campaign, the pelagials have ironically experienced a golden age for the first time in their existence as unofficial vassals of the Realm. The Exalted trade with them, teach them and study lore from their Collegiums of wisdom, giving the prehumans honors approaching those of the fading Dragon Kings. It is possible that the pelagials might try to forget their maker and embrace the Chosen as patrons one day, but their blood remembers what their hearts deny and will destroy them if they should ever truly forsake Whose Whispers Chain. In the same breath, it is equally possible that the destruction of Okeanos marked the first vengeance of the Sleeping Princes, perhaps in cooperation with the Lintha against their common foes. Such matters remain almost as murky as the waters the pelagials call home, providing a backdrop of exotic and alien intrigue for Exalted diplomats and merchants to navigate.

Grand Experiments

As the least populous direction of Creation, the West affords powerful Celestial Exalts a chance to flex and test their might without the same risk of collateral damage. Rarely a day goes by without some Solar sorcerer casting miracles upon a lonely promontory far at sea, either to test a new spell or to keep in practice. The region also hosts a variety of longer-term pet projects in remote facilities, sometimes situated far from sight to avoid interruption or prevent an accident from obliterating a nation, but usually because their creators feel the world just isn't ready for their genius. The locations that follow represent the barest sampling of these experiments and hardly the most fantastic among them.

Sixth Season Reef

In the deep Southwest near the borders of the Wyld, one of the many far-flung Realm tributaries sits as a dot on the map barely worthy of a named entry. Even so, Sixth Season Reef remains important as a daring Celestial experiment that might ultimately redefine how Creation deals with the Fair Folk. The colony's Lunar patron Endless Unagu visits as often as possible, fearful that his ambitions might unravel in his absence. He is wise to hold such fears. The small tribe of mortal settlers represents only one half of the colony's population. The other half dwells just offshore, a small raksha court that Endless Unagu subdued and spared years ago in return for oaths of fealty. The two neighboring settlements enjoy an uneasy truce maintained by amicable exchange of hostages and the fierce oversight of their mutual Lunar overlord. He aims to integrate them into a functional self-sustaining symbiosis within 10 years, teaching the Fair Folk the value of harvesting Essence from peaceful coexistence and consumption of social undesirables rather than giving in to gluttonous feeding frenzies. From his humans, he expects tolerance and patience assisted by forced intermarriage to create lasting ties and superior magical heritage for future generations. The plan seems to be on track, in spite of detractors who call Endless Unagu "Fairy Farmer" and occasionally accuse him of consorting with the enemies of Creation—a charge the eel-totem Lunar has angrily contested by citing the example and origin of the Mountain Folk. As much as he might wish or boast otherwise, Endless Unagu's eloquent arguments had very little to do with his receiving permission to continue his experiments. Rather, he can thank the unlikely consortium of savants and sorcerers who swarmed to his defense out of fear that their own pet projects might come under scrutiny if the inquiry continued. Few of these supporters actually believe Endless Unagu will succeed in any way (or really want him to), but many publicly wish him luck just to annoy their Faithful political rivals.

The Grotto of Light

When Queen k'Tula walks among her Solar peers, she wears the shape of a young woman who might be called fiercely beautiful if not for the alien indifference of her golden eyes. The Twilight Caste elder detests the political expediencies that make the lie necessary almost as much as she detests the limitations of the face she once wore, but she correctly recognizes that most Lawgivers would not understand or appreciate the modifications she has made to her flesh. Only in her own manse does she tear off the ruse and unchain her body, uncoiling her limbs to infinitely dexterous tentacles until only her caste mark shines unchanged upon a bulbous cephalopod brow. Her submerged sanctuary lies at the bottom of a benthic chasm beneath the Northern ice. It is well hidden and removed from the rest of the world in order to deter visitors and allow the Solar Queen to experiment on herself and the race of sapient Half-Caste octopi descended from her couplings with her Lunar mate in his totem form.

Queen k'Tula is not shy about her extreme transhumanist ideology, though she has given up trying to convince the Deliberative that intrinsic mortal weakness is the anchor holding back Exalted evolution. Many Lawgivers simply assume she spends most of her time in her manse sulking at her unpopularity, when they bother to think of her at all. Those who question further lose interest when they look at her breeding program, which appears little different from those of other savant-engineers and hardly gossip-worthy compared

Is It Working?

Endless Unagu's experiment is recklessly bold in its scope. He believes that sufficient social conditioning can alter the fundamental nature of the raksha, changing them from predators to symbiotic protectors like wolves changed to sheepdogs. The question embodies the timeless dilemma of nature versus nurture, and the answer remains deliberately unresolved for Storytellers to decide since the outcome might profoundly affect the Realm's Fair Folk policy.

Option 1: Success. Endless Unagu discovers the social formula that can tame raksha. If the formula can be reliably duplicated, the Exalted might move toward concentration-camp-style rehabilitation for conquered courts rather than wholesale execution, eventually creating a substantial buffer zone of "friendly" Wyld territories to ward off the horrors of deeper chaos. A more modest success might help Sixth Season Reef achieve domestic tranquility, but in such a way that he cannot immediately duplicate the results (perhaps necessitating further research).

Option 2: Failure. Endless Unagu is doomed to fail. The Fair Folk are of one kind, reality another, and there can be only enmity between them. The raksha might play along, enjoying the novelty of doing so, but they will eventually get bored and revert back to type. Worst of all, they might be playing along simply to delude Endless Unagu with false hope, perhaps setting him up to have his form and sanity unraveled by the Wyld at a later date.

with other Solar fetishes. Such assumptions suit k'Tula just fine. Her spawn represent more than an unchecked peccadillo run awry, being rather a deliberate and calculating attempt to create a superior host for Solar Exaltation. Although she hasn't quite reached a level of contempt to advocate human extinction, she has carefully considered the ramifications and sees some merit to a forced "restructuring" of Exaltation.

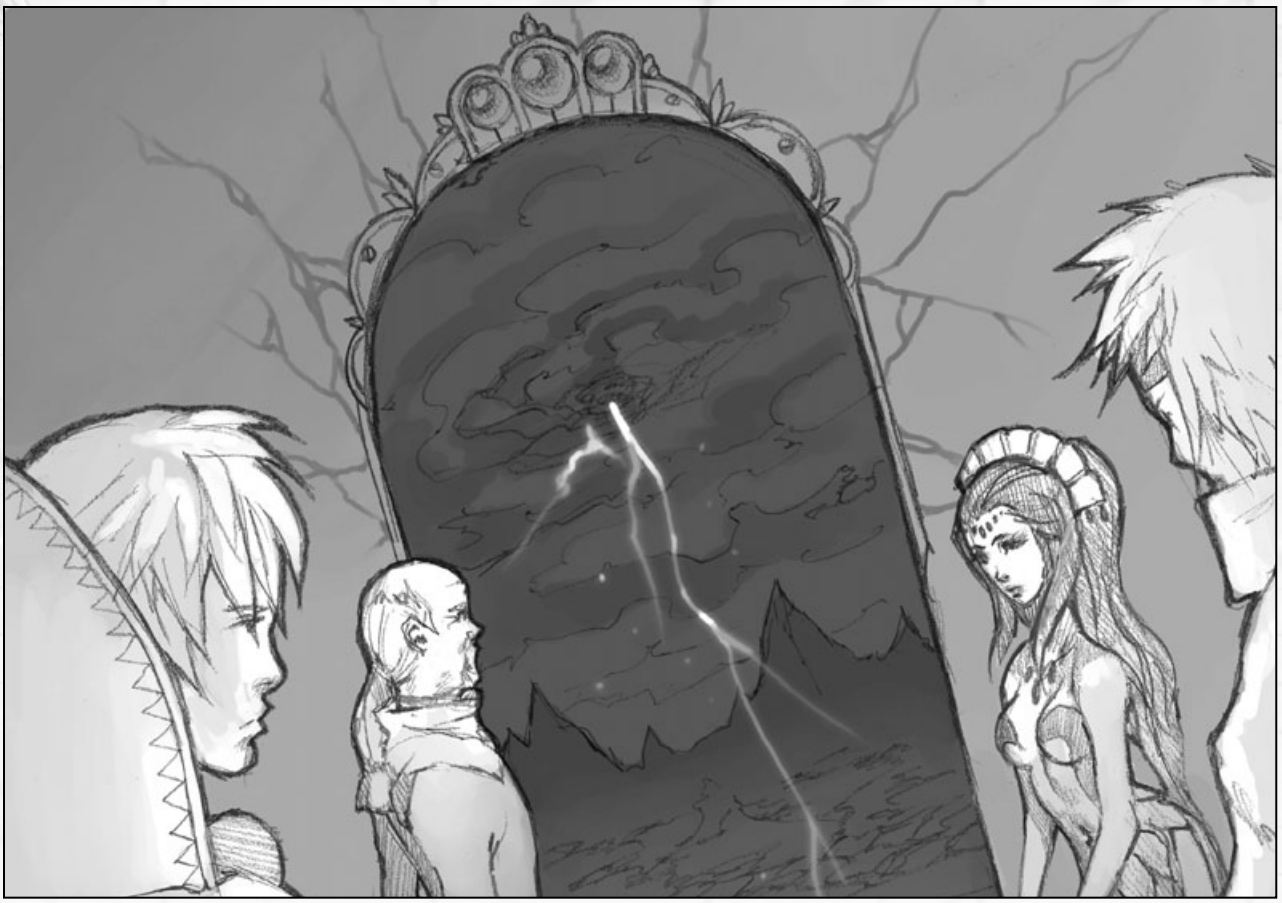
In keeping with the parameters and goals of k'Tula's experiment, her spawn do not wield Essence without extensive thaumaturgical training, since integral Essence has been proven to disrupt the Exaltation process. Furthermore, despite almost completely octopoid external morphology, the race incorporates vestigial internal elements of human physiology and spiritual structure to retain the potential for Solar Exaltation. From the outside, her children just appear to be octopi, albeit nearly human-sized telepathic tool-using octopi.

According to Queen k'Tula, her Lunar husband, Nakik, died in battle against the Fair Folk centuries ago. This story is widely believed, though conspiracy theorists and gossipmongers point out that the fact that his Exaltation has yet to appear in a new incarnation is an ominous sign. The truth of the matter, known only to k'Tula herself, is that Nakik volunteered to test one of her mutagenic experiments. Unfortunately, she lost control of the Wyld energies, and the onslaught stripped away her husband's caste and sanity as he experienced untold subjective centuries trapped inside a temporal vortex of Pure Chaos. He now remains a prisoner in the deepest levels of her manse, a massive inchoate kraken constantly struggling to escape his bondage. It was a combination of grief and guilt that drove k'Tula to her transhumanism, since both flow from her human nature as qualities she would gladly rise above. She has rationalized a greater good for her children to play and forged herself in the "perfection" of her husband's totem, but her denial is an exquisite madness cultivated in response to the unbearable remorse she feels in the throes of her Limit Breaks. Although she tells the world that her husband is dead and treats him as a monster, she continues to bear his young and holds a secret hope that she might be able to fix him one day. She doesn't know what might happen if his unstable Exaltation reincarnates without being mended, but she fears official investigation and reprisal if Nakik's successor suffers his unformed madness.

Queen k'Tula's children know nothing of her secrets, of course. They sincerely believe they are the future hosts of the Solar Exalted. To this end, their savants and thaumaturges tirelessly pore over reports from Xur, hoping they might help their mother unlock the Exaltation formula and secure their eternal greatness. They do not hate humanity, but they see their predecessors as a species that curiously fails to recognize its impending obsolescence, lacking even the savage dignity of the fading Dragon Kings.

The Arch of Undreamt Eternities

On a barren island that has no location sits a tower with no windows, doors or fate. Within the tower's one room stands an arched gate of starmetal encrusted with emeralds. If its empty hinges once held twin doors, no trace remains of them, but it is just as likely that those doors will be forged in an Age that might come to pass, given the structure's unique relationship outside time and fate. Only those outside fate can find the island, and then only if they travel due west of the Element Pole of Water until five days after they doubt their way and sincerely believe they must turn back. The Sidereal who first found it was walking outside fate at the time, stalking a demon of ill portents who could sense the subtle vibrations of destiny. The demon ran across the waves out into chaos, but Lady Zephyra pursued tirelessly behind, tracking the monster up the shore of the strange isle and through the riddle of its nonexistent tower to stand before the arch itself. Seeing this monolith, the demon remembered the dances of the gilmyne and mistakenly called the portal Saigoth. In expecting Saigoth, however, the limits of that



mythology defined the limits of the demon's understanding, so the creature died failing to comprehend the true nature of its discovery. Lady Zephyra proved wiser and refused to name the nameless, accepting it for what it was and opening her eyes to its transcendent reality. Through its opening, she witnessed the dreams and nightmares of many futures. She returned to Yu-Shan forever sadder and wiser for her vision.

Since its discovery centuries ago, the structure still bears no name, though some Sidereals toss about the moniker Arch of Undreamt Eternities as a title, hoping they will not inadvertently limit their understanding to fit their expectations. Lady Zephyra thinks the title has already diminished the artifact and staunchly refuses to call it by any identifying phrase, but her colleagues think she goes too far in her caution. To say that the Sidereals understand the arch would be a gross overstatement. They barely understand its controls, let alone how or why it works. As best they can deduce, the arch leads travelers into possible futures until growing discontinuities of Paradox return the travelers back to the moment they never truly left. The Sidereals keep the manse's "existence" a tightly guarded secret, even from the Solar Exalted. The Five-Score Fellowship does not need a glimpse of the future to know how dangerous the artifact could be in Solar hands. Merely attending one Calibration's Saigoth Gate contest in Clepsys is sufficient.

Game Effects: Sidereal manse 5 (likely metaphysically limited from N/A by its title). *Drawbacks:* Sacrificed Hearthstone 5, Fragility 1, Habitability 2, Maintenance 1 (to retain its full power, the arch must not be named). Powers: Divine Observatory (3; although lacking the traditional accoutrements of an observatory, the tower similarly resonates with fate and provides comparable benefits), Temple Manse (3; the Sidereals do not know who or what power made the manse, but all attempts to attune to it merely fray their patterns to no effect), Outside Fate (4), Wyld Revocation (4; the island cannot be found by any means except the outlined ritual; all other methods of divining its location or reaching it automatically fail), Otherworld Gate (5). Traveling through the gate requires a difficulty 1 (Intelligence + Craft [Fate]) roll that automatically fails if the traveler has no dots of that Craft. The traveler may select one condition for the journey per success, which may include an exact passage of time or something more exotic like, "What if the Solar Exalted all perished?" If the roll succeeds, the traveler appears in the future at the convergence of time and space that best meets the criteria for the journey (or a random event constructed by the Storyteller in the case of vague or indeterminable conditions). The traveler experiences the world exactly as if he had teleported to that point, but the timeline exists for only five days from the point of entry. After that, the traveler finds himself having walked through the arch without

any apparent effect, but with disorienting memories of the experience that drain all Willpower points. The intelligence or metaphysical process governing the journey prevents it from meaningfully counting toward training time for any trait. Furthermore, the prognostication cannot guess the actions of entities outside fate except to the degree those actions are assumed using activation successes, so any possible futures experienced within a vision deviate substantially from timelines in which such entities do anything important. Multiple travelers can experience the same vision, provided they all enter at the same point using the lowest number of activation successes and apply those successes to the same conditions. Storytellers should remember that the arch only explores possibilities. Anyone who treats a prescient vision as an unalterable truth does so at his own peril.

Defiant Islands

In the period of heavy colonization during the early Realm, the Exalted met with little resistance. They were, after all, the heroes and liberators of humanity from the tyranny of the Primordials and the ultimate weapons of the gods armed with the Mandate of Heaven to rule the world. Setting aside issues of heresy, no mortal nation could stand against a modest strike force of the Chosen, let alone the Deliberative Navy. Yet some dared anyway. Methods and reasons varied. Some islands put forward token protest, offering unconditional surrender if a Deliberative champion could defeat their own hero, preserving a shred of cultural dignity despite the certainty of defeat. The Chosen wisely accepted these duels, though on a few occasions the bravery and heroism of the native champion led to his or her own Exaltation and a much more difficult fight than anyone expected. In some cases, they arrived to find a local Celestial Exalt already ruling the people, which led to more delicate and gentle negotiations. Other nations took a fiercer stand, either resigning themselves to annihilation rather than the ignominy of assimilation or vainly imagining they could triumph. The Chosen showed little mercy to these peoples, but prudently left enough survivors to spread the stories of the battles as unwitting heralds. In this way, legends of the Exalted preceded them and reduced further defiance, accelerating the pace of conquest.

Heartwind Isle

During the Primordial War, most of humanity united under the banner of the Exalted to overthrow their masters. They had so little that any destiny seemed preferable to continued suffering under the capricious cataclysms of their makers. Yet, there were humans who sided with the Primordials—some out of fear, some out of pious respect for the established hierarchy and some because they enjoyed a better standard of living than their brethren as favored pets of a particular Primordial. Those whom the Exalted could not convert to their cause, they massacred as enemies of the gods and traitors to humanity, continuing the slaughter when they encountered lingering Primordial supporters following the War. Heartwind Isle offered something of a special case among nations blessed by the world's creators, however, since the inhabitants enjoyed the patronage of Gaia.

Historians do not accurately record how the island came by this favor, though mosaics on the island seem to depict a tribe warning Gaia of a raksha plot to murder her with a weapon shaped from the shadows of her own nightmares. The depictions get more abstract after that point, but suggest that the Elemental Dragon of Water rose from the waves and devoured the assassins, dragging the weapon into the deepest crevasses of the ocean. In reward, Gaia birthed Heartwind Isle, a paradise of malleable life that would care for the tribe's descendents for all time.

Regardless of the truth in this legend, when the Exalted ships beached on Heartwind Isle, they found a tribe unswervingly loyal to Gaia with biotechnology more advanced than anything early genesis labs elsewhere could produce. Assertions of common cause and alliance with Gaia could not persuade the nation to join the Deliberative, which even dismissed the Dragon-Blooded as impure recipients of Gaia's grace. Entreaties grudgingly turned to veiled threats, as the Exalted coveted the Heartwind biotech and would not be denied. Negotiations dragged on for years, as the Chosen couldn't be sure how much favor the islanders actually held with Gaia or what the Primordial might do in retaliation if they tried to take the land by force. In the end, avarice won over caution and the objections of Terrestrial subordinates, especially after other nations began looking to Heartwind as an underdog inspiration to their own resistance. Citing the Mandate of Heaven, the Deliberative declared war on Heartwind by launching the first thousand-forged dragon. Unfortunately, the weapon proved too effective and exterminated most of the island's ecosystem along with its inhabitants. Realm forces scavenged what they could and sterilized the island to prevent samples from making their way into the arsenals of rogue states, and the island remains a blasted wasteland to this day. The island's only known legacy is the cry of "Remember Heartwind!" on the lips of Western dissidents, a battle cry Lintha terrorists have gleefully spread as part of their anti-Exalted propaganda.

The Indigo Chain

Before the Exalted pushed back the borders of the world, the Indigo Chain stood at the edge of the Wyld more than 1,000 miles west of Okeanos, wracked by seasonal chaos typhoons that seeded the islands with all manner of barely plausible and extremely dangerous organisms. The archipelago had no sapient inhabitants until a ragged flotilla of rafts arrived on the beaches. Less than a hundred people arrived, out of more than five times that number who had set out on the voyage. They had all been condemned criminals awaiting sacrifice in a Dragon King prison island west of Okeanos but had murdered their jailers and stayed just ahead of pursuit until the Mosok turned back rather

Remember Heartwind!

When negotiations with the Deliberative began to break down, the Genesis Lords of Heartwind began work on a contingency plan. They knew they could not hope to repel an Exalted invasion, but they could at least make sure that some part of their culture survived. To this end, they engineered two organisms without the knowledge of their chieftains, hoping strictest secrecy would buy them time to finish before war broke out. The first, a synthetic behemoth whale, carried a comprehensive biotemplate record of Heartwind technology within its own Shaping-resistant immortal physiology. They set this whale loose into the Wyld, hoping one day to retrieve it and rebuild if the worst came to pass. It has not been seen since.

The second organism was far more insidious, a human-only plague imprinted with the neurological personality matrices of the Genesis Lords themselves. This disease has Virulence 6, Untreated Morbidity 6, Treated Morbidity 6, Difficulty to Treat 5 and is spread by physical contact with infected hosts or their preserved tissue. Victims infected by the disease show no outward symptoms, and the dormant disease cannot be detected even through magical diagnosis without a successful difficulty 10 (Perception + Medicine) roll. Only several dozen strains may be active at a time, one per Genesis Lord, at which point the disease still shows no symptoms but can be detected normally. Active strains do not harm their host body. Instead each month of active infection confers one dot in each of the following traits as a Training effect until all have a rating of 6 dots: all Mental Attributes, Craft (Genesis), Lore, Medicine and Occult. When all traits reach their maximum level, the victim's Motivation changes to "Avenge and restore Heartwind" as the personality of a specific Genesis Lord overrides his own mind. The new incarnation magically remembers everything from its original life, all successive lives as an imprinted copy and the host's life. Hosts cured of the possession lose all conferred traits, regaining any experience points paid to acquire them. Upon the death of the host or being cured, the Genesis Lord activates a random dormant strain infecting a non-Exalted host to continue the line. Since they do not control where they will emerge or what form they will take, Genesis Lords have developed a set of codes by which they can identify each other and coordinate their subtle, long-term insurgency.

than follow them near the Wyld. The refugees and their descendents labored to tame the island and eventually did. The Indigo Chain barely noticed the Primordial War; no one Exalted among them, nor did any of the battles come near the small chain. Therefore, when the Deliberative colonialists arrived, the natives greeted them warily. They had heard tales of the oil-tongued Glowing Men from the Fair Folk and the neighbors they bartered with, and they were not interested in becoming another vassal state. Fortunately for them, the Lunar in charge of the negotiations found their pride commendable and chose to scatter the populace through forced relocation to other parts of the Realm and Threshold rather than exterminate them, which was considered an extremely unorthodox strategy at the time. The success of the Indigo Chain assimilation prompted a change in Deliberative policy. Thereafter extermination was reserved for the most aggressively recalcitrant nations. The only real casualty of the forced diaspora was the distinctive indigo dye for which the islands received their name. The natives never revealed the formula to their conquerors, nor could alchemists duplicate it.

Today, the Indigo Chain is a productive prefecture of the Realm inhabited entirely by colonists. Its economy centers on building one of the critical engine components used in *Wyldbreaker*-class vessels, with more than half the populace employed at the factory-cathedral on the largest island. Other colonists fish the sea for food and provide auxiliary services to the factory workers, including restaurants, whorehouses and other essentials. The Dragon-Blooded forewoman at the factory files reports with her Solar Prince on the Blessed Isle by means of I AM, but receives loose autonomy as long as she meets production quotas.

The Independent Protectorate of Vajkaimal

When an island offers symbolic resistance to the Exalted by a challenge of single combat, the general assumption is that the Realm hero will triumph. The Chosen know this. The islanders know this. If the fight eases local pride and smoothes the transition without committing military resources, the Realm can afford to be magnanimous. Sometimes, however, plans backfire. Vajkaimal is a single atoll 900 miles north of the Coral Archipelago whose mostly dormant volcano warms the lagoon enough to make the island surprisingly temperate despite the freezing fog around it. The mineral-rich lagoon grows organic crystals suitable for data imprinting, making the land surprisingly valuable despite its size and remote location, which is one of many reasons the Deliberative sent a delegate to absorb its populace. In the middle of the resulting duel, the local hero Terrakun received Exaltation as a Lunar and promptly bit the head off his astonished Solar opponent. By the terms of the duel, the Deliberative had to leave the island alone and honor its sovereignty. While military force could have certainly prevailed over the turtle-totem No Moon, reneging

would have set a very dangerous precedent for further duel negotiations and required far more resources later, so the Deliberative ordered the team to withdraw. In the centuries since, Terrakun has opened friendly trade relations with the Deliberative, exporting crystals in exchange for all manner of civilized amenities. Most people don't even realize the island isn't a Realm prefecture, since it is virtually indistinguishable from one at this point. The natives celebrate their chieftain's victory every year with a feast day, but otherwise do not draw attention to the fact at his insistence. (He is wise enough not to antagonize his neighbors.) While the Silver Pact is too circumspect to show overt favor to Terrakun, the circumstances of his Exaltation remain a private folk-hero tale among the Stewards. Besides earning Terrakun a small cult of his peers, this status has helped him access tutors and mentors so that he could keep pace with the expectations of his age and experience.

The Lintha

When the Primordials created the Dragon Kings to oversee the Threshold and tame its savagery beneath the hierarchy of the gods, three of the breeds spread to the edges of Creation and claimed unmatched hegemony over the other Primordial-spawned races. Until the rise of Okeanos, however, the crocodilian Mosok in the West found themselves blocked at every turn by the awesome naval might of Kimbery's God-Blooded children. Jealously loyal to their Great Mother with almost monotheistic fanaticism, the Lintha rejected the notion that they should broaden their pantheon to a larger Celestial hierarchy. Instead, they turned their behemoth cousins and automaton soldiers against the invading Mosok in a bloody centuries-long feud that culminated in uneasy stalemate when both sides tired of the conflict.

Insular as they were, the Lintha barely noticed humanity at first, except to visit terrible wrath on migratory raft fleets that unknowingly trespassed into their ancestral waters. Later generations of Lintha discovered a taste for human flesh, though the meat always remained a delicacy since the only way to obtain captives was by raiding Mosok-controlled territories or bribing corrupt Dragon King officials to look the other way. Then the Exalted came.

The Western Theater of the Primordial War was probably the most spectacular, if only for the sheer size of the behemoths and other monstrosities fielded by the architects of Creation against the navies of the Chosen. By comparison, battles between Exalted and Lintha ships seemed almost mundane, if such a term could be applied to clashes between navies that covered more of the sea than many actual island formations of the time. Exalted admirals grimly expected the Lintha campaign to stretch on for several hundred more years after most hostilities ceased, but Kimbery's surrender had the side effect of imploding every level of the Lintha technological infrastructure, which had relied on reformatting their mother's component souls. The bloody conquest turned to a bloodier rout, and within a year, the broken vestiges of the Lintha no longer presented a credible military threat to the Realm.

In the time since their near genocide, the Lintha have replenished some of their numbers, though virtually none of their glory. In an ironic twist of fortune, the remnants have turned to their former food for breeding stock, sullying Kimbery's legacy with the blood of their own conquerors. Although they cannot hope to attack the Exalted directly or challenge naval convoys, any vessel foolish enough to travel alone through Southern seas risks being attacked by marauders. Subtler Lintha act terrorists throughout the West, helping to organize and outfit rebellions and civil unrest throughout the region for the sheer malicious joy of draining Deliberative resources and encouraging the Exalted to crack down harder on their vassals. Although many of these terrorists have so little Primordial blood that they might as well be fully mortal, more powerful members of the Lintha have developed clever ways to hide their nature, such as veils of fathomless wickedness. Both the Exalted and Lintha consider the counterinsurgency campaign known as the Lintha Suppression of 3405 as a major victory, with the Exalted having successfully wiped out hundreds of Lintha-backed infernal terrorist cells at the cost of many thousands of civilian casualties. Modern-day Exalts aren't sure whether the suppression was as successful as it seems or whether the Lintha are simply lying low until they can plan their next move. History, however, suggests the latter is far more likely.

T'foor Na

The behemoth atoll of Lintha Ng Oroo once surpassed Okeanos in size and grandeur, unsurprising given that Kimbery spawned it to challenge the Blessed Isle and as a sanctuary where she could dwell apart from the ocean as a lagoon. Encircled by the embrace of her daughter and dotted with the islands of the continent's sacred capital, T'foor Na, the black sea of the Primordial spawned every possible wonder the Lintha could ever want to enrich their glory. Had the atoll grown unchallenged, it might eventually have fulfilled its mother's hopes, tilting the symmetry of Creation toward a new omphalos. The Primordial War ended these aspirations and destroyed the continent, however, leaving only a fragmentary seed of the immortal behemoth to drift away and regenerate in sargasso seas to the east. The creature's corpse broke apart into fragments littering the ocean floor, her poisoned coral flesh mutating all the beasts that ate of it into monsters loyal to the Lintha cause. These lesser behemoths have intermittently plagued the Exalted throughout the Age of Splendor, though far less frequently since the Suppression of 3405. Lintha terrorists occasionally grind fragments of their former homeland to powder and introduce them into a settlement's water supply as a biological weapon, especially since the standard Deliberative Army response to such an outbreak is to exterminate the victims and sterilize the area.

Veil of Fathomless Wickedness (Artifact ••)

Created by the Lintha to help them move unnoticed through Exalted-controlled lands, these infernal artifacts take many forms from literal veils and masks to more innocuous jewelry items such as rings and pendants. Any creature of darkness donning such an item may spend one Willpower point (or three uncommitted motes) to power it for a day, thereby cloaking her unholy nature. For the duration of the enchantment, the character has Essence 1, no Essence pool and no access to Essence-fueled powers. Her body also changes any extremely minor cosmetic features such as skin tone to fit within human norms and appears completely mortal to all known forms of Essence detection. Since the tainted Essence that defines the bearer as a creature of darkness is actually suppressed, that label does not apply for the duration, and the veil can't be contested by effects that pierce illusions (although perfect truth effects such as Eye of the Unconquered Sun are not deceived). If the bearer travels more than a yard from the veil or voluntarily terminates its power, the enchantment collapses and the artifact cannot be reactivated for the rest of the day.

Of the original continental mass of Lintha Ng Oroo, only half-sunken T'foor Na remains, so choked with Kimbery's curses and sorcerous hate that even the victorious Exalted thought it wiser to leave the empty city alone than waste resources dismantling its rotting foundations. Nowadays, the former capital is a wasteland of blasphemies that fouls the waters around its organic spires, a haven for Lintha and other infernalists who wish to pay homage to the captive Primordials. Admiral Leviathan keeps a strike force under his command in the vicinity of the islands, using the city as a lure to attract and annihilate the infernal pilgrims en masse. Nonetheless, they continue to come from every corner of Creation no matter how many bodies the Exalted leave impaled on the beaches or shattered hulls they send to the merciless depths. The admiral has to rotate crews for the strike force each season to maintain morale. The ruins of T'foor Na are located to the far west of An-Teng near the borders of the Wyld, as the continent of Lintha Ng Oroo originally dwelled beyond the border of Creation in a pocket of stable reality sustained by her Great Mother.

Bluehaven

Although she is but a mere scrap of her former continental glory, Lintha Ng Oroo remains one of the largest behemoths still living in Creation and one of the most persistent adversaries of the Exalted. Her current form is that of a lush tropical island roughly 30 miles across, with innumerable flexible sargassum tendrils more than 100 miles long spread around her like the tentacles of a jellyfish. This body, however, is merely a shell suffused with her immortal spiritual Essence, much like her distant cousin Mother Bog in the East. The Lintha who dwell upon her call this daughter of Kimbery—together with the many derelicts snared in her tendrils as a labyrinth of planks and decks—Bluehaven. (The name is a reference to the cerulean hue of her seaweed and an homage to the literal translation of T'foor Na, the Blue City that was once the continent's heart.)

Lintha Ng Oroo retains her original purpose of endless growth, but has enough sense to take a long-term approach to this goal in light of her diminished state. Moreover, she also recognizes that she reflects her mother's imprisonment. What was once divine has became infernal, twisted away from its original alien aesthetic toward a more hateful and monstrous existence. The beings she now spawns upon her shores are fundamentally unclean, as fallen from the wonders of old as the degenerate mixed-blood Lintha compared with their ancestral grace. Try as she might to work around this curse and be what she was made to be, Lintha Ng Oroo cannot escape the envenomed pain and rage of her mother. Her efforts to keep this savage evil in abeyance consume much of her attention, so that she speaks to the Lintha from her cavern mouth only when she has something important to say or when they invoke her with desperate prayers.

As an island city, Bluehaven is fairly primitive by modern standards or those of the ancient Lintha, with buildings hewn

Horrors of the Shattered Reef

Any mortal animal that eats a piece of Lintha Ng Oroo absorbs some of the behemoth's Essence, shaping its body over the course of hours into a nightmarish expression of Kimbery's hate. This transformation is not dissimilar to the changes wrought by extreme exposure to the Wyld and should be modeled by stacking mutations onto a base animal template. Newly infected creatures immediately gain the required negative mutations of their state and gain one mutation point per hour until they have all required positive mutations listed here. These mutants are sterile and tied to Kimbery's Essence rather than the Wyld. They must return to the tainted waters near T'foor Na or Lintha Ng Oroo or lair in any of the thousands of hidden grottos in the ocean floor where the Sea That Marched Against the Flame once swam before the War. Eating fragments of Lintha Ng Oroo cannot change Essence users, but they react to the coral as they would to Yozi venom (see **Exalted**, p. 131).

Initial Mutations: Kin Sense (1; recognizes beings descended from Kimbery), Infernal Assimilation (2; as Wyld Assimilation; likewise protects against Wyld exposure, but instills dual Motivation of "Obey the Lintha" and "Avenge Kimbery" as overriding goals), Creature of Darkness (-4), Ongoing Mutation (-4; use the required list to guide worsening changes, followed by the suggested list when these have all been acquired)

Required Mutations: Night Vision (1), Water Adaptation (1), Fanged Beak (1; as Fangs), Gills (2; No Atrophy), Tentacles (4; eight tentacles), Diet (-1; human flesh or body fluids), Hungry (-1), Ugly (-1)

Suggested Mutations: Air Adaptation (1), Chameleon (2), Fanged Beak (2; as Tusks), Frog Tongue (2), Impossible Joints (2), Inexhaustible (2), Toxin (2), Armored Hide (4), Barbed Suckers (4; as Quills), Enlightened Essence (4; often gains a number of demon Charms, including Measure the Wind and Principle of Motion), Gripping Suckers (4; as Wall Walking), Dragon's Breath (6; caustic ichor), Gargantuan (6), Immortal Flesh (6; this mutation develops in these monsters only after about a decade of steady transformation)

New Mutations:

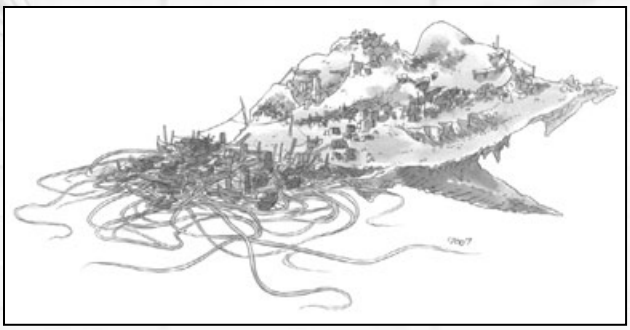
Kin Sense (Pox): The mutant can supernaturally recognize any being in range of her normal senses to whom she is related and can gauge the overall strength of that blood tie.

Ongoing Mutation (Deformity): The mutant is infected with a form of mutagenic cancer and continues to change even in the absence of Wyld exposure (or other origin). The character's player chooses a new mutation, which takes a number of weeks equal to its mutation point cost to appear. Then the process repeats. Although the player chooses new mutations (with Storyteller approval), the character is not at all in charge of the process and has no idea what to expect.

Gargantuan (Abomination): The mutant is four times the average size for its species, gaining +4 Strength and Stamina as well as the following extra health levels: -0x2, -1x4, -2x4. This mutation may be taken multiple times to stack bonuses and proportionally increase the size factor to these bonuses, although such creatures almost always suffer equally prodigious negative mutations appropriate to their bulk.

Immortal Flesh (Abomination): Whenever the mutant dies, unless he is killed by magic that can permanently slay spirits or his entire body is destroyed (such as by immersion in an acid bath), he eventually regenerates from the largest remaining fragment of his tissue. This process takes (6 – Stamina) years, to a minimum of one month, and may be delayed by re-killing the regenerating body. If the character died of old age, the body regenerates back to its prime. Otherwise, it remains the age it was when it died. Apart from Lunar chimera, Exalted cannot have this mutation; the Chosen may attain immortality only by their own power.

of timber rather than grown whole with sorcery or shaped out of embodied Primordial souls. Despite this outward primitivism, the Lintha enjoy a standard of living rivaling many Exalted, with effectively unlimited food and natural resources supplied by Lintha Ng Oroo and myriad species of First Circle demons descended from Kimbery serving as pets and slaves out of loyalty and kinship rather than sorcerous binding. Although only those of actual Lintha blood may set foot upon the island, purely human allies who swear fealty to them (including many talented infernalists recruited throughout the Threshold) live in sizeable numbers on the artificial reefs of vessels tangled in the sargassum. The outermost of these districts are little more than slums and slave pens rife with pestilence and the occasional hungry demon, but the inner ring settlements are virtually indistinguishable from the island in luxury except for the artificial composition of the terrain. Mortals from the inner rings wear distinctive facial piercing to denote they are not permitted on the island proper, while those of lesser station lack them (on the grounds that they won't even be in a position to trespass).



Motivation: Grow bigger than the Blessed Isle
Attributes: Strength 50, Dexterity 5, Stamina 50; Charisma 5, Manipulation 5, Appearance 5; Perception 6, Intelligence 6, Wits 6
Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 4, Temperance 4, Valor 3
Abilities: Athletics 5, Awareness 6, Bureaucracy 5 (Primordial Law +3), Integrity 6, Investigation 3, Lore 6 (Lintha +3), Martial Arts 5, Occult 6 (Kimbery +3), Performance 5 (Descendents of Kimbery +3), Presence 3, Sail 6 (Herself +3), Socialize (Ancient Lintha +3), Survival 5 (Tracking +3), War 6 (Primordial Forces +1, Piracy +2)
Backgrounds: Allies (Lintha) 5, Cult (Lintha and Infernalists) 5, Influence 4, Mentor (Kimbery) 5, Resources N/A (can create virtually limitless bounty upon herself)
Essence Powers:
Cartographer-Rebuking Geography—Lintha Ng Oroo exists outside fate, her purpose imbued with the incomprehensible infinitude of her mother. Moreover, any attempt to locate or track her current location by any means adds +10 to the difficulty, contesting magical efforts with a dice pool equal to her (Willpower + Essence) and +10 successes. Individuals descended from Kimbery may ignore this effect as long as they have an Intimacy of loyalty toward their Great Mother. Forcing a Lintha navigator to betray the current location of the island disrupts the Intimacy and invokes this power.
Great Mother's Brood—The behemoth may summon a First Circle demon descended from Kimbery (such as eristrufa) by spending 20 motes as a diceless miscellaneous action. These demons obey her loyally without any need for binding. She can only use this power at night and may no longer summon Second Circle components of her mother as in prehistory, since doing so would be a violation of Kimbery's oath.
Horrors of Infinite Paradise—Lintha Ng Oroo can alter her physical body as if using Wyld-Shaping Technique as if she were a region of Pure Chaos (see **Exalted**, p. 216), but she may create only land, wealth or animals (such as people, but non-sentient beings only). Things she creates are fully real but twisted by Kimbery's imprisonment and thus creatures of darkness or infernal objects. She may also mutate beings on her surface as a blessing or curse as per the rules for Wyld Cauldron Technology, though they must stay on her for the entire period of shaping.
Infernal Wellspring—The behemoth retains a conduit to her mother's Essence, allowing her and anyone descended from Kimbery who stands upon her to regain 20 motes per hour.
Oroo Speaks—The rumbling words that issue from Lintha Ng Oroo's cavern mouth speak directly to the blood of Kimbery. Those descended from the Great Mother understand the behemoth regardless of what languages they know. Others hear only cacophonous gibberish whose disturbing inflections demand that interlopers leave the island unless they spend one Willpower point per scene to stave off the unnatural mental influence.
Slipstream Whirlpool Escape—Where Kimbery swam, currents of dark Essence still flow in patterns hidden from the sight of the world. By descending into one of these currents and spending 100 motes, Lintha Ng Oroo can vanish in a great whirlpool and rise out of the waves anywhere else in the Western Ocean, taking her inhabitants with her. Although this power was once effortless, its ease has diluted with the blood of the Lintha. Currently, the behemoth remains in a state of helpless quiescence for a month following each teleportation. It is by means of this power that the Lintha have evaded destruction by Exalted forces time and again.
Terrestrial Circle Sorcery—Lintha Ng Oroo is an accomplished sorcerer with a vast repertoire of spells, many of which incorporate the magical rituals of the ancient Lintha with effects unknown to the Exalted.
Join Battle: 12
Attacks:
Sargasso Tentacles: Speed 7, Accuracy 30 (By simultaneously grappling with thousands of tendrils, the behemoth may simultaneously apply this clinch attack to any number of targets on the island or in waters within 30 miles of her. Clinched vessels use their piloting roll to win control of the grapple and break the hold.), Damage 60B piercing, Parry DV —, Rate 1
Soak: 50L (immune to bashing damage and attacks that do not use an artifact weapon, Charm or some other magic)
Health Levels: -0x100/-1x200/-2x300/-4x400/I/Quiescent (Like many of its cousins, this behemoth cannot truly die unless a unique conjunction of unlikely circumstances occurs as selected by the Storyteller. It recovers from any lesser demise after a century of torpor and heals as an Exalt.)
Dodge DV: None **Willpower:** 7
Essence: 8 **Essence Pool:** 800
Other Notes: As much a geographic feature as entity, Lintha Ng Oroo is immune to disease, poison and any other negative effects associated with conventional biology. She can be wounded, but her death is a doom not of this world, so she scorns death by this world's hands. She was once entirely immune to the Wyld, but that immunity fades with the waning purity of the Lintha race. She dares not travel beyond the Bordermarches anymore for fear of what she might become. Although traveling the hidden currents of Kimbery is her fastest mode of travel, Lintha Ng Oroo can also swim at a speed of 24/50mph.

HYAA! GIT ON OUTTA THERE!
DAMN DEMITAURS! GIT YOUR OWN!
YIP YIP! HYAA!
ALL RIGHT, GIT ALONG NOW. THEY AIN'T COMIN' BACK.

CHAPTER SIX
THE NORTH

Most people in Creation regard the people of the North as the least civilized. The Realm absorbed it second-to-last, and it remains today the least thoroughly civilized direction. Histories of the North record timelines of wars unbroken by cease fires, parleys or truces. Blood and sweat brought civilized behavior to the North, not treaty or marriage ties or peaceable union. Mortals elsewhere who are aware of this history speak of the North in terms of crudeness or barbarism.

Yet reflection brings an awareness of the truth. More than 1,000 years have passed since Solar warstriders battled here for supremacy. Since then, the Sun's Chosen have built cities and roads, aqueducts and manses. Today, the land is as settled as it might ever be. While they haven't penetrated everywhere, civilization's benefits have made sufficient inroads that eight out of every 10 people are literate and life expectancy for mortals averages seven decades. Even the honor-killings so common in hologlyph dramas and plays are almost extinct.

Within the Realm

The North's glittering cities stand in direct contrast to the broad plains, rolling hills and glacier-covered mountains of the nearby countryside. Anyone who can do so acquires a travel permit or residency papers and moves from the backcountry to a great city, or at least to one of the intermediate urban way stations to be found between the bright centers. Few willingly remain in fragile and frozen hinterlands where bitter winds howl constantly.

Even so, not everyone gains—or even seeks—permission to dwell in the North's shining towers. There are better places to learn martial arts, sorcery and thaumaturgy than a great city. Also, Exalts and mortals sometimes choose to test themselves against unforgiving wilderness. Finally, Creation's enemies rarely attack the North's power centers. They appear on the fringes, where their power can grow before the strike. Therefore, even this most sparsely populated of directions remains inhabited.

Northern populations are concentrated. Towns and cities tend to be small and centered, conserving building material and heat. Surrounded by Essence-powered weather shields, some Northern communities have orange trees and hibiscus bushes blooming even in the middle of snowstorms. Rural production complexes arrange tightly planted buildings around glassed-in atria and corridors. Towns lacking Essence engines build with underground arcades or courtyards glassed-in against bad weather. Living out of doors is an uncommon experience for most Northerners.

At least some do go outside into blizzards blowing from the Elemental Pole of Air, however. The North possesses a near monopoly on wilderness tourism, with a series of reserves

designed to appeal to adventurous mortal and jaded Exalt alike. Hunting, hang gliding, skiing, snowshoeing, ice boating and even glacier climbing form the core of challenging vacations in the North. People travel here from all over Creation to enjoy the perception—if not always the reality—of risk.

Orchard Isles Province

Seven provinces obey the Deliberative and the Realm's laws. The first of these, the Orchard Isles Province, consists of quartet of islands jutting into the Western Ocean. Each isle, named for its most prominent fruit crop—Apple, Berries, Pear and Plum—is a principality assigned to a minor Solar as a proving ground and experimental test-bed. While all four fruits are grown on every island, each island is most famous for a specific product. Orchard men vie with one another to produce new hybrids, and festivals and fairs celebrate different varieties. Amethyst plums are recent cultivars, being sweet to the tongue and translucent to light.

Subject to storms rolling in from the Western Ocean, the Orchard Isles are rainy and little visited by Exalts, though they welcome the income at tax time. The isolation does attract a few who wish to work on private projects far from public scrutiny, though. Laboratories dedicated to biological experimentation and breeding farms manipulating mortal forms are not uncommon.

Many of the manses of the Orchard Isles are enclosed gardens or greenhouses for exotic vegetables, or orchards of unusual fruit. Some are hothouses for forcing the growth of special orchids, while others are incubators for outlandish pets.

Principalities of the Isles

Apple Isle is the ignored middle child of the Orchards. Ordered to produce cider, it churns out hundreds of tons of low-quality swill. Commanded to produce apples, it ships thousands of barrels of mealy, tasteless apples to all of Creation. A few orchards produce high-quality product, but they are the exception, rather than the rule. Manufactories once famed for lenses and navigational instruments now produce medium-quality mass-produced weapons, available at Resources ••.

The **Isle of Berries** is barely large enough to count as a principality. The Celestial Housing Authority records it as having only two known manses, in fact. The flat isle is given over to scrabbled fields of low-lying plants, and few of its trees grow taller than 20 feet high. The Deliberative maintains a school on the Isle for mortals. Respected graduates of the School of Twining Ivy usually become bureaucrats in Northern territories.

Pear Isle, the largest and most developed of the Orchard Isles, is a matured pleasure ground for Exalts and mortals. Amid elegant orchards stand palaces for members of the Solar Deliberative, moon-viewing pavilions for Lunar Exalts and gaming grounds for the Dragon-Blooded. Many Exalts maintain "experimental farms" here, where they can engage in special breeding programs, or simply play farmer for a few weeks between expeditions or adventures.

The Northern Calendar

Despite its harsh winters and difficult springs, the North still expects four major harvests each year from its RPCs. The first crops are wheat, hay and beans, harvested late in Descending Wood and continuing to Ascending Fire. In Resplendent Fire, agronomists bring in cotton and flax. Descending Fire sees harvests of millet, rice, hops, oats and tea. No harvest is made during Calibration, except for fruits brewed into wines and brandies for sacrificial offerings. Ascending Air brings grapes, apples, pears and plums.

Northern RPCs also raise animals. White River fisheries produce salmon, trout, abalone, freshwater mussels, scallops and perch. People in alpine meadows raise sheep and goats, while Northeastern plains folk raise herds of dairy mammoths for cheese and wool. Cattle and yeddim are rarities, but tame silk-spider herds quartered near Opal Spire produce 5,000 yards of high-quality arrow-resistant cloth a year.

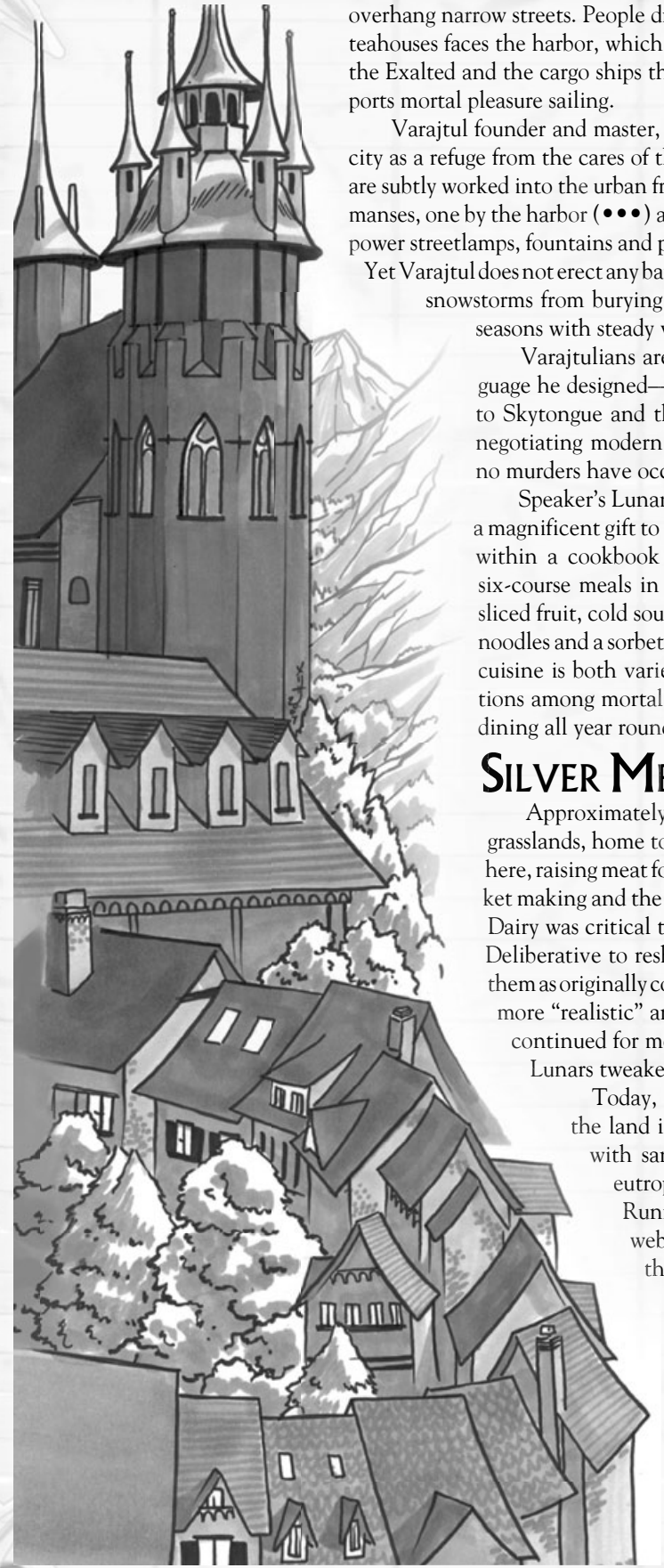
The six months of Air and Water are cold, but usually refreshingly so, with only Ascending Water being brutal. This tends to be the tourist season. Skiing, ice skating, snowshoeing and sleighing are popular activities, with many resorts built near geomantically enhanced hot springs and artificially warmed lakes. Late in Water comes hang gliding and long-distance soaring. The 1,200-mile aerial obstacle course Tzatli Race begins on the midday of Descending Water. Ascending Earth marks the resumption of planting. At the same time, herds usually leave lowland shelter and move up to high pastures early in Resplendent Earth.

Plum Isle is of middling size, and the best managed principality of the Isles. Low-lying and fertile, it is well tended, with prosperous, peaceful towns. In addition to its famous plums, the Isle produces furniture, game pieces, paper and pottery of luxury quality, requiring Resources ••• to buy.

Varajtul

Varajtul is the capital of Pear Isle Prefecture, and the largest city in the Orchard Isles. Two days north of Gateway 37 into Yu-Shan, it sits on the flanks of a mountain overlooking a narrow fjord of dark blue, cold water. Its brightly colored stone and plaster houses have yellow or orange walls, and most have roofs of purple slate. Among the houses, dogwoods and cider-apple trees create oases of comfort in the city center.

Of all Northern cities, Varajtul is most livable. Ramps and steps connect shopping plazas. Glassed-in courtyards define the centers of public buildings. Wrought-iron balconies



overhang narrow streets. People dress in bright colors. A corniche of luxury shops and teahouses faces the harbor, which is large enough to accommodate both the yachts of the Exalted and the cargo ships that call here. A second harbor in the next fjord supports mortal pleasure sailing.

Varajtul founder and master, the Solar linguist Speaker of Beneficence, built the city as a refuge from the cares of the Exalted. As a result, all Essence-powered devices are subtly worked into the urban framework rather than ostentatiously on display. Two manses, one by the harbor (•••) and another on the mountain (••••) above the city, power streetlamps, fountains and private water supplies and the net of I AM terminals. Yet Varajtul does not erect any barriers stronger than a weather-bender, which prevents snowstorms from burying the city every winter. Therefore, the city has true seasons with steady variations in temperature and storm conditions.

Varajtulians are devoted to their lord and master, speaking a language he designed—which is poetic and subtle in nuance—in addition to Skytongue and the Realm's speech. This language is well suited to negotiating modern life. Because miscommunication is so improbable, no murders have occurred in Varajtul in half a millennium.

Speaker's Lunar partner, Satiation Beneath the Crescent, also gave a magnificent gift to the city in the form of a perfected cuisine, contained within a cookbook called *The Ten Thousand Delectables*. Traditional six-course meals in Varajtul consist of a warm spicy drink, artistically sliced fruit, cold soup, fresh fish (poached or pan-fried in spices), savory noodles and a sorbet. Perfectly balanced to time of year and diet, Varajtul cuisine is both varied and healthful. The city hosts monthly competitions among mortal cooks, and a variety of restaurants provide elegant dining all year round.

Silver Meadows Province

Approximately 1,500 years ago, the Silver Meadows were rolling grasslands, home to cows, sheep and elephants. Mortal nomads herded here, raising meat for the Realm. Occasional towns concentrated on basket making and the construction of gerts, the round tent of the nomads. Dairy was critical to the local diet. Certain Lunars prevailed upon the Deliberative to reshape reality here, however, as it was too boring for them as originally conceived. The Moon's Chosen craved more elaborate, more "realistic" and more challenging environments. This reshaping continued for more than two centuries, as successive generations of Lunars tweaked the region to suit personal tastes.

Today, the Silver Meadows are rarely meadows. Instead, the land is a crazy-quilt patchwork of terrain and landforms, with sandy dunes lying alongside steep forested hills and eutrophicate ponds alongside swift rivers in deep ravines. Running through this bizarre ground extends a spiderweb of roads, towns, villages and fields—remnants of the old normality.

Principalities of the Silver Meadows

Three principalities in the Silver Meadows have long been assigned to important Lunar Exalts whose duties require them to have incomes and bases of operation, but who still need territory in which to run, hunt and play. In their lands, mortal communities cluster close to rare roads. Cities are merely overlarge towns. Silver Meadow terrain

varies widely. Forests give way to meadows and broken hill country where bare rock projects above tree line. Steep-sided ravines and gorges crisscross each other strangely. Animals wild and Wyld-touched are common. Fish, timber, hay, stone, ores and medicinal products are important sources of mortal income, won only with difficulty from a savage landscape.

The largest principality in the Silver Meadows is **Salk Fields**, a broad strip of land on the southern edges of the White Valley. Rocky, forested and cold, Salk Fields is famous for building airships in its many small towns. Only one road enters the prefecture. The populace mostly travels by air ferry, so as to leave the ground open to hunting Lunars. Mortals tend to avoid backcountry areas because they were the most recently Wyld-shaped territories, and so the least tamed. A behemoth of unknown origin slumbers in some forgotten valley, as yet unearthed by the Exalted of Luna. A few small districts have been converted into parks for mortals to experience the wilderness, but these regions are carefully groomed to provide a suitably thrilling—but not particularly dangerous—experience.

The second-largest principality, **Onion Dell** is a physician's nightmare-garden still clinging to its ancient idyllic name. Everyone avoids physical contact with the native flowers, shrubs and trees. Even *backcountry harvesters gathering medicinal but dangerous plants require special armor to prevent plant poisoning and venomous insect bites*. Most of the local flora began as Dragon King constructs, and many plants with healing properties also defend themselves from harvesting. Thistles packing psychotropic drugs and root systems strong enough to eat people are normal plant defenses here.

Blue Heron Principality, the smallest and most southerly in the Silver Meadows, appears from the air as a series of wooded hills emerging from a watery landscape of grass. Essence-powered artificial dragonflies keep guard over the land, and biomechanical bees pollinate giant bamboo and blade grass. In Resplendent Fire, the blade grass is harvested and laid edge-out into bamboo handles. The resulting blades make effective weapons, kitchen knives, saws and surgical tools. While not as dangerous as Onion Dell, Blue Heron Principality is still dangerous.

In each principality, the reigning Lunar often controls hunting privileges at all times, with certain months of the year reserved to her exclusive use. At other times, she may open the season to mortal or Exalted hunters at her pleasure. The Meadows Adventure is an annual Lunar tradition. Many of the shapechangers participate in a month of qualifying events by playing games of hunting and survival in the twisted landscape. Event rules require the Exalts to acquire at least one new form in the course of the month, to track and fight with at least one other Lunar, and to successfully evade at least one tracking Lunar. Those who succeed in all three tests are invited to stay for a second month of competition, with mortal and Exalted alike wagering on outcomes. The Lunar considered best receives control of Blue Heron Principality for the coming year.

Opal Crag Mountains Province

The Opal Crag Mountains run north to south from the Inland Sea to the edges of the White Valley. Major mining projects scour the mountain flanks, drawing out hundreds of tons of jade, opal and marble, and thousands of tons of construction material every year. Now the mountains are misnamed, as black industrial slag and obsidian haze from toxic dust obscures the most famous glittering, snow-capped vistas.

The Opal Crags obey the Deliberative reluctantly and haphazardly. In east-west gorges, the Unconquered Sun shines every day on clean water and good farmland, and the Realm rules a happy, contented populace. In vales and dells running north and south, the sun shines but a few hours even on the brightest days on narrow, less prosperous ravines, whose mines have long histories of accidents and worker mistreatment. People in those couloirs often plot rebellion beneath a veneer of grim obedience.

The people of the Opal Crags are a hard folk covered in a layer of black dust. For thousands of years, they have sifted their mountains and mined fine materials for the service of the Deliberative and the Age of Splendor. Little returns in exchange. I AM delivers news and letters to villages and towns later here than it does elsewhere in Creation. Information is often weeks old (if not months). The Order Conferring Trade Pattern relies on some areas' being less accessible and less viable to civilized living. This region proves how hard that aspect of the Pattern can be on that fringe of civilization.

Principalities of the Opal Crag Mountains

Four principalities subdivide the Opal Crag Mountains. Each centers on one of the major passes running between the Windlands and the Silver Meadows, and two or three prosperous valleys running east and west. Several more north-south dales complete each principality. **Gateway Prefecture**, the most northerly, contains the City of the Mountain Gateway and many mines for iron, copper, jade and even moonsilver.

Glittering Peak Principality is next on the major routes to the Inland Sea. Famous for timber and for marble veined with opal, the tributary is notorious for rebellious attitudes and disgruntled miners.

Bent Spine Prefecture lies still farther south. Here, the mountains take on a gentler aspect, with less steep slopes and more cuts between mountains so that the light of the Unconquered Sun penetrates deeply. The principal city here, Fellara, is famous for its walls of tawny stone.

Fire Opal Principality is named after bright, red-hued stones mined from deep valleys. A pervasive red dust often lingers in the air here. The Deliberative maintains a prison for serious offenders in a red jade mine deep under the mountain.

Lunar Triangles

Throughout the Opal Crag Mountains is a series of triangular stones balanced on their narrowest end. Set up by the Lunar Exalted to mark songlines and sites of vision quests, these stones can range in size from a few ounces up to several tons. Many of them seem to vibrate precariously, as if about to fall in the heavy gales. Yet, it is the mind of the observer rather than the stone itself that trembles.

Astute observers notice that many of these stones are arranged in patterns across the landscape, often tending toward arrangements of triangles within triangles within triangles. These Lunar triangles, as these stone shapes are called, are something less than First Age marvels but something more than mere childish games. They are spirit traps and elemental lures, designed to reorient dragon lines to bring energy—and Essence—toward a specific point. The goal of this work is to create a demesne suitable for capping with a Lunar-aspected manse.

A Lunar Exalt establishes a Lunar triangle by placing three stones of varying sizes in a triangle upon the landscape so that three stones are within line of sight. Doing so requires at least three (Dexterity + Craft [Earth]) checks, with at least five successes each. Additional Lunar triangles must then be crafted within the region set out by the first trio of stones, and each stone invested with a mote of Essence. Once a region within this area accumulates 100 motes of Essence and 500 successes, the stones all fall with a simultaneous crash, and the area becomes a one-dot demesne. Additional work can empower the area further.

Stones blown down or deliberately moved before the work is complete negate the whole working, which must begin anew.

The City of the Mountain Gateway

Although it is not a tourist destination or even a by-way for those traveling in the area, the City of the Mountain Gateway stands among the glories of the First Age. Carved from a mountain, from the three observatories on the highest level to a spectacular garden on the lowest, the city's high ceilings and engraved walls display a splendor unmatched outside of Meru.

The City of the Mountain Gateway, informally known as Six Gates, is the secondary command center for the Deliberative. Located beneath the tallest mountain in the Opal Crag range, Six Gates is a shortcut the military constructed between the Elemental Pole of Earth and Creation's Northern frontiers. Four great tunnels with portals of jade and orichalcum join Six Gates with the wider world to north, south, east and west. Two more gates in the deepest, most defended parts of the city join heaven and earth, literally. One of these gates, built of slabs of black jade, enters the realm of the Mountain Folk dwelling beneath the earth. The second door, constructed of white jade, orichalcum and moonsilver, is Gate 31 into Yu-Shan. In this way, the mountain of Six Gates serves as a secondary *axis mundi*, in the rare eventuality that Creation's center, Mount Meru and the Pole of Earth, should be rocked or damaged.

Therefore, the city has tremendously tight security. Ordinary mortals fill minor jobs in the city, such as tending the gardens and greeting visitors. Fewer than 20,000 people perform these sorts of tasks. A larger population of 30,000 God-Bloods and Dragon-Bloods handles routine and extraordinary security. Some levels of the city are open only to them, with security doors that appear to be solid rock until an anima banner flares nearby. Even then, special keys or charms may be needed. Located beneath the mountain are secondary debating chambers and conference rooms for the Deliberative, its generals and its functionaries, as well as private quarters for each of the Celestial Exalted.

On the city's deepest levels, in areas sealed against casual visitors, are Essence engines designed to harden the mountain's reality against Fair Folk incursion and other threats. These engines could make Six Gates so real that it could become a second—if less powerful—Elemental Pole of Earth. The engines have never been tested, but elders in the Deliberative know that Creation could be re-established around this central pole, in the event that the Blessed Isle fell to a Wyld invasion.

As an added side benefit, the city links Creation with the Mountain Folk. Seven caverns, widely separated from the security zone around the Celestial gateway, contain the diplomatic quarter where Mountain Folk congregate. Deliberative spies believe the Mountain Folk have tunnels connecting Six Gates to the underfells of Mount Meru on the Blessed Isle, but they have no confirmation as of yet.

Fellara

Fellara in Bent Spine Principality rises from the shoulder of a mountain, with fantastic views east, west and south. Famous for its medical school and for luxury items of mammoth ivory and wood, the city has a population in excess of 300,000 people. Many work in the city's four factory-cathedrals, which produce small parts in jade, orichalcum and moonsilver for Essence-powered machinery. A steady stream of cogs, gears, logic wheels and other precision-shaped parts flow out from the city to every part of Creation. Fellara enjoys a high standard of living from the resulting revenues.

The city government is unusually democratic, reflecting the thorough education of the workers there. In an experi-

mental use of I AM, citizens vote for each proposed law that is properly registered with the city manager. Political demonstrations in the streets are common during holidays, and more than 40 local political parties are active. The result is raucous and chaotic during controversial votes, but all commotion is left outside factory doors. Workers here are too proud of their contributions to Creation to risk fighting at work.

White Valley Province

Spidersilk Dam, a 2,800-mile wall of cable and crystal, curves into the Great Western Ocean to hold back the waters. Essence engines hidden within this construct filter and desalinate water, gradually releasing it into thousands of tiny streams, which eventually merge into the White River—an artificial but navigable river running west to east through White Valley.

Spidersilk Dam provides fresh water to mortals. The manses anchoring its termini bring together flows of Earth- and Air-aspected Essence to mingle with those of Water-aspected Essence. This Essence, crystallized in factories within the dam, is sent downstream to be the power source for manufactories, vehicles, residences, greenhouses, orchards and public buildings downstream. Each such seed, tagged to an appropriate destination, is set drifting in the river to find its way to the right location. Most arrive minutes before the previous crystal dissipates.

Holding back the sea created a fertile valley-land 800 miles wide and thousands of miles long between the Diamond Hills and the Opal Mountains. The river flows between the Gates of Wind into Frost Lake and thence White River Gorge Park, a wilderness preserve on both sides of the river covering thousands of square miles. There it becomes the River of Tears, which winds down to the Yanaze River where its water rejoins the Inland Sea.

Few recall the White Valley's origins. Old Solars recall the Spidersilk Dam being constructed as a weapon of the Primordial War. The White Sea was the home of the Primordial Ta'akozoka, and the dam cut off the Great Tentacled One from the Sea, without which she withered and died. Today, 40 million people dwell on farmland enriched by her decaying form.

The ground between the dam and Frost Lake is the second most fertile region in Creation, after the River Province. Where the River Province provides grain and grape, White Valley orchards produce both eating apples and cider, while White Valley hothouses force bulbs of long-lasting purple amaranth flowers. Manufactories in the White Valley produce toys, furniture, Essence devices and weapons of war to defend Creation.

Wyld Amaranth

The Solar known as Magnificent Garden carefully bred Wyld amaranth 2,000 years ago as part of Creation's defense systems. The unusually long-lived purple flowers strengthen reality with their presence. The seven petals represent the five directions, Yu-Shan and the hope of reincarnation, while their purple hue suggests a melding of the colors of the five directions. Their three green leaves symbolize cooperation among gods, Exalted and mortals.

Now common throughout Creation, they are particularly loved in the North for their capability to hold back the Wyld. Raksha detest them, for they have trouble performing shaping attacks in their presence. All Wyld shaping techniques performed within their line of sight suffer a -2 circumstance penalty.

Principalities of the White Valley

Unlike other parts of Creation, the principalities of this region intermingle with each other. Six principalities hold different parts of many cities and towns in the North, their borders and their territories remaining fluid. The cities of the White River sing, quite literally. Each principality has its own songs, and the towns—people, animals and buildings alike—all have their part in the music.

Oxbow Prefecture is a farm collective lying in the bottomland of the river. Affected by occasional floods and biennial rising waters, its principal crops are grasses, such as oats and hay, and fiber, such as cotton, hemp and linen. Its sun-fired brick communities constantly rebuild on the mounds formed from flood-shattered towns. Temples to the Unconquered Sun crown these artificially elevated cities, famous for spicy food and veiled women. Here, the constant song is the legato of the summer river and the allegro of the river in flood.

Swift Waters Principality consists of hill towns on the fringes of the White River, where streams come down into the valley from north to south. This principality is a land of factories, with power wheels flashing in streams and billowing steam-chimneys, accompanied by the tuneful sound of hammers on anvil. The songs tend toward stately marches and stirring hymns to the Unconquered Sun.

Long Wharf Principality vibrates with the bustle and commerce of riverfront counting houses and warehouses and the clamor of shipyards. Workmen make hulls ready for river and ocean travel. Chandleries rock with the sprightliness of sea chanteys and the minimalist tocking of brass on brass in the instrument shops. Runaways rub elbows with able-bodied sailors, and both sing laughing trills about women after a voyage home.

When entering **Covered Market Principality**, visitors sense the sudden shift in musical tones, as major keys give way to minor and bright harmonies give way to clashing cacophony. Too-bright dyes make cotton and silk flutter in air. Rare spice-scents attack nose and tongue, as cardamom and cinnamon float in the breeze. Arranged in pockets through all the others, this principality is a land of wheeling and dealing, bargains sought and outrageous scams completed. Con men and tax collectors match wits under indigo-striped awnings. Merchants' shouts echo off sandstone walls of banks and coffeehouses.

Scholars' Court Principality comprises the schools, colleges, universities and other institutes of higher learning that are scattered through the White Valley. In cloister and courtyard, students study bureaucracy, martial arts, religion, calligraphy or engineering, as their abilities pull them. In academy and apprenticeship, mortals and Exalts alike learn the arts of craftsmanship and graceful living. Nowhere in the North are these skills taught with such refinement as among these marbled halls.

Turning Stone Principality, the last of the districts of the White Valley, is a land of windmills atop bare hills, and lumbermen climbing high in trees. It is a place of quarries and mines, where industrious workers glean wealth from wilderness for country towns and riverside manufactories to shape and improve. Here, songs speak of roaring gales. Woodwinds trill merrily of forests in spring, cut off suddenly by the cymbal clash of a felled tree.

Sepporil

The largest city on the White River is Sepporil. Appearing as an association of towers and domes rising on a hill at the river's edge, the city boasts a population of a million people. Essence shields shelter the city from winter storms, and perpetual spring reigns within. Daffodils, magnolias, irises, tulips and dogwoods bloom in sequence each month of each season.

Botany is Sepporil's largest industry. Flowers and herb gardens blanket its surrounding fields and terraces, while its laboratories breed new strains of such grains as rice, millet, wheat and barley. Special research stations in nearby towns work on fiber crops such as cotton, silk, flax and hemp. Thanks to scientific advances and sorcery, many Northern states have experienced a hundred-fold increase in productivity over the last millennium. The innovators of Sepporil are always pleased to take the credit.

One of the city's more interesting diversions is the Carnivorous Flower Show, held in the month of Resplendent Fire. The city's botanists try to outdo each other (and themselves) in this contest, and many Solars compete against mortals as well. Past winners include the Guardian Vine, which entangles small animals or men who approach too closely to the plant and then gradually strangles them. Many remember with horror the winning plant from a decade ago, which ate an entire mammoth in three minutes. These and other monstrosities

Valley Songs

Visitors to the White Valley are often startled, then amused or bewildered, to discover that the Songs of the Valley are not metaphor but reality. Citizens of this region break into complicated song and dance routines right in the middle of ordinary endeavors. Teahouse patrons stage elaborate shadow puppetry to explain their political position. Whole marketplaces have become music-infected, as coins change hands to suit a song's purposes.

The White Valley's constant music is a source of much tension in the Deliberative. Some object to the operatic and dramatic swelling of orchestras behind ordinary daily activities. Others deplore its quality, which tends toward sloppy harmonies and repetitive rhythms. Yet the Lunar Exalt who helped design the Spidersilk Dam and the whole region—one Silver-Voiced Nightingale—is quite content with what she's wrought, and her proud Solar mate still has plenty of support in the Deliberative.

Hordes of music spirits surround any mortal with a modicum of talent, hoping for a chance to insert a brief solo into the continuing cycle of songs. Others grow so attached to a particular composition (however bad it might be) that they inflict it upon others—native and visitor alike. Thus can specific songs become popular for weeks or months, until they become too tedious and repetitive to bear.

This ordinary-life music is a major export of the White Valley to the rest of Creation. While few places take to Valley Songs with quite the same enthusiasm, ditties about blacksmithing or sailing can suddenly become quite popular everywhere for no obvious reason. I AM tracks these sudden outbursts of music and usually gifts the composer or original singer (when he or she can be found) with a one-time gift of wealth.

now reside in the secure section of the Sepporil Botanical Gardens, where they feed on the rejects of the city menagerie (and the occasional fence-climbing tourist).

Frost Lake Province

The White Valley's eastern end widens into a lake thinly sheathed with ice. Bone-like jointed causeways and floating platforms flow out onto the lake's surface from coastal towns and cities, dividing it up into thousands of triangular panes of water. Two million people live in eggshell-hued houses on these floating platforms.

The Solar general Fearless in Battle's Face created Frost Lake specifically as an industrial fishery to provide marine protein and vegetable matter for Creation's hungry soldiers. Beneath the ice, a rich, organic soup bubbles and froths, giving birth to a thousand different edible, medicinal life forms. Gigantic nets and seines drift, forming farms for algae, turtles, shellfish and fish. Manufactories on the surface turn living animals into jars of packed meat for military and peasant consumption. Others fashion the scraps of bone into jewelry, armor and more floating platforms. Factory-cathedrals and manses ride on jewel-covered rafts atop water's surface, while cables hundreds of fathoms long tether them to demesnes on the lake's floor. Underwater bubbles constructed of crab and lobster chitin form living and working spaces for strip-mining the waters of their living abundance.

Frost Lake's coastal towns form a principality unto themselves, joined with the constructed platforms that rise from waters and ice floes to support fishers and miners. Fish harvested here form an important part of the diet for the whole of the White Valley, since many fish species refuse to breed further upstream in the artificial watershed downstream from Spidersilk Dam.

Varilistu

At the center of the lake rise the shining white spires of Varilistu, obeying the rules of mathematical sequence. A series of platforms, each with its own tower, occupies the geographic center of the lake. The central tower rises to a height of 21 stories, and it extends 21 stories beneath the lake's surface. A ring of eight 13-story buildings surrounds it, and a ring of 16 eight-story buildings surrounds that ring. Each spire stands at the center of a plaza adorned with trees and parterres suitable for a royal palace. Beyond is an even larger ring of five-story buildings, and then structures three stories, two stories and, finally, one story high. Fishponds doubling as reflecting pools surround the city on all sides, except along the routes of eight causeways that join Varilistu to the mainland.

Even in the poorest apartments, Varilistu is gleaming white, studded with pearls and mother-of-pearl. Sculptures fill niches and adorn every pillar in the city. Thirty-four anchor cables tether Varilistu to manses on the lake bottom. Essence channeled up these cables helps refine the city from the minerals present in the water. It also gradually rebuilds any damage done to the city's walls or plazas. The city itself functions as if it were a hearthstone of delicious dream. No one in the city has troubled dreams; every night's sleep is restful and beneficial to one's health.

Varilistu exists principally as a gleaming showpiece of the North's Era of Dreams. Not as remote or as security-conscious as Tzatli, nor as religion-obsessed as Ondar Shambal, it is a city

intended for tourism and pleasure. Its towers are hotels and museums. Its plazas are adorned with gardens and sculpture. It is also a center for the production of gliders and airships, and many of the one- and two-story buildings at the edge of the city are hangars and construction facilities.

Varilistu is small in comparison with other Northern cities. Fewer than a million people live on this artificial island, yet the city's beauty and restfulness make it a popular destination. Indeed, its very attractiveness could prove its undoing. The nighttime restfulness that falls over the city attracts unusual and dangerous sentient predators that find peaceful dreamers too tempting to resist.

Diamond Hills Province

North of the White Valley lie the Diamond Hills. The province consists of eight principalities, which are named One through Seven because of their low populations. The eighth is Tzatli, the nominal home of the famous flying city.

The land is harsh. Perpetual winds ruffle scrubby grasses, making the land seem to undulate. Permafrost crunches underfoot, and trees bend double under the wind. Few people dwell here for any great length of time, and most rarely know anything of the Realm more recent than eight months past. People come to the Diamond Hills to get away from the Deliberative, even though this region still pledges loyalty. I AM nonetheless keeps tabs as best it can on those persons wanted for crimes. When they tire of their self-imposed exile, they can be found and punished.

The Diamond Hills are famous for mining and wild harvesting. Two thousand miles closer to the Elemental Pole of Air than the White Valley, a rich array of medicinal herbs useful in treating respiratory diseases grows in the permafrost here. Beneath the hard ground and below the icy water table lie crystalline metal ores and veins of minerals that are light but strong for building airships and swift weaponry. No great manufactories produce final products here. Bands of official and unofficial exiles cannot be permitted to run weapon manufactories. Instead, airboats make regular visits to the Diamond Hills to carry refined metals and crystals south and to bring prisoners and contract laborers north.

Scattered across the region is a series of slender steel needles, hundreds of feet high, reinforced with white jade alloy. These poles thrum with energy, and lightning arcs out from them to strike anyone standing within 100 feet of their bases or to airships traveling within 100 feet of them in the air. Those spires close to transportation routes carry lanterns as warning beacons. Many more are unmarked and difficult to spot. These lightning rods act as energy collectors for the city of Tzatli. It takes a tremendous amount of Essence gathered from the Elemental Pole of Air to keep the city afloat. These lightning rods collect the Essence and relay it along moonsilver cables that flex and change position in response to the city's motion. Whichever lightning rod is closest to the city actually beams Essence up to it in a single arc of continuous lightning.

Other than its principal city, few great population centers exist in the province. Towns huddle under Essence-enforced domes of transparent spidersilk canvas and laminated mammoth bone. Few of the wonders of the Age of Splendor are found here in a land of rough living and rougher civilization.

Tzatli

The flying city of Tzatli is a marvel of the Age known and celebrated in art and literature all over Creation. I AM regularly reports to awestruck and envious mortals on the technical marvels built into the city.

Its founder and builder, the Solar artificer Bright Shattered Ice, regards it as but a plaything or a clubhouse for her and her circle. Its brilliant towers of white false-stone and blue crystal rise from a semispherical hull whose mirrored surface reflects the countryside below. A perpetual column of lightning rising from the region's nearest lighting rod below keeps the city in the air. Every half-hour, local shuttles and skyremes carry travelers between the city and destinations all throughout Creation.

What visitors discover, although it's never mentioned in I AM's news reports, is how sterile and cold the city seems. No flowers adorn the city streets. Civilians hurry about their work in plain robes of white linen and wool. Decoration is modest and minimalist. Teahouses are studied and formal, and drinking houses are subdued. The constant music of the city is ethereal, even awe-inspiring, but it lacks human warmth or depth. It is as though Bright Shattered Ice, in building a city to indulge all her passions, has pulled the passions out of everyone else.

Even so, Tzatli keeps its people. While tourists and visitors on business can visit with minimal fuss, citizens have considerably more difficulty leaving. Bright Shattered Ice's adamant legionaries (similar to the brass legionnaires on p. 103 of **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**) guard the city's exits far more closely than they guard its entrances, and the city's highly efficient bureaucracy rarely issues passports.

There are always at least 156,281 citizens in Tzatli engaged in flight-critical tasks that keep the city functional. An additional 156,281 engage in economic production, while a third group of the same size is engaged in leisure activities. A fourth group sleeps or rests with family at home. Only once those conditions are met are any citizens allowed to depart the city—which, of course, makes it harder yet to leave.

The upper towers of the city are likewise separated out by caste. The uppermost stories of the city towers are reserved for Bright Shattered Ice, her circle and similarly high-ranking guests. The middle floors are given over to the Dragon-Blooded who manage her bureaucracy and officer her garrison. Lower floors and the hull's depths belong to mortals. Ordinary humans fit into one of 16 sub-groups: Officials of the First through Fifth Ranks, Artisans of the First through Fourth Ranks, Workers of the First through Third Ranks, Peacekeepers of the First and Second Rank, Merchants and Supernumeraries. There is very little progression or advancement outside of one's birth caste. Only clever and brave Supernumeraries have a chance of passing examinations to enter one of the other castes. As redundant citizens, they must to be ready to substitute in an emergency so that the city continues to fly.

Such emergencies and accidents are all too common in Tzatli. The law code is harsh. Idling too much during working hours or arriving home too late for "family time" is punished severely. Whole families have been rounded up and imprisoned for arguing too loudly over dinner and disrupting the city's happiness. I AM is obliged to report to the city's secret police on just who is disobeying the law. The city lacks safety railings—a grave hazard during maneuvers to avoid a blizzard or tornado. Despite being Tzatli's poorest citizens, the Supernumeraries all carry portable hologlyph terminals, so officials can summon them rapidly to new assignments. Groups of Supernumeraries have sat down to warm dinners, after police hauled away the original diners.

Windlands Province

Lying between the Opal Crag Mountains, the White River Ravine, the White Valley and the Inland Sea, The Windlands make up the largest of the North's provinces. Eleven principalities farm the even, fertile landscape, cooperating on roads and irrigation. Mammoth, sheep and cattle herding are common here. RPCs concentrate on raising animal-feed, while greenhouses raise flowers for the wealthy all over Creation.

Ondar Shambal

Ondar Shambal is the city of the Unconquered Sun's priestly followers in Creation. The Zenith Caste Solar, Righteous Guide, built the city of white granite about 700 years ago. This first city of the Windlands is quite small by the standards of the Era of Dreams, containing not quite a million persons. Spectacularly set among the Opal Crags' few remaining glaciers, its towers and walls glitter in the light. Spires gleam pink in the dawn, white in the noonday sun, yellow in late afternoon and golden in the sunset. At twilight, shadows of royal purple stretch eastward across its plazas. Whether this is a quality of the stone or a blessing of the god himself, no one is quite sure. Seen from above, as the Unconquered Sun would see it, the city becomes a perfect mandala of the god himself.

Ondar Shambal's mandala is not simply a paean to the Unconquered Sun. Beneath the city, gears and clockworks move the city's streets and plazas slowly and subtly, so that the city's architecture itself constantly praises the foremost god. Part of the city's magic assures that everyone wakes with the right mental map of the city, no matter how much has changed. Only those priests and monks who keep watch in the night, preoccupied with keeping time in order and serving the god honestly, lack the knowledge to find their way about. They must renew their understanding of the

city daily. Devoted monks forget their disagreements with one another in the joy of experiencing the marvels of the white city each morning.

At the city's center is the Solar-oriented manse called the Nine Towers of Day. Just as the city subtly rearranges itself every day, so do the towers of the manse remake themselves in the night. Some days of each month, they are square; on others, they become octagonal or round. Bands of orichalcum and jade upon their surfaces form continuous prayer wheels humming a message of peace, prayer and holiness upon residents. Within the manse, windows of translucent jade send light down into temples and shrines containing relics of the Unconquered Sun—locks of hair, drops of sweat, toenail clippings and ribbons of yellow silk from his robe. Several libraries within record the history of Creation and store knowledge of the occult, medicine and many other disciplines.

All is not well in Ondar Shambal. Some years ago, the Unconquered Sun asked Righteous Guide to construct a pilgrimage road from the city's south gate to the Inland Sea. The road, decreed the god, should be free from all death or hurt, so that those who made the pilgrimage would not have to tread upon the blood of the laborers. Righteous Guide has not returned to the city since. In his absence, monks and nuns and priests are sleeping through the night, and their theological arguments are increasing.

Wallport

Anticipating the completion of Righteous Guide's Holy Road, enterprising Dragon-Bloods endeavored to build an equally beautiful city to receive pilgrims from overseas. Seated on a broad plain at the top of black basalt cliffs, Wallport serves as an entry point for pilgrims and those who have business in the North.

Two crescent-shaped reflecting pools or moats surround the city. Filled with waters from an aqueduct from Ondar Shambal, these pools shelter the city, whose gray granite walls are traced with moonsilver to honor Luna. One road to the south goes down steep stairs to the lower town, at the foot of the cliffs. A dirt track to the north eventually meets the Holy Road, which will eventually be completed right to the city gate.

Within the walls, streets form a lotus pattern to celebrate Earth. Broad stairs and ramps connect each petal to one another, and each house and shop is colored slightly differently to create the effect of an iridescent flower from directly overhead. A golden fence surrounds the park at city center. Within, towers of differently colored marble topped by golden onion domes each commemorate one of the Maidens, while five theaters at the park's edge each celebrate one of the Elemental Poles. While the city is not a mandala like Ondar Shambal is, it is nevertheless a reflection of Creation' order.

Wallport's upper city is for craft and artistry, famous for clockwork mechanisms and Essence engines produced in its factory-cathedrals. The lower city is much less savory, since even pilgrims seek fleshly pleasures after long voyages, or just before return journeys. Prostitution, drug use and other vices stalk both unwary and willing here.

Cherak-on-the-Sea

Cherak-on-the-Sea is the beautiful capital city of the Tributary of Cherak. The famous Solar general, Wind of Heaven, founded it not as a fortress, but as a pleasure palace for relaxation. The city perches on five round palafittes in the middle of a wide, sheltering bay. Each platform supports dozens of towers, piazzas and parks. Marinas for pleasure barges and sailing vessels ring each platform. A pleasant walkway winds around the palafittes' edges, and calles—narrow streets closed to wheeled traffic—connect the many public squares. A variety of Essence vehicles skim above the opal-colored pavement, and the noise of carts is utterly banished from the city. Canals crisscross Cherak, used as much for transportation as the calles. Sorcerous barriers prevent rogue waves from overwhelming Cherak, but they don't keep out wind or rain, so the city has normal weather.

Each palafitte has a large central forum roughly at the center, which serves as an open-air public room. Crowds come to enjoy the fountains, shade trees, restaurants, shops and teahouses that define these spaces. On at least one angle of these gathering places is a monumental structure dedicated to one of the Solar Prince's favorite activities. These public facilities enable citizens and visitors to enjoy Wind of Heaven's beneficence. In the southeast, bathhouses and a gymnasium provide for the needs of the body. In the southwest, a library and a university (specializing in bureaucracy, military affairs, medicine and law) offer intellectual entertainment. In the northeast, a stadium and theater complex presents gladiatorial combat and a variety of plays. In the northwest, a shrine and adjunct pansala dedicated to the Unconquered Sun invites both songs of praise and quiet contemplation. At the city center, close by Wind of Heaven's manse and palace, is the Emporium, a vast hall of shops selling every sort of luxury and teahouses serving delicacies from all over Creation.

Visitors often mistake the Emporium for a food hall, but in fact, it is a cleverly designed social venue, one of the most important in the city. Paths between shops are wide enough for senior officials and their retinues to pass and notice one another. Every few hundred feet is a pergola or amphitheater for public conversation or staged encounters. New fashions and new modes of thought can be bought and sold here, just like everything else. Of course, Essence-powered spy devices keep track of everything that happens in the city, but especially here, so that Wind of Heaven's intelligence service keeps him abreast of the latest news.

The last element of the city is the Triumphal Circuit, usually called the "Triumph." Winding twice across the central palafitte and crossing each of the others in turn, this elaborate avenue is the main route of military and religious parades each month. Traveling circuses use this route when

entering or leaving Cherak, as do athletic squads and famous visiting scholars. Wind of Heaven asks any visiting Exalt to take part in either an impromptu or formal parade on the Triumph. The Triumph's path through the city causes crowds observing the parading Exalt to receive a temporary dot of specialty in the Exalt's highest Ability. This specialty persists for a month. Wind of Heaven follows up such parades with decrees ordering training in such skill for every citizen. Thus do his citizens become adept at almost any kind of activity under the sun.

In Wind of Heaven's absence, a government called the Panchayat rules. This council of five Dragon-Bloods manages the city's daily affairs, and each also supervises the magistrates and bureaucrats on each palafitte. The Panchayat meets in a modest city hall on the central forum, but each councilor has a separate district office in each district. Traditionally, one is a priest of the Unconquered Sun, while the other four are a bureaucrat, a physician, the commander of the city's peacekeepers and a sorcerer in charge of the city's maintenance.

Cherak Undersea

Cherak-on-the-Sea is intended to be a paradise, but even a Solar does not become a great general without developing dark desires and appropriate paranoia. Beneath the bright city lies another, in the dark waters of Cherak Bay.

A full 17 of the pillars supporting Cherak-on-the-Sea contain elevators, while 30 more hold stairways. These passages descend to the seafloor, where airlocks and underwater harbors for submarines allow water-breathing Exalts or military personnel to enter the city secretly. Between seafloor and sea surface, thousands of crystal bubbles cling to the city's roots. Crystal tubes overgrown with kelp allow travel between more isolated bubbles. In keeping with Wind of Heaven's paranoia, these bubbles are relatively fragile, and a command given from his manse can cause one or all of them to pop suddenly, drowning their occupants.

Each bubble holds a manufactory or service center that eases life in the city above. Except for military personnel and authorized visitors, most mortals here are practically slaves. Even free civilians rarely enter the sunlit city above. Wind of Heaven dislikes looking at the deformed in his city's plazas, so his laws condemn them to servitude below.

Not all who labor here are deformed, however. Within some crystal spheres, isolated from the others and reached by a single stairway, are the secret schools of Cherak. Here, beautiful boys and girls are raised to be playthings, gladiators, bodyguards, chefs, dancers, artists and other professionals, until they are allowed to ascend the single stairway from the "green world" to the "bright world above." Those judged worthy to make the journey usually meet their master on the stairway, remaining devoted servants forever.

Landward Cherak

North and west of the city proper is Landward Cherak, an industrial sprawl of two million people, approximately a third of whom are slaves. The main roads and bridges to Cherak-on-the-Sea carefully skirt the edges of this ugly city, usually below the ridgeline separating the industrial district from its more elegant and fashionable neighbor. Many upper-class visitors are unaware that Landward Cherak exists at all.

Other Cities of the Windlands

Four other cities have become de facto centers of culture and wealth in the Windlands Province. All are principality capitals and economic powerhouses. **Everliving Grove** is the most famous of these cities, because its 1,200-foot-high trees support structures holding a million people. The Grovites are famous for raising cold-weather orchids on their branch gardens and for training talking birds to be bodyguards, translators and tutors. Major industries include paper manufacture and book production using renewable bark skins from their city's towering foundations. Branch dancing—leaping from one evergreen bough to another hundreds of feet above the earth—is a popular diversion here. Additionally, the city stands above Gate 32 into Yu-Shan.

Three-Force Mesa, located in the inner highlands atop a lofty mesa, is a mining and industrial town. Windmills on the mesa run pumps the size of houses, to draw water into tremendous cisterns. House wastewater cascades through a series of sluices to waterwheels powering iron forges and jade cutters. Some water falls so hard and fast that its energy runs spark-hammers that fuel the smelters and fire the forges. At dusk, the city appears to be a behemoth, with its lower extremities belching fire, its sides gleaming with waterfalls and its shoulders alive with spinning windmills. Vast interior chambers serve as concert halls for echo concertos, where instrumentalists in widely separated balconies play to each other across gulfs of vaulted emptiness. In the city's undercrofts stands Gate 28 into Yu-Shan.

Meteor's Eye is a city of domes and spires, set on a steep hill rising out of a fog bank into perpetually clear skies. It began as an observatory for the Sidereal Exalted. Even in the well-planned skies of Creation, random events do occur from time to time. Meteors and comets cross the sky according to their own counsel. The Maiden of Secrets does not reveal their orders or intentions even to the Unconquered Sun. Therefore, they must be observed and their courses catalogued. Sited upon Gate 30 into Yu-Shan, Meteor's Eye is a city of schools, libraries and glassmaking. Astrology is most advanced here of anywhere in mortal ken. Numerous colleges teach the study of fate and its attendant arts of bureaucracy, thaumaturgy, sorcery and geomantic construction. Lens grinders, glassblowers and instrument makers insert a welcome diversity to the city's more arcane and occult pursuits.

Brahm's Bridge is a bustling city of over a million people located on the banks of the Golden River, flowing south from the Opal Crag Mountains to the Inland Sea. The bridge is a wonder constructed of the five types of jade and of moonsilver. Any Exalt crossing it immediately recharges his Essence pool, less any motes he has committed. Halfway across the bridge,

a golden pavilion houses Gate 33 into Yu-Shan. Brahm's Bridge is the Windlands' and Opal Crags' principal seaport. Its docks and wharves swarm with merchants and stevedores. Home port of the Deliberative Navy's Northern aerial and seagoing fleets, Brahm's Bridge is a popular destination for courtesans and traveling entertainers. Tight security remains the norm, however, since both rebels and Exalts test their prowess against the fleets' headquarters.

Urrin's Steppe Province

North of the Diamond Hills is Urrin's Steppe. The rough but green country of the Hills gives way to the Steppe with a suddenness bordering on obscenity. One moment there are trees, and the next moment there is grass—pale gray-green in spring, taller than a man; dusky amber in autumn; always brittle and sharp. The dry, grassy country lacks towns and cities. Occasional villages of nomadic herders hide in pockets of landscape, but the Lunar Exalt Urrin and his Solar bride First Rose of Morning intended it to be a vast and howling wilderness, and so it remains. Indeed, the land does howl. Whipcord-thin grasses tremble in gales sent south from the Elemental Pole of Air. Holes bored in them by ants and stag beetles accept the wind as a flute accepts the musician's breath. The Steppe sings constantly, humming its haunting, mournful and dissonant songs. Walking through the blade grass is a death sentence for a bare-skinned mortal. Unarmored flesh is carved into raw meat in minutes. Heavy clothes shred in under an hour. Leather survives better but, in hotter months, can be unbearable.

Water is scarce. Ponds ringed by stands of stunted pine or alder dot the land as cool refuges from the wind. These ponds are home to settlements of fewer than a dozen families. Herdsmen raise yeddim and mammoth, whose tough hides and fur protect them from the blade grass. Few other animals last long, except for the long-toothed predators made native to this region. These predators are Essence-powered brass cats that hunt strangers for their metal. These 12-foot-long felines attack communities and caravans in packs, destroying everything organic. They hoard metal to replicate themselves in hidden lairs. Also lurking in the grass are assassin beetles, whose poisonous bites inflict agonizing death mere hours later, and the innocuous but fiendish grass snail, whose secretions are a popular hallucinogenic drug farther south but mean progressive lunacy in this unforgiving landscape.

In cold months, snow steals across the landscape like a blanket. Storms blow sideways for several days straight, flattening grasses and sinking the land several feet beneath powder. Hurricane-force winds sweep up drifts and dunes dozens of feet high. In such a strange wilderness, barren of feature or landmark, it is difficult to get one's bearings. Out so far from Creation, incursions from the Wyld are common.

Some Solars complain that Urrin and First Rose of Morning developed a land inimical to human life. The steppe appears to be not merely ugly, but a suitable gateway for a terrible Wyld invasion. Urrin counters that it makes the perfect battlefield for a battle of Creation against chaos, however. Unknown outside the Deliberative's inner councils and barely suspected by residents, the razor-sharp grass, the brass cats, the assassin beetles and the grass snails are merely a first line of defense. The province is, in fact, a realm of rigid order, with a landscape composed of preplanned components on octagonal or square bases, arranged according to a complex but rational algorithm. This algorithm determines the placement of weapons caches, bunkers, minefields, Wyld-disruption weapons, reality-hardening machines and manses with suitable weaponry to use against raksha. Even the supposedly nomadic villagers travel carefully planned routes, to avoid tripping the lethal defenses.

Sezakan

Administratively accounted part of Urrin's Steppe, the great city of Sezakan is better regarded as an entity in its own right. The First Shrine of Sunset is the westernmost temple on the mainland of Creation and the most northerly. The Sezakanians would say it is also the most beautiful. Their slender pyramid rises so high that, from the top, the sun shines green through the waters of the Western Ocean at sunset.

Sezakan's position in the mountains isolates it from the rest of Creation, suiting the inhabitants quite happily. The people of the air regard it as their capital, and more than half of its mountainside structures are open only to the winged people or to Exalts with the capacity for magical flight. A skyship construction facility occupies a portion of a hollow mountain opposite the city. Its workmen regularly commute by flying over a chasm more than 3,000 feet deep.

Four great Essence engines help to shore up this settlement on the outer edge of Creation. The city's manse supplies heat, light and energy to power the city's elevators, magic windows and automatic doors. A reality engine draws power from the manse's hearthstone to energize the violet shield dome that protects residents from winds and storms. Additional engines fertilize the city's window boxes and gardens to nourish the half-million inhabitants. A final enormous device generates a series of high-speed but safe corridors of wind to and from Sezakan, so that travelers and cargo can journey to the city at triple the swiftness of a robin. These corridors connect Sezakan with every major urban center in the North. Sometimes, it is faster to go to Sezakan first, and then somewhere else, than to travel a direct route.

The Solar Council rules Sezakan on behalf of whomever the Deliberative declares the Prince. A Terrestrial Exalt usually leads these lucky 13 councilors. Of the remaining twelve, three are people of the air, three are mortal, three are Dragon-Blooded, and three are God-Blooded. Each has some area of responsibility to the Council, including public health, water supply, Essence management and more. Two Dragon-Blooded command the city's security forces and handle peacekeepers. The other one directs military forces that train to fight the Wyld and the raksha.

Sezakan's internal security causes concern and debate. Parleys between Fair Folk and Deliberative representatives

have revealed the likelihood of Wyld moles spying on Creation. Further investigation narrowed likely conduits of information to residents of Sezakan. The result is a discreet but vicious witch-hunt, as representatives of the Deliberative try to find the beings betraying military secrets to Creation's worst enemy.

The Great Ice

At the final northern edges of Urrin's Steppe begins the Great Ice. Spreading ubiquitously in a single wall 700 feet high from distant East to farthest West, the Great Ice is but the edge of the inhabitable world. A 66-day trek on foot across the Great Ice through the worst weather in the world brings one to the Edge.

At the Edge, one looks out from a world of snow and ice and blizzard into thin air. Clouds drift in the distance, both above and below. Wind comes straight on and never ceases. A vast blue gulf of emptiness waits below, and nothingness hangs beyond that.

Older, crazed Solars and Sidereals who have survived since the Primordial War espouse a fabulous idea. They claim that traveling due north from Mount Meru's summit, straight through Opal Spire, brings one over the Great Ice and at last to a narrow golden wire thinner than a strand of silk that extends from Creation outward into nothingness. If one could walk it without falling, they say, one might be able to enter a different place—one without gods or Primordials or Exalts.

In a golden palace anchoring that thread to Creation lives Vanileth, the god of air travel. Why he lives so far from his official responsibilities is a matter of some conjecture. One likely reason is that one of the Primordials fled Creation that way and the gods are afraid she might return.

Opal Spire

Opal Spire is less a city than a fortress. Arranged on a grid plan of eight blocks by eight blocks like a military camp, the city consists of 64 towers, each with a central light well and bridges connecting it to neighboring towers. Fifty thousand people live within its walls and Essence shields, which defend against both the bone-chilling ice and the dangers of the Wyld. Opal Spire stands at the northern end of the Diamond Hills, not far from where the Great Ice begins. Outside the walls and shields, temperatures often drop so precipitously that mortal breath freezes solid in the lungs. Even Solars curse the cold here.

Opal Spire began as a center for Cauldronists seeking to add thousands of square miles to Creation in the North. Enormous skyships, designed to carry Essence-powered reality-hardening engines, traveled out from Opal Spire into the Wyld and solidified reality around them. In this way, vast territories were added to Creation. Yet, the success of these operations placed Opal Spire too far from the Wyld frontier. Engineers chose to incorporate a reality-warping engine into the city structure, and the city moved farther north.

At this second location, with its manse capping a five-dot demesne, the lands to the south became fair and fertile. Transportation and geomantic networks connected the city to the rest of Creation, and Opal Spire prospered as a genuine city, not merely a military base. Then, the Cauldronists grew ambitious, resolving to move the city heart farther north. The outer suburbs became a new city, Emerald Hill, which dug inward. The manse of Opal Spire, with its attendant military barracks and airship hangars, jumped northward yet again.

This current effort has not proved so successful, even after 100 years. The region around Opal Spire today tends to be warm and spring-like in the three months of Fire, but cold and nearly buried in ice for the rest of the year. Some Cauldronists claim success requires the addition of new reality engines. Others decry the expense of the project to date and wish to withdraw Opal Spire further south in order to develop the region between there and Emerald Hill.

At the center of the debate are two Solars, the Twilight Caste sorceror-engineer Firebird Glorying at First Light, who designed and built the reality engines and the airships of Opal Spire, and the Eclipse Caste financial genius Elegant Interest, who paid for them. Their continuing arguments deadlock the Far North, as Elegant Interest tries to push Firebird into moving the city south, and Firebird Glorying tries to prove that pattern reinforcement can succeed even this close to the Elemental Pole of Air.

In the meantime, the city suffers. So far from the bright centers of Creation, Opal Spire's goods and services are expensive. Many soldiers garrisoned here have been away from home for a long time. Some Solars contemplate intervention in the dispute, since the Northern frontier is so critical, but an elegant solution has not presented itself thus far.

Cedarfall Province

In the Far Northeast, centuries ago, was the Greenland. This fair and grassy region raised wheat and barley, and herded cattle and sheep. It was a relatively dry and desolate country, but the people made a even prosperous living under the Deliberative's rule. Famous for wood and timber, for furniture and crafted ornament, the Greenland's millions lived in three prefectures and 12 cities. Peace and prosperity were the birthright of principality citizens here, even on the edge of Creation. Warm and pleasant weather sheltered fruit trees and tall timber. The people created a rich culture of music and craftsmanship that the whole world envied.

Then came the decision to use the Greenland as the target for Operation Wyldhand. Barely two decades ago, the Solar Deliberative resolved to carry out a military exercise that would simulate a full-scale incursion into Creation by greater, unshaped raksha and lesser forces. To this end, a vast section of Creation here was appropriated for the purposes of this experiment.

Operation Wyldhand changed everything. At first, simple checkpoints at the major road crossings into the province appeared. Ordinary infantry manned them at first, then Exalted and gunzosha troops appeared, followed by warstrider reinforcements and worse. For two years, work crews constructed a series of forts along the border to guard an Essence-charged fence and minefield separating the Greenland from the rest of Creation.

Then, just as rapidly as the Greenland had become an armed camp, it changed again. In its place were the four principalities of Cedarfall: High Sequoia, Black Juniper, Blue Cedar and Sweet Balsam. Many of the same towns were preserved intact within, yet many others had vanished or changed. The spatial relationships between towns shifted by hundreds of miles and tens of degrees. Even the forests, once dominated by deciduous hardwoods, changed to cedars and other evergreens.

The same changes wrought to the land also affected citizens. Many—though not all—of the same people inhabited this new territory as had lived in the Greenland. Many had their life memories and their professions altered (which caused some temporary instability in the Order Conferring Trade Pattern). Some were so altered physically and mentally that outsiders no longer recognized them, though the citizens of Cedarfall claimed friendship or kinship or even romantic involvement. The world had changed thoroughly.

Principalities of Cedarfall

High Sequoia is the northeastern-most principality of the province. Today famed for roof timbers and other building products, it is sparsely populated and least noticed. Most Deliberative agents are reluctant to travel so far into a region so deeply and thoroughly affected by Operation Wyldhand, so this territory is the least carefully studied. The people are friendly and tend to live in log cabins on the forest floor or in tree houses woven out of bark strips.

Black Juniper lies to the east and south. A land of rolling hills and shallow pools, it is famed for fishing and for its nut-crops such as pecans and almonds. The berries of its evergreens make fine gin as well. Deliberative agents remain convinced that the people of Black Juniper know something of what happened to the Greenland. So far, no agent has discovered the secret and lived to tell.

Blue Cedar lies to the north and west of High Sequoia. The sponginess of the ground here, and its relative closeness to the Elemental Pole of Air, make it a realm of thick dust and heavy pollen. A wide range of medicinal and cooking herbs grow from the forest floor here, and local stone is rich in copper and tin. As a result, timber and raw ore are this principality's two major products. The population here is the most physically changed, but the least mentally.

Sweet Balsam is closest to the rest of Creation, and the most thoroughly altered. People changed physically and mentally from their former existence, and the woods here were the most thoroughly changed. Deliberative foresters have identified 56 new conifer species here, as well as many ground-cover plants and insects found nowhere else in

Creation. Diseases of memory and age are prevalent in older people, but half the citizens are under 40 years of age.

All four principalities are deeply loyal to the Deliberative and accept that something happened to them. Occasionally, individual citizens become upset at the notion that Wyldhand did something strange to them, but most people treat the idea that the world was different before with equanimity. The Solars wanted it, the reasoning goes, so it must have been all right.

In the Deliberative, most factions publicly approve of the outcome of Operation Wyldhand. In private, many Solars remain either horrified by the changes… or eager to do the same to some other part of Creation.

Crystal

Crystal is the largest city in the Principality of Sweet Balsam, home to five large factory-cathedrals for the manufacture of medicines. More than 400,000 people work there, and an additional 300,000 work in supporting roles. Here in Creation's Northeast, combinations of cold winds and luxurious verdancy produce abundant edible and medicinal herbs, trees and shrubs. Millions of people depend upon oil and nutrient extraction from these plants, and their distillation into panaceas. The resulting crystals, as clear as diamond or muddy like river water, gave the city its name.

The factory-cathedral spires each rise from a square at the center of their neighborhoods. Workers from nearby apartments daily enter these crystal structures that catch and amplify the light of the Unconquered Sun. Bells chime at the start of the day, at midday (for a lunch break) and at day's end, with precision more usually found within a military establishment.

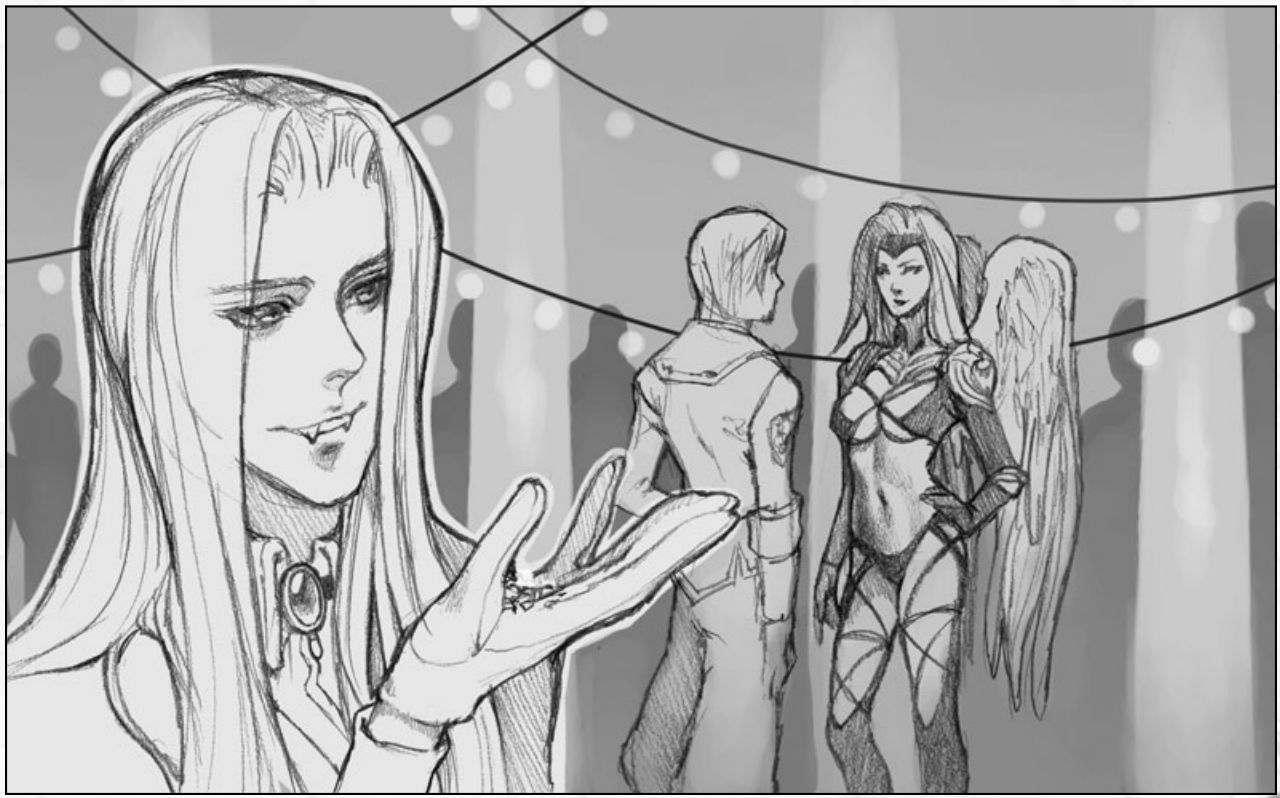
In some ways, Crystal is a military establishment in the Deliberative's war against disease. Tiny beings from the Wyld are thought to cause most illnesses. The doctors of the High First Age diagnose patients with infections of Northern, Southern, Eastern or Western Wyld and cure them with considerable success. The Deliberative Institute of Longevity and Living was relocated here after Operation Wyldhand in order to take advantage of the newly constituted resources in the area.

Within the manse at the city's center, the Solar physician Vigilant Guardian contemplates such alchemical reactions necessary to make the Forever Elixir necessary to sustain eternal life. No one has seen her in years. Once or twice a year, a large explosion or earthquake originates from the manse, wrecking some buildings or damaging one of the factory-cathedrals. Neither apology nor explanation is forthcoming.

In the absence of Solar guidance, a commission of nine Dragon-Blooded runs the city and Institute, keeping the factories running smoothly. The commissioners also make sure that regular shipments of current medications go out to all of Creation.

The Fringes

At the edges of the Deliberative's power and legitimacy, the North contains five regions outside the bounds of the Realm. I AM does not speak there, nor do the Solars or the



The Eighty Crystals

The Seventy-Five Crystals, as they are called in medical texts, are the most potent medicines in Creation. Each factory-cathedral in Crystal produces only one such medicine in each month of the year. Those produced during the months of Air are useful for diseases of the lungs, ears, nose and throat. When taken, the crystal melts on the tongue and suffuses the breath with sweetness. The elixirs produced during the months of Water are useful to the digestive and urinary tracts. Medicines from the months of Earth come in the form of a stone to be swallowed or inserted as a suppository. They are used for reproductive control and to aid difficult pregnancies or to amplify normal childhood development. Medicines from the Wood months, in the form of crystalline bandages, are suitable for dealing with skeletal and ligament damage. The crystalline pills from the three Fire months are used to treat illnesses of the internal organs, brain and nervous system. Each medicine is produced in sufficient quantities to provide about a million doses, and roughly a third is stockpiled around Creation every year against the risk of epidemic.

In accordance with appropriate medical principles first to do no harm, taking the medicines without having the relevant illness causes no injury. The medicines are named after the month in which they are produced, and are usually 100 percent effective when combined with diet, exercise and rest. When packed in unmelting ice within inlaid rosewood boxes, they are guaranteed to survive 6,000 years.

During the five Calibration days, the factory workers are relieved of their duties while special teams of Dragon-Bloods clean the machinery. While no new materials are added, the addition of pure water pumped from the source of the Crystal River helps flush oils and resins from the production line. The resins are crystallized in the same way as the other medicines, resulting in five very different but very potent drugs, and producing around 100 doses of each every year. All five drugs are rare and expensive controlled substances. They are named after their colors:

Goldbreath is inhaled by breaking the fragile crystal under one's nose. It makes one sexually irresistible to one member of the opposite sex, the first to smell one's breath. The effect lasts for about six days, after which the seduced becomes lethally angry toward the seducer.

Bronzewater, when drunk, raises the three Physical Attributes and Appearance to five dots for three days, after which they all fall to one dot for six months.

Bloodstone, a thin crystal the color of blood, is inserted into the urethra, where it dissolves. Toxins build up in the bloodstream for the next six to twelve days, but during that time, the bearer of the stone can heal even aggravated damage with a touch. At the end of that time, the buildup of toxins causes the bearer's internal organs to rupture. This is usually followed by painful death.

Graythread, when used to stitch any wound, seals it immediately and permanently, no matter how bad the wound was. It also works on nostrils, mouths, ears and other orifices, making it a favorite of vicious criminal lords.

Six hours after using *blackbox*, the user's Essence is halved, rounding down, for a period of days equal to one's Essence before using the drug. The Solars maintain special controls at this factory in particular.

Celestials pay official attention to events in those areas. Cold and difficult to dwell in, changes in weather and temperature affect them far more than the principalities.

The Deliberative seeds the Fringes with spies and informants. At the same time, it pretends to honor whatever agreements allow those areas to remain free. Compared with the principalities, populations are small. Not a single city of any splendor or Exalted beauty exists in any of them. Life tends to be shorter and less valued in the Fringes than in the rest of Creation.

The Sea Fingers

The so-called Sea Fingers consist of a chain of fjords and islands in the Northwest. Cauldronists raised the Sea Fingers about two centuries ago. Infamous for reefs and aggressively carnivorous seagulls, the Fingers are a less-than-perfect success. Solar engineers intended to call forth a region of green hills out of the Wyld, suitable for raising terrace crops such as potatoes, almonds and pecans. Instead, they engendered this land of mountains and scrub pines, and it has resisted redesign ever since, despite steadfast efforts and the regular deployment of Wyld cauldron devices to the principal demesnes in the region. Several Solars theorize that the reasonably solid architecture of the Great Western Ocean to the south, and equally solid lands to the east, have locked this area into its present reality. It remains unsuitable for its intended crops and unalterable to more useful form. Other Solars believe that an outside power, some agent of the Wyld, is deliberately holding the Sea Fingers in its present shape for unknown reasons.

The Blindman's Pashalic

In fact, the Sea Fingers owe their immutability of form to the Blind Pasha, a shaped raksha of surpassing power who has indeed worked in parallel with the Cauldronists. As a result, he sculpted the Sea Fingers to serve the needs of his story.

The Blind Pasha's preferred narrative is to play the blind beggar, wandering from town to town and house to house, receiving beatings at one gate and riches at another. In response, the Blind Pasha reveals himself as a god and metes out appropriate punishment or reward—always with hidden benefit or penalty. A man rewarded for generosity, for instance, might find that cuts on his skin bleed rubies, with predictable results. A woman punished for stinginess might be robbed of her infertility, resulting in a long-hoped for child—yet a monster in both form and manner. These gifts provide such a range of joy and despair to the Blind Pasha and his adherents that the district feeds a great host of the Fair Folk preparing to invade Creation.

In the Wyld, the Sea Fingers are called the Blindman's Pashalic, and his royal house is named the Court of Lapis and Clear Obsidian. When meeting with heroes openly, the Blind Pasha adopts the guise of a nobly dressed androgyne dressed in silk shot with onyx and silver thread. While traveling in the Bordermarches, the Blind Pasha wears ratty wool and leather, and stoops along the roads to the houses of his victims. The Blind Pasha looks forward to the day when the Sea Fingers' population is sufficiently high that he can bless or curse the whole population at once, and bear it away into the Wyld.

The second opinion is more favored in the Deliberative. As a result, the Deliberative refuses to consider petitions to settle new towns and cities there. Between climate and Wyld threat, settlement cannot be condoned at this time, or so the prevailing wisdom holds.

Even so, people come. From the West, shipwrecks and accidental groundings established small communities on the land over centuries, since rescue parties have been few and far between. From the North, tradesmen, merchants and miners came seeking new sources of wealth and new markets. Empty, fertile-looking valleys and stands of timber attracted settlers; villages and towns sprang up. As a result, a few large trade centers emerged, and small boats carry on a thriving trade with the rest of Creation for the Sea Fingers' goods: walrus ivory, ship timber, goats' wool and cheese and small quantities of useful metals such as zinc and palladium.

Exiles and escaped criminals come to the Sea Fingers to start over or to hide. Piracy is common among residents, though few are bold enough to attack ships from the rest of Creation. Too many know the risks and the penalties for failure. Few think about even greater risks from a single success. Even so, the Lintha have established repair bases in the area, far from their normal habitations.

Life in the Sea Fingers is harsh. Most rely on a combination of hardscrabble subsistence farming and fishing. Most activities are rigidly seasonal. A broad system of taboos prevents both overgrazing the land and over-fishing the waters. The average life expectancy is 46 years, owing to rampant honor-killing, persistent disease related to goat keeping and a long-standing tribally based legal system eager to apply death penalties. Slavery is common in this region of the North, usually accompanied by behaviors that mortals from the Deliberative consider shocking.

Steppe Nomads

Among the peoples of Urrin's Steppe are at least a thousand tribes that do not formally acknowledge the Deliberative as authoritative. Not swayed by religious systems promulgated in Creation's core, they worship Moon, Sun, Gaia, local gods and even elementals indiscriminately, depending on who appears to serve their needs best at the time. Even Fair Folk might suit their purposes at times, and so be offered worship.

To call them a loose confederation of powers would be to assign their governance too much legitimacy. Each tribe has its own rivalries, structures and methods for choosing leaders and displacing them. Each tribe herds some animal for food, usually with a second animal as a supplemental food source or raw material. Among some, mammoths are popular, while sheep and goats meet needs elsewhere. Giant spiders are common among the tribes in the West. In the East, giant hares weighing up to 100 pounds are an important staple.

Most of the tribes live in portable round tents called gerts, constructed of bone or wood woven together into flexible frames and covered with animal hide or an airboat skin—sometimes both. Visitors assume that because houses are primitive, people are as well. In fact, some gerts are sophisticated structures with Essence-powered heating systems. Bathhouses often use chalices of solar benediction. Even workshops have modern manufacturing tools within. More than one Dragon-Blood swears that while lost in the North among these forsaken people, he came upon a gert fitted as a manse in the tundra.

White River Gorge

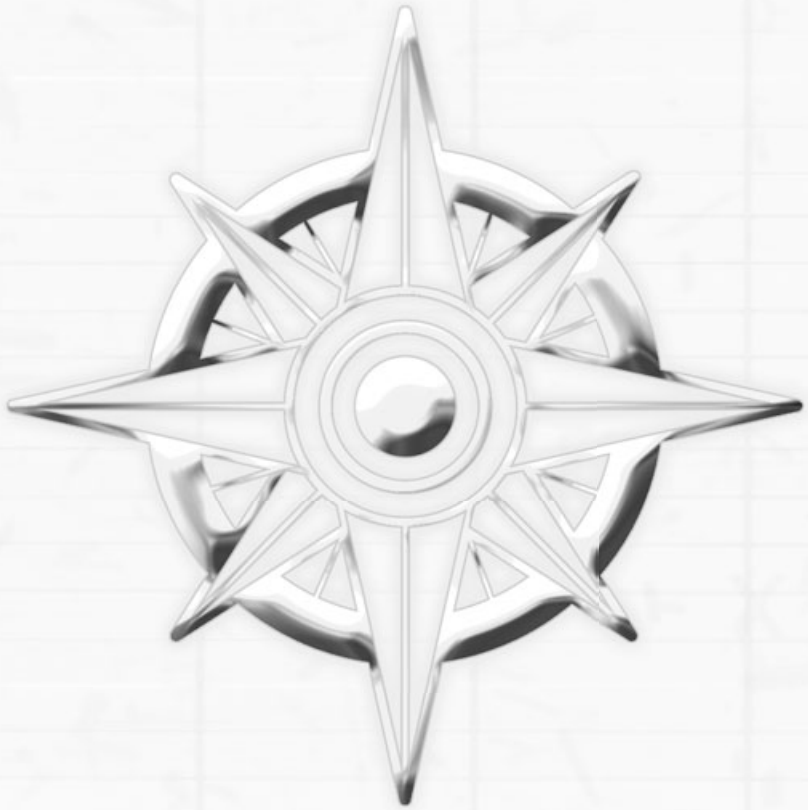
The largest area in the North that is not officially under Deliberative control is the White River Gorge, where the White River turns south from Frost Lake and enters a narrow channel to the Inland Sea. While the Deliberative refers to it as Dominion Park, the area is but lightly held.

True wilderness exists beyond the manicured areas suitable for mortal and Exalted tourism.

Visitors find the river itself the first danger. Canals bypass rapids and two waterfalls, but too many places provide ambush-cover between Frost Lake and the Inland Sea. High cliffs and narrow canyons offer opportunities to seize merchant ships, and rough country prevents military expeditions from besieging towers and citadels.

Part of the difficulty in suppressing the bandits of the Gorge lies in just who they are. Constrained by the Deliberative from outright warfare with their most powerful weapons, younger but militant Solars and their Terrestrial allies use the park as their personal war-gaming preserve. Rough terrain prevents large-force maneuvers. Standard rules of engagement prohibit the use of warstriders or skyships through the region. While laws against targeting civilians still hold, occasional minor atrocities occur, such as villages burning during cattle raids or towns being pillaged during longer campaigns.

The petty states along the river are usually only a day's march in diameter. Most have an available force of under 1,000, including Dragon-Bloods, led by one of the Sun's Chosen. Solar Queen Merela intervened regularly in the last millennium, requiring one or more Solars to step down for committing unacceptable outrages. Still, the Gorge provides a welcome outlet for Solars' more aggressive behaviors, especially those born into the lasting peace of the Second Deliberative Era and the Era of Dreams.



Now, is everyone paying attention?
YOUR HIGHNESS! YOUR HIGHNESS! THIS JUST CAME FOR YOU!
Always when I'm eating...
What is it?
A MESSAGE FROM THE ENEMY GENERAL, YOUR HIGHNESS.
Enemy general?
Are we under siege, then?
I wondered about the noise.
YES, YOUR HIGHNESS! IT'S BEEN GOING ON FOR A MONTH!
Very well. I'll deal with this after dinner.
YES, YOUR HIGHNESS, BUT...
Shoo! Shoo! After dinner, I said.

APPENDIX

Old Realm Script

The characters in this appendix allow one to read, write and transliterate the ancient language of the Old Realm, the first language spoken in Creation and the native tongue of gods, raksha and sorcery. Although the alphabet that follows has existed since the beginning of the **Exalted** game line, this is the first time it has appeared in print for players and Storytellers to use in their own games.

The first thing to learn is how words are pronounced in Old Realm. To this end, there are a few simple rules:

1. If the letter C is a soft one, the sound is written like an S. If the C is hard, it is represented by a K.

2. If any syllable ends in a consonant, that lone consonant is written with whatever vowel came before it. If it is somehow a lone initial consonant, it takes the vowel that first follows it.

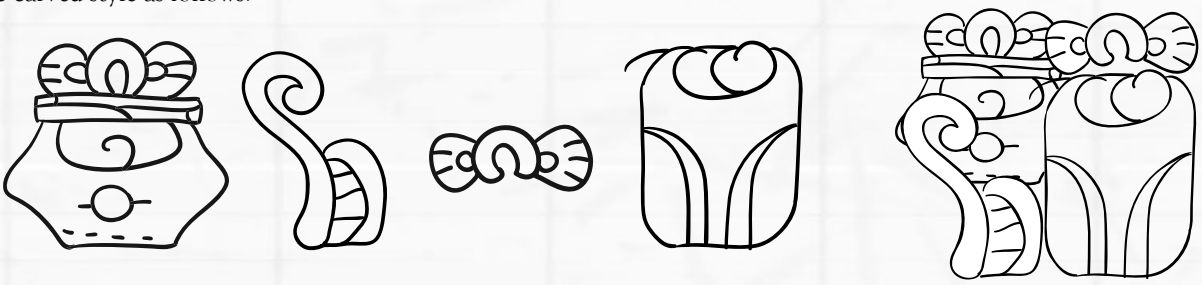
3. The SH sound is pronounced CH. Similarly, the TH sound is pronounced D.

With the exception of these rules, words are sounded out and composed of the pictograms that correspond to their syllables.

= BA

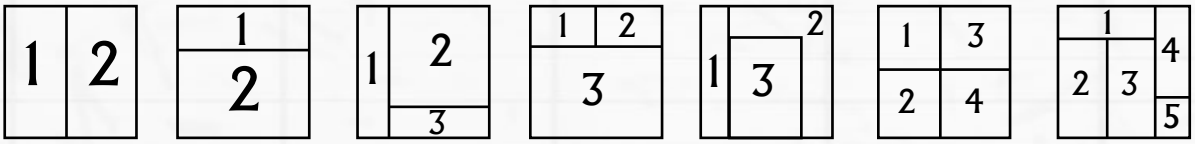
= DA

Next, it's important to learn how the pictograms come together to form words and sentences. Words are formed in the carved style as follows:

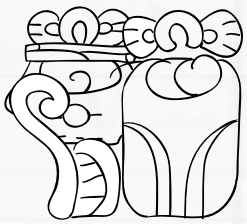


DA + RE + MA + SE = DREAMS

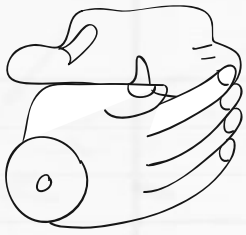
Letters can be formed into words any number of the following ways:



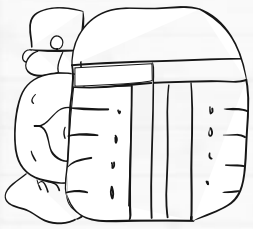
Those same words are then formed into full sentences as follows:



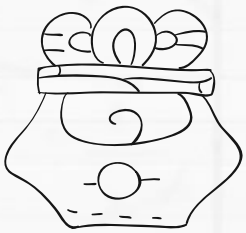
DREAMS
(DA-RE-MA-SE)



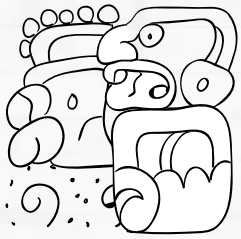
OF
(O-FA)



AGE
(A-GE)



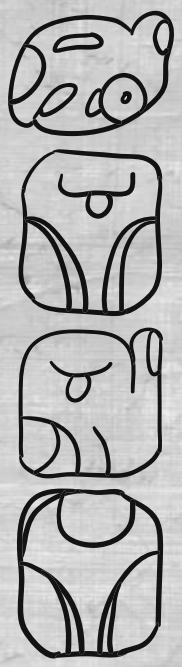
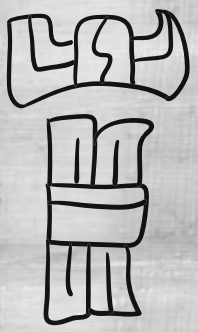
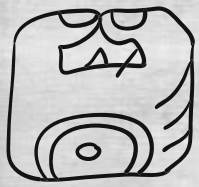
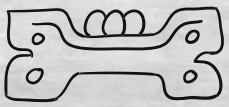
THE
(DA)



FIRST
(FU-RU-SA-TA)

1→2 7→8
3→4 9→10
5→6 11→12

A	E	I	O	U
BA	BE	BI	BO	BU
KA	KE	KI	KO	KU

Cha	Che	Chi	Cho	Chu
				
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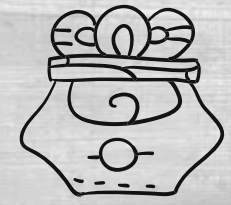	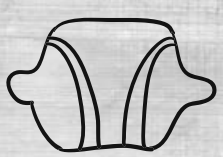	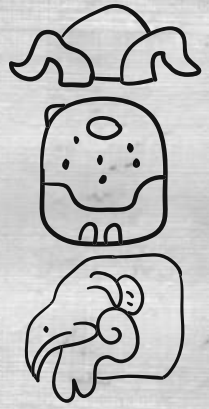		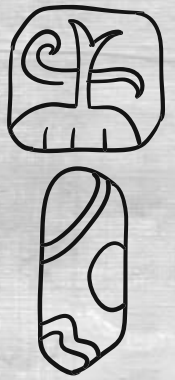
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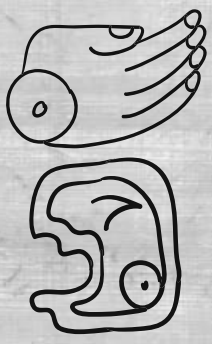		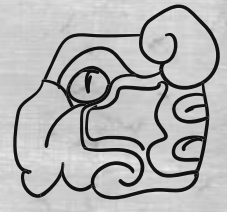	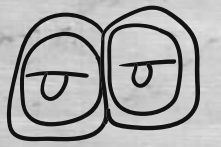	

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	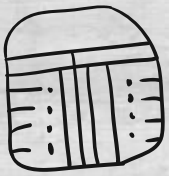			
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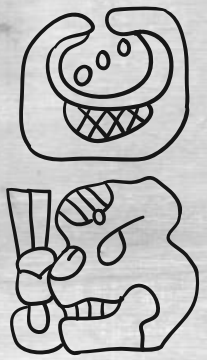	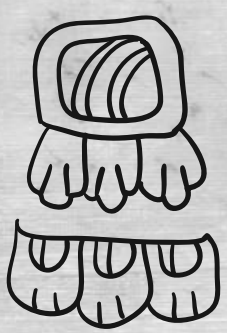	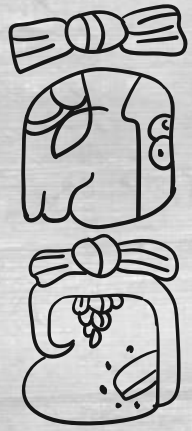		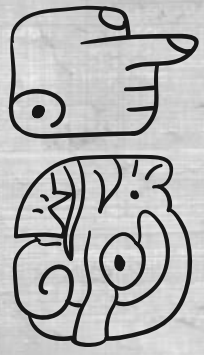
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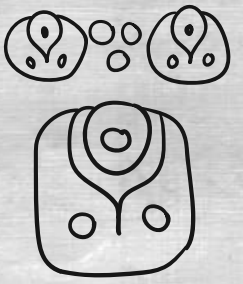		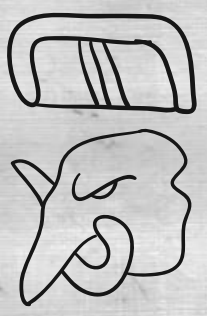	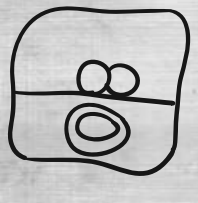	
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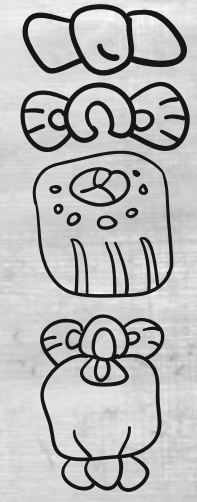	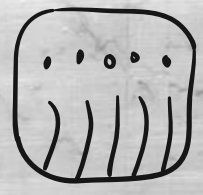	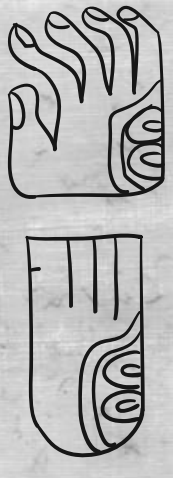	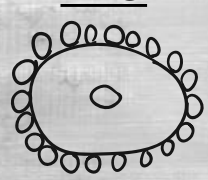	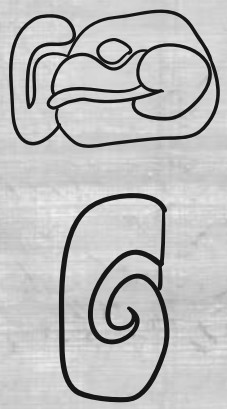

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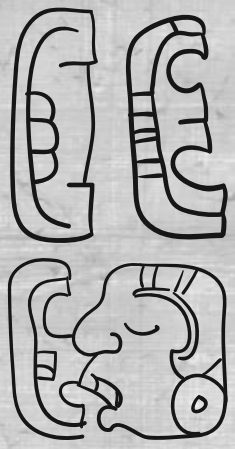				
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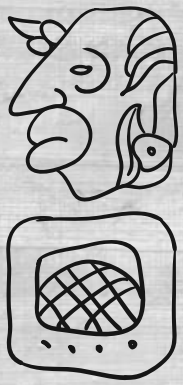		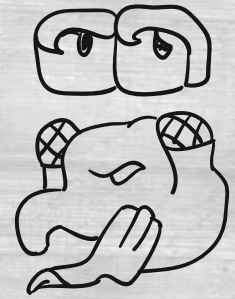	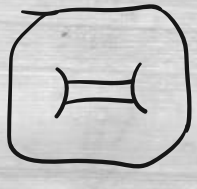	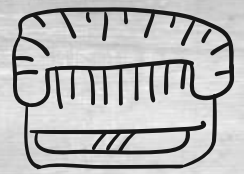
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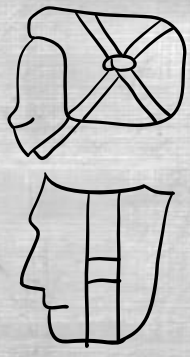	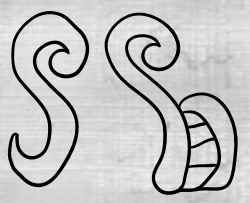		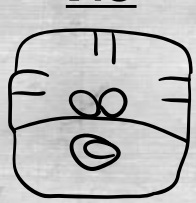	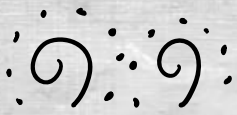
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	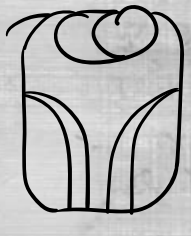		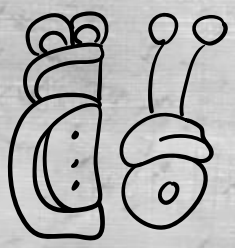	

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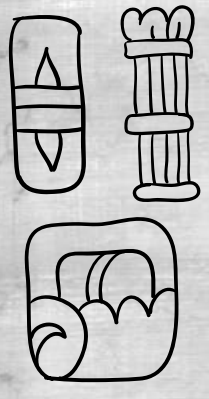	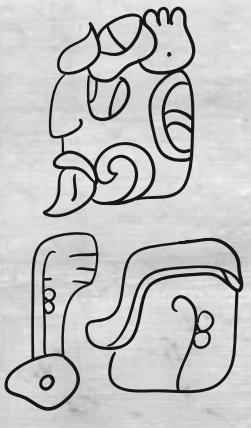	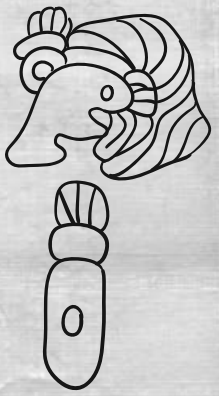	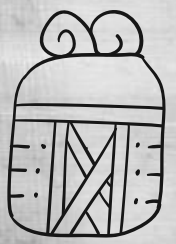	
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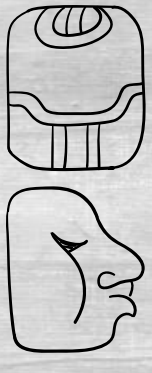	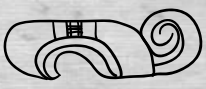			
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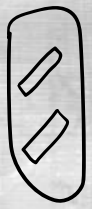				
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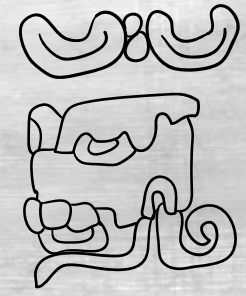
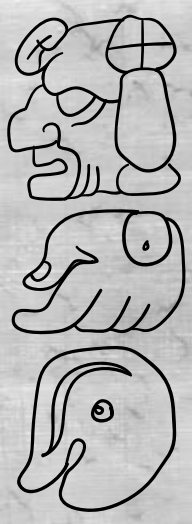
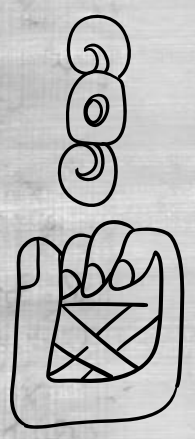
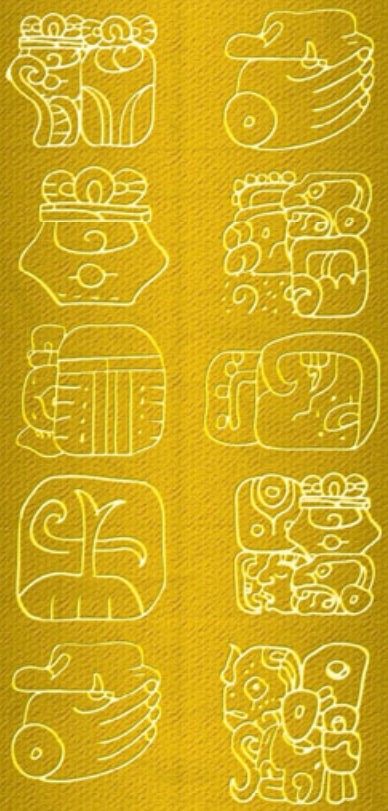
				

Dreams of the First Age—Lands of Creation is devoted to the history, geography and politics of the Solar Deliberative and the Realm it rules. All the setting material required to run games set in the Age of Splendor lies within.

Dare you learn the victories and atrocities of the gods' Chosen?



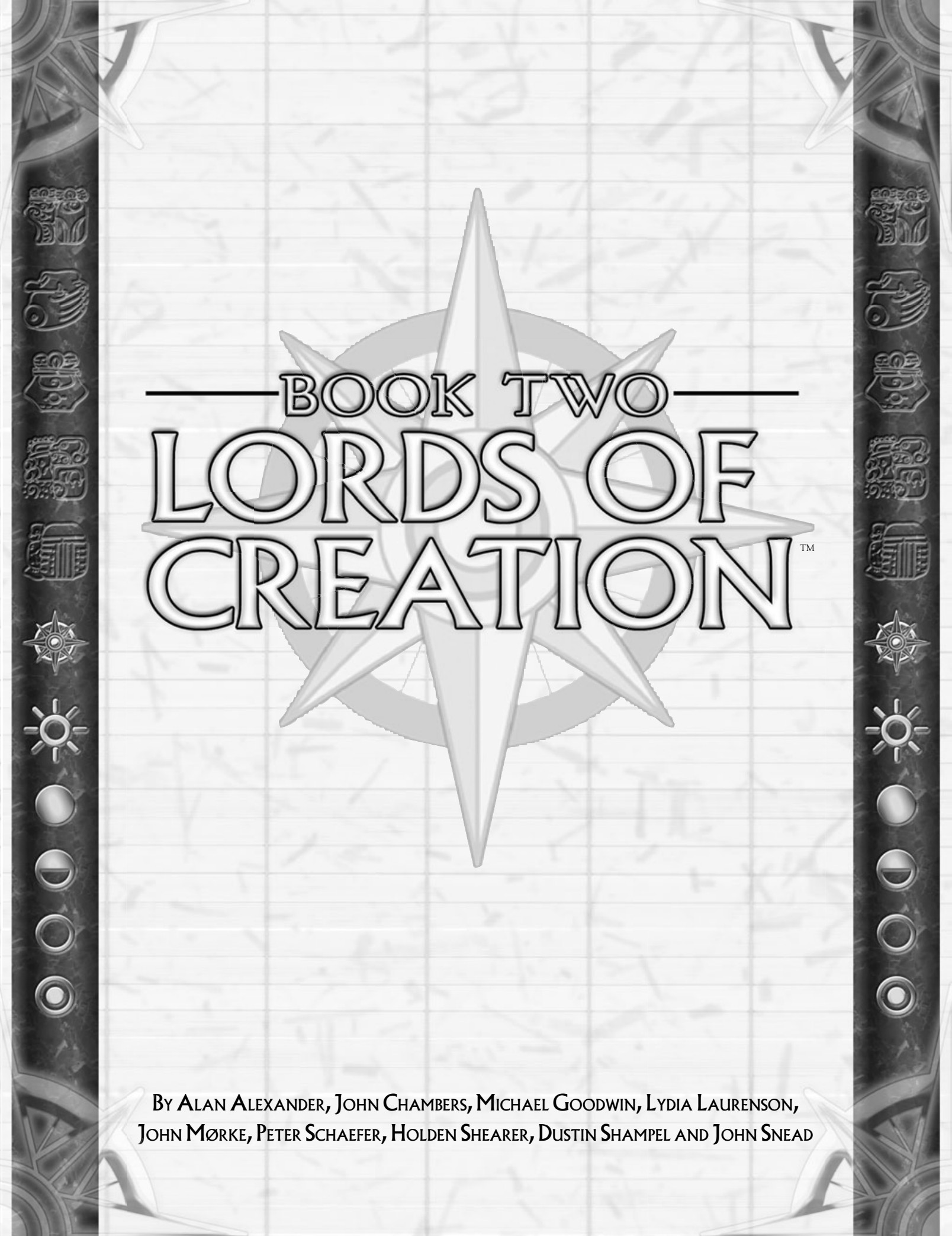
Inside you'll find:

- A complete overview of life in the Era of Dreams
- A guide to the major provinces, principalities and cities of the Blessed Isle and the Threshold during the High First Age
- A complete guide for using the script of the Old Realm in your **Exalted games**

BOOK TWO

LORDS OF CREATION™

EXALTED
SECOND EDITION



BOOK TWO

LORDS OF CREATION™

By Alan Alexander, John Chambers, Michael Goodwin, Lydia Laurenson, John Mørke, Peter Schaefer, Holden Shearer, Dustin Shampel and John Snead

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BOOK TWO
LORDS OF CREATION™

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Chapter One: First Age Character Creation	7
Chapter Two: The God-Kings' Prowess	56
Chapter Three: Wonders of the Age	107
Chapter Four: The Mortal	125
Chapter Five: The Mighty	143

IT'S GETTING DARK, MY BOY. WILL YOU STAY FOR SUPPER?
I CAN'T, SIR. I'M SORRY.
I HAVE TO GET BACK TO THE LOOM OF FATE BY MIDNIGHT.
IT'S DINNERTIME, GALITO. DID YOU HAVE A NICE WALK?
OH... SCYALA, THERE YOU ARE. I WANT YOU TO MEET MY FRIEND.
I KNOW HIM, GALITO. HE COMES TO VISIT EVERY WEEK. REMEMBER?
OH, HOW NICE...
GOOD EVENING SCYALA, I'LL SHOW MYSELF OUT.
WIPE YOUR FEET BEFORE YOU GO THROUGH THE HOUSE.
YES, MA'AM.
I LIKE HIM. HE'S A NICE BOY.
WHAT DID YOU TWO TALK ABOUT?
HM? OH... TODAY WE TALKED ABOUT PRUNING.
SUCH A SMART BOY. WHAT WAS HIS NAME?
IT'S CHEJOP KEJAK, SIR. YOU KNEW HIS MOTHER, REMEMBER?
YES, YES... SUCH A NICE BOY.

Introduction

We may not appreciate the fact; but a fact nevertheless it remains: we are living in a Golden Age, the most gilded Golden Age of human history—not only of past history, but of future history.

—Aldous Huxley, "Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow"

The undisputed lords of the First Age are the mighty Solar Exalted, who rule Creation under the Mandate of Heaven with help from their Lunar mates, their Sidereal advisors and the Dragon-Bloods who run their day-to-day affairs, tend to their estates and command their armies. For over three millennia, these Exalts have worked to build a world of wonder that glorifies both themselves and their patron Incarnae. And with but a few missteps, they have succeeded. Yet, a darkness threatens to swallow this golden age—one born of the Great Curse levied against the Exalts in the dawn of time. Can this Age of Splendor be saved? That may well depend on the Chosen newly Exalted into this era, the pinnacle of the wondrous First Age.

How to Use This Book

Dreams of the First Age—Lords of Creation is a guide to the Exalted of the First Age, both Terrestrial and Celestial. It offers players and Storytellers the tools they need to generate characters in the Age of Splendor—from complete-character creation rules to new Charms and artifacts to powerful allies and loyal minions. With this information, and that provided by the other two books

This Is Not a Complete Game!

Despite its size, **Dreams of the First Age** is not a complete game. It is a supplement for **Exalted**, a game about near-divine heroes in a world of high fantasy. The game's core book describes the Solar Exalted, the rightful rulers of Creation, reborn into a world that has cast them as Anathema, demonic despots from a bygone era. This supplement does not describe the game's various core traits or present its rules for combat. This supplement instead gives in-depth information about the First Age: its society, its lands and the rules necessary to create and play Solar, Lunar, Sidereal and Dragon-Blooded characters in it. You'll need the **Exalted** core book for the basics, though.

included in this boxed set, it's possible to play games set at the height of the Solar Exalted's dominance of Creation, a time of glory… and madness.

Chapter One: First Age Character Creation

This chapter provides all the tools necessary to create characters of all the Age's extant Exalt types: Solar, Lunar, Sidereal and Dragon-Blooded. In addition to standard character creation, each section offers alternative rules for creating Exalted much older than the norm (or in the case of Dragon-Bloods, much younger). This period in the history of Creation marked the last time such a broad range of ages among the Exalt types interacted with one another on a regular basis.

Chapter Two: The God-Kings' Prowess

This section of **Lords of Creation** devotes itself to new, high-Essence Charms, just the type that the movers and shakers of the Deliberative (whether portrayed by the players or the Storyteller) are likely to spring on the unsuspecting. Whether you prefer playing Terrestrial or Celestial Exalts, there are Charms aplenty for each Exalt type (and even more so for players of Eclipse Caste characters).

Chapter Three: Wonders of the Age

Chapter Three presents a plethora of fantastic new artifacts the Princes of the Earth have developed to aid them in their rule over and protection of Creation. Everything from sublime cutlery to mighty shaping artifacts can be found within. There are even a number of new manse powers with which to customize characters' fabulous estates.

Chapter Four: The Mortal

The Exalted are the undisputed masters of the Age, but every leader needs followers. This chapter is all about the mortal folk whom the Deliberative's Exalts command (and wield against one another in their endless intrigues). Be they mortal soldiers, thaumaturges, blessed races, Mountain Folk or Dragon Kings, the mortal servants of the Chosen are covered here in detail.

Chapter Five: The Mighty

And what's an **Exalted** series without powerful allies and unbeatable villains to populate it? From the ostensible master of the Deliberative, the Hierophant, to a young(er) Chejop Kejak, this chapter provides Exalted of all stripes with which to people one's games.

I CAN SEE SOMETHING. IS THAT MOUNT MERU?
IT IS. VERY GOOD, ARLOT.
BEFORE WE ARRIVE, I WANT TO GIVE YOU SOMETHING.
YOUR MEDALLION? BUT WHY?
BECAUSE IT USED TO BE YOURS. YOU MADE IT.
YOU ALSO MADE ME PROMISE TO RETURN IT ONCE YOUR SOUL WAS REBORN.
I'LL TELL YOU MORE WHEN WE REACH YOUR MANSE.
I HAVE A MANSE?
IN THE CITY, YES. AND ANOTHER ON THE ISLE.
SO WE USED TO KNOW EACH OTHER?
SORT OF.
AND WE WERE FRIENDS?
THAT AND SO MUCH MORE.

CHAPTER ONE

FIRST AGE CHARACTER CREATION

The first step in entering the **Dreams of the First Age** is to create a character, an alter ego whose identity you assume when playing your role in the epic that is **Exalted.** As in most roleplaying games, your character and those of the other players represent the protagonists in a great epic, jointly written by the players and the Storyteller. Your character will change and grow over time, perhaps becoming a hero of legend or perhaps descending into the darkest villainy, but all such characters *begin* the same way—as dots on a page that you must bring to life. In **Exalted**, you typically begin the game as a newly Exalted Solar who must hide her talents from a world that hates and fears her due to centuries of Dragon-Blooded propaganda. Or the character might begin as a Dragon-Blooded noble trained from birth to view the Solars as demons from legend. Or a newly Exalted Lunar challenging the very definition of society while walking in primitive barbarian lands. Or a fresh young Sidereal agent of the Bureau of Destiny, hard-pressed to keep Creation running in the aftermath of so much chaos and destruction.

But those characters are for **Exalted** proper, a grim and gritty future that has yet to come to pass. In **Dreams of the First Age**, your character is a Prince of the Earth, regardless of what type of Exaltation comes to him. Whether he's a Solar, Lunar, Sidereal or Dragon-Blood, your character is *Exalted*, anointed by the gods and appointed by the Solar Deliberative to rule over the greatest civilization that has ever existed. Your character's face adorns local currencies. Statues erected in his honor look out over the streets of the city where he lives. His lowliest kitchen servant has a standard of living that is the envy of most of Creation's mortals. Life is good.

First Age Dragon-Blooded are born into a society that trains them from birth to prepare for Exaltation. Celestial Exalted often have less preparation, but they have access to advanced technology and training techniques that can turn a street urchin into a refined lady within weeks. Regardless of the nature of Exaltation, all Exalts are expected to be literate, reasonably well educated and prepared to assume their duties as Princes of the Earth. Beyond that, your character has the traits you assign to her. These traits reflect your character's strengths and weaknesses and help determine how she interacts with other characters in the story. The rules in this chapter also help determine whether your character can perform a given action successfully, whether it's throwing a punch, picking a lock, seducing a beautiful maiden or balancing a ledger.

Characters and Series

The initial steps of the character-creation process require the Storyteller's involvement. Whenever possible,

the Storyteller should guide players through this process so that the characters are as thoroughly integrated into the story as possible. Players often find it frustrating to create a devastating warrior only to find that the primary focus of the story is court intrigue. It's worse when players design effete socialites based entirely on charm and civility, only to find that the story focuses mainly on violent battlefield conflict. A "fish out of water" character can be quite interesting to play, but less so when the player didn't plan on doing so and was caught unaware by the story's themes and focus. Simple communication can circumvent this problem.

It's also a good idea to take a few moments during the initial game session to give an overview of the setting history and the current status quo. Even experienced **Exalted** players might need to be reminded of the differences between that game and the one you hold in your hands, as many of the fundamental assumptions of **Exalted** are no longer applicable. Solar Exalted can be frightening figures, but here they're not condemned as demonic "Anathema" by an entire state religion dedicated to opposing them. Lunar Exalted are loyal subjects of the Realm. They have five castes, and they're not dependent on the moonsilver tattoos that are nearly universal in the Age of Sorrows. Sidereal Exalted are also loyal to the Solar Deliberative, though the first dark suspicions about the Solars' fitness to rule are beginning to rear. The Sidereals have not yet broken the heavens in order to conceal their role in any Usurpation, so there is no Arcane Fate to hide their movements from prying eyes. Perhaps the Dragon-Blooded are the most different. In the Age of Sorrows, the Dragon-Blooded will become the undisputed rulers of Creation. In the First Age, that power has not yet come to them. While the Terrestrial Exalted are elevated above mortals, they remain little more than servants to the mighty Celestials.

As Storyteller, you should also give some thought to what types of Exalted you want in your series. **Exalted** proper is set in the Age of Sorrows, a time when historical forces conspire to make Solar and Lunar Exalted outlaws, Sidereals reclusive to the point of paranoia and Dragon-Blooded obsessed with exterminating Celestial Exalts. Consequently, stories in which different types of Exalts work together are somewhat rare. In **Dreams of the First Age**, however, all four Exalted types work together in support of the Realm. Therefore, nothing prevents players from creating characters of all four Exalted types for the same series.

There is one issue that the Storyteller of such a series must take into account, however. As a practical matter, there are significant gradations in power level between Celestial

and Terrestrial Exalted. In fact, differing power levels become apparent even among the three Celestial types over time. Celestial Exalted progress more quickly than Terrestrials do, with Solars progressing the fastest of all. A group of characters who are all the same Exalted type is much more likely to progress at an even rate than a mixed group is—to the detriment of non-Solar characters in general and Dragon-Blooded characters in particular. That said, if the players don't object to this situation, they can find interesting roleplaying opportunities in playing characters who begin at comparable power levels but drift apart as some leave the rest far behind.

As a final option, players can even choose to play heroic mortal characters. They could be members of a Celestial Exalt's retinue, personal aides to a Dragon-Blood or simply a group of mortal allies trying to find their way in this world of demigods.

After discussing the basics of the setting and what type of Exalts are permissible in the game, give the players character sheets and answer any questions they have. Most of the traits listed on the character sheet are fully described in the **Exalted** core book, though, not here**.** To reiterate: **This is not a complete game!** While it's quite extensive, **Dreams of the First Age** is a supplement for **Exalted**. The core Attributes, Abilities, primary Solar Charms and mechanical rules are all explained there. Additionally, the primary Charms unique to the Terrestrial, Lunar and Sidereal Exalted are found in the **Manuals of Exalted Power** devoted to those three Exalted types. This chapter does, however, contain character-creation rules and explanations of the various Backgrounds that are available to characters—most of which differ substantially from their descriptions in other books. Chapter Two has additional high-Essence Charms for all four Exalted types.

Character Creation: An Overview

Regardless of Exalt type, the initial steps of creating a character are fundamentally the same for all characters. Nearly every mortal in Creation has the same chance to receive Celestial Exaltation. Given the inherent demographics of First Age society, the overwhelming likelihood is that a future Celestial Exalt will be born into the lower classes. Each Exaltation—i.e., the empowered portion of the soul that cycles from one Exalted incarnation to the next—still seeks the same kind of person it always does. The Exaltation of a Twilight Solar will typically be drawn to an intellectual of one type or another, while the Exaltation of a Lunar is drawn to someone with a strong protective impulse. Since the overwhelming number of Creation's citizens are lower-class agricultural workers, that's just naturally where the Exaltations are likely to go. It is partly for this reason that the Deliberative strives so hard to improve the living standard and educational opportunities for the common folk of Creation. No one wants a future Prince of the Earth to spend his formative years suffering deprivation and want, growing ever more hostile toward the ruling class.

Books You Might Need

The following are other White Wolf books that are or could be necessary to play in this setting:

• **Exalted** is essential to playing the game. It contains all the rules for playing the game, as well as descriptions of all the relevant traits and a comprehensive list of starting Solar Charms.

• **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded** is essential for any game that includes Terrestrial Exalted characters. It contains a comprehensive list of starting Dragon-Blooded Charms.

• **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Lunars** is essential for any game that includes Lunar characters. It contains a comprehensive list of starting Lunar Charms and an explanation of how Lunar shapeshifting works. During the period when **Dreams of the First Age** is set, however, the Lunar Exalted have not yet suffered the Breaking of the Castes, nor have they begun using moonsilver tattoos to protect themselves from the Wyld. Accordingly, there are five Lunar Castes, and all Lunars are vulnerable to Shaping effects that target their bodies.

• **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Sidereals** is essential for any game that includes Sidereal characters. It contains the *exclusive* list of Sidereal Charms, as well as an explanation of how Sidereal Astrology works. During the period when **Dreams of the First Age** is set, Sidereal Exalted have not yet undertaken the Great Prophecy, let alone the Breaking of the Mask. (Those concepts are discussed on pp. 23 and 25–26 of **The Sidereals**.) Accordingly, Sidereal Exalted do not suffer or benefit from Arcane Fate.

• **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the First Age** is helpful for games set in the First Age, as it contains an extensive list of First Age magical devices.

• **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. II—The White and Black Treatises** is useful for games in which one or more players expect to play high-level sorcerers, as that book contains a long list of spells for use by characters.

• **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex** is useful, as it offers information on how manses and other Essence-focusing constructs are made, as well as the ins and outs of thaumaturgy.

Once Exalted, the new Celestial is located by the Deliberative as soon as possible. He's cleaned up and given a crash course in all the things a young Exalt needs to know in order to properly rule the world. The Deliberative then arranges some kind of "starter job" for him, usually an apprenticeship with an experienced Exalted mentor or some unimportant duty that a new Celestial can perform to gain on-the-job training. The nature of this appointment is largely a function of how the player allocates her character's traits, especially her Background dots.

The rules are slightly different for a newly Exalted Dragon-Blooded character. While nothing is ever certain, the Deliberative has spent centuries overseeing Dragon-Blooded breeding and can predict with a high degree of accuracy which children of Dragon-Blooded families will Exalt. Of course, such predictions are much easier in the First Age. The events of the Usurpation and the Great Contagion have not devastated the Dragon-Blooded ranks, and the Terrestrial bloodlines are much purer. Most children of Dragon-Bloods with high Breeding are likely to Exalt, and the "lost eggs" so common to the Age of Sorrows are quite rare in the First Age.

Nearly all Dragon-Blooded characters are raised in Gentes that have faithfully served a particular Celestial Exalt (or more accurately, a particular Celestial Exaltation) for centuries. Even the death of the patron does not end his connection to the Dragon-Blooded family in his employ, as the future Solar who inherits his Exaltation will enjoy the same bond of fealty as her predecessor. Generally, Dragon-Blooded characters have a much better educational background than newly Exalted Celestials do, despite the best efforts of Celestial educational techniques. Dragon-Blooded characters also begin with free dots in Backgrounds that represent their placement by virtue of birth and Exaltation within a vast social infrastructure. There are two drawbacks to these benefits. One is that the Dragon-Blood's advantages are rarely his own. Instead, they are products of the Dragon-Blood's status as a favored lieutenant, a seneschal or even a majordomo to a Celestial Exalt. The other is that, as powerful as these advantages of status and training are in the short term, they will eventually be outstripped by the natural advantages of Exaltation.

For perspective, consider two characters. One is a starting Dragon-Blood whose family is vassal to a particular Solar Exalt. The other is a starting Solar who is the neophyte reincarnation of the Dragon-Blood's previous Solar patron. Initially, the Dragon-Blood has some advantages over the Solar—a superior understanding of the Solar's properties, of bureaucratic manipulation, of military tactics—which could cause the Solar to view him as a trusted advisor or even a mentor. After a few years, however, the Solar's superior learning curve will erase this advantage. The Solar might continue to value the Dragon-Blood's opinions, but it won't be because the Dragon-Blood knows anything the Solar doesn't.

Accordingly, the first steps in creating an Exalted character of any sort are to decide the character's concept, his place of origin and, above all, the nature of his Exaltation.

Attributes

The next step is to assign Attribute dots. This step works basically the same for all Exalted types (and really for any character). There are three categories of Attributes: Physical, Social and Mental. The Physical Attributes are Strength, Dexterity and Stamina. The Social Attributes are Charisma, Manipulation and Appearance. The Mental Attributes are Perception, Intelligence and Wits. All of these Attributes are defined in **Exalted**, pp. 101–102.

The player must decide which of the three Attribute categories is of primary importance to her character, then which one is secondary, and finally which one is tertiary. Depending on the type of Exaltation (and the age and experience of the character), the player allocates a set number of dots among the primary Attributes, a smaller number of dots among the secondary Attributes and an even smaller number among the tertiary Attributes. For example, a typical starting Solar character begins with eight dots to divide among her primary Attributes, six dots to divide among her secondary Attributes and four dots to divide among her tertiary Attributes. The number of dots available to each Exalted type is described under the specific character-creation rules for that type. All characters begin with one free dot in each Attribute.

Things are a little different for Lunar Exalted. Lunars focus their Charms through Attributes rather than Abilities and are better able to increase those Attributes. The player of a Lunar character must note which Attributes are associated with his character's caste. Lunar Caste Attributes are discussed more fully on page 17. The player then must select one non-Caste Attribute to be a Favored Attribute. Finally, after he allocates his starting Attribute dots among his primary, secondary and tertiary Attribute groups, he gains two additional Attribute dots to spend on any Caste or Favored Attribute.

No Attribute can be raised above five dots in a starting character.

Abilities

The next step in character creation is determining the character's Abilities. There are 25 Abilities used in **Exalted**: Archery, Athletics, Awareness, Bureaucracy, Craft, Dodge, Integrity, Investigation, Larceny, Linguistics, Lore, Martial Arts, Medicine, Melee, Occult, Performance, Presence, Resistance, Ride, Sail, Socialize, Stealth, Survival, Thrown and War. These Abilities are defined in **Exalted** on pages 106–110. Some of these Abilities are modified for use in the First Age, as described on pages 28–30.

The default character-creation rules for **Dreams of the First Age** assume that a Celestial Exalt character has been Exalted for a year or so and has mastered all the skills that the Deliberative expects a neophyte Prince of the Earth to learn before he is released to seek his destiny. Not every

young Solar fully accepts the reasoning behind this required training. For example, a young Dawn Caste who is not from a military background might not see why she should be required to study military tactics just because of her caste when she has no interest in leading troops into battle. Fortunately, while the Deliberative doesn't force young Exalts to pursue a specific course of study, elder Exalts are usually on hand to "convince" their younger kin of the necessity of the training, sometimes with subtle mind-altering Charms. It is no coincidence that training in the Integrity Charms that best fend off such mental control is *not* part of the required training regimen. Young Exalts who wish to master such Charms must do so on their own.

The specialized training that all young Celestial Exalts must undergo is reflected in eight free Ability dots that all such characters receive. They are known as Celestial Training Abilities.

Celestial Training Abilities

Bureaucracy, Presence or Socialize 1; Lore 2; Occult 2, Ride or Sail 1; two dots allocated among Archery, Martial Arts, Melee or Thrown

In addition to eight free dots in the Celestial Training Abilities, Celestial Exalts also begin with four free dots in Caste Training Abilities. These Abilities vary according to which type of Exalt the character is. Caste Training Abilities are discussed more fully in the sections for each individual Exalt type.

Dragon-Blooded characters begin with 12 free dots in Terrestrial Training Abilities, as a result of growing up in a Dragon-Blooded family and becoming better prepared for Exaltation. The default assumption of **Dreams of the First Age** is that a newly created Dragon-Blooded character will be a little older and more seasoned than a newly created Celestial Exalted character. Dragon-Blooded characters do not have castes and do not receive specialized Caste Training Abilities.

Terrestrial Training Abilities

Archery 1, Bureaucracy 1, Lore 2, Martial Arts 1, Melee 1, Occult 1, Performance 1, Presence 1, Ride 1, Socialize 1, War 1

Once all free Training Abilities are allocated, the player can spend the rest of his Ability dots. The player must first note on his character sheet which Abilities are Caste Abilities (except for Lunars, who do not have Caste Abilities) and then choose which Abilities are Favored Abilities. You cannot pick a Caste Ability as a Favored Ability. Exalted characters get price breaks on purchasing additional dots in Caste and Favored Abilities with bonus points and experience points. They also get price breaks on purchasing Charms associated with Caste and Favored Abilities. A character must have at least one dot in each Favored Ability, however, and he must generally split some of his starting Charms among Caste and Favored Abilities. Exactly how many Favored Abilities a character gets and how he must divide up his Charms is determined by Exalt type and explained in the specific sections pertaining to each Exalt type.

No Ability can be raised above three dots without the expenditure of bonus points. You can also spend bonus points to purchase Ability specialties. Each specialty gives you one extra die to roll in situations where the specialty applies. You can have a maximum of three specialty dots associated with a single Ability, and you can split those three dots up among different specialties or put multiple dots in a single specialty. For example, if you wish to specialize in Melee, you can have Melee (Daiklave +3), Melee (Daiklave +1, Sneak Attack +2) or any other combination your Storyteller approves.

Backgrounds

Solar Exalted, as the true Princes of Creation according to the Mandate of Heaven, begin with 20 dots to allocate among the various Backgrounds. Terrestrial Exalted, as the favored seneschals and adjutants of the Solars and the scions of established Dragon-Blooded Gentes, begin with 15 dots in Backgrounds. Sidereal and Lunar Exalts also begin with 15 dots to spend on Backgrounds. The various Backgrounds are discussed more fully beginning on page 30. Some Backgrounds limit who can take them. For example, only Dragon-Blooded may possess the Breeding Background, while only Lunars may possess the Heart's Blood Background.

No Background may be raised above three dots without spending bonus points. If a Celestial Exalt has five or more dots of Essence, she can purchase Legendary Backgrounds, which are essentially extra-powerful versions of normal Backgrounds. Legendary Backgrounds are explained on page 30.

Charms and Other Magic

Solar Exalted begin with 15 Charms, at least five of which must come from Caste or Favored Abilities. Lunar Exalted begin with a combination of 12 Charms or shape-shifting Knacks, with at least five Charms and one Knack coming from Caste or Favored Attributes. Sidereal Exalted begin with 12 Charms with at least five Charms coming from Auspicious or Favored Abilities. Dragon-Blooded begin with 10 Charms, with at least five Charms coming from Aspect or Favored Abilities. Sidereals also get dots in Astrological Colleges, which facilitate Sidereal Astrology. Any character who has taken the Terrestrial Circle Sorcery Charm can substitute other Charm slots for sorcery spells on a one-for-one basis.

Final Touches

All Exalted characters begin with Essence 3. Personal and Peripheral Essence pools are calculated according to the rules outlined under each Exalt type.

All characters begin with five dots to allocate among the four Virtues: Compassion, Conviction, Temperance and Valor. Each Virtue begins with one free dot. A Virtue cannot be raised above four dots without spending bonus points. All Exalted characters are subject to the Great Curse levied against them by the Primordials. The precise way in which this Curse manifests against a particular Exalt is determined by the interaction of his Exalted type with his primary Virtue and is discussed more fully in **Exalted** (for Solar Exalted) and in the **Manuals of Exalted Power** (for the Terrestrial, Lunar and Sidereal Exalted).

All characters begin with Willpower equal to the sum of their two highest Virtues. Starting Willpower can be improved with bonus points. The player must next choose a Motivation for his character (see **Exalted**, pp. 88–89) and select a number of Intimacies equal to his character's Compassion (see **Exalted**, p. 90).

Finally, the player can spend 18 bonus points to round out the character. The cost for most traits varies according to Exalt type. A Bonus Point Costs chart can be found on the Character Creation Summary pages for each Exalt type.

Mortal Characters

Instead of playing mighty Exalted, your players might wish to play as ordinary mortal citizens of the First Age. While the First Age is a utopia compared to the Age of Sorrows, Creation can still be dangerous for those who are not blessed with the power of Exaltation. To a mortal hero, ordinary bandits can be deadly, and a simple fever can end one's life if no First Age medical treatments are available. Although the mortal characters described here are heroic mortals, the Exalted (and especially the Solar Exalted) are demigods, and even those newest to Exaltation vastly outclass even the most experienced mortal. As a result, every character in a series should be Exalted or every character should be mortal, as a mixed series would be extremely unfair to mortal characters. Heroic mortal character creation is as follows.

Step One: Concept

The concept is key to an interesting, three-dimensional character. Mortals choose Motivations as normal but have neither castes nor aspects. Heroic mortals still require heroic Motivations, but not ones as epic as those of the Exalted.

Step Two: Attributes

Prioritize Attributes as normal. Heroic mortals get six dots to spend in their primary category, four dots in their secondary, and three dots in their tertiary. Ordinary mortals have only four dots to spend in their primary category, and three dots to spend in each of the other two.

Step Three: Abilities

Mortals do not have Caste Abilities. Heroic mortals get 25 dots to distribute among their Abilities, while normal mortals get 18. A heroic mortal may choose one Ability as a Favored Ability, complete with a discount. Such a character can never have any other Ability rated higher than his Favored Ability. Mortals may choose specialties as normal.

Step Four: Advantages

Mortals select Virtues as normal and distribute five dots among them. Mortals do not suffer from the Great Curse and have neither Virtue Flaws nor Limit Breaks. Mortals receive seven dots for Backgrounds, chosen from the following: Allies*, Arsenal, Artifacts, Command*, Connections*, Familiar, Henchmen, Mentor*, Panoply, Reputation, Resources. If a mortal takes a Background marked with an asterisk, her rating cannot exceed 3.

Step Five: Finishing Touches

Mortals calculate Willpower as normal. All mortals begin with an Essence of 1, which cannot be upgraded with bonus points. Some mortals develop the capacity to channel Essence, though, and can learn to increase their permanent Essence ratings with experience. Mortals choose Intimacies equal to their Compassion as normal.

To compensate somewhat for the vast gulf between mortals and the Exalted, mortal characters get 21 bonus points. These points may be spent on any traits except Charms, Essence and Backgrounds that are not available to mortal characters. Mortals can also spend bonus points to acquire mutation implants (see p. 47).

Solar Character Creation

This section discusses how to create a starting Solar character who has been Exalted for a year or so and who has just been released to forge his own destiny in Creation. At the end of the character-creation rules are alternative rules for more experienced Solar characters (either for Storyteller characters who serve as antagonists or for players' characters in games of a higher level of power and influence).

Step One: Character Concept

Character concept answers two questions: Who was your character before Exaltation, and what is he on the road to becoming now that he is Exalted? Any mortal in Creation can receive the blessing of the Unconquered Sun, from a lowly fisherman in the Far West to a nomadic trader in the burning South to a voluptuous concubine on the Blessed Isle itself. Before you fill in any dots, ask yourself questions about your character. Where was he born? What was his lifestyle growing up? How did he feel about the Exalted before he became one? What did he do for a living? How old was he at the time of his Exaltation?

You can change your answers to these questions as you progress through character creation, but they give you a good foundation for creating a well-rounded and interesting character.

Caste

Solar Exalted are divided into five castes, which largely determine the societal role an Exalt is expected to play. The Unconquered Sun affords his Chosen great latitude in how they fulfill their responsibilities, but however a Solar chooses to approach his caste duties, he cannot evade them altogether if he hopes to retain the favor of Heaven and the respect of his peers. Each caste has five Caste Abilities associated with it. Each caste also has a unique anima power that Solars of that caste can use. Finally, Solars of a particular caste gain four free dots in Abilities due to specialized caste training (discussed more fully under Abilities). The five Solar castes are as follows:

Dawn: The Dawns are the generals and warriors of the Unconquered Sun. The Caste Abilities associated with the Dawn Caste are Archery, Martial Arts, Melee, Thrown and War. The Dawn anima power allows the Solar to become awesome and terrifying for the duration of the scene. The mechanics of this power are described in **Exalted**, p. 92.

Zenith: The Zeniths are the prophets, mystics and priest-kings of the Solar Deliberative. The Caste Abilities associated with the Zenith Caste are Integrity, Performance, Presence, Resistance and Survival. The Zenith anima power allows the Lawgiver to render dead bodies to dust and better combat creatures of darkness. The mechanics of this power are described in **Exalted**, pp. 93–94.

Twilight: The Twilights are the sorcerers, savants and engineers who have produced the awesome magitech wonders

that fuel the glories of the First Age. The Caste Abilities associated with the Twilight Caste are Craft, Investigation, Lore, Medicine and Occult. The Twilight anima power protects the Exalt with a shield of force. The mechanics of this power are described in **Exalted**, pp. 95–96.

Night: The night belongs to the spies and assassins who walk in dark places to protect the people from harm. The Caste Abilities associated with the Night Caste are Athletics, Awareness, Dodge, Larceny and Stealth. The Night anima power allows the Exalt to move with great stealth and to suppress his anima so that it doesn't glow brightly and give away his position. The mechanics of this power are described in **Exalted**, p. 98.

Eclipse: The Eclipses are the businessmen, diplomats and naval tacticians of the Realm who oversee its ever-stretching borders and who use diplomacy and guile to keep the dreaded Fair Folk at bay. The Caste Abilities associated with the Eclipse Caste are Bureaucracy, Linguistics, Ride, Sail and Socialize. The Eclipse anima power allows them to sanctify oaths that are backed by the power of Heaven itself. Also, Solars of this Caste are beneficiaries of millennia of diplomatic treaties and can freely enter Yu-Shan, Malfeas or the Wyld itself without fear of assault as long as their business is official. Finally, Eclipse Caste Solars, alone of all the Exalted, can learn the Charms of non-Solars. The mechanics of these powers are described in **Exalted**, p. 100.

Motivation

Motivation simply means this: "What is your character's goal in life?" When circumstances conspire to make the character either act in furtherance of or contravene his Motivation, it has implications for how the character regains Willpower and how he responds to certain social attacks. The implications of Motivation are more fully described in **Exalted**, pp. 88–89 and 172–173. Solar Motivations tend to be epic goals that, if fulfilled, will affect the lives of a large number of people: the conquest of a great kingdom, large-scale changes in all of Creation, a fundamental shift in the social paradigm of the human race.

Step Two: Attributes

A Solar Exalt gets eight dots to distribute among his primary Attributes, six dots to distribute among his secondary Attributes and four dots to distribute among his tertiary Attributes.

Step Three: Abilities

A Solar Exalt gets eight free dots in Abilities by virtue of Celestial Training—one dot in Bureaucracy, Presence or Socialize; Lore 2; Occult 2; Ride or Sail 1; and two dots allocated among Archery, Martial Arts, Melee or Thrown. Members of each Solar Caste also receive specialized training in areas considered appropriate to their societal role. Some of these Abilities are Caste Abilities, but others are not. Collectively, these are called Caste Training Abilities. Each Caste gains free dots in those Training Abilities *in addition to* the dots gained from the Celestial Training Abilities.

Dawn Training Abilities: two dots in Archery, Martial Arts, Melee or Thrown; one dot in Ride or Sail; War 1

Zenith Training Abilities: Bureaucracy 1, Performance 2, Presence 1

Twilight Training Abilities: Craft 1, Lore 1, Medicine 1, Occult 1

Night Training Abilities: two dots in Investigation or Larceny; one dot in Archery, Martial Arts, Melee or Thrown; Stealth 1

Eclipse Training Abilities: Integrity 1; Linguistics 1; one dot in Ride or Sail; one dot in Bureaucracy, Performance, Presence or Socialize

After noting all the free dots your character gets through training, pick her five Favored Abilities (which cannot be Caste Abilities). Divide 10 dots among your Caste and Favored Abilities. You must have at least one dot in every Favored Ability. Once that's done, allocate the other 18 Ability dots as you wish. You cannot raise an Ability above 3 without spending bonus points.

Step Four: Advantages

Advantages include a variety of traits that are not ranked and (usually) do not form dice pools. Rather, they consist of traits with static values such as Backgrounds, magical powers or Virtues.

Backgrounds

Backgrounds measure intangible traits that a character possesses and can use to her advantage, such as material wealth, social status, personal possessions or other such qualities. Some Backgrounds limit which Exalted types can possess them.

Solar Exalted begin with 20 points in Backgrounds. Also, all Solars begin with one free dot in the Cult Background and one free dot in the Manse Background (representing a manse somewhere in Meru, most likely a one-dot Air or Earth manse unless the player assigns more dots to improve the quality of this manse). A comprehensive list of Background traits, along with a description of each, begins on page 30.

Charms

Each Solar begins with 15 Charms. At least five of them must be associated with either Caste or Favored Abilities.

Virtues

Your character gets five dots to divide among the four Virtues. No Virtue rating can go above 4 without spending bonus points. Choose a Virtue that is rated at 3 or higher as your character's primary Virtue, then choose an appropriate Virtue Flaw. Virtues are explained more fully in **Exalted**, pp. 102–103, while Virtue Flaws for Solar Exalted are found on pages 103–105 of **Exalted**.

Step Five: Finishing Touches

All Solar Exalts begin with a permanent Essence rating of 3. The character's Willpower is the sum of his two

highest Virtues. You can raise your character's Willpower with bonus points, but you cannot raise it above 8 unless at least two Virtues are rated 4 or higher.

A Solar Exalt's Personal Essence pool is equal to ([Essence x 3] + Willpower). His Peripheral Essence is equal to ([Essence x 7] + Willpower + [the sum of the character's Virtues]). A Solar begins with seven health levels (-0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incapacited) and can purchase more through the Solar version of the Ox-Body Technique Charm (see **Exalted**, p. 208).

A character begins with a number of Intimacies equal to his starting Compassion. Intimacies are more fully explained in **Exalted**, pp. 90 and 172–174.

Alternative Solar Character Creation

The default character-creation rules for Solar Exalted assume that the character has Exalted fairly recently, that she has only recently finished her specialized training regimen and that she has only just assumed her role as a member of the Solar Deliberative. A Storyteller character created under those rules would count as a three-dot ally (per the Allies Background). The rules outlined here describe how to create more powerful Solars, whether to serve as more powerful antagonists or allies or for use in a series designed for elder characters.

Character creation for these more powerful Solars uses all the rules for standard character creation except as noted under each character's description.

The Established Solar (Allies •••• or Mentor •••)

The Established Solar has one or two centuries of experience in dealing with the intricate, cutthroat politics of the Deliberative and the practical realities of life outside Meru. She has probably acquired at least one significant principality for herself unless she has chosen to concentrate on direct service to the Deliberative (whether politically or in the military) to the exclusion of any personal agenda.

Attributes: The Established Solar begins with nine dots to allocate among her primary Attributes, seven for her secondary Attributes and six for her tertiary Attributes.

Abilities: After noting all Training Abilities, the Established Solar gets an additional 15 dots to divide among her Caste and Favored Abilities (with at least one dot in each Favored Ability), plus an additional 30 dots to spend as she wishes. The Established Solar also gets three free specialty dots to allocate as she wishes. Remember, you can never associate more than three specialty dots with a single Ability. The most dots you can have in any Ability is five or an amount equal to the character's Essence (whichever is higher).

Backgrounds: The Established Solar gets 30 dots to spend on Backgrounds. No Background can be raised above 4 without spending bonus points. An Established Solar can purchase six-dot Legendary Backgrounds with bonus points if she first raises her permanent Essence to 5.

Charms: The Established Solar gets 35 Charms, at least 12 of which must come from Caste or Favored Abilities.

Virtues: The Established Solar gets five dots to divide among her Virtues, which can be raised to 5 at this stage without spending bonus points.

Essence: The Established Solar begins with Essence 4.

Bonus Points: The Established Solar has 35 bonus points to spend.

The Influential Solar (Allies ••••• or Mentor ••••)

The Influential Solar is between 800 and 1,500 years old. A mover and shaker in the Deliberative and master of at least a moderately-sized dominion, he is respected by the majority of his peers, although even he must still tread cautiously against the hoary ancients who truly dominate Solar society.

Attributes: The Influential Solar begins with 12 dots to allocate among his primary Attributes, 10 to spend on his secondary Attributes and eight to spend on his tertiary Attributes.

Abilities: After noting all Training Abilities, the Influential Solar gets 25 dots to divide among his Caste and Favored Abilities (with at least one dot in each Favored Ability), plus 35 more dots to spend as he wishes. The Influential Solar also gets six free specialty dots to allocate as he wishes. Remember, you can never associate more than three specialty dots with a single Ability. The most dots you can have in any Ability is an amount equal to the character's Essence.

Backgrounds: The Influential Solar gets 40 dots to spend on Backgrounds. No Background can be raised above 5 without spending bonus points. An Influential Solar can purchase six-dot Legendary Backgrounds with bonus points.

Charms: The Influential Solar gets 85 Charms, at least 25 of which must come from Caste or Favored Abilities.

Virtues: The Influential Solar gets five dots to divide among her Virtues, which can be raised to 5 at this stage without spending bonus points.

Essence: The Influential Solar begins with Essence 6.

Bonus Points: The Influential Solar has 50 bonus points to spend.

The Legendary Solar (Allies ••••• • or Mentor •••••)

The Legendary Solar is well over 1,500 years old. The Legendary Solars are figures of living myth—beings of immense power who could potentially destroy much of Creation if they were of a mind to do so. Queen Merela is such an entity, as is the Hierophant and most of his circle. Having such beings as allies is as much a curse as a blessing, as such a relationship invariably draws the younger Solar into Creation-shaking events. There is a reason that the phrase "May you gain the attention of important people" is considered a curse.

Attributes: The Legendary Solar begins with 15 dots to allocate among her primary Attributes, 12 to spend on her secondary Attributes and 10 to spend on her tertiary Attributes.

Abilities: After noting all Training Abilities, the Legendary Solar gets an additional 35 dots to divide among his Caste and Favored Abilities (with at least one dot in each Favored Ability), then 55 more dots to spend as he wishes. The Legendary Solar also gets 10 free specialty dots to allocate as he wishes. Remember, you can never associate more than three specialty dots with a single Ability. The most dots you can have in any Ability is equal to the character's Essence.

Backgrounds: The Legendary Solar gets 50 dots to spend on Backgrounds. A Legendary Solar can purchase six-dot Legendary Backgrounds without the need for bonus points.

Charms: The Legendary Solar gets 155 Charms, at least 75 of which must come from Caste or Favored Abilities.

Virtues: The Legendary Solar gets five dots to divide among her Virtues, which can be raised to 5 at this stage without spending bonus points.

Essence: The Legendary Solar begins with Essence 7.

Bonus Points: The Legendary Solar has 75 bonus points to spend.

Lunar Character Creation

This section discusses how to create a starting Lunar character who has been Exalted for a year or so and has just been released to find her own path to stewardship. At the end of the character-creation rules are alternative rules for more experienced Lunar characters (either for Storyteller characters who serve as antagonists or for players' characters in games of a higher level of power and influence).

Step One: Character Concept

Character concept for Lunar Exalted means exactly what it did for Solar Exalted: Who was your character before Exaltation, and what is she on the road to becoming now that she is Exalted? There are also some additional questions for a Lunar Exalt, mainly pertaining to her animal side, such as what her spirit shape and her Tell are.

First Age Lunars vs. Lunars in the Age of Sorrows

In the First Age, there is no such thing as a "Casteless Lunar." Initially, all Lunars are technically casteless, with their caste mark shifting with the lunar cycle. Eventually, over the course of several months, the caste "settles" on the one most appropriate to the Exalt's personality and sensibilities. Lunars need do nothing to "fix" their castes, they do not wear moonsilver tattoos (except perhaps as decoration), and they do not have the total immunity to Shaping effects that target their physical forms as they have in the Second Age. When confronted by the prospect of Wyld mutation or other comparable Shaping effects, Lunars add two dice to all rolls to resist. Despite Second Age propaganda to the contrary, Lunars in the Era of Dreams cannot practice Sidereal Martial Arts.

Caste

Like Solars, Lunar Exalted are divided into five castes that largely determine what societal role an Exalt is expected to play. The distinctions between the Lunar castes are somewhat blurred compared to the sharper divisions that separate the Solar castes. For example, while Full Moon Lunars are the preeminent warriors of the Lunar Exalted, it is the Half Moons who are the leading tacticians.

Lunars do not have Caste Abilities. Instead, each of the five Lunar Castes is associated with three Attributes. Like all Exalted, however, each Lunar caste has a unique anima power. Finally, although Lunars do not have Caste Abilities per se, members of each particular caste do gain four free

dots in certain Abilities due to specialized caste training (discussed more fully under Abilities). The five Lunar castes are as follows:

Full Moon: The Full Moons are the warriors of Luna—not generals or soldiers as the Dawn Caste Solars are, but savage berserkers who epitomize Luna's strength and directness. The Caste Attributes for Full Moons are Strength, Dexterity and Stamina. The anima of a Full Moon allows her to spend five motes to double her speed and leaping distances for a scene and also to double her Strength for the purpose of feats of strength. This effect stacks with other increases, but only by adding a factor equal to the original value, not by continuing to multiply by two. That is, a Lunar who increases her running speed twice moves at three times her normal speed, not four. This power activates automatically when the Full Moon has spent 11+ motes of Peripheral Essence.

Waxing Moon: The Waxing Moons are the priests and courtiers of Luna, elegant wordsmiths and fiery orators who represent the Moon's power over the emotions. The Caste Attributes for the Waxing Moons are Charisma, Manipulation and Appearance. A Waxing Moon can channel 10 motes of Essence through his anima. Doing so causes it to glow with a silvery light and illuminate an area with a radius of (Essence x 5) yards in all directions. While this power is in effect, the Waxing Moon gains additional lethal and bashing soak equal to his Essence against all attacks from creatures of the Wyld. In addition, he can add his Essence to the minimum number of dice rolled for post-soak damage against creatures of the Wyld. This effect comes into play automatically when the Waxing Moon has spent 11+ motes of Peripheral Essence. For purposes of this effect, "creatures of the Wyld" includes Fair Folk, Fae-Blooded and any being with more than five points of Wyld mutations.

Half Moon: The Half Moons are the judges of Luna, ruthless strategists who advised the Dawn Caste Solars on military tactics and the Zenith Caste Solars on legal policy with equal aplomb. The Caste Attributes for the Half Moons are Charisma, Perception and Intelligence. The Half Moon anima power costs five motes and allows her to add dice equal to her permanent Essence to Join Battle, Join Debate and Join War rolls, and to all rolls to detect unexpected attacks for the remainder of the scene. This power activates automatically when the Half Moon has spent 11+ motes of Peripheral Essence.

Waning Moon: The Waning Moons are sometimes referred to as the rogues of Luna—brash, impudent and cunning tricksters who defy conformity and convention. The Caste Attributes for the Waning Moons are Dexterity, Manipulation and Wits. A Waning Moon's anima power allows him to spend 10 motes to craft an illusion that makes him appear to be one other person he knows (without the need for stealing that form through the Lunar ritual hunt). The illusion affects all senses, and while protected by it, the Waning Moon can add an amount equal to his Essence to any social action to successfully pose as the person he impersonates or to appear generally trustworthy. Alternatively, this power can be used to bathe the Waning Moon in an array of ever-shifting shadow and silver light that makes him difficult to see clearly. Doing so adds an amount equal to his Essence to the difficulty of any attempts to identify him by sight (assuming the investigator did not see him before this power was activated). If a Waning Moon who is hiding behind an illusion activates his anima banner at any level, it automatically pierces the illusion and the anima power defaults to its obfuscation function. Also, if the Lunar spend 11+ motes of Peripheral Essence, that aspect of the power automatically activates.

No Moon: The No Moons are the thinkers of Luna—scholars and sorcerers who walk alongside the Twilight Solars on the strange roads they travel. The Caste Attributes for the No Moons are Perception, Intelligence and Wits. A No Moon can draw upon the darkness that falls on the nights of the new moon. She must spend at least one mote of Essence and can spend up to twice her permanent Essence in motes. For the remainder of the scene, she will be surrounded by an inky black penumbra that inflicts a -1 external penalty on all attackers who cannot see through darkness. Additionally, the cost of Charms that explicitly require an Occult roll, as well as the cost of any spells cast, are reduced by a number of motes equal to what the No Moon spent to activate her anima (to a minimum of half the Charm or spell's normal cost). Whenever the No Moon spends 11+ motes of Peripheral Essence, this power activates at full strength (i.e., as if she had spent twice her permanent Essence in motes).

Spirit Shape and the Tell

Each Chosen of the Moon gains two additional characteristics upon Lunar Exaltation. The first is a spirit shape, which is a second natural shape in addition to the Lunar's normal human shape. Generally, the spirit shape is that of an animal to whom the Lunar has a totemic connection. In addition, each Lunar has a singular characteristic known as a Tell, which is a mark present in all her forms for those with the wit to see it. The spirit shape and the Tell are explained more fully in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Lunars**, pp. 98 and 127–130.

Motivation

Motivations for Lunar characters work pretty much as they do for Solar characters except in their scope. While the Unconquered Sun desires children with epic Motivations who wish to change the world, Luna pays more attention to the protective instinct. The Motivations of her Exalts tend to focus on protecting something important, be it a small village or an entire continent.

Step Two: Attributes

A Lunar Exalt gets eight dots to distribute among her primary Attributes, six dots to distribute among her secondary Attributes and four dots to distribute among her tertiary Attributes. Additionally, note which Attributes are Caste Attributes

(as noted under the descriptions of the five Lunar castes) and pick a fourth Attribute as a Favored Attribute. You get two extra dots to place in either Caste or Favored Attributes. No Attribute can be raised above 5 for a starting character.

Step Three: Abilities

A Lunar Exalt gets eight free dots in Abilities by virtue of Celestial Training—one dot in Bureaucracy, Presence or Socialize; Lore 2; Occult 2; one dot in Ride or Sail; and two dots allocated among Archery, Martial Arts, Melee or Thrown. Members of each Lunar caste also receive specialized training in areas considered appropriate to their societal role. Collectively, these are called Caste Training Abilities. Each caste gains free dots in those Abilities *in addition to* the dots gained from the Celestial Training Abilities. You cannot raise an Ability above 3 without spending bonus points.

Full Moon Training Abilities: one dot in either Archery, Martial Arts, Melee or Thrown; Resistance 1; Survival 1; War 1

Waxing Moon Training Abilities: Performance 1, Presence 1, Socialize 1, Survival 1

Half Moon Training Abilities: Investigation 1, Presence 1, Survival 1, War 1

Waning Moon Training Abilities: Larceny 2, Stealth 1, Survival 1

No Moon Training Abilities: Craft 1, Lore 1, Occult 1, Survival 1

After noting all the free dots your character gets through training, pick three Favored Abilities, one of which must be Survival. Divide five dots among your Favored Abilities. You must have at least one dot in every Favored Ability. Once that's done, you get 20 more Ability dots to allocate as you wish.

Step Four: Advantages

Advantages function for Lunars as they do for Solars except that Lunars have access to some Backgrounds (such as Heart's Blood and Solar Bond) that are not available to other Exalted.

Backgrounds

Lunar Exalted begin with 15 dots in Backgrounds. Also, all Lunars gain one free dot in the Cult Background. A comprehensive list of Background traits, along with a description of each, begins on page 30.

Charms

Each starting Lunar chooses a total of 12 Charms and Knacks. (Knacks are special Charm-like powers that help to facilitate Lunar shapeshifting.) The Lunar's 12 choices must consist of at least four Charms and at least one Knack. At least four of his total Charms must be associated with the Lunar's Caste or Favored Attributes.

Virtues

Lunars get five points to divide among the four Virtues. No Virtue rating can go above 4 without spending bonus points. Choose a Virtue that is rated at 3 or higher as your character's primary Virtue and then choose an appropriate Virtue Flaw. Virtues are explained more fully in **Exalted**, pp. 102–103, while Virtue Flaws for Lunar Exalted are found in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Lunars**, pp. 121–123.

Step Five: Finishing Touches

All Lunar Exalts begin with a permanent Essence rating of 3. The character's Willpower is the sum of his two highest Virtues. You can raise your character's Willpower with bonus points, but you cannot raise it above 8 unless at least two Virtues are rated 4 or higher.

A Lunar Exalt's Personal Essence pool is equal to (Essence + [Willpower x 2]). His Peripheral Essence is equal to ([Essence x 4] + [Willpower x 2] + [the character's highest Virtue x 4]). A Lunar begins with seven health levels (-0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incapacited) and can purchase more through the Lunar version of the Ox-Body Technique Charm (see **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Lunars**, p. 156). Unlike the Ox-Body Techniques practiced by other Exalted, the Lunar version also confers two additional Dying health levels every time it is taken (see **Exalted**, pp. 150–151).

A character begins with a number of Intimacies equal to his starting Compassion. Intimacies are more fully explained in **Exalted**, pp. 90 and 172–174.

Alternative Lunar Character Creation

The default Lunar character counts as a two-point ally (per the Allies Background). More powerful Lunars are constructed according to the rules outlined here.

The Established Lunar (Allies ••• or Mentor ••)

The Established Lunar is a few centuries old. She is typically a powerful warrior, regardless of caste, and she might be able to draw upon the resources of a powerful Solar mate (depending on whether she possesses the "Solar Bond" Background.

Attributes: The Established Lunar begins with 11 dots to allocate among her primary Attributes, nine to spend on her secondary Attributes and eight to spend on her tertiary Attributes. She also gains two additional dots to allocate among Caste and Favored Attributes.

Abilities: After noting all Training Abilities, the Established Lunar gets an additional 13 dots to divide among his Favored Abilities (with at least one dot in each Favored Ability), then 25 more dots to spend as he wishes. The most dots you can have in any Ability is five or an amount equal to the character's Essence (whichever is higher).

Backgrounds: The Established Lunar gets 20 dots to spend on Backgrounds. No Background can be raised above 4 without the need for bonus points. An Established Lunar can purchase six-dot Legendary Backgrounds with bonus points if she first raises her permanent Essence to 5.

Charms: The Established Lunar gets a combination of any 30 Charms and Knacks. She must have at least five of each, and at least 10 Charms must come from Caste or Favored Attributes.

Virtues: The Established Lunar gets five dots to divide among her Virtues, which can be raised to 4 at this stage without spending bonus points.

Essence: The Established Lunar begins with Essence 4.

Bonus Points: The Established Lunar has 35 bonus points to spend.

The Influential Lunar (Allies •••• or Mentor •••)

The Influential Lunar is between 800 and 1,500 years old. A powerful servant of Luna, he has probably either outlived a Solar mate or learned how to cope with a Legendary one. He might have a principality of his own or rule one on behalf of his mate.

Attributes: The Influential Lunar begins with 13 dots to allocate among his primary Attributes, 11 to spend on his secondary Attributes and nine to spend on his tertiary Attributes. He gains two additional dots to allocate among Caste and Favored Attributes.

Abilities: After noting all Training Abilities, the Influential Lunar gets an additional 20 dots to divide among his Favored Abilities (with at least one dot in each Favored Ability), then 30 more dots to spend as he wishes. The Influential Lunar also gets six free specialty dots to allocate as he wishes. Remember, you can never associate more than three specialty dots with a single Ability. The most dots you can have in any Ability is equal to the character's Essence.

Backgrounds: The Influential Lunar gets 30 dots to spend on Backgrounds. No Background can be raised above 5 without spending bonus points. An Influential Lunar can purchase six-dot Legendary Backgrounds only with bonus points and Storyteller approval.

Charms: The Influential Lunar gets 74 Charms or Knacks, at least eight of each, and 22 of which must come from Caste or Favored Attributes.

Virtues: The Influential Lunar gets five dots to divide among her Virtues, which can be raised to 5 at this stage without spending bonus points.

Essence: The Influential Lunar begins with Essence 6.

Bonus Points: The Influential Lunar has 50 bonus points to spend.

The Legendary Lunar (Allies ••••• or Mentor ••••)

The Legendary Lunar is between 1,000 and 2,000 years old. Few Lunars live to this remarkable age, as the inherent brutality of Lunar existence results in most of them dying in battle. The philosopher Ingosh Silverclaws is a Legendary Lunar.

Attributes: The Legendary Lunar begins with 16 dots to allocate among her primary Attributes, 13 to spend on her secondary Attributes and 10 to spend on her tertiary Attributes, as well as an additional two dots to divide up among Caste and Favored Attributes.

Abilities: After noting all Training Abilities, the Legendary Lunar gets 30 dots to divide among his Favored Abilities (with at least one dot in each Favored Ability), then 45 more dots to spend as he wishes. The Legendary Lunar also gets 10 free specialty dots to allocate as he wishes. Remember, you can never associate more than three specialty dots with a single Ability. The most dots you can have in any Ability is equal to the character's Essence.

Backgrounds: The Legendary Lunar gets 40 dots to spend on Backgrounds. A Legendary Lunar can purchase six-dot Legendary Backgrounds with bonus points.

Charms: The Legendary Lunar gets 140 Charms and Knacks, with at least 20 of each. At least 35 Charms must come from Caste or Favored Attributes.

Virtues: The Legendary Lunar gets five dots to divide among her Virtues, which can be raised to 5 at this stage without spending bonus points.

Essence: The Legendary Lunar begins with Essence 7.

Bonus Points: The Legendary Lunar has 75 bonus points to spend.

Sidereal Character Creation

This section discusses how to create a starting Sidereal character who has been Exalted for a year or so and who has just been given an assignment by the Bureau of Destiny. At the end of the character-creation rules are alternative rules for more experienced Sidereal characters (either for Storyteller characters who serve as antagonists or for players' characters in games of a higher level of power and influence).

Step One: Character Concept

Character concept for Sidereal Exalted is no different than it is for other Exalted: Who was your character before Exaltation, and what is she on the road to becoming now that she is Exalted? The chief difference is that those chosen for Sidereal Exaltation seem to be more thoughtful, intellectual and (according to some) manipulative than the average members of the other Exalted groups. Of course, many Solars and Lunars are more intellectual and manipulative than even the most cunning Sidereal. The difference is that Sidereal Exaltation seems to seek out those who actively prefer to manipulate events from behind the scenes and who are willing to forsake personal glory for the fulfillment of their goals.

Caste

Like Solars and Lunars, Sidereal Exalted are divided into five castes that largely determine the societal role the Exalt is expected to play. The Sidereal caste divisions are more… metaphysical than those of the other Exalted types. That is, each caste is associated with one of the Five Maidens instead of all five being the product of a single Incarna's unified

First Age Sidereals vs. Sidereals of the Age of Sorrows

During the Usurpation, the Sidereals essentially "broke" one of the 25 heavenly constellations in an effort to conceal their complicity from divine censure. The constellation in question was called the Mask, and while the stars that formed it continued to shine, the constellation itself was irreparably damaged for purposes of Sidereal astrology.

The Breaking of the Mask had two effects. First, Sidereals were no longer able to use the Mask for "ascending and descending destiny" effects in Sidereal astrology that targeted themselves (see **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Sidereals**, p. 203). Second, all Sidereals were supernaturally occluded by an effect called the "Arcane Fate," which prevented most beings from recognizing and remembering them. This Arcane Fate makes it difficult for modern Sidereals to form lasting relationships with anyone other than fellow Sidereals and gods.

In the First Age, the Mask has not yet been broken. Accordingly, Sidereals do not suffer the effects of Arcane Fate. They can also grant themselves the benefits of the Mask's ascending and descending destiny effects.

design. Also, because Sidereal Exalted are charged with the maintenance of fate and destiny, their castes are designed to personify arcane astrological principles more than concrete job assignments.

Like the Solars, each Sidereal caste is associated with five Caste Abilities. Because of the Sidereals' fate-based connection to these Abilities, however, the Abilities are typically referred to as Auspicious Abilities instead. Mechanically, there is no distinction between Castes Abilities and Auspicious Abilities. Like all Exalted, each Sidereal caste has a unique anima power. Finally, members of each caste gain four free dots in certain Abilities due to specialized caste training (discussed more fully under Abilities). The five Sidereal castes are as follows:

Journeys: The Chosen of Journeys regulate fate as it pertains to travel, movement and distance. The Auspicious Abilities for the Chosen of Journeys are Resistance, Ride, Sail, Survival and Thrown. As an anima power, the Sidereal can spend 10 motes to activate the Lesser Sign of Mercury. This effect triples running Move and Dash actions for him and any of his allies (including their mounts) within (Essence x 10) yards. The mechanics for this power are more fully explained in **Exalted**, p. 334, and in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Sidereals**, p. 109.

Serenity: The Chosen of Serenity regulate fate as it pertains to life, love, recreation and procreation. The Auspicious Abilities for the Chosen of Serenity are Craft, Dodge, Linguistics, Performance and Socialize. As an anima power, the Sidereal can spend 10 motes to activate the Lesser Sign of Venus. This effect adds a number of automatic successes equal to her Essence to all Performance rolls made by her or her allies within (Essence x 10) yards. The mechanics for this power are more fully explained in **Exalted**, p. 334, and in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Sidereals**, p. 111.

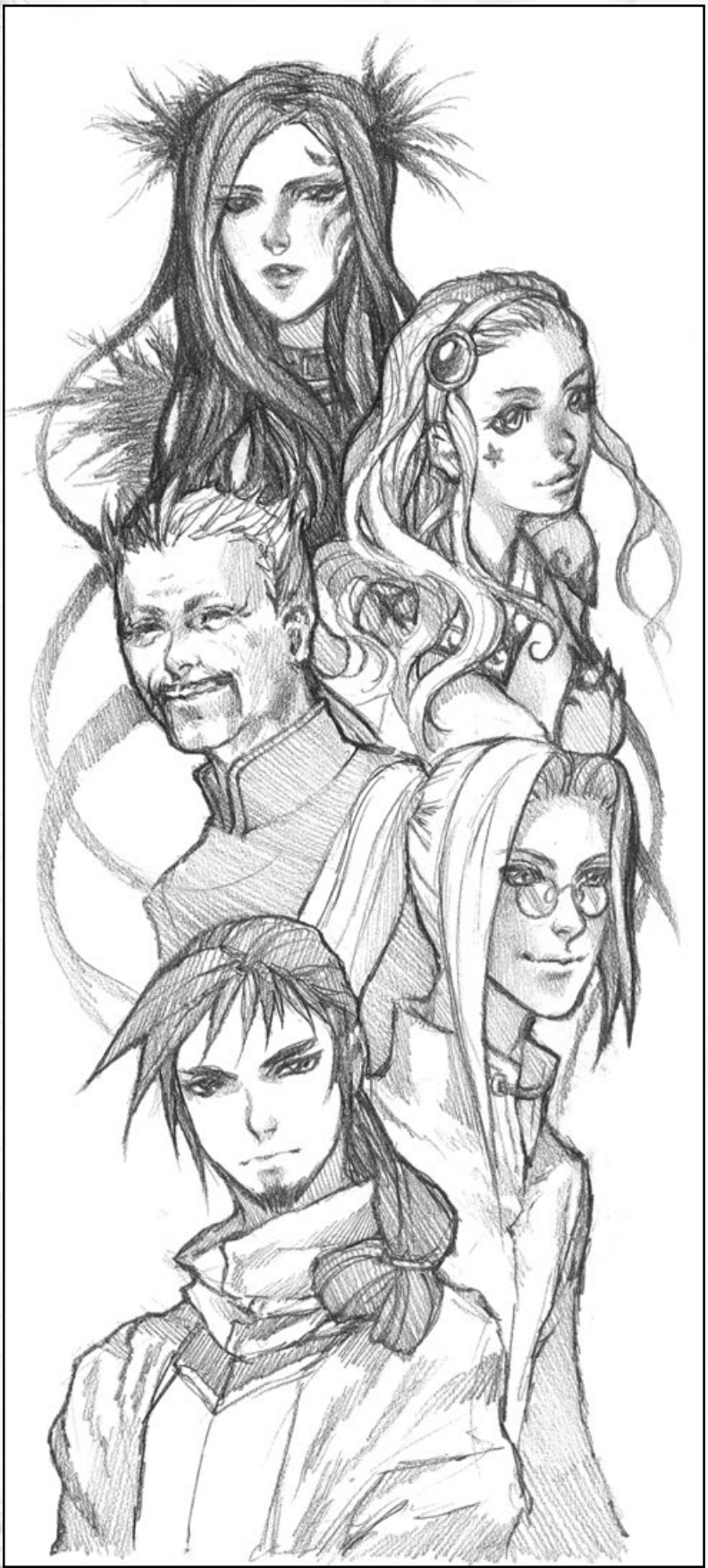
Battles: The Chosen of Battles manipulate fate in the context of combat and direct conflict. The Auspicious Abilities for the Chosen of Battles are Archery, Athletics, Melee, Presence and War. By spending 10 motes, the Sidereal can invoke the Lesser Sign of Mars as an anima power. This effect reduces damage rolled in Step 10 of attack resolution by one health level (to a minimum of zero). This effect protects both the Sidereal and her allies within (Essence x 10) yards. The mechanics for this power are more fully explained in **Exalted**, p. 334, and in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Sidereals**, p. 113.

Secrets: The Chosen of Secrets shape fate where it applies to concealed actions and hidden knowledge. They also see to it that some things that are best forgotten remain so… or become so. The Auspicious Abilities for the Chosen of Secrets are Investigation, Larceny, Lore, Occult and Stealth. As an anima power, the Sidereal can spend 10 motes to invoke the Lesser Sign of Jupiter. Doing so renders him and his allies within (Essence x 10) yards immune to mind reading and unnatural mental influence from opponents with an Essence less than his own. Against opponents with an equal or higher Essence, those protected by the Lesser Sign of Jupiter add an amount equal to the Sidereal's Essence to the MDV of any affected person. The mechanics for this power are more fully explained in **Exalted**, p. 334, and in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Sidereals**, p. 115.

Endings: The Chosen of Endings shape fate as it applies to change, death and completion. The Auspicious Abilities for the Chosen of Endings are Awareness, Bureaucracy, Integrity, Martial Arts and Medicine. By spending 10 motes, the Sidereal can invoke the Lesser Sign of Saturn as an anima power. Doing so increases the damage inflicted by her and her allies within (her Essence x 10) yards by one level, applied after rolling in Step 10 of attack resolution, as long as an attack inflicts at least one level of damage before considering the effect. The mechanics for this power are more fully explained in **Exalted**, pp. 334–335, and in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Sidereals**, p. 117.

Motivation

Motivations for Sidereal characters work pretty much as they do for Solar characters except in their scope. While the Unconquered Sun desires children with epic Motivations who wish to change the world, the Maidens are subtle and prefer efficiency over grandiosity. The Motivations of Sidereal Exalts



tend to focus on perfecting the efficiency of organizations, kingdoms or nations. While a Sidereal might *desire* to conquer a kingdom, the practical effect of his status as a heavenly bureaucrat makes it unlikely he can maintain such authority. Therefore, his Motivation is more likely to make him seek to put *someone else* on a throne—someone he can rule from behind the scenes without taking too much time away from his heavenly duties.

Step Two: Attributes

A Sidereal Exalt gets eight dots to distribute among her primary Attributes, six dots to distribute among her secondary Attributes and four dots to distribute among her tertiary Attributes.

Step Three: Abilities

A Sidereal Exalt gets eight free Ability dots by virtue of Celestial Training—one dot in Bureaucracy, Presence or Socialize; Lore 2; Occult 2; Ride or Sail 1; and two dots allocated among Archery, Martial Arts, Melee or Thrown. Like Solars and Lunars, members of each Sidereal Caste also receive Caste Training Abilities. Each caste gains free dots in those Training Abilities *in addition to* the dots gained from the Celestial Training Abilities. You cannot raise an Ability above 3 without spending bonus points.

Journeys Training Abilities: one dot in Athletics or Survival; Linguistics 1; Martial Arts 1; one dot in Ride or Sail

Serenity Training Abilities: one dot in Craft, Medicine or Performance; Martial Arts 1; Presence 1; Socialize 1

Battles Training Abilities: two dots in Archery, Melee or Martial Arts; War 2

Secrets Training Abilities: one dot in Awareness or Investigation; one dot in Larceny or Socialize; Martial Arts 1; Stealth 1

Endings Training Abilities: one dot in Awareness or Dodge; Martial Arts 2; Stealth 1

After noting all the free dots your character gets through training, pick four Favored Abilities. Divide 10 dots among your Auspicious and Favored Abilities. You must have at least one dot in every Favored Ability. Once that's done, you get 15 more Ability dots to allocate as you wish.

Step Four: Advantages

Advantages function for Sidereals as they do for Solars.

Backgrounds

Sidereal Exalted begin with 15 dots in Backgrounds. Also, all Sidereal Exalted begin with one free dot in the Cult Background and one free dot in the Backing (Bureau of Destiny) Background. A comprehensive list of Background traits, along with a description of each, begins on page 30.

Charms and Astrological Colleges

Each Sidereal begins with 12 Charms. At least five Charms must be associated with the Sidereal's Auspicious or Favored Abilities. A Sidereal may begin with up to three Sidereal Martial Arts Charms as long as his traits meet the Charms' prerequisites.

Sidereal Exalted also have the ability to directly manipulate the Loom of Fate and, by extension, the future of Creation. Ordering such changes in the Loom of Fate requires a specialized formal language and a technical understanding of how the Loom functions. This power is referred to as Sidereal astrology. A Sidereal's training in Sidereal astrology is represented by dot ratings in colleges. There are 25 colleges, five for each of the Five Maidens, each of which correlates to one of the 25 heavenly constellations and to one of the 25 Abilities. You have seven dots to spread among all the colleges, and at least four of those dots must be placed within the five colleges associated with the character's Maiden. The mechanics of Sidereal astrology are described in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Sidereals**, pp. 189–213.

Virtues

Sidereals get five points to divide among the four Virtues. No Virtue rating can go above 4 without spending bonus points. Choose a Virtue that is rated at 3 or higher as your character's primary Virtue and choose an appropriate Flawed Fate. Virtues are explained more fully in **Exalted**, pp. 102–103, while Flawed Fates for Sidereal Exalted are found in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Sidereals**, pp. 118–119.

Step Five: Finishing Touches

All Sidereal Exalts begin with a permanent Essence rating of 3. The character's Willpower is the sum of her two highest Virtues. You can raise your character's Willpower with bonus points, but you cannot raise it above 8 unless at least two Virtues are rated 4 or higher.

A Sidereal Exalt's Personal Essence pool is equal to ([Essence x 2] + Willpower). His Peripheral Essence is equal to ([Essence x 6] + Willpower + [the sum of all Virtues]). A Sidereal begins with seven health levels (-0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incapacited) and can purchase more through the Sidereal version of the Ox-Body Technique Charm (see **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Sidereals**, p. 127), each level of which confers an additional -0 health level.

A character begins with a number of Intimacies equal to his starting Compassion. Intimacies are more fully explained in **Exalted**, pp. 90 and 172–174.

Alternative Sidereal Character Creation

The default Sidereal character is a two-dot ally (per the Allies Background). More powerful Sidereals are constructed according to the rules outlined here.

The Established Sidereal (Allies ••• or Mentor •••)

The Established Sidereal is four or five centuries old. Ironically, she tends to get far more respect from other Solars and Lunars (especially in her age group) than she does from her Sidereal peers. Sidereal culture is even more staid and averse to change than the Deliberative is.

Attributes: The Established Sidereal begins with nine dots to allocate among her primary Attributes, seven to spend on her secondary Attributes and six to spend on her tertiary Attributes.

Abilities: After noting all Training Abilities, the Established Sidereal gets an additional 13 dots to divide among his Auspicious and Favored Abilities (with at least one dot in each Favored Ability), then 25 more dots to spend as he wishes. The most dots you can have in any Ability is five or an amount equal to the character's Essence (whichever is higher).

Backgrounds: The Established Sidereal gets 20 dots to spend on Backgrounds. No Background can be raised above 4 without spending bonus points. An Established Sidereal can purchase six-dot Backgrounds with bonus points if he first raises his permanent Essence to 5.

Charms: The Established Sidereal gets 30 Charms. At least 10 Charms must come from Auspicious or Favored Abilities.

Colleges: The Established Sidereal has 14 dots to spread among all the colleges, and at least seven of those dots must be placed within the five colleges associated with the character's Maiden.

Virtues: The Established Sidereal gets five dots to divide among her Virtues, which can be raised to 4 at this stage without spending bonus points.

Essence: The Established Sidereal begins with Essence 4.

Bonus Points: The Established Sidereal has 35 bonus points to spend.

The Influential Sidereal (Allies •••• or Mentor ••••)

The Influential Sidereal is between 800 and 1,500 years old. She has probably acquired a position of some importance within the Bureau of Destiny and has mentored perhaps dozens of younger Celestial Exalts through the difficult transition into their new status.

Attributes: The Influential Sidereal begins with 12 dots to allocate among his primary Attributes, 10 to spend on his secondary Attributes and eight to spend on his tertiary Attributes.

Abilities: After noting all Training Abilities, the Influential Sidereal gets an additional 20 dots to divide among

his Auspicious and Favored Abilities (with at least one dot in each Favored Ability), then 30 more dots to spend as he wishes. The Influential Sidereal also gets six free specialty dots to allocate as he wishes. Remember, you can never associate more than three specialty dots with a single Ability. The most dots you can have in any Ability is equal to the character's Essence.

Backgrounds: The Influential Sidereal gets 30 dots to spend on Backgrounds. No Background can be raised above 5 without spending bonus points. An Influential Sidereal can purchase six-dot Legendary Backgrounds only with bonus points and Storyteller approval.

Charms: The Influential Sidereal gets 74 Charms, at least 22 of which must come from Auspicious or Favored Abilities.

Colleges: The Established Sidereal has 22 dots to spread among all the colleges, and at least 10 of those dots must be placed within the five colleges associated with the character's Maiden.

Virtues: The Influential Sidereal gets five dots to divide among her Virtues, which can be raised to 5 at this stage without spending bonus points.

Essence: The Influential Sidereal begins with Essence 6.

Bonus Points: The Influential Sidereal has 50 bonus points to spend.

The Legendary Sidereal (Allies ••••• or Mentor •••••)

The Legendary Sidereal is probably well over 2,000 years old. While she probably keeps a low profile in Creation, her every utterance in Yu-Shan sends ripples through the Celestial Hierarchy. She probably serves as one of the highest-ranking officials of the Bureau of Destiny. The ranking Sidereals in each of the five Bureau divisions are all Legendary figures.

Attributes: The Legendary Sidereal begins with 15 dots to allocate among her primary Attributes, 12 to spend on her secondary Attributes and nine to spend on her tertiary Attributes.

Abilities: After noting all Training Abilities, the Legendary Sidereal gets an additional 30 dots to divide among his Auspicious and Favored Abilities (with at least one dot in each Favored Ability), then 45 more dots to spend as he wishes. The Legendary Sidereal also gets 10 free specialty dots to allocate as he wishes. Remember, you can never associate more than three specialty dots with a single Ability. The most dots you can have in any Ability is equal to the character's Essence.

Backgrounds: The Legendary Sidereal gets 40 dots to spend on Backgrounds. A Legendary Sidereal can purchase six-dot Legendary Backgrounds with bonus points.

Charms: The Legendary Sidereal gets 140 Charms, at least 35 of which must come from Auspicious or Favored Abilities.

Colleges: The Legendary Sidereal has 35 dots to spread among all the colleges, and at least 15 of those dots must be placed within the five colleges associated with the character's Maiden.

Virtues: The Legendary Sidereal gets five dots to divide among her Virtues, which can be raised to 5 at this stage without spending bonus points.

Essence: The Legendary Sidereal begins with Essence 7.

Bonus Points: The Legendary Sidereal has 75 bonus points to spend.

Dragon-Blooded Character Creation

This section discusses how to create a starting Dragon-Blooded character. In this case, "starting" is something of a misnomer, as a Dragon-Blooded created via these rules represents a character who has been Exalted for five to 10 years and has established himself as an individual of some importance. Such a character is one who can realistically fight alongside a young Celestial Exalt, though his Celestial peers will almost certainly outstrip him over time. At the end of the character creation rules are alternative rules for more-experienced Dragon-Blooded characters (either for Storyteller characters who serve as antagonists or for players' characters in games that are premised on a higher level of power and influence). Preceding that are rules for younger, freshly Exalted Dragon-Blooded more consistent with starting characters from **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**.

Step One: Character Concept

The character concept phase for Dragon-Blooded differs somewhat from that of Celestial Exalted. The basic questions remain the same, but a Dragon-Blooded character starts her journey in a much different place than the typical Celestial Exalt does. While most Celestial Exalts are born into the lower classes, almost all Terrestrial Exalts are born into prestigious Dragon-Blooded families. Even the non-Exalted members of these families lead lives of wealth and privilege unimaginable to the vast majority of Creation's citizenry. Nonetheless, all the wealth and power of all of Creation's Dragon-Blooded pales in comparison to that of the Celestial Exalts to whom all Dragon-Blooded owe their fealty.

In short, Dragon-Blooded do not begin their lives as rice farmers or simple fishermen. Instead, they are the scions of businesspeople, military officers and savants of the highest order. While Celestial Exaltation generally manifests in adulthood—roughly between the ages of 18 and 40—Terrestrial Exaltation almost always occurs in one's teens. Nearly all Dragon-Blooded children receive an excellent education specifically designed to prepare them for Exaltation. After Exaltation, these young recipients are removed to special training academies to prepare them for lives of service to the Celestial Exalted.

Elemental Aspect

Unlike Solar Exalts, Dragon-Blooded do not have castes. Instead, each Dragon-Blood is aligned with one of five elemental dragons and consequently carries the "aspect" of one of the five elements. Each of these aspects is associated with five Abilities in much the same way Solar castes are. Dragon-Blooded Charms are also keyed to Aspect Abilities just as Solar Charms are keyed to Caste Abilities. Like all Exalted, each elemental aspect also carries a unique anima power. Because Dragon-Blooded do not have castes, they do not receive specialized training to fulfill any particular societal role. The five elemental aspects are as follows:

Air: The Aspect Abilities for Air Aspects are Linguistics, Lore, Occult, Stealth and Thrown. The Dragon-Blood can spend five motes to attune his anima to the winds. For the duration of a scene, he is surrounded by a swirling vortex of air that functions as a weakened version of the Stormwind Rider spell. The Dragon-Blood may triple his leaping distance, and he takes no damage from falls. Finally, he may add an amount equal to his Essence to his DV versus Thrown and Archery attacks. This power automatically activates if the Air Aspect has spent 11+ motes of Peripheral Essence. The mechanics for this power are more fully explained in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**, p. 113.

Earth: The Aspect Abilities for Earth Aspects are Awareness, Craft, Integrity, Resistance and War. For five motes, the Earth Aspect can acquire the durability of stone. For the rest of the scene, she may soak all lethal damage with her full Stamina, and she can add a number of dice equal to her Essence to all rolls to resist grappling attacks or avoid knockback. Finally, she adds her Essence to her Stamina for all purposes, but only while her feet rest on earth or stone. This power automatically activates if the Earth Aspect has spent 11+ motes of Peripheral Essence. The mechanics for this power are more fully explained in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**, p. 115.

Fire: The Aspect Abilities for Fire Aspects are Athletics, Dodge, Melee, Presence and Socialize. By spending five motes, the Fire Aspect can surround himself with a corona of fire that inflicts no damage on himself or his possessions but adds his Essence in lethal damage dice to bare-handed or grappling attacks made by him. Anyone who attacks the Fire Aspect barehanded or by grappling suffers an equal amount of fire damage. This power automatically activates if the Fire Aspect has spent 11+ motes of Peripheral Essence. The mechanics for this power are more fully explained in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**, p. 117.

Water: The Aspect Abilities for Water Aspects are Bureaucracy, Investigation, Larceny, Martial Arts and Sail. The Water Aspect can spend five motes to possess complete water freedom for a day. She can breathe water as easily as air, she is incapable of drowning, and she ignores any and all environmental penalties for being underwater. She can also walk across water as if it were solid land. This power

automatically activates if the Water Aspect has spent 11+ motes of Peripheral Essence. The mechanics for this power are more fully explained in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**, p. 119.

Wood: The Aspect Abilities for Wood Aspects are Archery, Medicine, Performance, Ride and Survival. By spending five motes, the Wood Aspect can render herself completely immune to plant-based poisons for a scene. Furthermore, while this power is active, the Wood Aspect's touch is poisonous, with the poison inflicted carrying the following traits: Damage (Essence)/Minute; Toxicity (Essence); Tolerance (None); Penalty –[(Essence)/2], rounded up. The Wood Aspect also adds her Essence to her DV versus Archery attacks and any attacks that rely on wooden weapons. This power automatically activates if the Wood Aspect has spent 11+ motes of Peripheral Essence. The mechanics for this power are more fully explained in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**, p. 121.

Motivation

Like all Exalted, Dragon-Blooded tend to have grand and epic Motivations. In the First Age, however, the Motivations of most Dragon-Blooded are not nearly so grand as those of their successors in the Age of Sorrows. The Usurpation is still centuries away, and while a handful of Dragon-Blooded might rebel against the worst excesses of the Solar Deliberative, the idea of completely overthrowing the Solars and seizing control of Creation still seems like an absurd fantasy to any Dragon-Blooded treasonous enough to consider it. Consequently, most Dragon-Blooded Motivations tend to involve advancing their own agendas or those of their Gentes, usually through exceptional or exemplary service to their Solar patrons. Military service is the most common means for young Dragon-Bloods to achieve that goal, but sizeable numbers of the Dragon-Blooded seek wealth, power, status within the Deliberative bureaucracy, sorcerous knowledge or more esoteric goals.

Step Two: Attributes

A Terrestrial Exalt gets eight dots to distribute among her primary Attributes, six dots to distribute among her secondary Attributes and four dots to distribute among her tertiary Attributes.

Step Three: Abilities

A Terrestrial Exalt gets 12 free Abilities by virtue of Terrestrial Training—Archery 1, Bureaucracy 1, Lore 2, Martial Arts 1, Melee 1, Occult 1, Performance 1, Presence 1, Ride 1, Socialize 1 and War 1. The Dragon-Blooded do not get the same degree of specialized caste-related training that Celestial Exalts receive, since aspects simply do not define societal roles. After noting the five Abilities associated with your character's aspect, pick three Favored Abilities. Divide 10 dots among Aspect and Favored Abilities, making sure that you must have at least one dot in every Favored Ability. Once that's done, you get 20 more Ability dots to allocate as you wish. You cannot raise an Ability above 3 at any point without spending bonus points.

Defense-From-Anathema Method?

The Charm known in the Second Age as Defense-From-Anathema Method (see **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**, p. 146) carries a very different name and purpose in the First Age. Its intention will be perverted in the Usurpation, its name altered, and existing records of its original meaning and function systematically erased by the Immaculate Order and the Sidereal Exalted. For now, however, it is considered among the most honorable of Charms; knowing it is a mark of great station, for it means that a Terrestrial is allowed to frequently consort directly with the Celestial Exalted themselves.

The following Charm replaces Defense-From-Anathema Method. Where its mechanics conflict, this Charm takes precedent. To be clear, this *is* the Charm that Dragon-Blooded of the Age of Sorrows will use to hunt their onetime leaders—only its name changes.

Dragon's Parable Defense

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Integrity 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-OK
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Chaos-Warding Prana

Gaia ordered that the Dragon-Blooded should be the perfect army for the Celestial Host. Dragon's Parable Defense gets power from this unique relationship between Terrestrial and Celestial Exalted. The Terrestrial's Essence surges in response to the presence of the greater Chosen, bolstering his stolidity to make him immovable and inexorable: the perfect soldier. When using this Charm within (Essence x 100) yards of a Celestial Exalt, add the Terrestrial's Essence to his DVs and MDVs. The bonuses garnered from Dragon's Parable Defense apply to all attacks the character experiences, regardless of their source, so long as the Charm remains in effect.

Step Four: Advantages

Except as noted, Advantages function for Dragon-Blooded as they do for Solars.

Backgrounds

Terrestrial Exalted begin with 15 points in Backgrounds, as starting Dragon-Blooded characters are somewhat more experienced in Exaltation than their Celestial peers are. A comprehensive list of Background traits along with a description of each begins on page 30.

Charms

Each Dragon-Blood begins with 10 Charms. At least five Charms must be associated with either Aspect or Favored Abilities.

Virtues

Dragon-Bloods get five dots to divide among the four Virtues. No Virtue rating can go above 4 without spending bonus points. Choose a Virtue rated at 3 or higher as your character's primary Virtue. Dragon-Blooded do not have Virtue Flaws in the same sense as Celestial Exalted. Although Dragon-Blooded do accrue Limit, they do not have Virtue Flaws and do not suffer from Limit Break Conditions. Instead, when a Dragon-Blood suffers Limit Break, he acts in a certain manner determined by the interaction of his Virtues and his aspect. See **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**, p. 123, for more information on this topic.

Step Five: Finishing Touches

All Terrestrial Exalts begin with a permanent Essence rating of 3. The character's Willpower is the sum of his two highest Virtues. You can raise your character's Willpower with bonus points, but you cannot raise it above 8 unless at least two Virtues are rated 4 or higher.

A Dragon-Blood's Personal Essence pool is equal to (Essence + Willpower + any gained from the Breeding Background). His Peripheral Essence is equal to ([Essence x 4] + Willpower + [the sum of the two highest Virtues] + any gained from the Breeding Background). A Dragon-Blood begins with seven health levels (-0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incapacited) and can purchase more through the Terrestrial version of the Ox-Body Technique Charm (see **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**, p. 146).

A character begins with a number of Intimacies equal to his starting Compassion. Intimacies are more fully explained in **Exalted**, pp. 90 and 172–174.

Alternative Dragon-Blooded Character Creation

The default Dragon-Blooded character represents an "Established Dragon-Blood" rather than a young one and is considered a one-dot ally (per the Allies Background). More powerful Dragon-Blooded are constructed according to the rules outlined here, as are "young" Dragon-Blooded who are less than a decade past Exaltation and who are just starting their careers.

The Young Dragon-Blood

The Young Dragon-Blood is a child compared to most Exalts. Rarely more than a decade past Exaltation, he might have a little more experience in some areas than recently Exalted Celestials, but they far outstrip him in raw power. Most Young Dragon-Blooded act as support personnel to Celestial Exalted, serving as secretaries, shield-bearers, apprentice sorcerers and even favored concubines. Dragon-Blooded characters assigned to Celestial Exalts pursuant to the Henchman Background are often Young Dragon-Blooded.

Attributes: The Young Dragon-Blood begins with only seven dots to allocate among his primary Attributes, six to spend on his secondary Attributes and four to spend on his tertiary Attributes.

Abilities: After noting all Training Abilities, the Young Dragon-Blood gets an additional 10 dots to divide among his Aspect and Favored Abilities (with at least one dot in each Favored Ability), plus 15 more dots to spend as he wishes. At this point, you cannot raise Abilities above 3 without spending bonus points.

Backgrounds: The Young Dragon-Blood gets 10 points to spend on Backgrounds. No Background can be raised above 4 without spending bonus points.

Charms: The Young Dragon-Blood gets seven Charms. At least four must come from Aspect or Favored Abilities.

Virtues: The Young Dragon-Blood gets five dots to divide among her Virtues, which can be raised to 4 at this stage without spending bonus points.

Essence: The Young Dragon-Blood begins with Essence 2.

Bonus Points: The Young Dragon-Blood has 15 bonus points to spend.

The Influential Dragon-Blood (Allies •• or Mentor •)

The Influential Dragon-Blood is over 150 years old. While still very young by Celestial standards, she is around middle-aged for a Terrestrial Exalt and a canny operator with an abundance of field experience, despite the limitations of her Exaltation. The younger Gentes heads hold this level of experience, as do the ranking Dragon-Blooded officers.

Attributes: The Influential Dragon-Blood begins with nine dots to allocate among her primary Attributes, seven to spend on her secondary Attributes and five to spend on her tertiary Attributes.

Abilities: After noting all Training Abilities, the Influential Dragon-Blood gets 15 dots to divide among her Aspect and Favored Abilities (with at least one dot in each Favored Ability), then 26 more dots to spend as she wishes. The Influential Dragon-Blooded also gets five free dots in Specialties. The most dots you can have in any Ability is five or an amount equal to the character's Essence (whichever is higher).

Backgrounds: The Influential Dragon-Blood gets 18 points to spend on Backgrounds. No Background can be raised above 4 without spending bonus points. Regardless of Essence rating, a Dragon-Blooded can *never* possess a six-dot Legendary Background, except Breeding. With Allies 5 or Mentor 5 (and Storyteller permission), however, she might be able to borrow such a benefit for a time.

Charms: The Influential Dragon-Blood gets 24 Charms. At least 12 must come from Aspect or Favored Abilities.

Virtues: The Influential Dragon-Blood gets five points to divide among her Virtues, which can be raised to 4 at this stage without spending bonus points.

Essence: The Influential Dragon-Blood begins with Essence 4.

Bonus Points: The Influential Dragon-Blood has 35 bonus points to spend.

The Legendary Dragon-Blood (Allies •••• or Mentor •••)

The Legendary Dragon-Blood stands at the pinnacle of Terrestrial society. She is aged by the standards of her kind and probably relies on anagathic drugs to maintain herself. The more powerful and highly regarded Gentes leaders are Legendary figures, as are the personal assistants of some Legendary Celestial Exalts and the few Dragon-Blooded military personnel who have risen to the rank of colonel or commodore. No Dragon-Blood has risen to the rank of general or full admiral in centuries.

Attributes: The Legendary Dragon-Blood begins with 14 dots to allocate among his primary Attributes, 12 to spend on his secondary Attributes and 10 to spend on his tertiary Attributes.

Abilities: After noting all Training Abilities, the Legendary Dragon-Blood gets an additional 25 dots to divide among his Aspect and Favored Abilities (with at least one dot in each Favored Ability), then 30 more dots to spend as he wishes. The Legendary Dragon-Blood also gets nine free dots in specialties. Remember that you cannot associate more than three dots of specialties to the same Ability. The most dots you can have in any Ability is five or an amount equal to the character's Essence (whichever is higher).

Backgrounds: The Legendary Dragon-Blood gets 30 points to spend on Backgrounds. No Background can be raised above 4 without spending bonus points. Dragon-Blooded generally are forbidden to possess six-dot Legendary Backgrounds no matter how legendary their reputations are, with the exception of Legendary Breeding.

Charms: The Legendary Dragon-Blood gets 70 Charms, at least 20 of which must come from Aspect or Favored Abilities.

Virtues: The Legendary Dragon-Blood gets five dots to divide among her Virtues, which can be raised to five at this stage without spending bonus points.

Essence: The Legendary Dragon-Blood begins with Essence 5. A Dragon-Blood cannot raise her permanent Essence above 7 except through extraordinary means, such as rare hearthstones, strict dietary regimens, et cetera.

Bonus Points: The Legendary Dragon-Blood has 50 bonus points to spend.

New and Altered Traits

Abilities

Except as noted here, all Abilities function exactly as described in **Exalted**.

Archery

In addition to conventional bows and arrows (which, other than powerbows, are used mainly for hunting and archery contests), the Archery Ability is also the default Ability used for targeting and firing weaponry including most kinds of projected-Essence weapons such as implosion bows and Essence cannons.

Linguistics

The Linguistics Ability serves two functions. First, it provides dice for all dice actions pertaining to written communication, speech writing and poetry, as well as code-breaking and other forms of cryptography. More importantly, each dot taken in Linguistics represents fluency (and literacy) in an additional language.

Old Realm is the language most often spoken by Exalted when communicating among themselves. The language that will be called "Old Realm" in the Second Age is called the same in the First Age because it predates even that period. In the beginning, it was the only language *anyone* spoke. Even the language of the Dragon Kings evolved long after Creation was formed, as the reptilian creatures desired a unique language that was incomprehensible to their human slaves. Savants believe that Old Realm was woven into the fabric of Creation by the Primordials at the dawn of time itself. In addition to being the preferred tongue of Exalted in polite society, Old Realm remains the language spoken by spirits and demons (as the Primordials presumably encoded it into their very beings). The Fair Folk intuitively understand it as well, either upon entering Creation or when they first interact with beings from Creation in the Wyld. Old Realm also serves as the basis for the linguistic component of spells that require speech as a prerequisite to casting.

As the Solars began their conquest of the Wyld, they created new languages to assist in the functioning of the Order Conferring Trade Pattern. Each of these artificial languages represents a significant modification to Old Realm designed to conceptually reinforce reality in the areas where it is spoken. These languages include:

Earthtongue is the language associated with the Blessed Isle itself. Linguistically, it is the new language that is closest in structure and syntax to Old Realm. As it is spoken primarily by the lower classes of the Blessed Isle, it is also referred to as "Low Realm" by cultural elitists.

Flametongue is the language spoken by the people who dwell in the Threshold regions of the South. It is most notable for having an elaborate nomenclature for navigational terms calculated to assist caravans in finding their way to the next oasis across hundreds of miles of trackless desert.

Forest-tongue is the language spoken by those who dwell in the trees of the Great Eastern Forest. The East is vitally important to the medical profession, as the vast majority of medicinal plants come from that region. Accordingly, a significant portion of medical terminology used across Creation originated in Forest-tongue.

Riverspeak is the language associated with the River Province. Riverspeak has also become the most commonly used trade language in all of Creation, with many Riverspeak trading terms entering into the other languages as loan words.

Skytongue is the language associated with the Threshold areas of the North. Among Skytongue's curiosities is that the language has over 200 different words for snow and ice, an essential feature for regions where the ground remains snow covered year round.

Seatongue is the language associated with the Great Western Ocean. As with Flametongue, much of its artificial syntax is designed to aid sailors in communicating navigational concepts. Also, Seatongue is perhaps the most "religious" of the directional languages, and many of its most common idioms are interwoven with subtle prayers to local sea deities. Every "hello" or "goodbye" spoken in Seatongue subtly praises the sea and weather gods and helps to make sure that weather patterns in that turbulent region evolve in ways helpful to the Order Conferring Trade Pattern.

In addition to the directional languages, other important languages include:

- **Clawspeak:** An artificial language created by Lunar savants to make it easier for Stewards to "write" while wearing animal forms.
- **Dragontongue:** The first artificial language, created centuries ago by the Dragon Kings as a way of establishing social dominance over the humans who served as their slaves at the time. The Dragon Kings themselves call this language "High Holy Speech."
- **Rocktongue:** The language of Autochthon's strange children, the Jadeborn. It was once intensively studied by early Twilight savants, as the language's exacting vocabulary contained a number of peerlessly nuanced terms relating to manufacturing, craftsmanship and creativity, and some keystone concepts of early motonic theory were found within. It is now considered a subject unworthy of interest, as all of its secrets were long ago uncovered.
- **Pelagial:** The unique language spoken by the mysterious pelagials who dwell on the Western sea floor.

Besides those listed here, there are innumerable other tongues spoken in Creation, albeit by small and insular groups of speakers. The strange gray beings that became so skilled in artifice that the Great Maker Autochthon devoured them for their hubris left arcane works in their advanced language. Various remnants from the Primordial War may yet retain their own rare speech, and occasionally, the Wyld produces new breeds with unknown tongues. In remote areas, some of the more paranoid Solars have magically forced a unique language onto the humans who serve them and obliterated their ability to speak any other tongue. Whether they did this to facilitate some arcane magical process or simply to

make it impossible for those humans to live anywhere save under the Solars' protection is not debated openly. Some Solar linguists even speculate that it is possible to develop "programming languages" to aid in the creation of animating intelligences or, more disturbingly, help to reinforce the power of Social-keyword Charms by devising a language that overrides the listener's will.

Lore

In the First Age, virtually every human in Creation has at least one dot in Lore. The educational system enacted by the Solar Deliberative is comprehensive, and literacy is nearly universal. Any character who begins without any dots in Lore most likely represents a child who was shipwrecked on a desert island or abandoned by his parents to be raised by wolves. Even then, Exalted instructional Charms and technology would see that such a "wild child" could be inculcated with a rudimentary education (sufficient for Lore 1) within a few weeks. It is unheard of for an illiterate person to Exalt, let alone be allowed into polite Exalted society without first achieving the equivalent of Lore 2.

Occult

In the First Age, magic and science are so integrated that basic magical principles are taught to small children in public schools. Any reasonably educated person has Occult 1 or higher.

Ride

In the First Age, the Ride Ability, in addition to being used to control mounts and other beasts of burden, is also used for piloting rolls for certain types of artifact vehicles. Specifically, a character must use her Ride Ability when piloting one-person vehicles that, because of their design, handle like horses. Examples of such artifacts include swift riders, *Windblade*-class personal transports, warbirds and clockwork steeds.

Sail

In the First Age, the Sail Ability, in addition to being used to operate and maintain conventional water vehicles, is also the default Ability used for piloting large land and air vessels, which handle similarly to First Age watercraft. Examples of such artifacts include battle carriers, traveling pagodas, skysleds, and *Manta*-class transports.

Backgrounds

The following Backgrounds are available to **Exalted** characters. Some Backgrounds are limited in who can possess them. For example, only Dragon-Blooded may possess the Breeding Background (or even derive any benefit from it, since only Terrestrial Exaltation is passed through family lines).

Backgrounds are rated from 1 to 5. Celestial Exalts who possess a permanent Essence of 5 or higher can purchase Legendary Backgrounds. Essentially a sixth dot in the relevant Background, a Legendary Background provides incredible benefits far in excess of those granted by the lower levels of the Background. Possessing a Legendary Background is a twin-edged sword, though. Creation's most powerful Exalts rely upon these Legendary Backgrounds as the source of much of their authority. Such luminaries do not take kindly to young upstarts throwing around Legendary Backgrounds in a reckless or impudent manner. Tread cautiously. Neither mortal nor Dragon-Blooded characters may possess Legendary Backgrounds, except Legendary Breeding, which is only open to Terrestrials.

Some Backgrounds are interconnected. That is, to acquire a rating above a certain level, the character must also have a commensurate rating in a different but connected Background. This concept is explained more fully under each relevant Background.

Acquaintances (Sidereals Only)

As agents of the Bureau of Destiny, the Sidereal Exalted have a peerless understanding of fate and destiny as those concepts apply to everything in Creation, especially to mortals. Over the centuries, the Five-Score Fellowship has developed many innovative techniques for exploiting that understanding. For example, Sidereal astrologers realized early on that the Loom of Fate placed exacting limits on each Sidereal's ability to manipulate it via astrological effects. Specifically, it is impossible for any Sidereal Exalt to have more concurrent astrological effects in effect than he has dots of permanent Essence. Usually. By interweaving his own destiny with that of a mortal (either through the Breaking the Wild Mortal Charm or simply establishing a rapport with her), the Sidereal can subsume her fate into his own… for bookkeeping purposes, anyway. Sidereals euphemistically refer to mortals with whom they have established such a relationship as "acquaintances."

Essentially, a Sidereal's acquaintances are mortals whom the Sidereal considers friends (or at least treats as friends, if only to gain the benefits of this Background). The Sidereal must visit his acquaintances regularly and maintain genial relations with them. More importantly, the mortal cannot know that the Sidereal is an Exalt. The effect that allows Sidereals to use acquaintances essentially involves using the Loom's own properties to deceive the Loom itself. Accordingly, the effect relies on manipulation of the constellation known as the Mask, and taking advantage of this effect requires the Sidereal to actively employ deception against the person whose fate he is appropriating.

Each dot of Acquaintances represents a number of people who know the Sidereal under a cover identity and not as an Exalt. Because acquaintances perceive the Sidereal through the lens of the Mask, the Sidereal does not need to go to elaborate lengths to deceive the mortal about her identity. The player decides how her acquaintances know her character. They might think of her as the woman who tells the best stories or that merchant who always has sweets for the kids. There is no support for these front identities. An acquaintance who decides to visit "that cloth merchant"

for his daughter's wedding can't find her store, but he won't think much of it afterward.

For each dot in this Background, the Sidereal can increase by one the number of concurrent astrological effects he can maintain. There is no such thing as Legendary Acquaintances. Manipulating the Loom to that extent is beyond even elder Sidereals.

Trait	Effects:
X	None. You've made no effort to connect with any mortals. Why?
•	One person, such as a merchant or a courtesan, thinks of you as a friendly acquaintance, and then only when he sees you. +1 concurrent astrology effects.
••	A small handful of people recognize you, remember your name and think well of you when they see you. Alternatively, more people know you as no more than a friendly stranger. +2 concurrent astrology effects.
•••	A close-knit group welcomes you warmly as one of its own, though the regulars almost never miss you when you're gone. Examples include opium den regulars, inhabitants of a tiny farming village or a group of bandits. Alternatively, more people recognize and think well of you. +3 concurrent astrology effects.
••••	You've developed a close relationship with one mortal, and several mortals consider you a personal friend. Alternatively, you have up to three tight groups that happily acknowledge you among them and a spread of casual acquaintances as well. Your fronts can be the same identity in multiple places, multiple identities among the same group (in which case you choose which is "on" when you approach that group) or combinations thereof. +4 concurrent astrology effects.
•••••	Your front gives you a recognized social position among a community as large as a town, city neighborhood or group of similar size. The Connections Background for the same sort of group can enable a character to wield these acquaintances more effectively. Alternatively, you have as many as five lesser fronts. +5 concurrent astrology effects.

Allies

An ally represents a character under Storyteller control with whom a player's character has some kind of mutually beneficial relationship. They could be friends, business partners, lovers or peers in the same organization. Allies in **Dreams of the First Age** are generally more powerful than allies from **Exalted**. Since the players' characters themselves are more powerful, they have little need of help from their social and physical inferiors.

Acquaintances in the Age of Sorrows

The ability of the Sidereals to use the Mask in order to benefit materially from acquaintances will be crippled after the Usurpation. Desperate to avoid censure for its role in the overthrow of the Solar Exalted, the Bronze Faction wreaks widespread astrological damage calculated to occlude not just its role in the Usurpation but also its very existence, stretching the Mask to its breaking point—and beyond it. The Breaking of the Mask successfully makes it impossible for Sidereals to be prosecuted by any god of Yu-Shan for their role in the Usurpation. Unfortunately, it also inflicts on the Sidereals the curse of the Arcane Fate, which makes it nearly impossible for anyone to even remember who the Sidereals were, including their mortal friends and allies. Even worse, the damage to the Mask prevents the Sidereals from using many of its effects for astrological purposes. Sidereals lose the ability to use the ascending and descending destiny effects associated with the Mask on themselves, and with it, they lose the ability to trick the Loom of Fate into allowing them extra astrology effects through the Acquaintances Background.

Acquaintances are still quite useful in the Age of Sorrows, though. A Sidereal can still develop acquaintances, and such mortals will remember the Sidereal (to an extent), allowing the Sidereal to develop limited versions of the Allies and Contacts Backgrounds.

The ally relationship is typically (but not always) a peer relationship in which the two characters hold roughly equal power and status. If there is a gross power disparity among the two characters in favor of the Storyteller character, the Storyteller may declare that the relationship is unequal and that the player must purchase the Mentor Background instead. Purchasing a character as a mentor is actually cheaper than buying him as an ally, but only because the mentor is clearly in the dominant position. Allies trade favors all the time. A character must *request* a favor from his mentor, who is free to *demand* a service from her student.

The player can, however, establish an ally relationship in which he is more powerful than the other character. The traits here indicate the general power level of an ally at each dot level, but the player can opt to take a lower power ally than his dot rating would indicate. The difference between the actual rating and the ally character's traits represents some hold over the ally that gives the character greater influence over her. For example, an Influential Dragon-Blood typically represents a two-dot ally. If the player purchases an Influential Dragon-Blood ally at the four-dot level, the ally is extremely loyal to and protective of the character and is

more likely help him even when doing so puts her at personal risk. If the player purchases the same Dragon-Blood at the five-dot level, she might be hopelessly enamored of him or he might know some dark secret that allows him to blackmail the Dragon-Blood into utter obedience.

Celestial Exalted are frequently supported by entire squads of Dragon-Blooded employees, bodyguards, soldiers and lackeys. Unless one of these Dragon-Bloods is particularly powerful and has a particularly close relationship with the character, such lackeys are better described by the Henchman Background.

Trait	Effects:
X	You have no powerful allies, though you might have mortal or even inferior Dragon-Blooded servants (as represented by the Retainers Background) or soldiers under your authority (as represented by the Command or Henchman Backgrounds).
•	Your ally is a starting Dragon-Blooded character, a Dragon King, a minor terrestrial god or an extremely influential mortal.
••	Your ally is a starting Lunar or Sidereal, an Influential Dragon-Blood, an elder Dragon King, a major terrestrial god, a minor god of Yu-Shan, or a Jadeborn.
•••	Your ally is a starting Solar character, an Established Lunar or Sidereal character or an important god of Yu-Shan.
••••	Your ally is an Established Solar character, an Influential Lunar or Sidereal, a Legendary Dragon-Blood, a celestial censor or a division head in Yu-Shan.
•••••	Your ally is an Influential Solar character, a Legendary Lunar or Sidereal character or a bureau head in Yu-Shan.

Legendary Ally

This ally could potentially reshape Creation itself according to your request. Perhaps your ally is one of Creation's Legendary Solars such as Queen Merela or the Hierophant. Or perhaps you have somehow found the favor of one of Yu-Shan's most powerful deities. Any being in Creation or Yu-Shan save the Unconquered Sun or Gaia can represent a legendary ally, though only a fool calls upon a legendary ally for anything but the direst of circumstances.

Arsenal

In the First Age, the science and art of weapon manufacture has been raised to dizzying heights, with the result that magical weapons that will one day be considered priceless artifacts are sometimes given out as graduation presents to friends or even acquaintances after their commencement from a military academy. In this era, a vast infrastructure exists for the creation and maintenance of artifact weapons. As a consequence, anyone sufficiently wealthy can purchase minor magical weapons. A mortal could wield an artifact weapon, provided he can afford one, he can get the permit to carry one and he can figure out to attune one.

The last requirement is not as onerous as it sounds. In this era, many mortals have been trained to manipulate Essence in minor ways sufficient to attune a low-level magical device. Furthermore, the technology exists to dedicate a hearthstone to a magical weapon so that anyone can use it, although such dedicated hearthstones are prohibitively expensive for all but the wealthiest of Exalted. Modifying a magical device so that it will function properly in mortal hands increases the Arsenal rating of the item by one and also requires the character to dedicate a hearthstone with a rating equal to the item's adjusted rating to its operation.

The Solar Deliberative classifies magical weapons and armaments based on their power and versatility. This classification is represented mechanically by the device's Arsenal rating. It is trivially simple for any Celestial Exalt to acquire an Arsenal rating of 1 or 2, and if such a character begins without any dots in Arsenal, it is because he has simply not bothered to fill out the requisite paperwork. Technically, there is a five-day waiting period before even an Exalt can legally purchase Essence-projecting weapons, but that restriction is seldom enforced against Celestial Exalts with any degree of influence. Simpler artifact weapons such as daiklaves and powerbows can be acquired in an afternoon once an Exalt has registered the weapons with I AM.

The Arsenal Background doesn't just represent the character's ability to outfit himself with powerful weapons. It also represents his ability to outfit any troops he has as part of his Command Background (see pp. 35-36). If the character's Arsenal and Wealth ratings are each two dots higher than he needs to acquire a particular weapon and his Arsenal rating is higher than his Command rating, he can supply such weapons to his troops in sufficient numbers to add bonus dice in mass combat.

Trait	Effects:
X	None. Your troops (if you have any) must make do with mundane swords and armor… and hope that no Fair Folk show up. Personally, you have access to minor thaumaturgical talismans and alchemical potions that are unregulated by the Deliberative and that you can easily afford even without Celestial resources.
•	You possess basic magical armor and weapons, as well as more powerful thaumaturgical talismans. You can arrange for select mortal retainers to receive gunzosha armor, but you don't have clearance to field an entire gunzosha unit. Such armaments have a Wealth cost of 1 if the character is supplying the retainers himself.
••	You can acquire personal Essence-discharge weapons or magical power armor such as common warstriders or dragon armor. You can arm your

soldiers with minor thaumaturgical talismans, ashigaru armor or alchemical weapons in sufficient numbers to add a +1 bonus to the unit's Might. Such armaments have a Wealth cost of 2 if the character is supplying the unit herself.

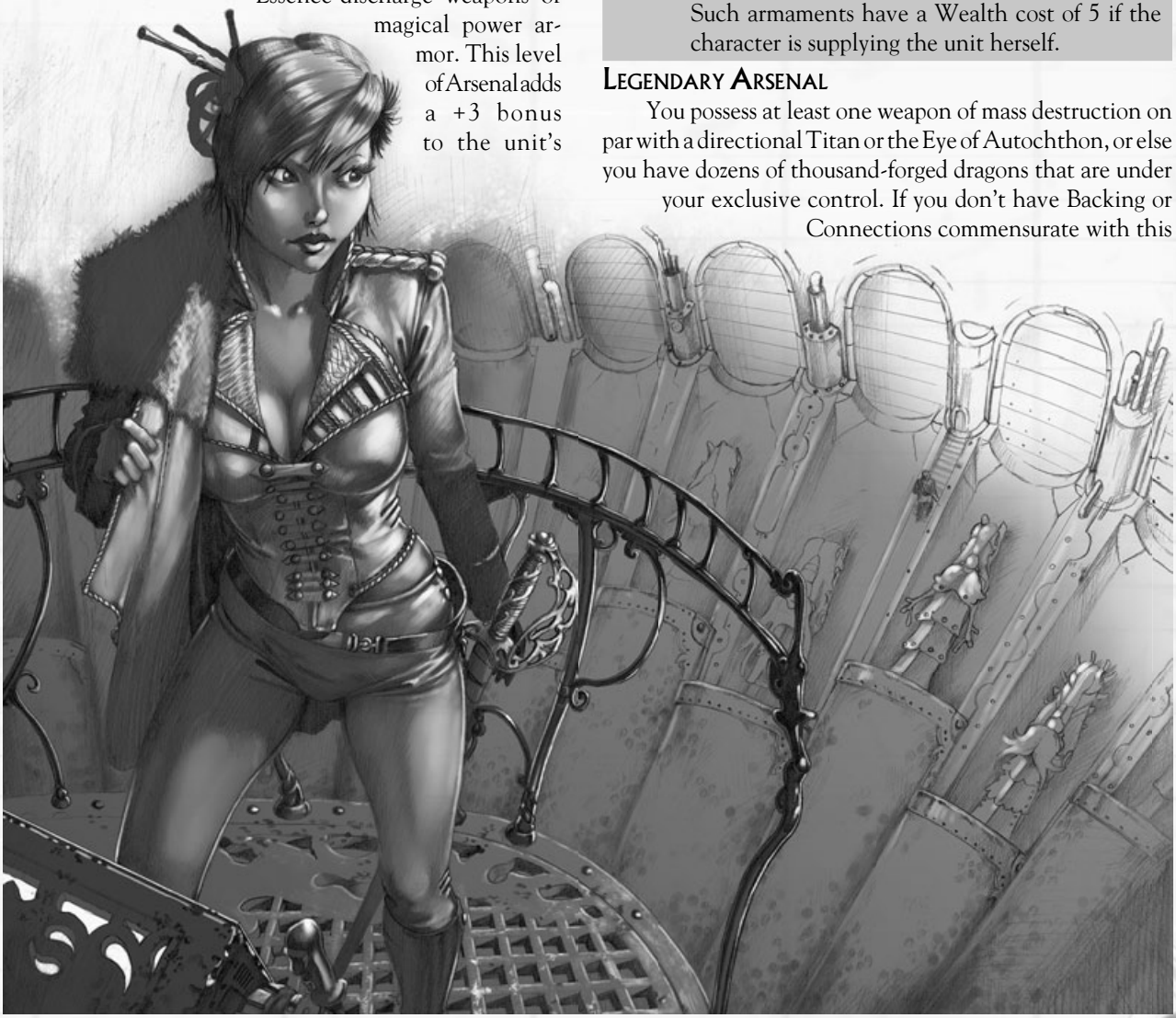
••• You can acquire magical siege weapons, field Essence-weapons or a noble warstrider. You can purchase personal flying or aquatic craft with military capabilities. You can equip your soldiers with more sophisticated thaumaturgical weapons or outfit enough soldiers with gunzosha armor to add a +2 bonus to the unit's Might. Such armaments have a Wealth cost of 3 if the character is supplying the unit herself.

•••• You can purchase troop transports (land-, air- or sea-based), as well as personal command ships comparable to a light cruiser. You can acquire intelligent automaton soldiers or bio-engineered "super-soldiers." You can equip your soldiers with Essence-discharge weapons or magical power armor. This level of Arsenal adds a +3 bonus to the unit's Might. Such armaments have a Wealth cost of 4 if the character is supplying the unit herself.

••••• You can purchase an intelligent royal warstrider for yourself. Your arsenal includes massive Essence weapons capable of decimating a city. Your personal command ship is the equivalent of a *Dawning Sun Indomitable*-class heavy battlecruiser, which is supported by multiple indomitable conquest platforms and probably at least one thousand-forged dragon. Those soldiers under your command who are not wearing power armor or warstriders are armed with heavy Essence-discharge weapons and protected by personal Essence force shields. You possess an extensive collection of unique and arcane large theater weapons, such as intelligent acids that swim toward enemy vessels in the water and eat through any parts of the ship not protected by magical materials or missiles that turn every living thing within a one-mile radius to glass. This level of Arsenal adds a +4 bonus to the unit's Might. Such armaments have a Wealth cost of 5 if the character is supplying the unit herself.

Legendary Arsenal

You possess at least one weapon of mass destruction on par with a directional Titan or the Eye of Autochthon, or else you have dozens of thousand-forged dragons that are under your exclusive control. If you don't have Backing or Connections commensurate with this



Background, you had better keep it secret or risk turning the entire Deliberative against your "rogue state." The Deliberative is probably very worried. The armaments supplied to your forces make them a match for any force in Creation or Yu-Shan, provided that you also have Legendary Backing or Wealth to pay for their upkeep. The Storyteller may also require you to possess other traits in order to properly use such an artifact (such as, for example, high levels of Willpower and Occult in order to use the Eye of Autochthon successfully). Add a +5 bonus to your unit's Might.

Artifact

The Artifact Background functions essentially as described in **Exalted**, p. 111, subject to the following conditions. First, the character must purchase each artifact separately. Second, artifacts represented by this Background generally represent devices acquired in the past that are beyond the character's normal power to acquire. Accordingly, a character can have an artifact that exceeds her Arsenal, Backing, Panoply, Resources or Wealth ratings, although possession of such artifacts might be illegal depending on the character's circumstances.

Because most magical items produced in the First Age are the result of assembly-line factory-cathedrals, all but the most powerful artifacts can actually be purchased with money (i.e., the Resources Background used by mortals and Dragon-Blooded, or the Wealth Background used by Celestial Exalts). There is little need for a player to purchase an artifact with Background or bonus points if the character has ratings in other Backgrounds that would allow her to simply buy the artifact outright. For example, a standard daiklave is a two-dot artifact if purchased with this Background. If the character already has Arsenal 2 and either Backing 3 or Wealth 3, however, he could potentially buy as many daiklaves as he wanted.

Yet even in the First Age, all but the most basic items—and especially, those common items that the Solars mass produce for the express benefit of mortals—are still prohibitively expensive for anyone other than Celestial Exalted. Furthermore, the more powerful or potentially dangerous an item is, the more likely it is that the Deliberative will take steps to keep it out of mortal hands through legislative means. For example, it is illegal for private mortal citizens to own Essence-based weapons without a special permit from the Deliberative or from a Celestial employer who is willing to be held liable for the mortal's actions. It is similarly illegal for private citizens to own a beast of resplendent liquid without special authorization, since the Deliberative does not care to see someone loose massive quantities of potentially addictive drugs among Creation's mortals.

Mechanically, the public availability of an artifact of a particular rating is governed by the interplay of four Backgrounds: Arsenal, Backing, Panoply and Wealth, each of which is discussed more fully under its individual description in this chapter. Arsenal governs the character's legal authority to possess magical armaments and weapons, while Panoply governs her ability to acquire powerful magical items that do not have military or combat applications.

Wealth permits the character to purchase any item that she can afford and that she is authorized to own. Mortal and Dragon-Blooded characters substitute (their Resources ratings – 2) for Wealth. The general rule is that if the character has a Resources or Wealth rating one dot higher than necessary to purchase an item, he can purchase an infinite number of such items without reducing his Background rating. For most purchases, that rule still applies. As a practical matter, though, the Solar Deliberative tracks all purchases of magical weapons and takes a dim view of stockpiling. An Exalt is legally limited to the amount and type of ordinance determined by his Arsenal rating as it applies to mass combat. The effects of *illegally* exceeding that limitation are left to the Storyteller's imagination. Simple artifact weapons and armor that do not have Essence-manipulating technologies built into them are very easy to produce in this era. Accordingly, reduce the Artifact cost for artifact melee weapons, martial arts weapons, powerbows and armor by one (to a minimum of one dot).

The character's Panoply rating represents the effective limit on how many and what kind of artifacts without military application she can legally purchase. In this case, the limitation does not, for the most part, reflect the Deliberative's involvement. (As far as that body is concerned, an Exalt can buy as many flying chariots as she wants.) Instead, the limitation arises simply due to the practical limits of magical construction. While simple devices such as I AM glyph readers are mass-produced and therefore omnipresent, more sophisticated wonders are the product of gifted Exalted artisans. Or, if you prefer, *artistes*. It's not enough to be able to afford a set of silk armor. You also have to be able to persuade Iatrixian the Weaver—the Solar who invented the process for giving silk robes the properties of steel—that you'll look sufficiently fabulous in the indestructible-yet-fashionable clothing she designs.

The Artifact Background can be taken multiple times, with each time representing a separate artifact. A character can buy as many individual artifacts as she wants, though, as long as her Arsenal or Panoply rating (depending on the type of device) is high enough to allow her access to that device—and as long as her Wealth rating is at least one dot higher than the item's Artifact rating. If her Wealth rating is merely equal to that of the item, purchasing it will reduce her permanent Wealth rating by one.

Finally, Backing can also take the place of Wealth, allowing the character to "borrow" items from the organization to which he belongs for limited periods of time. A list of common (and some uncommon) magical items can be found on pages 40-41, along with the Backgrounds required to purchase them.

Characters cannot begin with Legendary Artifacts (i.e., artifacts with an N/A rating) absent Storyteller approval.

Characters *might* be able to acquire such artifacts with the Legendary Arsenal or Panoply ratings, but only after meeting the other requirements of those Legendary Backgrounds. If such an artifact comes into the character's hands without him having the authority to possess it, however, it has done so only through the will of the Storyteller.

Backing

Your character is an important member of an organization, such as the Deliberative, the Solar Fleet, the Bureau of Destiny (or some other heavenly bureau) or the Silurian Academy. The higher her rating is, the more important she is to this organization's function and the more freedom she has to direct the organization's resources. With Storyteller approval, this Background can be taken multiple times to reflect authority in different organizations.

Trait	Effects:
X	You do not involve yourself with any other Exalted body except for a pro forma membership in the Deliberative (for Celestial Exalted) or your familial bonds (if you are Dragon-Blooded). Even in those bodies, you have cultivated no base of support. Why is that?
•	You are a lower officer or minor functionary in the organization.
••	Your character is a mid-level officer, the head of a small department or some similarly situated position.
•••	Your character is moderately powerful and has many people working under her.
••••	Your character is extremely powerful and typically is only a few rungs below those who control the organization.
•••••	Your character is one of the most important figures in the organization. While her authority is not absolute, she can influence the activities of the entire group in important ways.

Legendary Backing

You have the complete support of an organization whose reach is potentially Creation-wide. Furthermore, while you officially "work for" the organization, you pretty much run it. The only people who can balk you in your decisions regarding the organization's activities are other characters who also have Legendary Backing. While several Solar luminaries have Legendary Backing from the Solar Deliberative and routinely block each others plans, other Solars rule slightly less important bodies with an iron fist. Grand Admiral Kendik Arkadi has this level of authority over the Solar Fleet, although he is cautious not to overplay his hand lest his rivals in the Deliberative unite against him and attempt to remove him from his position.

Breeding (Dragon-Blooded Only)

Among Dragon-Blooded Gentes, Breeding represents the purity of an Exalt's bloodline and the strength of the power of the Elemental Dragons that flows through it. Breeding confers two benefits. First, as a Dragon-Blood's Breeding increases, so does his ability to harmonize Essence. Accordingly, each dot of Breeding grants him extra motes of Essence to add to his Personal and Peripheral Essence pools. Second (and more important for the more status-conscious Dragon-Blooded), the higher a Terrestrial Exalt's Breeding is, the more likely it is that his children will Exalt as well. Although the Deliberative has made it legal for Dragon-Blooded to mate with non-Exalts, most Dragon-Blooded families continue to carefully arrange their intermarriages to make sure that their ancestral power is preserved.

Trait	Effects:
X	Your family tree is unremarkable.
•	+1 to Personal Essence pool; +2 to Peripheral Essence pool.
••	+2 to Personal Essence pool; +3 to Peripheral Essence pool.
•••	+3 to Personal Essence pool; +5 to Peripheral Essence pool.
••••	+4 to Personal Essence pool; +7 to Peripheral Essence pool; -1 mote from the cost to activate your anima banner; +1 on the roll to see if your child Exalts.
•••••	+5 to Personal Essence pool; +9 to Peripheral Essence pool; -2 to the cost of activating your anima banner; +2 on the roll to see if a child of yours Exalts.

Legendary Breeding

You are one of the tiny handful of Terrestrials whose blood is completely unsullied. None of your ancestors ever saw fit to dally with mortals, demons, petty gods, or any other beings beyond the mandate of the Elemental Dragons. Your blood is as pure as that of the first generation of Dragon-Blooded, and were you to have children with another character possessing Legendary Breeding, their Terrestrial Exaltation would be guaranteed. You add +6 motes to your Personal Essence pool, +11 motes to your Peripheral Essence pool, and reduce the cost of activating your anima banner by three. Unfortunately, your anima markings are so clearly apparent that the difficulty of any attempt to pass as a mortal increases by two. Unlike other Legendary Backgrounds, Legendary Breeding may be taken before Essence 5—but only with Storyteller approval.

Command

Because of the character's wealth, family backing or actual military rank, he has command of one or more military units. Such units might be divisions within the Legions of the Deliberative or the Solar Fleet, a Celestial Exalt's private

army, a city guard or a mercenary company. Most major Dragon-Blooded Gentes also place significant military forces at the disposal of their Celestial patrons, forces usually under the direct command of Dragon-Blooded officers when not at their patrons' beck and call.

This Background grants only command authority over the troops in question. The default assumption is that the troops actually *belong* to someone else, such as the Deliberative or some independent body. A character who wishes to build an army for her own private purposes must also see to it that the unit is fully funded and, in the case of larger units, has its own officer corps. These requirements must be met through additional Backgrounds, which may include Allies, Connections, Retainers, Wealth and more at the Storyteller's discretion. Arsenal is also required if the force uses magical weapons of any sort, although a force without such equipment is at a serious disadvantage against any force that has them. (See p. 32 for a description of how the Arsenal Background interacts with the Command Background.)

Generally, the size and character of the unit under the character's command is determined by its Magnitude + Might (see **Exalted**, pp. 159–161). The unit's Magnitude governs how many individual soldiers serve in it. The unit's Might governs what percentage of the unit consists of Exalted and other magical beings. Any bonuses added to Might through superior equipment are represented by the character's Arsenal Background. It is considered a waste of resources to put an Exalt in charge of a unit with a Magnitude of only 1, but young Dragon-Blooded are sometimes assigned to serve as squad leaders as part of their training.

Trait	Effects:
X	None. Either you haven't yet earned the right to lead troops or you have no interest in doing so.
•	The sum of your unit's Magnitude and Might is 2 (plus any bonus gained from Arsenal). If you are personally funding this unit, you must also have Wealth •• (for equipment and payroll).
••	The sum of your unit's Magnitude and Might is 4 (plus any bonus gained from Arsenal). If you are personally funding this unit, you must also have Allies •• (for junior officers), Connections • (for gathering intelligence and establishing military contracts), Retainers • (for specialist officers) and Wealth ••• (for equipment and payroll).
•••	The sum of your unit's Magnitude and Might is 6 (plus any bonus gained from Arsenal). If you are personally funding this unit, you must also have Allies •••, Connections •••, Retainers ••• and Wealth ••••.
••••	The sum of your unit's Magnitude and Might is 8 (plus any bonus gained from Arsenal). If you are

personally funding this unit, you must also have Allies ••••, Connections ••••, Retainers •••• and Wealth ••••.

••••• The sum of your unit's Magnitude and Might is 10 (plus any bonus gained from Arsenal). If you are personally funding this unit, you must also have Allies •••••, Arsenal •••, Connections •••, Retainers ••••• and Wealth •••••.

Legendary Command

You are one of Creation's most prominent and highly ranked generals. Alternatively, your dominion includes an enormous military force loyal exclusively to you. You probably command 10,000 soldiers or more, most of whom are likely Dragon-Blooded. The sum of your unit's Magnitude and Might is 12. If you are funding this incredible force personally, you must meet all the Background requirements of the five-dot level of Command but must also have Legendary Resources (and Legendary Arsenal if you wish to equip your army with magical weaponry).

Connections

Creation functions as a complex web of interacting societies, each with its own institutions, foundations and social orders. The Connections Background represents the ability to gain information, to trade favors and to network with other Exalted. Characters with connections shape society, while simultaneously protecting their assets and gaining prestige.

Each area of influence represents a separate potential Background. For example, a well-connected Lunar character might have Connections (Military) 4, Connections (The Deliberative) 2, Connections (The Bank of the Treasury) 4 and Connections (Rathess) 5, in addition to many others.

Ironically, the value of a character's connections is inversely proportional to how expansive the relevant area of influence is. That is, a character who has Connections (The Solar Navy—Eastern Fleet) 3 can effect more change than a character with Connections (The Solar Navy) 3, but the first character's area of influence is confined to a more limited geographic area. The entire Solar Navy is home to dozens of high-Essence luminaries who attempt to shape its Creation-wide functioning, but if an Exalt focuses his attention on gaining connections within a specific theater, he has less competition. Similarly, it is much easier to exercise influence over a single sorcery academy than over Creation's entire magical education infrastructure, or to control a single city-state more completely than a large territory.

Trait	Effects:
X	None. You lack any ties to the group in question.
•	You possess at least one major contact (and a handful of minor ones) in the group and are moderately influential at the local level.
••	Two major contacts and several minor ones within your area of influence, giving you a significant amount of pull in a citywide area.
•••	Three major contacts and a large number of minor ones. You are a person of regional importance.
••••	Five major contacts and a horde of lesser ones. You are one of the most influential figures in the region.
•••••	You know all the major power players in your area of influence, and they all acknowledge your importance and at least consider your advice.

Legendary Connections

Your knowledge about the inner workings within your area of influence are so complete that your rivals suspect you of having a spy network in place (which you probably do). You effectively control the organization's infrastructure at the Creation-wide level and can do as you wish with it except where others with this level of influence interfere.

Cult

Gods know that worship gives them power. Your character also learned this lesson and has worshipers who honor her as their patron goddess. Indeed, she might not have even set out do to so. Celestial Exalted in particular are so widely venerated that all of them have an effective Cult rating of 1 without doing anything to acquire it other than having their identities publicly known. The problems

Backing vs. Connections

At first glance, the Backing and Connections Backgrounds would seem to overlap. The distinction lies in what the two Backgrounds actually allow a character to do. Backing represents the application of resources and personnel that are not directly under the character's personal control. Connections represent the character's understanding of an organization's structure (including its secrets) and his ability to direct its overarching agenda. The two can interact freely when a character has both the backing of an organization and connections to those who actually run it. It is not necessary, however, for a character to have the backing of an organization in order to have made connections within it and vice versa. The most talented field agents of the Bureau of Destiny often have unlimited backing but no pull when it comes to defining the agency's agenda. Similarly, the dealmakers of the great Dragon-Blooded Gentes have vast webs of connections within even the Deliberative itself, but they would be looked at as insane if they demanded actual authority within that body.

arise when Solars (and other Exalted) move beyond that meager limit.

Technically, having a Cult rating higher than 2 is illegal and punishable by severe sanctions depending on the situation and the status of the Exalt in question. As a practical matter, however, Solars tend to overlook such transgressions among both their own peers and their Lunar mates, except when the particular rites associated with the cult violate the precepts of the Church of the Unconquered Sun. Things are tougher for Sidereals. Their activities are closely monitored by the Bureau of Heaven, which frowns severely on Sidereals who play at being gods. Dragon-Blooded who acquire significant cults risk the death penalty, but Celestial Exalts can usually get off with a steep fine and suppression of the cult's religious orders, assuming they receive any censure at all.

No Exalt in recorded history has ever achieved a Legendary Cult rating, although some historians think Solar Queen Merela was close when she was forced to relinquish much of her authority.

Trait	Effects:
X	You have no worshipers and are most likely a lowly Dragon-Blood or a reclusive Sidereal.
•	You have a small but devoted cult. Perhaps six acolytes tend a few shrines and make offerings to you. Every morning when you awaken, you automatically gain one additional point of temporary Willpower. All Solar and Lunar Exalted possess this level of the Cult Background. All Celestial Exalted possess this level of the Cult Background.
••	The members of one large community or several small ones worship you. Several hundred people make daily prayers and small offerings to you. You gain a point of temporary Willpower every morning and regain two motes of Essence per hour from worship. Many Solars and a few Lunars possess this level of the Cult Background.
•••	You are venerated in a large region. Several thousand people daily seek your favor or forbearance. (Characters who are god-kings of a single city have this level of worship.) You may regain one point of temporary Willpower once every 24 hours as a reflexive action. You gain three additional motes of Essence per hour from the power of the cult. Some members of the Deliberative have begun murmuring with distaste about your worship, which, at this level, is patently illegal. It is a capital offense for any Dragon-Blood to achieve this level of cult worship.
••••	An entire nation honors you. Tens of thousands revere you as one of their primary deities. Regional festivals in your name draw merchants and traders from surrounding lands. You might have a city sacred to you where you rule either symbolically or in truth. Once every 12 hours, you gain back a point of temporary Willpower, and your cult gives you four additional Essence motes per hour. Both the Deliberative and the Bureau of Heaven certainly know of you and may soon attempt to move against you unless you have powerful backing or allies.
•••••	Many people throughout one of the four quarters of Creation worship you. There, you are the deity of some major sphere of life such as hunting, war or procreation. The people hold seasonal festivals in your honor, children bear your name, and many claim that their actions are done to aid you and your cult. Every six hours, you gain a point of temporary Willpower, and you regain six motes per hour from the constant prayers. The gods are openly jealous of your power, and movement in the Deliberative to censure you could be inevitable.

Familiar

The Familiar Background functions exactly as outlined in **Exalted**, p. 112.

Legendary Familiar

A Legendary Familiar is an intelligent and loyal creature of enormous power and/or versatility. Smaller behemoths and intelligent tyrant lizards are possible examples of a Legendary Familiar. All such creatures also possess the Essence-replenishing properties of a small Familiar 3 animal.

Heart's Blood (Lunars Only)

Heart's Blood functions in the First Age exactly as it does in the Age of Sorrows. This Background represents the size and versatility of a Lunar Exalt's internal library of shapes she can adopt with her shapeshifting powers. The mechanics of this power function as outlined in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Lunars**, pp. 109–110.

Trait	Effects:
X	You have only your true forms—your human shape and your spirit shape.
•	1–3 additional, distinct forms
••	4–10 additional, distinct forms
•••	11–20 additional, distinct forms
••••	21–40 additional, distinct forms
•••••	41+ additional, distinct forms

Legendary Heart's Blood

The rare Lunar who has mastered her shapeshifting powers to the nth degree achieves this level. The Lunar has 25 additional, distinct forms that exclusively represent the stolen shapes of mortals, magical creatures or other unusual life forms. In addition, she is assumed to have the shape of

any mundane animal in her library. She can continue to pursue unique specimens of mundane animals if she desires (or allocate some of her 25 extra forms to them), but for a garden-variety specimen of any particular animal, it's just assumed that she drank its Heart's Blood at some point over the centuries.

Henchmen

Henchmen are generally mortal or Dragon-Blooded characters who have sworn oaths of fealty to the character. Who these characters are depends on the character who holds this Background, although nearly any character concept can be justified. A high-ranking officer might count his subordinate officers as henchmen, while a savant or businessman might do the same for his bodyguards. Religious leaders invariably attract acolytes, while crime lords are surrounded by thugs and assassins. In game terms, they are all (or can be) henchmen.

The default assumption is that a henchman is a heroic mortal, created under the rules outlined in **Exalted**, p. 81. Such a heroic mortal gains a Favored Ability based on his roles. A spy might have Stealth or Larceny, while an apprentice might have Occult or Lore. Henchmen are typically quite loyal. Celestial Exalted may have lower ranking Dragon-Blooded as henchmen. Choosing them increases the rating of the Background by one. That is, with Henchmen (Dragon-Blooded) 3, your character will have three Dragon-Blooded henchmen instead of six mortal ones. These Dragon-Blooded henchmen count as "Young Dragon-Blooded" (see p. 27). If the henchmen are all starting Dragon-Blooded, the value of the Background rating increases by another dot.

There is no Legendary Henchmen trait. Such resources are better described by other Backgrounds, such as Command or Retainers. Mortals may possess the Henchman Background up to the five-dot level, but such henchmen are never Exalted.

Trait	Effects:
X	None. You walk alone.
•	One mortal companion.
••	Three mortal companions or one young Dragon-Blood.
•••	Six mortal companions, three young Dragon-Blooded or one starting Dragon-Blood.
••••	Ten mortal companions, six young Dragon-Blooded or three starting Dragon-Blooded.
•••••	Fifteen mortal companions, ten young Dragon-Blooded or six starting Dragon-Blooded.

Manse

Manses are large buildings and palaces designed to focus the Essence that converges at naturally occurring dragon lines through geomantic principles. The basic principles of manses are outlined in **Exalted**, pp. 113, 133 and 382–384, while more detailed rules are presented in Chapter Two of **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**. The specific benefits of a character's Manse Background rating in the First Age are defined here. All Solar characters begin with one free one-dot manse located somewhere in Meru, most commonly an Earth- or Air-aspected one unless the Solar spends Background points to improve his manse's quality. Other manses may be located anywhere in Creation or in Yu-Shan. A character can own a manse in Yu-Shan only if he meets one of the following criteria, however: (1) he is a Sidereal Exalt, (2) he is a Solar or Lunar Exalt who possesses a rating in the Backing Background (representing a heavenly employer) equal to the rating of the manse, (3) he is a Solar or Lunar Exalt who possesses dots in the Connections Background representing contacts in Yu-Shan equal to (the cost of the Manse + 2). A manse can *never* be acquired solely through any combination of Resources, Salary or Wealth, although such Backgrounds may "grease the wheels" for the character in the form of bribes to influential Deliberative members.

Trait	Effects:
X	If you are a Solar Exalt, you have a single one-dot manse (Air- or Earth-aspected) in Meru. If not, you have no manse of your own and have not been permitted to attune to anyone else's. Who in Creation have you offended?!?
•	The character has been attuned to several lesser manses (level-1 and -2) and holds a single level-1 or -2 hearthstone.
••	The character has attuned to numerous lesser manses and possesses over three levels worth of hearthstones, with none exceeding level 2.
•••	The character has been attuned to a small number of moderately powerful manses or dozens of lesser ones. She holds six levels of hearthstones, possibly including a single level-3 stone.
••••	The character has been attuned to some of the best designed manses in Creation. She has eight levels of hearthstones, including a single level-4 hearthstone.
•••••	The character is renowned for her hearthstone collection. She holds a single level-5 hearthstone and additional lesser stones totaling 10 levels (including the powerful stone).

Legendary Manse

There has only been one officially sanctioned manse in history built with a rating in excess of 5, the Sword of Creation. All attempts to create another such "super-Manse" have bogged down in territory disputes (the geomantic web required for such a project would span a significant portion of a Direction, passing through the territories of numerous Lawgivers) or been met with stiff

political opposition within the Solar Deliberative. While members of the Twilight Caste are eager to press the outer boundaries of geomancy, their neighbors have no wish to see a second Sword of Creation, or anything remotely like it, in the hands of a single Solar. As such, any Legendary Manses in existence channel their power to more subtle uses than the Sword, or are quite well-hidden, or are dubious in their qualification for the title, being "merely" 5-dot manses of unusual power. Characters may not begin play with possession of a "Legendary Manse." An Exalt who has the six-dot level of this Background simply has access to an extraordinary number of manses, many of which have been specially designed to produce certain effects. The character holds two level-5 hearthstones and additional lesser stones totaling 20 levels (including the two large stones).

As an alternative, the player can choose to settle for the benefits of the five-dot level of this Background. In addition, the character is also master of another 10 levels worth of Manse. These extra manses produce no hearthstones and provide the Exalt with no Essence recovery. Instead, the power of the manses is channeled into providing a power grid in an area under the Exalt's control. This power grid has the benefit of reducing the Essence commitment cost of artifacts within the affected area by one per level of manse channeled into that area, provided that the artifact in question is sympathetically linked to the manse. The 10 extra levels must be divided between the area to be affected (one level for the grounds of a country estate, two for a small village, three for a large town, four for a major metropolis or city-state, and five for a small territory) and the amount by which commitment costs are reduced. If the commitment cost for a particular item is reduced to zero, mortals can use such an item freely.

Mentor

The Mentor Background functions exactly as outlined in **Exalted**, p. 113, except as noted here. There is no such thing as a Legendary Mentor. If your character is powerful enough to possess Legendary Backgrounds, then most likely there's no one in Creation capable of giving him advice, let alone orders.

Trait	Effects:
X	You walk your own path, eschewing the advice of anyone who seeks to help you, no matter how valuable it might be.
•	Your mentor is an Influential Dragon-Blood, a powerful local god, an exceptionally wise and experienced mortal savant or, possibly, a First Circle demon.
••	Your mentor is an Established Lunar or a major terrestrial god (Essence 3+).
•••	Your mentor is an Established Solar or Sidereal, an Influential Lunar, a Legendary Dragon-Blood, a minor spirit of Yu-Shan or possibly a Second Circle demon.
••••	Your mentor is an Influential Solar or Sidereal, a Legendary Lunar, a Celestial censor, or a prominent god in the Yu-Shan bureaucracy.
•••••	Your mentor is a Legendary Solar or Sidereal, a divisional head or possibly even a bureau head in Yu-Shan, a god of Essence 6+ who serves as an emissary to one of the Incarnae or (if you have the nerve) a Third Circle demon.

Panoply

Arsenal represents a character's legal authority to own and possess magical weaponry and armaments, and the right to outfit troops with them. Panoply governs what sort of magitech the character owns that does *not* have military applications. In a sense, Panoply also describes the character's connections with the Exalted artistic and business communities, since more advanced magical items are rare and difficult to produce, even in the First Age. It's a seller's market, and Panoply governs the character's ability to find dealers in rare items and to persuade pompous and arrogant art dealers that only she will *truly* appreciate the item's worth.

Celestial Exalts unquestionably have the largest panoplies in Creation. Mortals and Dragon-Blooded can have this Background, but they must pay double the normal cost (whether in Background dots, bonus points or experience) for any dots above the three-dot level. Furthermore, both mortals and Dragon-Blooded often find high-end magical items prohibitively expensive due to the disparity between Resources and Wealth.

Trait	Effects:
X	Nothing. For whatever reason, you are fully content with mundane equipment. You are limited to items that do not require a Panoply rating, such as an I AM glyph reader and Essence powered lighting and heating in your home (but only if that home is on an Essence power grid). If you are a Celestial Exalt, you are entitled to one free hard mote from the Ministry of the Treasury.
•	You have access to simple magical items that function purely for entertainment or educational purposes. Your portable glyph reader is capable of downloading music from I AM and playing it back later, as well as acting as a communications device interacting with other glyph readers (but only in areas within range of I AM terminals). You have one set of simple clothing that is made of silk armor or has some other magical properties. You might have a hearthstone amulet or a simple hearthstone diadem. You can acquire a hard mote (if your Exalted station hasn't already entitled you to one). Mortals may possess this level of Panoply, but they cannot acquire items that require the

commitment of Essence unless they are capable of channeling Essence. Otherwise, the Panoply cost of the item increases by one due to the addition of a built-in Essence converter for the artifact.

•• You have access to more sophisticated devices usable for entertainment, business and travel. Your I AM glyph reader has an audio-visual recorder function and can provide you with directions even when you are lost in the wilderness and cut off from direct communication with I AM. You probably have several suits of fine, enchanted clothing and a collar of dawn's cleansing light. Mortals may possess this level of Panoply, but they cannot acquire items that require the commitment of Essence unless they are capable of channeling Essence. Otherwise, the Panoply cost of the item increases by one due to the addition of a built-in Essence converter for the artifact.

••• Your devices give you control over your environment. You have a portable sky mantis tower that allows you to change the weather (at least over your manse). You have a supply of spell crystals usable for storing spells (if you are a sorcerer) or that have already been programmed with useful Terrestrial level spells (most commonly Infallible Messenger). You probably have a maneki neko spirit acting as your personal shopper, and you wear only the finest enchanted clothing (be it silk armor or some other enchantment). You have a small personal ground, sea or air transport device such as a swift rider, a *Windblade*-class personal transport or a sky chariot. You might also have a simple but intelligent automaton servant, and you probably have at least a few artificial life forms to provide entertainment. Mortals may possess this level of Panoply, but they cannot acquire items that require the commitment of Essence unless they are capable of channeling Essence. Otherwise, the Panoply cost of the item increases by one due to the addition of a built-in Essence converter for the artifact, usually beyond the ability of a mortal to afford.

•••• Your devices allow for mass transport, such as a personal skyship or a *Whirligig*-class courier. You have multiple sky mantis towers that let you regulate the weather over a city and its surrounding environs. Your numerous artificial servants are erudite and charming, and they can perform any menial tasks, from cooking and cleaning to providing companionship and even sexual service.

••••• You journey in style, usually in a traveling pagoda or some comparable vessel. Your children are entertained by chillikin playmates, and you entertain yourself with expensive dreams downloaded from I AM and played in your mind on a special dream emitter. A golden mechanical asp coils around your neck, whispering sage advice in your ear. Your various homes possess every amenity that mortals could dream of—and many that they couldn't.

Legendary Panoply

You have acquired astounding products of Exalted craftsmanship and ingenuity. Purchasing and maintaining such items requires a Legendary Wealth rating, though, unless you are prepared to bankrupt yourself to attain your prize. Examples of items that can be purchased with this level of Panoply include whole stables of beasts of resplendent liquid, personal orreries designed to emulate the Great Observatory of Rathess, reality engines such as those found in Opal Spire

How Much Does It Cost?

The first step in deciding whether your character can afford to simply buy an artifact on the open market is to determine its Artifact rating. Generally, most artifacts described in **Exalted** and its companion books keep the same Artifact cost listed in those supplements. The Artifact rating of a simple artifact weapon or set of armor that has no Essence-attack features decreases by one, however, to a minimum of 1. Additionally, the Storyteller has absolute discretion to modify the Artifact cost of any item listed in supplements set during the Age of Sorrows, either reducing its Artifact rating (due to mass production in the First Age) or increasing it (due to government regulation of the magitech in question).

The next step is to decide whether the device was created primarily for combat purposes. If it was, it falls under the Arsenal Background. If it wasn't, it falls under Panoply. Then, compare your character's rating in the relevant Background to the item's modern day Artifact rating. If the character's Arsenal or Panoply rating is equal to or higher than the Artifact rating, he will have no legal or social problems in acquiring the item. If his Background rating is less than the Artifact rating, it's out of his league, either because the law forbids it or because it is simply not to be had at any price. Acquiring an artifact with a rating equal to the character's Arsenal or Panoply rating has no negative effect on those ratings.

The final step is comparing the item's Artifact rating to the character's Wealth (or Resources – 2, for Dragon-Bloods or mortals). If his Wealth rating is higher than the Artifact rating, he can afford the item. If not, he can't. If they are equal, he can purchase it at the cost of losing a dot of Wealth.

or simply a personal gate of auspicious passage. Or perhaps your possessions include an entire city under your exclusive dominion, one in which every citizen has the benefits of two or three dots in Panoply, and in which all of their prayers are magnified and transmitted directly to you.

Reputation

Nearly all Celestial Exalted are known across Creation, but there is a difference between merely being famous and actually having a reputation worthy of Exaltation. This Background represents some area in which the Exalt has distinguished himself—combat, sorcery, carousing, etc.—to the point that his fame precedes him, whether for good or ill. The player and Storyteller must decide together what the character has a reputation for. In situations in which that reputation is beneficial, the Storyteller may grant bonus dice to social rolls made for the character intended to get others to follow his advice. In situations where the character's reputation is a liability, however, his player must subtract an equal number of dice. A Solar with the reputation of a great womanizer might well get a love-struck young man to follow his advice on how to court a beautiful princess. He will have less luck in getting a penitent monk who has taken a vow of celibacy to take his advice on anything.

Trait	Effects:
X	No reputation. What was your name again?
•	one bonus die to appropriate social rolls
••	two bonus dice to appropriate social rolls
•••	three bonus dice to appropriate social rolls
••••	four bonus dice to appropriate social rolls
•••••	five bonus dice to appropriate social rolls

Legendary Reputation

Possessing Legendary Reputation takes the double-edged benefit of a normal reputation and raises it to epic levels. In situations in which your reputation is helpful to your cause, add five dice to any social combat rolls made to persuade others, and reduce the Dodge MDV of your targets by half. In situations where your reputation is a liability, add a -5 internal penalty to the social attack roll and double the Dodge MDV of your targets.

Resources (Dragon-Blooded and Mortals Only)

The Resources Background functions as outlined in **Exalted**, pp. 113–114. These rules apply to mortals and to Dragon-Blooded. Celestial Exalted use the Wealth Background instead (see p. 46). There is some overlap between the two Backgrounds—a character's Wealth is equal to (Resources – 2). That is, a Solar with Wealth 3 and a Dragon-Blood with Resources 5 have roughly the same financial status. Whenever a situation calls for consideration of a character's Wealth and the relevant character is a Dragon-Blood or mortal, simply subtract two from the

character's Resources to determine whether she meets the financial requirements.

Obviously, there is no such thing as Legendary Resources. In the first place, that would simply be equivalent to Wealth 4. In the second place, Dragon-Blooded may not acquire Legendary Backgrounds, and the Deliberative would probably tax the presumptuous Dragon-Blood into poverty if one began displaying such income, to say nothing of wealthy mortals.

Retainers

Whether born into a Dragon-Blooded Gens or blessed with the gift of Exaltation, one constant in the life of most Exalts is servants. The typical Exalt leads a life of privilege unimaginable to most mortals, a life quietly maintained by the unsung retainers who attend to all their masters' needs. Secretaries, bodyguards, cooks, stewards, men at arms, maids, concubines, drivers and many others stand ready to attend to the Exalt's every whim and insulate him from those who are beneath his divine station.

Retainers are mortal characters, and rarely heroic ones, although a retainer is often capable of showing great bravery in the defense of her master. To create individual retainers, use the rules for regular mortal character creation found on page 13. In addition to household servants, retainers may also represent low-ranking officers and support staff in a military organization or mortal apprentices in a sorcerer's laboratory.

There is no such thing as having Legendary Retainers. A Celestial Exalt may, however, declare that some or all of his retainers are supernatural beings (such as Dragon-Bloods or First Circle demons) by increasing the cost of the Background rating by two. Therefore, if he purchases this Background at the six-dot level, the Exalt might be surrounded by a retinue of 13 Terrestrial Exalted servants, or perhaps a mixture of Dragon-Blooded aides and demon courtesans and artisans. Supernatural servants acquired through this Background are rarely soldiers. For that, use the Henchman Background on page 39. If the player desires, this Background can be taken twice—once to represent mortal servants and once to represent supernatural servants.

Trait	Effects:
X	None. For reasons of your own, you eschew the body of servants that is part of your birthright.
•	Two retainers
••	Five retainers
•••	Nine retainers or two magical or Dragon-Blooded servants
••••	Thirteen retainers or a lesser number of more skilled aides. Alternatively, you have five Dragon-Blooded or magical servants.
•••••	Twenty retainers, probably including everything from secretaries to bodyguards, from cooks to concubines. This is the retinue of a general or a god-king. In the alternative, you have nine magical servants or Dragon-Blooded retainers.

Salary (Celestial Exalted only)

Most beings in Creation who are not independently wealthy collect a salary of some description, but such income is reflected in the Resources Background. The Salary Background refers to a very specific form of income—the quintessence and ambrosia allotments paid out by the various heavenly bureaus to their employees, both godly and Exalted. Quintessence is the physical manifestation within Yu-Shan of the general prayers of all mortals for heavenly intervention. Ambrosia is a purer and rarer form of quintessence that manifests from prayers to a specific deity. Quintessence is distributed to all gainfully employed entities in Yu-Shan (including Exalted) on a relatively equivalent basis. Ambrosia manifests in the immediate vicinity of the god to whom the relevant prayers were directed. All gods who receive Ambrosia from mortal prayers are required to tithe 10 percent of their prayer income to the Unconquered Sun, a major source of that deity's unrivaled power. The Unconquered Sun then redistributes that tithe via his celestial lion servitors to the five heavenly bureaus, which then use the Ambrosia both to manufacture necessary equipment and to pay their employees.

Within Yu-Shan, both Ambrosia and Quintessence can be forged into anything. Indeed, in large quantities (such as the weekly salary of most division heads), these materials could be transformed into sufficient jade to pave every street in Meru… or utterly destroy Creation's economy. Accordingly, converting one's salary into material wealth sufficient to live in Creation above the Resources 3/Wealth 1 level is a serious offense. (Specifically, it is considered embezzlement from the Unconquered Sun's coffers.) Since nearly all Celestial Exalts possess Wealth that dwarfs that meager sum, most Exalted employees use their salaries exclusively to ease their time in Yu-Shan, mainly by enticing less important gods into advancing the Exalts' personal agendas. While Yu-Shan is far less open to corruption in the First Age than it will become in the Age of Sorrows, the line between extravagant gift-giving and outright bribery is still somewhat blurred.

All Sidereal Exalted work directly for the Bureau of Destiny and, accordingly, receive pay in the form of a Quintessence and/or Ambrosia stipend. In addition, some Solar and Lunar Exalts (but never Dragon-Blooded) have risen to achieve gainful employment in Yu-Shan in one of the other four bureaus. An Exalt's divine salary correlates directly with his level of influence over and support from the bureau that employs him. A Solar or Lunar can never have a Salary rating higher than his Backing or Connections Background (whichever is higher) associated with the bureau that employees him. Therefore, a Lunar who works in Yu-Shan on behalf of the Bureau of Nature and possesses Backing (Bureau of Nature) 3 and Connections (Bureau of

Nature) 4 can theoretically have up to four dots in Salary. As a practical matter, however, as an Exalt's salary rises, so does the likelihood of a Celestial audit. Since employment within the Bureau of Destiny is an inherent part of Sidereal Exaltation, the Five-Score Fellowship is exempt from those prerequisites.

As noted before, Ambrosia is created from the condensed prayers of mortals and appears in a solid block nearby the god to whom the mortals were praying. The same applies to Exalts in Yu-Shan who possess cults, and such beings tend to accrue significant quantities of Ambrosia while residing there. Maintaining a cult is highly illegal for Exalted in Yu-Shan. Of course, a certain amount of cult worship is expected for Solars and Lunars (but not the more subtle Sidereals), and an Exalt with a Cult rating of only 1 will be tolerated, his Ambrosia confiscated and turned over to the Bureau of Heaven for reallocation. More significant quantities of Ambrosia directed to an Exalt will almost certainly trigger an audit.

There is no such thing as a Legendary Salary, unless one counts the incomes of the various Incarnae.

Trait	Effects:
X	None. You angered the god of dispensation, or perhaps your salary has been garnished for violations of Celestial law. In Heaven, you must live in the back of your office or on a kind god's floor. You eat only through theft or charity (such as the small daily dole of Quintessence given to the First Age's few indigent gods).
•	This is the starting salary for most gods. Exalts earn this pay grade only when they are new or being punished. You have a small apartment (five rooms and facilities) and can afford merely a single feast per day. You earn no Ambrosia but can afford two elemental servants. You have Resources •• in Heaven and Wealth • in Creation. It's hard for you to rent a dragon boat. Heaven's passenger dhows are more your speed.
••	A solid salary. You have a small townhouse or a large apartment in an unfashionable Yu-Shan neighborhood, serviced by a handful of elemental servants. You always have ample food available for your pleasure. The Quintessence in your pay far outweighs the Ambrosia. You have the equivalent of Wealth • in Heaven and Wealth •• in Creation, though exercising the latter in full could earn you trouble. This is standard pay for Exalted.
•••	You rent a townhouse in a good neighborhood of the Celestial City, a faux ranch with land or a rooftop temple-fortress. You travel by your own dragon boat or aerial rickshaw, and you have a dozen elemental servitors. Most of your pay comes as Ambrosia, so your repast is godly. You have Wealth •• in Heaven and could have Wealth ••• in Creation if you could get away with it.
••••	You rent more than one of the aforementioned residences. Essence 2 or 3 gods live with and serve you as bodyguards, consultants or courtesans (though they must be purchased with the Allies Background). You eat only godly victuals and pay even your servants in Ambrosia. Your subsidies give you Wealth ••• in Heaven and Wealth •••• in Creation (if you would risk censure).
•••••	You own half a dozen grand palaces, penthouse apartments and weekend lodges in Yu-Shan, moving from one to the next at your whim. If you chose to, your parties could last for centuries. Your small fleet of dragon boats ensures your getting where you want when you want, and your party barge makes you very popular in certain sets. A legion of divine servants awaits your pleasure, including at least a dozen potent gods (though useful gods require the Allies Background). You dine on peaches of immorality and sip celestial wine. You have Wealth •••• in Heaven and Wealth ••••• in Creation, enough to ruin entire economies at will. Only the most senior Exalted and mightiest gods receive this pay packet. Decide what divine criminal or celestial powerbroker you owe and how many Severity 3–5 offenses you are committing.

Savant

Even among the Exalted, only the best and the brightest are truly capable of comprehending the greatest technological and magical secrets of the First Age, let alone fixing them when they break down. A character with the Savant Background adds her Savant rating in dice to any Lore check involving history, science or magic. She also adds her rating in dots to her Lore, Occult and Craft Abilities in order to meet the Ability requirements to operate and maintain First Age artifacts.

Trait	Effects:
X	None. Whatever your qualifications with regard to Lore, Occult and Craft, you are not considered a member of the era's magitechnical intelligentsia.
•	one bonus die to appropriate rolls
••	two bonus dice to appropriate rolls
•••	three bonus dice to appropriate rolls
••••	four bonus dice to appropriate rolls
•••••	five bonus dice to appropriate rolls

Legendary Savant

You are considered one of Creation's greatest thinkers in your field of expertise, and you authored many of the foremost treatises and textbooks in that area. Not only do you gain

the benefits of the five-dot level of this Background, you also gain one free reroll per session on a failed roll. Furthermore, your writings within your field of expertise are so seminal that your textbooks grant a one-die bonus to Lore, Occult or Craft rolls made by others who rely upon your writings. Legendary manse designer Kal Bax has reached this level of savant.

Sifu

In the parlance of the Exalted, a sifu is a martial arts instructor, especially one capable of teaching the supernatural martial arts available to the Exalted. Essentially, the sifu is a sort of specialized mentor whose chief utility to the character lies in his ability to teach supernatural martial arts. The best sifus are invariably elder Sidereal Exalts, as the Five-Score Fellowship has pioneered the application of Essence to martial arts. They remain the most puissant masters, despite the boasting of the Dawn and Full Moon castes. The Sidereals jealously guard their secrets, especially their knowledge of the most advanced Sidereal martial arts. A Lunar's beginning Sifu rating cannot exceed 3, and a Dragon-Blooded's cannot exceed 2; the Five-Score Fellowship does not allocate its greatest masters to students who cannot wield their ultimate techniques.

This Background lets a player declare which supernatural martial arts she wishes her character to have available in the future. Players and Storytellers should work together to decide which styles a sifu represented by this Background knows. The sifu is effectively martial arts training on demand; it should always be available, subject only to important plot considerations.

While there are certainly legendary sifus, there is no such thing as a Legendary Sifu Background rating.

Trait	Effects:
X	You have never found a sifu, either because you have no interest in the martial arts or because no master has ever considered you worthy of tutelage.
•	Your sifu knows one supernatural martial art style and has partially mastered one Sidereal style.
••	Your sifu knows two supernatural martial arts styles and one Sidereal style. This is the maximum Sifu rating for a beginning Dragon-Blood.
•••	Your sifu knows three supernatural martial arts styles and two Sidereal styles. This is the maximum Sifu rating for a beginning Lunar Exalt.
••••	Your sifu knows five supernatural martial arts styles and three Sidereal styles.
•••••	Your sifu is unparalleled: He knows seven supernatural martial arts styles and four Sidereal styles.

Teach Me, Sifu!

The First Age relationship between the Chosen of Sun and Stars is an odd one. On the one hand, the Solar Exalted are the undisputed lords of Creation, rulers of all things within the span of the five Poles and first among the Exalted. On the other hand, there exists a long tradition of Solars studying beneath Sidereal sifus, for the Chosen of the Maidens were created in large part to advise, assist, and train the Solar Exalted.

This extends to study of the martial arts. The two Chosen have not yet become alienated from one another as they will be in the Age of Sorrows, and Sidereals have never had reason to withhold the secrets of their ultimate martial arts from their allies and leaders. They have, however, had reason to carefully ration out those secrets. Long trial and error has taught the Seers of Heaven that the Solars become sullen and unresponsive at best—jealous and mistrustful at worst—when denied access to Sidereal Martial Arts. The Viziers cannot advise resentful heroes who will not listen to them! However, the Sidereals also have no interest in becoming the absolute vassals of the Lawgivers, dispensing lessons like an automaton whenever a Solar snaps his fingers, so they are very particular about the sifu-student relationship inherent to martial arts training. A Solar may be worshiped by a million mortals, eat the viands of the gods on plates of red jade, and command an army capable of conquering the new worlds he rips from the depths of the Wyld… but upon entering the dojo he addresses his sifu with respect, accepts the master's curriculum with humility, and, if wise, considers the words of the "lesser Exalt" carefully. At the dawn of the First Age the Sidereals were granted the individual right to choose which Solar students to teach and which not to, and they have never relinquished that discretionary power.

The Solars, for their part, have not sought to remove this authority from the hands of the Sidereals… but to the Fivescore Fellowship's dismay, an increasing number of Lawgivers have begun to decide that they simply have no need of the advice or martial knowledge of the Viziers.

Solar Bond (Lunars Only)

The Solar Bond Background represents the strength of a Lunar Exalt's devotion to her Solar mate, a devotion that can translate into a greater resolve and mental fortitude for the Lunar when the Solar mate's interests are involved. The mechanics of this Background are outlined in **The Manual**

of Exalted Power—The Lunars, pp. 110–111. There is no such thing as a Legendary Solar Bond.

Wealth (Celestial Exalted Only)

Celestial Exalts typically possess riches beyond the dreams of even the greediest mortal merchant, and even those Solars born with nothing can achieve vast incomes with almost trivial ease. This incredible financial status is reflected by the Wealth Background. As noted under the description for Resources, the Wealth Background is equivalent to the (Resources Background + 2). The descriptions here delineate what sort of possessions your character can possess at each level. Don't forget—your character's *magical* equipment, whether combat equipment or useful gadgets, depends on the interaction of his Arsenal, Backing, Panoply and Wealth ratings.

Trait	Effects:
X	You are among the poorest Celestial Exalts in Creation—your wealth is "merely" equal to that of a Dragon-Blood with Resources ••.
•	Your character is wretchedly poor by the standards of Exalted society. She owns a single townhouse or a prosperous farm. She probably has one fine riding animal and another one of lower quality in case the first falls ill. Your character has a suit of any armor and any two weapons. She eats reasonably well every night and can afford most minor forms of entertainment. Your character has a maximum Retainers rating of 1 (unless the retainers are paid by someone else). Equivalent to Resources •••.
••	For a Celestial Exalt, your character is lower middle class. He owns both a townhouse and a country estate. Your character bears the finest arms, rides relatively expensive transportation, and alone or as master of a family, your character and his kin will never know hunger or want for medical attention. He might also own a private yacht and have a dozen or more servants tend to his needs. Your character has a maximum Retainers rating of four. Equivalent to Resources ••••.
•••	Your character is rich, even by the standards of Exaltation. He has vast riches and either commands an army or could rent one at need. Your character owns at least one excellent ship, and an army of attentive servants eagerly awaits his every whim. His personal dominion either measures in scores of square miles or represents a single city-state. Equivalent to Resources •••••. This is the maximum Wealth available to characters who are not Celestial Exalted.
••••	Your character's wealth is impressive even to Solars. She is rich enough to maintain a standing army, a small fleet of ships and as many retainers as she desires. Her personal dominion is the size of a small country, hundreds of square miles in area. She travels Creation as she wishes and has homes in dozens of locales.
•••••	Your character is so rich that no bank in Creation can hold all of his money without it destabilizing local currency exchanges. His personal dominion is vast, at least 500 square miles in area, and contains multiple major cities all under his control. His servants and slaves number in the tens of thousands. He casually spends a king's ransom on great monuments to his own glory or elaborate funerary structures in preparation for his eventual demise.

Legendary Wealth

Your character is so rich that, if she chose, she could destabilize the Order Conferring Trade Pattern over much of Creation. Unfortunately, as a result, the Solar Deliberative watches her spending habits like a hawk. You can make an infinite number of purchases of any non-magical goods or services. If your Arsenal rating is high enough, you could pay for your own directional Titan, assuming you're willing to wait for a few centuries for the Deliberative to build it for you.

Mutation Implants

Any character can start with mutation implants or acquire them later. "Mutation implant" is the generic term for a bio-modification or a Wyld-shaping effect that gives a character inherent supernatural powers. The special abilities of artificially engineered blessed mortals are also represented by mutations. Mechanically, a mutation implant is actually identical to a positive Wyld mutation (see **Exalted**, pp. 288–290, **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Lunars**, pp. 206–209, and **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. II—The Wyld**, pp. 144–148), except that the implant is deliberately grafted onto a willing subject's body through magitech, biothaumaturgy or other occult means. Mutation implants can be purchased at character creation with bonus points and can be acquired later through roleplaying and experience with Storyteller approval. More information on such magical upgrades can be found under the heading for "Blessed Mortals" on page 111 and "Altered Mortals" on page 117. (Magitech implants applied in a similar manner are discussed in **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**, pp. 70–72.)

Implant Level	Bonus Point Cost	Experience Point Cost
Poxes	1	2
Afflictions	2	4
Blights	4	8
Abominations	6	12

Solar Character Creation Summary

Character-Creation Process

Step One: Character Concept

Choose concept, caste and Motivation.

Note caste's anima powers.

Step Two: Attributes

Note that all Attributes start with one dot.

Prioritize the three categories: Physical, Social, Mental (8/6/4)

Choose Physical Attributes: Strength, Dexterity, Stamina

Choose Social Attributes: Charisma, Manipulation, Appearance

Choose Mental Attributes: Perception, Intelligence, Wits

Step Three: Abilities

Note Caste Abilities.

Select Favored Abilities (5; may not be the same as Caste Abilities)

Assign Celestial Training Ability dots (one dot in Bureaucracy, Presence or Socialize; Lore 2; Occult 2, Ride or Sail 1; and two dots allocated among Archery, Martial Arts, Melee or Thrown)

Assign Caste Training Ability dots:

- **Dawn Training Abilities:** two dots in Archery, Martial Arts, Melee or Thrown; Ride or Sail 1; War 1
- **Zenith Training Abilities:** Bureaucracy 1, Performance 2, Presence 1
- **Twilight Training Abilities:** Craft 1, Lore 1, Medicine 1, Occult 1
- **Night Training Abilities:** two dots in Investigation or Larceny; one dot in Archery, Martial Arts, Melee or Thrown; Stealth 1
- **Eclipse Training Abilities:** Integrity 1; Linguistics 1; one dot in Ride or Sail; one dot in Bureaucracy, Performance, Presence or Socialize

Choose Abilities (28—at least 10 must be from Caste or Favored Abilities; at least one in each Favored Ability; none may be higher than 3 without spending bonus points).

Step Four: Advantages

Choose Backgrounds (20—none may be higher than 3 without spending bonus points; gain Cult 1 and Manse 1 for free), Charms (15—at least five must be associated with either Caste or Favored Abilities), Virtues (5—none may be higher than 4 without spending bonus points) and Virtue Flaw.

Step Five: Finishing Touches

Record Essence (3), Willpower (equals the sum of the two highest Virtues—may not start at higher than 8 unless at least two Virtues are 4 or higher), Personal Essence ([Essence x 3] + Willpower), Peripheral Essence ([Essence x 7] + Willpower + [sum of all the character's Virtues]) and health levels (seven, plus any gained from Charms). Choose starting Intimacies (equal to Compassion).

Bonus Points

Bonus points (18) may be spent at any time during character creation.

Castes

- **Dawn:** The Dawns are the generals and warriors of the Unconquered Sun.
  Caste Abilities: Archery, Martial Arts, Melee, Thrown, War
  Anima Power: The Dawn anima power allows the Solar to become awesome and terrifying to others for the duration of the scene.
- **Zenith:** The Zeniths are the prophets, mystics and priest-kings of the Solar Deliberative.
  Caste Abilities: Integrity, Performance, Presence, Resistance, Survival
  Anima Power: The Zenith anima power improves her resistance to injury and her fighting prowess when she fights creatures of darkness. It also allows the Zenith to reduce the bodies of the dead to ash.
- **Twilight:** The Twilights are the sorcerers, savants and engineers who have produced the awesome magitech wonders that fuel the glories of the Age of Splendor.
  Caste Abilities: Craft, Investigation, Lore, Medicine, Occult
  Anima Power: The Twilight anima power surrounds the Exalt with a shield of force that defends her from injury.
- **Night:** The Night Caste encompasses the spies and assassins who walk in dark places to protect the people from harm.
  Caste Abilities: Athletics, Awareness, Dodge, Larceny, Stealth
  Anima Power: The Night anima power allows the Exalt to move with great stealth and to suppress his anima so that it does not glow brightly and give away his position.
- **Eclipse:** The Eclipses are the businessmen, diplomats and naval tacticians of the Realm who oversee its ever-stretching borders and who use diplomacy and guile to keep the dreaded Fair Folk at bay.
  Caste Abilities: Bureaucracy, Linguistics, Ride, Sail, Socialize
  Anima Power: The Eclipses' anima power allows them to sanctify oaths that are backed by the power of Heaven itself. Also, Solars of this Caste are beneficiaries of centuries of diplomatic treaties and can freely enter Yu-Shan, Malfeas or the Wyld itself without fear of harassment as long as their business is official. Finally,

Solar Character Creation Summary

Eclipse Caste Solars alone of all the Exalted can learn the Charms of non-Solars.

Motivation

Choose a driving and epic motivation for your Solar character.

Virtues

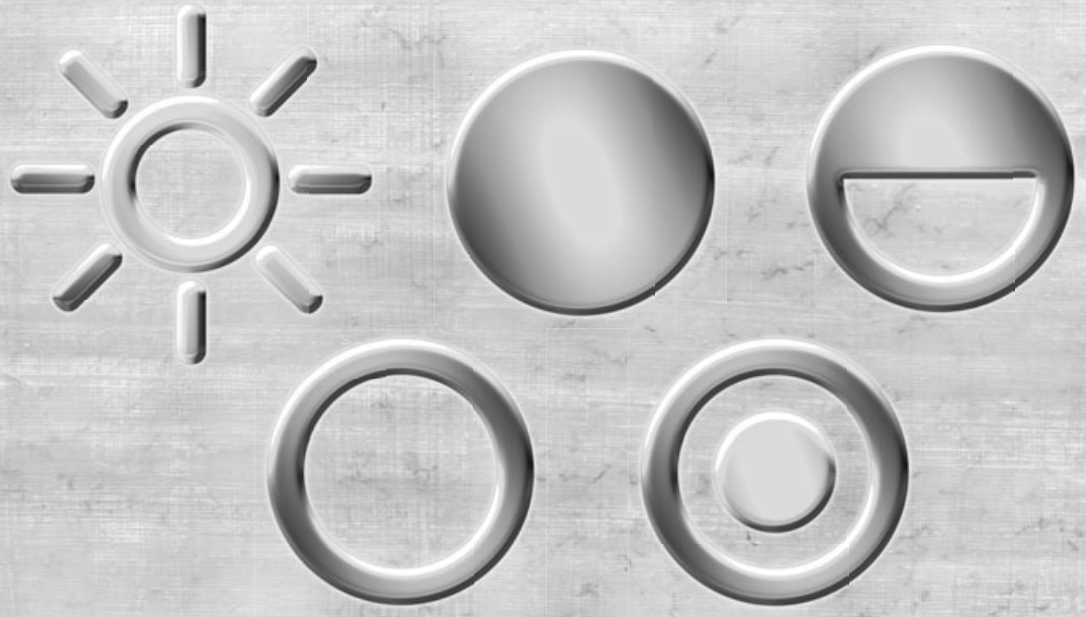
Compassion—Empathy and forgiveness
Conviction—Emotional endurance
Temperance—Self-control and clear-headedness
Valor—Courage and bravery

Backgrounds

Allies—Aides and friends who help in tasks.
Arsenal—Authorization to own magical weapons and to outfit military forces with them.
Artifact—Individual wonders of the First Age (for those who cannot buy them in bulk with other Backgrounds).
Backing—Standing and rank in an organization of power and influence.
Command—Authority to lead troops.
Connections—Influence and informational sources among organizations of power and authority.
Cult—Mortals who worship you.
Familiar—An animal companion.
Henchmen—Non-Exalted minions who fight on your behalf.
Manse—A place of power and Essence.
Mentor—A teacher and instructor.
Panoply—Your accumulated collection of wondrous devices.
Reputation—Your social standing.
Retainers—Loyal servants.
Salary—Heavenly income in the form of Ambrosia and Quintessence.
Savant—A superior understanding of First Age magitech.
Sifu—A tutor in the intricacies of Exalted martial arts.
Wealth—A vast income, the upper levels of which are unreachable save by the Celestial Exalted.

Bonus Point Costs

Trait	Cost
Attribute	4
Ability	2 (1 if a Favored or Caste Ability)
Background	1 (2 if the Background is being raised above 3)
Specialty	1 (2 per 1 if in a Favored or Caste Ability)
Virtue	3
Willpower	2
Intimacies	3 to increase starting Intimacies to (Willpower + Compassion)
Essence	7
Charms	5 (4 if in a Favored or Caste Ability)



Lunar Character Creation Summary

Character-Creation Process

Step One: Character Concept

Choose concept, caste and Motivation.

Note caste's anima powers.

Note spirit shape and Tell.

Step Two: Attributes

Note that all Attributes start with one dot.

Prioritize the three categories: Physical, Social, Mental (8/6/4)

Choose Physical Attributes: Strength, Dexterity, Stamina

Choose Social Attributes: Charisma, Manipulation, Appearance

Choose Mental Attributes: Perception, Intelligence, Wits

Record Caste Attributes (3).

Select Favored Attribute (1).

Gain two free Attribute dots that must be assigned to Caste or Favored Attributes.

Step Three: Abilities

Select Favored Abilities (Survival and 2 others).

Assign Celestial Training Ability dots (one dot in Bureaucracy, Presence or Socialize; Lore 2; Occult 2; Ride or Sail 1; and two dots allocated among Archery, Martial Arts, Melee or Thrown).

Assign Caste Training Ability dots:

- **Full Moon Training Abilities:** one dot in either Archery, Martial Arts, Melee or Thrown; Resistance 1; Survival 1; War 1
- **Waxing Moon Training Abilities:** Performance 1, Presence 1, Socialize 1, Survival 1
- **Half Moon Training Abilities:** Investigation 1, Presence 1, Survival 1, War 1
- **Waning Moon Training Abilities:** Larceny 2, Stealth 1, Survival 1
- **No Moon Training Abilities:** Craft 1, Lore 1, Occult 1, Survival 1

Choose Abilities (25—at least one in each Favored Ability; none may be higher than 3 without spending bonus points).

Step Four: Advantages

Choose Backgrounds (15—none may be higher than 3 without spending bonus points; gain Cult 1 for free), Charms and Knacks (12; at least four Charms and one Knack; at least four Charms from the Lunar's Caste or Favored Attributes), Virtues (5—none may be higher than 4 without spending bonus points) and Virtue Flaw.

Step Five: Finishing Touches

Record Essence (3), Willpower (equals the sum of the two highest Virtues—may not start at higher than 8 unless at least two Virtues are 4 or higher), Personal Essence (Essence + [Willpower x 2]); Peripheral Essence ([Essence x 4] + [Willpower x 2] + [the character's highest Virtue x 4]); and health levels (seven, plus any gained from Charms). Choose starting Intimacies (equal to Compassion).

Bonus Points

Bonus points (18) may be spent at any time during character creation.

Castes

- **Full Moon:** The warriors of Luna.
  Caste Attributes: Strength, Dexterity, Stamina
  Anima Power: Doubles speed and leaping distances for a scene and also doubles Strength for the purpose of feats of strength.
- **Waxing Moon:** The priests and courtiers of Luna.
  Caste Attributes: Charisma, Manipulation, Appearance
  Anima Power: Gain (Essence) additional lethal and bashing soak against all attacks from creatures of the Wyld. Also adds (Essence) to the minimum number of dice rolled for post-soak damage against creatures of the Wyld.
- **Half Moon:** The judges of Luna.
  Caste Attributes: Charisma, Perception, Intelligence
  Anima Power: Adds (Essence) to all initiative rolls and to all rolls to detect unexpected attacks for the remainder of the scene.
- **Waning Moon:** The rogues of Luna.
  Caste Attributes: Dexterity, Manipulation, Wits
  Anima Power: May craft an illusion that makes the Waning Moon appear to be someone else for a scene and add (Essence) to any social action to maintain the deception. Alternatively, this power provides an array of ever-shifting shadow and silver light, adding (Essence) to the difficulty of any identification attempt.
- **No Moon:** The scholars of Luna.
  Caste Attributes: Perception, Intelligence, Wits
  Anima Power: The No Moon is surrounded by an inky black penumbra that inflicts a -1 external penalty on all attackers who cannot see through darkness. Also, the mote cost of all Charms that explicitly require an Occult roll, as well as the cost of any spells cast, are reduced.

Motivation

Choose a driving and epic Motivation for your Lunar character in keeping with her duty of stewardship.

Lunar Character Creation Summary

Virtues

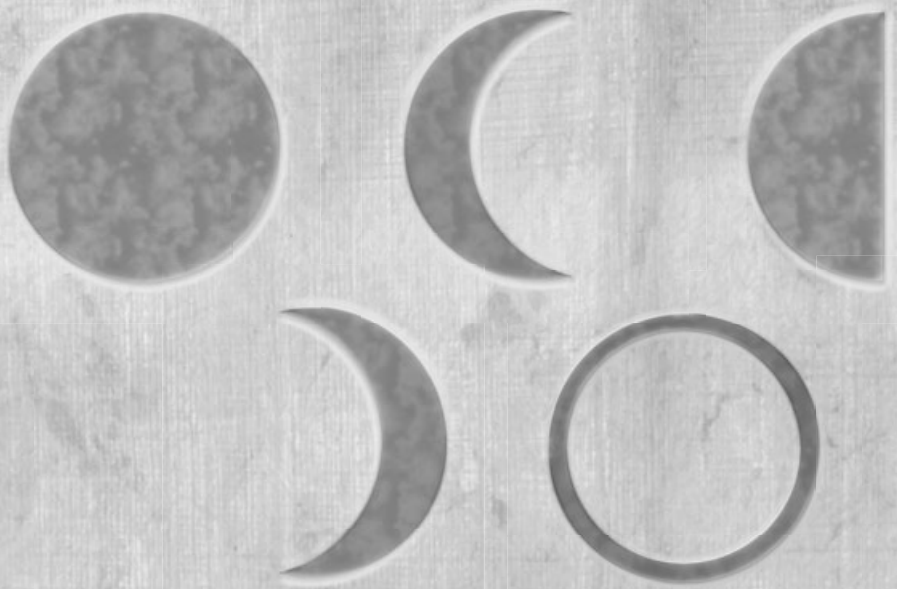
Compassion—Empathy and forgiveness
Conviction—Emotional endurance
Temperance—Self-control and clear-headedness
Valor—Courage and bravery

Backgrounds

Allies—Aides and friends who help in tasks.
Arsenal—Authorization to own magical weapons and outfit military forces with them.
Artifact—Individual wonders of the First Age (for those who cannot buy them in bulk with other Backgrounds).
Backing—Standing and rank in an organization of power and influence.
Command—Authority to lead troops.
Connections—Influence and informational sources among organizations of power and authority.
Cult—Mortals who worship you.
Familiar—An animal companion.
Heart's Blood—The library of animal and human shapes you can assume.
Henchmen—Non-Exalted minions who fight on your behalf.
Manse—A place of power and Essence.
Mentor—A teacher and instructor.
Panoply—Your accumulated collection of wondrous devices.
Reputation—Your social standing.
Retainers—Loyal servants.
Salary—Heavenly income in the form of Ambrosia and Quintessence.
Savant—A superior understanding of First Age magitech.
Sifu—A tutor in the intricacies of Exalted martial arts.
Solar Bond—A supernatural connection to your Solar mate.
Wealth—A vast income, the upper levels of which are unreachable save by Celestial Exalted.

Bonus Point Costs

Trait	Cost
Trait	**Cost**
Attribute	4 (3 if a Caste or Favored Attribute)
Ability	2 (1 if a Favored Ability)
Background	1 (2 if the Background is being raised above 3)
Specialty	1 (2 per 1 if in a Favored Ability)
Virtue	3
Willpower	2
Intimacies	3 to increase starting Intimacies to (Willpower + Compassion)
Essence	10
Charms	7 (5 if in a Favored or Caste Ability)
Knacks	6



Sidereal Character Creation Summary

Character-Creation Process

Step One: Character Concept

Choose concept, caste and Motivation.

Note caste's anima powers.

Step Two: Attributes

Note that all Attributes start with one dot.

Prioritize the three categories: Physical, Social, Mental (8/6/4)

Choose Physical Attributes: Strength, Dexterity, Stamina

Choose Social Attributes: Charisma, Manipulation, Appearance

Choose Mental Attributes: Perception, Intelligence, Wits

Step Three: Abilities

Note Auspicious Abilities.

Select Favored Abilities (four; may not be the same as Auspicious Abilities).

Assign Celestial Training Ability dots (one dot in Bureaucracy, Presence or Socialize; Lore 2; Occult 2; Ride or Sail 1; and two dots allocated among Archery, Martial Arts, Melee or Thrown).

Assign Caste Training Ability dots:

Journeys Training Abilities: one dot in Athletics or Survival; Linguistics 1; Martial Arts 1; one dot in Ride or Sail

Serenity Training Abilities: one dot in Craft, Medicine or Performance; Martial Arts 1; Presence 1; Socialize 1

Battles Training Abilities: two dots in Archery, Melee or Martial Arts; War 2

Secrets Training Abilities: one dot in Awareness or Investigation; one dot in Larceny or Socialize; Martial Arts 1; Stealth 1

Endings Training Abilities: one dot in Awareness or Dodge; Martial Arts 2; Stealth 1

Choose Abilities (25—at least 10 must be from Auspicious or Favored Abilities; at least one in each Favored Ability; none may be higher than 3 without spending bonus points).

Step Four: Advantages

Choose Backgrounds (15—none may be higher than 3 without spending bonus points; gain Cult 1 and Backing [Bureau of Destiny] 1 for free), Charms (12; at least five must be associated with the Sidereal's Auspicious or Favored Attributes; Sidereal Exalted may begin with up to three Sidereal Martial Arts Charms as long as they meet the prerequisites); astrological colleges (seven; at least four must be placed within the five colleges associated with the character's Maiden); Virtues (5—none may be higher than 4 without spending bonus points) and Virtue Flaw.

Step Five: Finishing Touches

Record Essence (3), Willpower (equals the sum of the two highest Virtues—may not start at higher than 8 unless at least two Virtues are 4 or higher); Personal Essence ([Essence x 2] + Willpower); Peripheral Essence ([Essence x 6] + Willpower + [the sum of all four Virtues]); and health levels (seven, plus any gained from Charms). Choose starting Intimacies (equal to Compassion).

Bonus Points

Bonus points (18) may be spent at any time during character creation.

Castes

- **Journeys:** Heaven's Messengers, who travel any distance to perform their duties.
  Auspicious Abilities: Resistance, Ride, Sail, Survival, Thrown
  Anima Power: Triple running speed for him and any of his allies (including mounts) within (Essence x 10) yards.
- **Serenity:** Heaven's Courtesans, who regulate fate as it pertains to life, love, recreation and procreation.
  Auspicious Abilities: Craft, Dodge, Linguistics, Performance, Socialize
  Anima Power: Gain (Essence) automatic successes to all Performance rolls made by her or her allies within (Essence x 10) yards.
- **Battles:** Heaven's Soldiers, who manipulate fate in the context of combat and direct conflict.
  Auspicious Abilities: Archery, Athletics, Melee, Presence, War.
  Anima Power: Reduce damage rolled in Step 10 of attack resolution by one health level (to a minimum of zero). This effect protects both the Sidereal and her allies within (Essence x 10) yards.
- **Secrets:** Heaven's Eyes, who keep or reveal knowledge at Heaven's direction.
  Auspicious Abilities: Investigation, Larceny, Lore, Occult, Stealth
  Anima Power: Renders the Sidereal and his allies within (Essence x 10) yards immune to mind-reading and unnatural mental influence from opponents with an Essence less than his own. Against opponents with an equal or higher Essence, those protected add the Sidereal's Essence to the Mental DV of any affected person.
- **Endings:** Heaven's Gardeners, who make sure that all things end at their appointed time.
  Auspicious Abilities: Awareness, Bureaucracy, Integrity, Martial Arts, Medicine

Sidereal Character Creation Summary

Anima Power: Increase the damage inflicted by the Sidereal and her allies within (Essence x 10) yards by one level, applied after rolling in Step 10 of attack resolution, as long as an attack inflicts at least one level of damage before considering the effect.

Motivation

Choose a driving and epic Motivation for your Sidereal character, keeping in mind her natural tendency for subtlety and misdirection.

Virtues

Compassion—Empathy and forgiveness
Conviction—Emotional endurance
Temperance—Self-control and clear-headedness
Valor—Courage and bravery

Backgrounds

Acquaintances—Mortals who know the Exalt under a different guise.
Allies—Aides and friends who help in tasks.
Arsenal—Authorization to own magical weapons and outfit military forces with them.
Artifact—Individual wonders of the First Age (for those who cannot buy them in bulk with other Backgrounds).
Backing—Standing and rank in an organization of power and influence.
Command—Authority to lead troops.
Connections—Influence and informational sources among organizations of power and authority.
Cult—Mortals who worship you.
Familiar—An animal companion.
Henchmen—Non-Exalted minions who fight on your behalf.
Manse—A place of power and Essence.
Mentor—A teacher and instructor.
Panoply—Your accumulated collection of wondrous devices.
Reputation—Your social standing.
Retainers—Loyal servants.
Salary—Heavenly income in the form of Ambrosia and Quintessence.
Savant—A superior understanding of First Age magitech.
Sifu—A tutor in the intricacies of Exalted martial arts.
Wealth—A vast income, the upper levels of which are unreachable save by Celestial Exalted.

Bonus Point Costs

Trait	Cost
Attribute	4
Ability	2 (1 if a Favored or Auspicious Ability)
Background	1 (2 if the Background is being raised above 3)
Specialty	1 (2 per 1 if in a Favored or Auspicious Ability)
Virtue	3
Willpower	2
Intimacies	3 to increase starting Intimacies to (Willpower + Compassion)
Essence	10
Charms	7 (5 if in a Favored or Auspicious Ability)
Sidereal Martial Arts Charm	8 (6 if Martial Arts is a Favored or Auspicious Ability)
Sidereal astrology college	7 (5 in your Maiden's colleges)

Dragon-Blooded Character Creation Summary

Character-Creation Process

Step One: Character Concept

Choose concept, aspect and Motivation.

Note aspect's anima powers.

Step Two: Attributes

Note that all Attributes start with one dot.

Prioritize the three categories: Physical, Social, Mental (8/6/4)

Choose Physical Attributes: Strength, Dexterity, Stamina

Choose Social Attributes: Charisma, Manipulation, Appearance

Choose Mental Attributes: Perception, Intelligence, Wits

Step Three: Abilities

Note Aspect Abilities.

Select Favored Abilities (three; may not be the same as Aspect Abilities).

Assign Terrestrial Training Ability dots (Archery 1, Bureaucracy 1, Lore 2, Martial Arts 1, Melee 1, Occult 1, Performance 1, Presence 1, Ride 1, Socialize 1 and War 1).

Choose Abilities (30—at least 10 must be from Aspect or Favored Abilities; at least one in each Favored Ability; none may be higher than 3 without spending bonus points).

Step Four: Advantages

Choose Backgrounds (15—none may be higher than 3 without spending bonus points), Charms (10—at least 5 must be associated with either Aspect or Favored Abilities) and Virtues (5—none may be higher than 4 without spending bonus points).

Step Five: Finishing Touches

Record Essence (3), Willpower (equals the sum of the two highest Virtues—may not start at higher than 8 unless at least two Virtues are 4 or higher), Personal Essence (Essence + Willpower + any gained from the Breeding Background), Peripheral Essence ([Essence x 4] + Willpower + [the sum of the two highest Virtues] + any gained from the Breeding Background) and health levels (seven, plus any gained from Charms). Choose starting Intimacies (equal to Compassion).

Bonus Points

Bonus points (18) may be spent at any time during character creation.

Aspects

- **Air:** Silent as a breeze and dangerous as a tornado.
  Aspect Abilities: Linguistics, Lore, Occult, Stealth, Thrown
  Anima Power: Can triple leaping distance, take no damage from falls and add (Essence) to Dodge DV against Thrown and Archery attacks.
- **Earth:** Islands of stability and the bedrock supporting individuals, causes and institutions.
  Aspect Abilities: Awareness, Craft, Integrity, Resistance, War
  Anima Power: May soak lethal damage with full Stamina, and can add Essence in dice to all rolls to resist grappling attacks or avoid knockback. Also adds (Essence) to Stamina for all purposes while standing on earth or stone.
- **Fire:** Passionate and energetic, like the flickering flames they emulate.
  Aspect Abilities: Athletics, Dodge, Melee, Presence, Socialize
  Anima Power: Immune to fire and bursts into flame for a scene. Touch inflicts (Essence) dice of lethal fire damage.
- **Water:** Cool and relaxed, like a flowing river.
  Aspect Abilities: Bureaucracy, Investigation, Larceny, Martial Arts, Sail
  Anima Power: Grants complete water freedom for a day. Can breathe water as easily as air and ignore any and all environmental penalties for being underwater. Can also walk across water as if it were solid land.
- **Wood:** Mystical and in touch with nature.
  Aspect Abilities: Archery, Medicine, Performance, Ride, Survival
  Anima Power: Grants total immunity to plant-based poisons for a scene. Also grants poisonous touch. Adds (Essence) to Dodge DV versus Archery attacks and any attacks that rely on wooden weapons.

Motivation

Choose a driving and epic Motivation for your Dragon-Blooded character.

Virtues

Compassion—Empathy and forgiveness
Conviction—Emotional endurance
Temperance—Self-control and clear-headedness
Valor—Courage and bravery

Dragon-Blooded Character Creation Summary

Backgrounds

Allies—Aides and friends who help in tasks.
Arsenal—Authorization to own magical weapons and outfit military forces with them.
Artifact—Individual wonders of the First Age (for those who cannot buy them in bulk with other Backgrounds).
Backing—Standing and rank in an organization of power and influence.
Breeding—The inherited strength of your Terrestrial bloodline.
Command—Authority to lead troops.
Connections—Influence and informational sources among organizations of power and authority.
Cult—Mortals who worship you (even though it could mean your death if you are discovered).
Familiar—An animal companion.
Henchmen—Non-Exalted minions who fight on your behalf.
Manse—A place of power and Essence.
Mentor—A teacher and instructor.
Panoply—Your accumulated collection of wondrous devices.
Reputation—Your social standing.
Resources—Wealth and material goods (or at least those within the reach of Dragon-Blooded and mortals).
Retainers—Loyal servants.
Savant—A superior understanding of First Age magitech.
Sifu—A tutor in the intricacies of Exalted martial arts.

Bonus Point Costs

Trait	Cost
Attribute	4
Ability	2 (1 if a Favored or Aspect Ability)
Background	1 (2 if the Background is being raised above 3. Certain Backgrounds may cost more for Dragon-Blooded.)
Specialty	1 (2 per 1 if in a Favored or Aspect Ability)
Virtue	3
Willpower	2
Intimacies	3 to increase starting Intimacies to (Willpower + Compassion)
Essence	10
Charms	7 (5 if in a Favored or Aspect Ability)
Celestial Martial Arts Charm	10 (7 if Favored or Aspect Ability)

ADMIRAL LEVIATHAN'S SCOUTS CONFIRM THE PIRATES' LOCATION.
MOVE IN.
AYE-AYE, SIR.
ALL RIGHT, MASTS DOWN. ALL SHIPS PREPARE TO DIVE!
AYE-AYE, SIR!
ON MY MARK, NOW! READY, READY...
...DIVE!

CHAPTER TWO

THE GOD-KINGS' PROWESS

In the Age of Splendor, the Celestial Exalted are at the pinnacle of their power. In addition, their Dragon-Blooded subordinates have access to anagathic techniques unheard of in the fallen Second Age, extending both their lives and their odds of surviving to better master their Essence. As a result, the use of high-Essence Charms by the Exalted of the era is commonplace.

THE SOLAR EXALTED

As undisputed masters of the Realm, First Age Lawgivers exercise the Mandate of Heaven across the face of Creation. Much of the power that backs up the Solars' supremacy lies in the immense innate power granted by the spectacular Charms at their command. The rest derives from the infrastructure and weapons that those Charms helped forge.

NEW KEYWORDS

Mirror: This Keyword denotes a symmetry of power between the Lawgivers and their dark reflections, the Abyssal Exalted. Solar Mirror Charms list their Abyssal analogues in parentheses, which generally have the same total number of prerequisite Charms and minimum trait requirements. For Eclipse and Moonshadow Castes, a mirror can substitute for its analogue (with regard to any prerequisites) as if it were the same Charm. More detail on this Keyword may be found in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Abyssals**, pages 120-121.

The Abyssal Exalted do not yet exist in the First Age, but some Solars have begun to discover their terrible Charms through experiments with the fearsome relic known as the Black Mirror (see **Lands of Creation**, p. 121) and the Charm Black Mirror Revelation (see **Glories of the Most High—The Unconquered Sun**, pp. 29-30). The Mirror Charms detailed below are appropriate for Abyssal characters in Second Age games to learn as they grow into the full maturity of their apocalyptic power.

Native: Powers like the Eclipse, Moonshadow and Fiend anima do not allow acquisition of Native Charms. Only natural wielders can learn Native charms. Exalted Charms and hero-style expansions are natural to the appropriate type of Chosen. Spirit Charms are natural to gods, elementals, demons and akuma. Arcanoi are natural to ghosts. Raksha Charms are natural to Fair Folk. Primordial Charms are natural to Primordials, Green Sun Princes and Exalted akuma. The God-Blooded children of natural wielders cannot learn their parents' Native Charms. Martial Arts Charms that are not Hero Style expansions cannot have the Native keyword.

Reactor: No combination of effects including any Charm carrying this Keyword may cause the character to gain more than 20 motes during the course of a single action. Stunt

rewards explicitly do not count toward this limit. As a point of clarification, the Solar Charm Essence-Gathering Temper (see **Exalted**, p. 207) has this Keyword.

Excellencies

Supreme Perfection of (Ability)

Cost: —; **Mins:** (Ability) 5, Essence 5; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: Mirror
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: (Ability) Essence Flow

This Charm permanently alters the cost of the Solar Excellencies associated with the Ability this Charm is purchased for. The First Excellency's cost becomes "one mote per two dice added," while the Second Excellency's cost becomes "one mote per success added" and the Third Excellency's cost drops to a flat three motes. Fractional values are lost; for example, a Solar with Dexterity 4, Melee 5 who spent five motes on the First or Second Excellency would add nine dice or four successes, respectively. This discount *only* applies when the Excellency in question is channeled through the appropriate (Ability) Essence Flow. Supreme Perfection of (Ability) is incompatible with any other Charm which provides cost discounts to the Excellencies, such as Infinite (Ability) Mastery.

New Abyssal Charm: This Charm's Abyssal Mirror is identical to its Solar counterpart in all regards.

Divine Transcendence of (Ability)

Cost: —; **Mins:** (Ability) 5, Essence 5; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: Native, Mirror (Apocalyptic Evolution of [Ability])
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Any (Ability) Excellency

All limitations in existence shrink in the face of Solar determination. That which is impossible becomes merely difficult; that which is indestructible crumbles; that which cannot be slain lies dead upon the earth. When a Solar crashes against the boundaries of her own power, that limit also falters. All Charms within the Ability corresponding to this Charm reduce their minimum Ability and Essence ratings by one when the character attempts to learn them. All subsidiary powers contained within such Charms (such as the Archery 6+ damage upgrade of Lambent Bolt of Annihilation) also lower their requisite Ability and Essence ratings by one. For example, if a character learned Divine Transcendence of Linguistics, the Charm Beautiful Essence-Born Rune would drop from minimums of Linguistics 6, Essence 6 to Linguistics 5, Essence 5. Under Divine Transcendence of Melee, all of the repurchase opportunities of Golden Destruction Cut would become available one dot earlier. Divine Transcendence of (Ability) cannot reduce the requirements of any Charm with minimums of (Ability) 10 or Essence 10. Charms retain their original ratings for all other purposes, such as building Combos. Upon achieving (Ability) 10, Essence 10, this Charm vanishes and the Solar is refunded its cost.

New Abyssal Charm: Apocalyptic Evolution of (Ability) (Prerequisites: Any [Ability] Excellency). This Charm's Abyssal Mirror is identical to its Solar counterpart.

Elder Essence Minimums

Charms running from Essence 1 to 5 are detailed on page 184 of **Exalted**.

Charms having Essence minimums from 1 to 5 encompass the complete array of effects for which the Solars were given purpose. Having conquered chaos and ascended to rulership of Creation, Solars expand to represent a purpose for which there was no design. Charms beyond the Essence minimum of 5 suggest a force for which there is no peer, and a measure for which there is no call. In short, these effects equip the Solars with a new array of effects of such magnitude and scope that there could be no known reason. Beyond this point, Solars transcend humanity, expand their notice beyond the core of existence, bargain with incomprehensible forces, and build new worlds—if only to have more to conquer.

Charms with an Essence minimum of 6 leave behind worldly miracles—the Exalt now engages in the work of gods. Her power redefines her standing among the Exalted, and it is on the back of these wonders that an Age may be built.

Charms with an Essence minimum of 7 depict the authorial primacy of one who knows no value she cannot change and no limit she cannot reach. These miracles leave marks on the world that last for untold generations, each application a legend unto itself. The holy might contained by these Charms evoke such awe and terror that the Celestial Exalted look upon them with shocked remove.

Charms with an Essence minimum of 8 touch the very foundation of the universe. The Solar lays hands upon the forces of the very cosmos, and they recognize in her Essence a peer.

Charms with an Essence minimum of 9 affect all the heavenly glory of the sun unbound. Solar power expands almost beyond the capacity of the world to contain it. What is the possible purpose of such great and terrible power?

Charms with an Essence minimum of 10 denote powers beyond those which forged the universe. Not even the Primordials fully understand Essence 10; at this level of effect, the intellects which defined existence find themselves in the position of discovery. What challenges even the Primordials, a Solar may come naturally to grasp and engender: power beyond all reason.

The Dawn Caste

Archery

Lambent Bolt of Annihilation

Cost: 5 motes; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 4;
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Mirror (Howling Shadows of the Void), Obvious
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Essence Arrow Attack

The Lawgiver's arrow detonates in a searing flare as it hits. If an attack enhanced by this Charm successfully strikes its target, then the target is surrounded by a one-time environmental damage effect with a radius of (Essence x 5) yards, Damage (Essence)L and Trauma (Essence). This damage is doubled against structures. If the Solar is caught within the radius of this effect, she is immune to it. At Essence 5+, if the Solar has Compassion 3+, the explosion produced by this Charm will not harm any characters she does not wish it to. At Archery 6+, the environmental field's Damage upgrades to (Essence x 2)L.

A second purchase of this Charm, at Archery 7+, Essence 7+ permits the Lawgiver to activate Lambent Bolt of Annihilation for 10m, expanding its radius to (Essence x 50) yards. This benefit upgrades to (Essence x 100) yards at Archery 8+, Essence 8+.

New Abyssal Charm: Howling Shadows of the Void (Prerequisites: Splinter of the Void). This Charm is identical to its Solar counterpart save that the Abyssal may not spare allies with her Compassion. Instead, at Essence 5+, the Charm does not destroy any undead the Abyssal has personally animated.

Golden Artillerist Method

Cost: —; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 5; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: Mirror (Uncanny Extermination Instinct), Obvious
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Phantom Arrow Technique

This Charm acts as a permanent upgrade to Phantom Arrow Technique, allowing the archer to fire any ranged weapon he may lay his hands on, be it a firewand, prayer piece, light implosion bow, or giant steam cannon. Firing a personal-scale weapon which uses exotic ammunition, or ammunition with a Resources cost, demands 3m per shot fired; firing an artillery-scaled weapon with this Charm costs 3m, 1wp per shot. If the effect of Inexhaustible Bolts of Solar Fire is active, such attacks require one mote per shot, or 1m, 1wp per artillery shot.

New Abyssal Charm: Uncanny Extermination Instinct (Prerequisites: Relic Arrow Method). This Charm is identical to its Solar counterpart, including compatibility with Quiver of Souls.

Boundless Arrow of the Unconquered Sun

Cost: —(+9m, 1wp); **Mins:** Archery 7, Essence 7;
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Mirror (Caught in Oblivion's Eye), Obvious
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Accuracy Without Distance

Though he flees to Heaven or to Hell, the target cannot escape the Lawgiver's arrows. Tilting her head back to feel sunlight on her face, the Solar squints and fires one shot toward her Celestial patron. That shot will strike the target as long as the target is under an open sky—be he in Malfeas, the Underworld, the Wyld, Yu-Shan or anywhere else. The archer need not know where her enemy is, but she may attack a given distant target thus only once until she sees him again. This Charm acts as a permanent range upgrade to Accuracy Without Distance whose benefits cost +9m and 1wp to activate. It explicitly can't be used at night or indoors, and won't hit indoor targets. It works in Yu-Shan only when the Unconquered Sun is ahead in the Games of Divinity and his image is projected across the sky. A second purchase, at Archery 9+, Essence 9+, permits the Charm to attack a target up to five times before the Solar sees him again. A third and final purchase, at Archery 10, Essence 10, permits the Lawgiver to use this Charm whenever she stands in sunlight, and to target her enemies so long as they are exposed to any degree of light; thus are the enemies of the greatest of the Chosen forced to dwell in absolute darkness forever. This final mode of attack may only be used once until the Lawgiver sees her target again.

New Abyssal Charm: Caught in Oblivion's Eye (Prerequisites: Flawless Archer Discipline). This Charm is similar to its Solar counterpart, save that the archer and his target must both be under the open sky at night. The Essence 10 version of Caught in Oblivion's Eye permits the Abyssal to strike his target so long as both characters stand in darkness illuminated by light no brighter than that of a moonless night.

Martial Arts

Swallowing the Lotus Root

Cost: —; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 2;
Type: Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: None

The greatest among the Exalted find it no great feat to master the arts of their subordinates. The experience cost of Terrestrial Martial Arts Charms is reduced to 4xp, or 5xp if Martial Arts is not a Caste or Favored Ability (or if the character has no Favored Abilities, as in the case of Alchemicals), and their training time is halved. During character creation, Terrestrial Martial Arts Charms cost half as much as native Charms, meaning that each starting Charm (or

Charm purchased with bonus points) allocated to such a style provides two Charms instead. As a final benefit, the character no longer needs to pay a surcharge when using elementally aspected Terrestrial Martial Arts styles. Should a character who already knows Terrestrial Martial Arts learn this Charm, the experience cost of those Charms is retroactively lowered and the character is refunded the difference.

This is a stand-alone Celestial Martial Arts Charm, which may *only* be learned by Celestial Exalted and akuma. Non-Solar Exalted know the Charm by different names; Abyssals call it Blood-Soaked Lotus Roots, while the Green Sun Princes know it as Roots of the Brass Lotus and Sidereals have dubbed it Perfected Lotus Mastery. Lunar Exalted know the Charm as Terrestrial Bloodline Integration.

Alchemical Exalted achieve an identical effect through the use of a Perfected Lotus Matrix submodule called Lotus Filament Conduction (Essence 2; 6xp).

Solar Hero Supremacy

Cost: —; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5;
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Mirror (Agony of the Black Messiah), Stackable
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Fists of Iron Technique

The Chosen of the Most High need no esoteric lessons to rock the world back on its heels—their strength and prowess are weapons enough. The Solar's unarmed attacks automatically stun opponents they strike and roll damage against (see **Exalted**, p. 153). This stunning effect is cumulative—if a Solar made a three-attack flurry and struck his opponent with all three attacks, his target would suffer a -6 internal penalty until the Solar's next action.

New Abyssal Charm: Agony of the Black Messiah (Prerequisite: Ravaging Blow). This Charm causes each hit to produce a stackable -2 wound penalty that lingers until the Abyssal's DV refreshes. It is otherwise identical to its Solar counterpart.

Orichalcum Fists of Battle

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 6, Essence 6;
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-Basic, Obvious
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Solar Hero Supremacy

The Solar's fists crash with the sound of thunder as they batter her opponents into submission. The Solar multiplies her Strength by her Essence for the purpose of calculating the raw damage of her unarmed attacks. These attacks ignore hardness.

Wicked Dissolve Dust

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 7, Essence 7;
Type: Reflexive (Step 10)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Crippling, Obvious
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Solar Hero Supremacy

Having already prepared his opponent for her grand defeat, the Solar brings a battle to a thunderous conclusion. This Charm constitutes a monstrous blow which raises a massive cloud of dust and debris on impact, knocking the opponent senseless. The target is rendered Inactive for a number of ticks equal to the post-soak damage dice of the attack (rounded up). Wicked Dissolve Dust may only be activated if the target suffers a stunning penalty (such as from Solar Hero Supremacy) higher than their Stamina rating.

Melee

Golden Destruction Cut

Cost: —; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Hungry Tiger Technique

This Charm acts as a permanent upgrade to its prerequisite, allowing the Solar's player to count extra successes on the attack roll three times rather than twice for the purpose of determining raw damage. A second purchase, at Melee 6+, allows extra successes to be counted four times rather than three, while a third purchase at Melee 8+ allows extra successes to be counted five times. A fourth and final purchase at Melee 9+ causes each extra success to be counted ten times for the purpose of determining raw damage.

Guarding Star Tactics

Cost: — (+4m); **Mins:** Melee 6, Essence 6;
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Obvious, War
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Protection of Celestial Bliss

The Solar Exalted embody a limitless destructive power which is second to none. Using this Charm, the character may tap into that power, focusing it into a large-scale defense capable of striking down and turning aside all oncoming forces with an even greater force of her own. Defending herself is not good enough; even if a star should fall, the Exalt may use Guarding Star Tactics to deflect it away from all that she wishes to protect by an unrivaled display of power. This Charm serves as a permanent upgrade to Heavenly Guardian Defense, allowing it to be activated with a four mote surcharge to serve as a perfect parry against any area-of-effect attack, environmental damage effect, or ranged attack from a complementary unit—a parry which destroys or turns aside the offending attack. Players should feel free to invent suitably dramatic stunts to express the way in which attacks are defeated.

Attacks may be divided into two categories: *transitory* and *sustained*.

• Transitory: Transitory attacks are attacks composed of non-imperishable physical matter, energy, or non-permanent environmental hazards. Defending against a transitory attack destroys that effect utterly at the point where it intersects the Lawgiver's weapon, preventing it from harming anything behind the Solar, or any complementary unit he is a special character in.

For example: *The Exalt unleashes an arc of solar flame from his blade, burning away an arrow volley as it descends toward his army. Crackling waves of golden lightning erupt from the Solar's daiklave, shattering a swarm of obsidian butterflies in midair. The Solar's weapon strikes an incoming tidal wave, sending a sheet of Essence boiling across it surface and evaporating it before it can smash into Chiaroscuro. The Lawgiver's sword dissolves the leading edge of a Total Annihilation shockwave, unraveling the spell in moments. The Solar plunges his weapon into the ground, stilling an earthquake with a pulse of Essence.*

• Sustained: Sustained attacks include attacks made of the five magical materials, attacks which are part of the body of a living being, permanent environmental hazards, and environmental hazards or attacks which the Storyteller deems unsuitable to arbitrary destruction. Attacks made with imperishable materials (such as a rain of jade arrows) are simply scattered and deflected without harm. Attacks made by permanent environmental hazards (such as the Pole of Fire) are stilled within (Essence) miles for (Essence) actions. Attacks made by living environmental hazards (such as the winds of Adorjan or a Lunar using a swarm Knack) are prevented from moving to intersect or bypass the position of Solar or any complementary unit he is a member of until their DV has refreshed. Attacks unsuitable for arbitrary destruction are generally one-of-a-kind storyline events, and are deflected or otherwise handled according to the Storyteller's discretion. Potential examples of resolution of such attacks:

Golden lightning leaps from the Solar's blade to catch Mount Metagalapa before it can fall on her army, then shifts the mountain so that it is deposited safely on the ground several miles away. A shockwave erupts from the Solar's blade, knocking the flying manse away without harm moments before it would have crashed into Tzatli. A pillar of sunfire rises from the Lawgiver's blade, preventing two of Malfeas's layers from crashing together and sending them slowly drifting apart. A slash releases a cyclone which ironically carries Adorjan away.

Sharp Light of Judgment Stance

Cost: 12m, 1wp; **Mins:** Melee 7, Essence 7; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-Basic, Holy, Mirror (Symphony of the Flayed Legion), Obvious, War
Duration: One action
Prerequisite Charms: Blazing Solar Bolt

The Solar whirls into a devastating attack, felling all who would stand against her with a storm of slashes. The character makes a standard Melee attack and applies it against all enemies within (Melee x 100) yards. Allies are immune to this onslaught; the waves of lethal radiance

dance deftly past them. This attack is also applied against any enemy who moves into the effect radius during the Charm's duration, and applied again once per tick against any enemy attempting to move toward the Lawgiver. The attack produced by this Charm deals aggravated damage to creatures of darkness.

If used over consecutive actions, the Charm loses its Willpower cost after the first use, and cumulatively lowers its most cost by two on each subsequent activation, to a minimum cost of 5m. The range of its area of destruction doubles with each consecutive activation. The Charm cannot spread to encompass more than the Solar's (Essence x 3) miles.

Directed against a complementary unit in mass combat, this Charm renders the attack unblockable and undodgeable, and multiplies its final damage in Step 10 by the Lawgiver's Essence.

New Abyssal Charm: Symphony of the Flayed Legion (Prerequisites: Ebon Lightning Prana). Gathering shadows about his weapon, the Abyssal casts shrieking waves of razor-edged darkness across the battlefield. This Charm is identical to its Solar counterpart, save that it lacks a Holy effect; instead, mortals slain by this Charm automatically rise one day later as uncontrolled zombies, full of risen hunger for the flesh of the living. This effect fails automatically in the face of any magic designed to prevent a corpse's reanimation.

Thrown

Torrent of Inner Light

Cost: —; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: Obvious
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Falling Icicle Strike, Spirit Weapons, Triple-Distance Attack Technique

The Solar is a living weapon, every mote of his Essence a microcosm of the perfect assassin. The character gains the following permanent benefits:

• Triple Distance Attack Technique: The Charm extends the range of thrown weapons by a factor of ten rather than three. At Thrown 6+, Essence 6+ this Charm changes a weapon's range value from yards to miles.

• Spirit Weapons: This Charm's Cost becomes zero motes.

Additionally, all unexpected Thrown attacks ignore the target's Hardness.

Acuity of the Far-Flung Hand

Cost: — (3m); **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 5;
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Obvious
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Call the Blade

This Charm costs three motes every time its benefits are activated. It allows the character to hurl implements in order to take a normal action out to a range of (Essence x 10) yards; for example, the character could throw her lockpicks at a lock to make a Larceny roll, toss a pen at a desk to write a letter from across the room, or hurl her daiklave at an opponent on the other side of a moat to make a standard Melee attack. Acuity of the Far-Flung Hand does not help the character retrieve tossed items. Penalties that would apply to a Thrown roll (such as those due to wind or poor visibility) apply to the roll for the action taken.

Maelstrom of Celestial Dominance

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Thrown 6, Essence 6;
Type: Simple
Keywords: Combo-OK, Mirror (Bone-Filled Maelstrom Gust), Obvious
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Cascade of Cutting Terror

The Solar focuses the apocalyptic might of his Essence into a weapon and hurls it out into the world, where it becomes a vortex annihilation formed of ten thousand glittering blades. The character makes a single Thrown attack with a readied weapon. This attack is unblockable and undodgeable, and applies to every character within a line (Essence x 3) yards wide, (Essence x 2) yards high, and (Thrown) miles long. At Thrown 8+, Essence 8+ the Charm's distance extends to (Thrown x 3) miles.

A second purchase of this Charm at Thrown 7+, Essence 7+ upgrades its destructive power to the point that the attack lacerates the very fabric of the cosmos. A million white-hot cuts sizzle in the air, leaving behind a ragged white scar of sunfire. This acts as an environmental attack within the area covered by the Charm's initial attack with Damage 3L/action (Damage 3A/action as a Holy effect against creatures of darkness), Trauma 3. This scar lingers for (Solar's Essence) hours. The Lawgiver is advised to be wary of this barrier, as he is not immune to its power.

New Abyssal Charm: Bone-Filled Maelstrom Gust (Prerequisites: Burrowing Bone Maggot). The jagged, weeping slits this Charm's repurchase leaves in the fabric of the world radiate the power of Oblivion and have no Holy aspect. It is otherwise identical to its Solar counterpart.

War

One With Strife Method

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** War 5, Essence 4;
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Counterattack
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Fury Inciting Presence

Some Solars learn to avoid conflict. Those of the Dawn Caste learn to revel in it. One With Strife Method enhances the Lawgiver's capacity for violence, allowing him to use any of his combat abilities to make one free counterattack per action against each opponent that attacks him during that action.

Behemoth-Slaying Attitude

Cost: 7m; **Mins:** War 5, Essence 5; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Mirror (Filling the Elephants' Graveyard), War
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Mob-Dispersing Rebuke

It is the lot of Solars to stand before the titans and their creations, and to be unafraid—they were made to kill giants. The Solar sets herself into a battle rhythm which causes larger opponents to expose their weak points and get in their own way as they attempt to destroy her; their strength becomes her own. Any warstrider-sized or larger opponent suffers a -3 external penalty on all attempts to strike the Lawgiver, while her own blows ignore half the target's soak and raise the minimum damage of successful attacks by two. The Solar also ignores any Magnitude advantages enjoyed by opponents who are considered to be solo mass combat units due to their vast size, such as Juggernaut. Finally, if facing landscape-scale opponents (such as Mount Mostath or Mother Bog), the Solar may always use that opponent's own bulk as a point of concealment permitting her to attempt to re-establish surprise.

At War 6+, Essence 6+, while this Charm is active the Solar lowers by one mote (to a minimum of one mote) the cost of all Charms which create undodgeable attacks or cause attacks to be undodgeable, so long as those attacks are directed solely at warstrider-sized or larger opponents.

New Abyssal Charm: Filling the Elephants' Graveyard (Prerequisites: Morale-Shattering Method). This Charm is identical to its Solar counterpart.

In Doubt of Legions Spirit

Cost: 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** War 6, Essence 6;
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, War
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Behemoth-Slaying Attitude

In the Era of Dreams, Solars of the Dawn Caste are as legends outside of time, relics of a Primordial War long ended, known for their ability to stand alone against armies. The Lawgiver's insuperable tactics wreak havoc upon enemy formations, turning their numbers into a liability and lessening the effectiveness of their attacks. This Charm may be activated when the Solar fights as a solo unit. All attacks against her by complementary units suffer an external penalty equal to (the total aggregate Magnitude of opponents facing her on the battlefield) – (unit's Might).

For example, if the Solar faced a force of 10,000 erymanthoi, split into 10 Magnitude 6 units, this would count as Magnitude 9 opposition, not magnitude 60. Since a unit of erymanthoi enjoys Might 3, each unit's attacks upon the Solar would suffer a -6 external penalty. Were the units composed of mortal soldiers with mundane weapons, the penalty would instead be -9 (reflecting their Might 0).

The Solar also ignores any formation benefits the unit may enjoy.

Yozi-Fighting Principle

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** War 8, Essence 8; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Native
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: One With Strife Method

Yozis are one of the greatest challenges a Solar will ever face in combat, for they are not one being, but *hundreds*. Yet none may stand in superiority to the Solar Exalted. Using Yozi-Fighting Principle, the Lawgiver's killing instinct expands to encompass foes which are armies unto themselves. By conceptualizing all such combatants as intrinsically linked, the character may extend the actions he takes against one opponent to all of them, enabling him to face impossible odds and engage in legendary battles which form the heart of mythology.

While Yozi-Fighting Principle is in effect, any Charm activated against or in response to a networked being is considered to have had its cost pre-paid for use against all other elements of that networked being. This cost discount applies until the Exalt's next action tick.

For example: A Solar is attacked by Ligier and activates a Combo of Heavenly Guardian Defense and Solar Counterattack, paying normally for this defense and counterattack. One tick later, he is subjected to a two-attack flurry by Ligier's soul, Gervesin. The character may activate Heavenly Guardian Defense and Solar Counterattack for no cost in response to Gervesin's first attack, but would need to pay for it against his second. Then, one tick after that, Malfeas himself strikes the Solar with a three attack flurry. The Solar may use Solar Counterattack and Heavenly Guardian Defense twice in response to the titan's onslaught for no cost, but would have to pay a third set of activations.

"Networked beings" are considered to be creatures whose sum totality of being is encompassed by multiple bodies—Yozis and Primordials are the premiere example, but the Emanations of an unshaped raksha also count. This Charm is effective moving both 'up' and 'down' a Yozi's chain of souls—an attack against Gervesin could roll over into a discount against Malfeas as easily as an attack against Malfeas could roll over into a discount against Gervesin. Attacks against Exalted are never discounted, though in the bizarre event that an Exalt somehow began growing subsidiary souls, attacks directed at the Exalt *would* provide a discount to then target her souls. Exalted akuma form an exception to this rule—they are considered a part of the Yozi they have sold themselves to, and may be fully treated as such by this Charm.

The Zenith Caste

Integrity

Lion's Roar Recovery

Cost: —; **Mins:** Integrity 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: Mirror (Underworld Executioner Stance), Native
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Phoenix Renewal Tactic

Reality itself bows to the prowess of the Solar Exalted when they act in accordance with the power infusing their Exaltation. All of the Solar's stunts are upgraded by one category (to a maximum of being three-point stunts) when the Lawgiver's actions reinforce her role as a god-king. Specifically, the Solar's actions must involve: ruling over or protecting those less powerful than herself; administrating territory or resources she owns; educating others; spreading either the worship of the Unconquered Sun *or* herself; or combating creatures of darkness. Successful stunts that are upgraded from two to three points by this Charm are not elligible to draw a point of experience as a reward. Natural three point stunts, rather than being upgraded, add automatic successes rather than dice. If a stunt has already been upgraded due to resonance with the Solar's Motivation, Lion's Roar Recovery provides no benefit.

New Abyssal Charm: Underworld Executioner Stance (Prerequisite: Faithful Killer's Reprieve). This Charm works like its Solar counterpart, except that rather than acting as a god-king, the Abyssal must play out her part as a world-killing weapon. Stunts are upgraded only when the Abyssal seeks to slay either the living or the dead, inflict needless cruelty upon another (mentally, emotionally or physically), inspire fear, or ruin Creation (salting fields, burning homes, poisoning rivers, orchestrating massacres to expand shadowlands, and so forth). Additionally, embracing this Charm raises the Abyssal's value in the eyes of the Neverborn above all other servants of Oblivion; hope is kindled in their dead hearts that the Abyssal may finally be the one to end even the Underworld, setting them free. As a result, the Exalt no longer accumulates Resonance for fighting spectres, Nephwracks, Deathlords or any other creatures of death. This Charm cannot be learned by the Deathlords.

Sacrosanct Soul Retribution

Cost: 8m; **Mins:** Integrity 5, Essence 5;
Type: Reflexive (Step 9)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Counterattack, Holy, Obvious, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Spirit-Maintaining Maneuver

Those who would tempt the noble Lawgivers from their righteous path pay a price in fire. This Charm is a counterattack that may be used in response to any unnatural mental influence directed at the Solar. The Solar's caste mark blazes white and red for a moment; then, wherever the attacker may be, she is engulfed in a bonfire of pure white flames. This is treated as an automatically successful Shaping counterattack which inflicts (Essence) dice of lethal damage (aggravated against creatures of darkness). Should any astrology be used to attempt to divine the target's fate during the scene in which Sacrosanct Soul Retribution is directed at him, such inquiries automatically succeed, but return only the following puzzling message: THE ANATHEMA IS HERE.

This Charm may be used regardless of the range from which unnatural mental influence is deployed, but may only be used once in response to a particular static source of mental influence. For example, the Solar could only deploy this Charm in response to a book enhanced with Linguistics Charms once, no matter how many times he read the book.

At Integrity 6+, Essence 6+, the Solar may also pay one point of Willpower to bestow the creature of darkness mutation on targets of this Charm, as a Shaping effect. Additionally, at this level, anyone slain by Sacrosanct Soul Retribution's white fire is twisted and castigated into a new form, reborn as a terrible monster possessing the same non-magical traits they previously enjoyed, with (Solar's Essence x 3) points of mutations added. If the beast was not a creature of darkness before, it is now. This beast is cleansed most of its previous memories, all Intimacies, and any Essence-based powers it may have possessed. It is reborn with a new, unalterable Motivation: To loyally serve the Lawgiver who created it. Thus do those who would dare tamper with the minds of the Sun's champions pay for their temerity.

Should the Sun Not Rise

Cost: —; **Mins:** Integrity 6, Essence 6; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: Holy, Native
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: None

In eternal night, the Solar Exalted are evidence of a perfect light that once was and shall be again. Should the sun go down forever, the Lawgivers stand as proof of an imperishable hope, surpassing the light from whence they sprang. By learning this Charm, the Solar substantiates for himself the foundational principles of Holy by which the universe abides and the Unconquered Sun decides. In the event of the death of the Unconquered Sun, the Solar's Holy Charms retain their full capacity against all creatures of darkness. This Charm also permanently lowers the cost to activate all Charms with the Holy Keyword by one mote, to a minimum of zero motes.

Performance

Infatuation-Gathering Idol Methodology

Cost: —; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 4;
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Emotion, Illusion
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Heart-Compelling Method

The charismatic soul of the Lawgiver bleeds into every song she sings, every word she reads, every act she plays and every step she takes, making her beautiful. Even if she's just singing softly to herself, she inspires adulation. Whenever she successfully influences a target with a social attack, that target acquires a positive Intimacy toward her, with an emotional context of the target's player's choosing, so long as the target does not choose to reject the social attack by paying Willpower or invoking an appropriate Charm. If the target already has an existing positive Intimacy toward the Solar, then he instead suffers an Illusion effect which causes him to regard the Lawgiver as having twice her true Appearance rating. This unnatural mental influence persists so long as the positive Intimacy does, but may be ignored for one scene by paying a point of Willpower, or broken altogether by paying five points of Willpower at once.

Catching the Sun's Glance

Cost: 20m, 2wp; **Mins:** Performance 7, Essence 7;
Type: Simple (Speed 7 long ticks, DV -3)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Native, Obvious, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Respect-Commanding Attitude

The Unconquered Sun trusts his Chosen to separate out the righteous from the wicked. By the power he has invested in them, the Lawgivers may send forth the specter of his rage to be visited upon the enemies of the Exalted. This Charm allows entire groups to be labeled enemies of Creation and given the creature of darkness deformity. The Lawgiver's player makes a prayer roll against a difficulty of (3 + Magnitude of group targeted). If successful, the day dims and the air quivers, or the night grows hot and feverish and bright. Targeted beings realize what is about to happen as the wrath of Heaven gathers (the Charm is Obvious to them), and have one long tick to prepare themselves—Essence-users are advised to establish some form of Shaping defense. After one long tick passes, a surge of Essence rips through the area, flaring it bright as noon and rendering every targeted being a creature of darkness.

This Charm may only be used to target relatively geographically compact groups, up to about the size of a city. Targeting may be based on geography or political affiliation. "Every member of the Guild in Nexus" would be a valid target for the Charm, as would "every man woman and child in Nexus" or "the army encamped in that valley." However, Guild members not in Nexus would not be affected, and if the army's general were back in the Lap receiving new orders, he would be spared, as he is not with the targeted bulk of the group. Likewise, "all members of the Guild" or "all Brides of Ahlat" would not be valid targets, because those organizations are spread far and wide geographically. The Solar must be close enough to the targeted group for at least one targeted individual to hear the prayers and condemnations he speaks to the Unconquered Sun.

Cast Out Beyond Regard

Cost: 40m, 2wp; **Mins:** Performance 8, Essence 8;
Type: Simple (Speed 7 long ticks, DV -3)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Native, Obvious, Shaping
Duration: One performance
Prerequisite Charms: Catching the Sun's Glance

Creation was given into the hands of the Lawgivers; it is theirs to govern and to judge, forever. Through the power of this Charm, a Solar may exile those who have proven themselves unworthy to exist in the world he rules. The Lawgiver's player makes a prayer roll against a difficulty of (5 + Magnitude of group targeted); this works in the same fashion as Catching the Sun's Glance, save that the Charm cannot discriminate to target sub-groups within a geographic region; for example, it can only target "everyone in Nexus," not "all Guildsmen in Nexus."

Unlike its prerequisite, the Charm does not render its targets creatures of darkness. If used while the sun is out, the day grows dark as night as the Unconquered Sun turns his face away from what is to come. If used by night, the light of the stars becomes weird and green, casting everything into a febrile haze. Creation's Essence sizzles and screams at the culmination of the Lawgiver's ritual condemnation; the boundaries of the cursed area blacken, char, and erupt into flights of blind doves. A patina of silver sand drips from the stars. These omens persist for one long tick following the successful conclusion of the Lawgiver's prayer, which must be uttered within earshot of at least one targeted individual.

At the end of that long tick, the entire targeted region and all inhabitants who have not fled or established Shaping defenses are torn from Creation in a surge of crimson Essence. Where the targeted region stood, there is only a plain of black glass holding Ligier's sullen reflection. He speaks a grudging word of ritual thanks for the Solar's offering, and then vanishes.

The targeted region is deposited somewhere within a random layer of the Demon City, which reflexively reorganizes its geography to make room for the new arrival. The lethal miasma of Malfeas avoids such imported bits of Creation, but this is the only mercy the new deportees are granted; demons are always quite interested in the novelty of a freshly-arrived army encampment or city, and soon come to investigate.

The Sidereal Exalted have repeatedly pressed for legislation to outlaw the use of this Charm, or at least require Deliberative-authorized advance warning of its deployment, as it wreaks untold havoc on the Loom of Fate whenever it is used. To date, these efforts have met with little success.

Presence

Mind-Blanking Rebuke

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 4;
Type: Simple (Speed 6 long ticks, DV -1)

Keywords: Combo-OK, Compulsion, Mirror (Insidious Forbidding Command), Obvious, Social
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Majestic Radiant Presence

The Lawgiver issues a powerful admonition against a target, forbidding him from taking a certain action. The Solar's player makes a (Charisma + Presence) social attack against the target's Dodge MDV; if successful, he may forbid the target from performing an act of his choice for the duration of the scene. This ban may be no wider than the scope of a single Ability or Charm, at the Storyteller's discretion. Examples of forbidden actions include "dodging my attacks," "attacking me with your daiklave," "picking any locks," or "using Seven Shadow Evasion." The Lawgiver cannot prevent the target from resisting Mind-Blanking Rebuke, or forbid any necessary life function ("do not breathe" is not a valid ban).

This unnatural mental influence may be resisted for one action by spending a point of Willpower, and the target becomes immune to the Charm's effects for the rest of the scene once he has spent 3 Willpower resisting it.

New Abyssal Charm: Insidious Forbidding Command (Prerequisite: Dread Lord's Demeanor). This Charm is identical to its Solar counterpart.

Hastening Night's End

Cost: 10m; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 4;
Type: Simple (One dramatic action)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Emotion, Obvious
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Hypnotic Tongue Technique

A touch, a kind word, a moment of intimacy—through such gestures the Solar Exalted may straighten that which is bent and mend that which is broken. This Charm's activation requires at least one hour of personal interaction, which may take a wide variety of forms. Patiently listening to a subject while they explain what ails them, sitting together to watch the sun rise or set, or an evening of lovemaking would all qualify. This Charm has two effects. First, the Solar may target and remove one derangement from the target's mind, regardless of whether it was inflicted by Charms, sorcery, the Wyld, or the simple stresses of life (if any effect contests this, the Solar adds his Presence in automatic successes to the roll-off). Second, the Solar forges in the target an Intimacy to a specific memory in the target's life of which she is aware. So long as this Intimacy endures, the target may not reacquire the derangement the Solar cured, nor may that memory be in any way tampered with, altered, poisoned, removed, or corrupted.

Hastening Night's End may be resisted for a cost of 0 Willpower—the Charm will only help those who wish to be helped. It is impossible for the patient to gain Limit or Resonance, or suffer a Dark Fate manifestation, Limit Break, or Torment during the course of the treatment.

There exists a similar Charm utilizing Medicine as a prerequisite called Mind-Soothing Anodyne (Prerequisites: Flawless Diagnosis Technique, Touch of Blissful Release). Its activation requires an hour of careful psychoanalysis or hypnotherapy, but is otherwise identical to Hastening Night's End.

Searing After-Image Passion

Cost: —; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 5; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: Mirror (Stalking the Shadowed Mind)
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Enemy-Castigating Solar Judgment

The Lawgiver personifies one blazing ideal, choosing an emotion, one of her Intimacies or her Motivation. When she makes social attacks inspiring or furthering her passion, targets must spend an additional two Willpower points to resist. The Solar must choose one passion at a time, but the player may spend one experience point to switch this Charm to a new one. This Charm may not force a target to spend more than 5 Willpower to resist a single instance of mental influence.

New Abyssal Charm: Stalking the Shadowed Mind (Prerequisite: Sanity-Eroding Diatribe). This Charm may only be used to enhance a negative emotion, negative Intimacy, or the Abyssal's Motivation; it is otherwise identical to its Solar counterpart.

Eternal Empress of Love Attitude

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Presence 6, Essence 6;
Type: Simple
Keywords: Combo-Basic, Compulsion, Emotion, Mirror (Eternal Overlord of Dread Attitude)
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: Authority-Radiating Stance

All characters in existence who possess a positive Intimacy toward the Lawgiver find that they cannot intentionally raise a hand against her while this Charm is active. This unnatural mental influence forces such characters who wish to deliberately take some action they believe will bring harm to the Solar (be it physical, emotional, political or even financial) to spend one Willpower per action to do so. Spending three Willpower in this fashion within the course of a single scene negates the effects of Eternal Empress of Love Attitude for the rest of the scene, but the only way for a target to permanently escape the effect of the Charm is to remove her positive Intimacy for the Solar. A second purchase of this Charm at Presence 7+, Essence 7+ renders mortals incapable of spending Willpower to resist the Charm.

New Abyssal Charm: Eternal Overlord of Dread Attitude (Prerequisites: Broken Heart Triumph). This Charm is identical to its Solar counterpart, save that it affects characters who possess an Intimacy of fear toward the Abyssal.

Resistance

Rising Sun Renewal

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 5;
Type: Simple (Speed 5, DV -0)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious
Duration: Five actions
Prerequisite Charms: Body-Mending Meditation

Perfection is the nature of the Solar Exalted, and the best efforts of the world cannot draw them away from that state for long. The Solar's Essence surges and begins to catalyze, producing a crackling, charged feeling in the air around her, as though a storm were about to commence. Once her DV has refreshed five times, she erupts into a torrent of blue-white Essence, shining like a newborn star. When this surge of power passes, the Solar stands unmarred—all her health restored. Activating a Charm with a Flaw of Invulnerability at any point during the Charm's 'charging' period resets its countdown. For example, if a Solar used Rising Sun Renewal, had her DV refresh three times, and then activated Heavenly Guardian Defense, she would need to wait until her DV refreshed five more times before her health levels would be restored. Losing more health levels than the Lawgiver's Stamina during the course of a single action delays the countdown by one DV refresh.

At Resistance 6+, Essence 6+, this Charm will also remove all Crippling effects in addition to healing the character.

Unbroken Chain Resolve

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 5;
Type: Reflexive (Step 10)
Keywords: Combo-OK
Duration: Three actions
Prerequisite Charms: Iron Kettle Body

The Solar's defense must hold at all costs. If the Solar falls, so does all that she holds dear. From this grim resolution a Solar draws the power to survive all onslaught. The character may use this Charm in response to an attack that incurs pre-soak damage. Upon activation, his hardness to rises to a level equal to the pre soak damage of the attack. This does not prevent damage dice from being rolled, but rather guarantees that all lesser attacks are turned harmlessly aside. The Solar's hardness remains at this level for three actions, or until he is struck by an attack that overcomes her hardness. Should the Solar suffer such an attack, he may reflexively pay six motes to drive his hardness up to match the attack's raw damage. This does not count as a Charm activation. This renewed defense will last for three actions or until it is dispelled by a greater attack, whichever comes first. This Charm is ineffective against attacks the Solar permitted to be inflicted upon himself.

Ruin-Abasing Shrug

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Resistance 6, Essence 6;
Type: Reflexive (Step 10)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Mirror (Far Beyond Ruin)
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Adamant Skin Technique

Considerate of others, a Solar may choose not to flaunt his invincibility until the very last instant. This Charm is a perfect defense, having one of the Four Flaws of Invulnerability (see **Exalted**, p. 194). Upon activation, reduce the final damage inflicted by an attack to zero. Those crippled by iniquity are not availed of perfection. Characters with two or more points of Limit experience a failure in this defense: final damage is reduced to a number equal to the Solar's (Limit / 2, round down), as a crack in the Solar's aegis allows damage to slip through. Under this condition, Ruin-Abasing Shrug loses its Flaw of Invulnerability. Ruin-Abasing Shrug may not be used in a Combo with any Charm carrying the Reactor Keyword if it carries a Flaw of Invulnerability. A repurchase at Essence 7 allows the Lawgiver to extend this Charm's duration to One Tick by paying seven motes upon activation, or to One Action by paying seven motes, one Willpower.

New Abyssal Charm: Far Beyond Ruin (Prerequisites: Wounds Mean Nothing). This Charm is identical to its Solar counterpart, save that Abyssals substitute Resonance for Limit.

Inner Fire Unleashed

Cost: —; **Mins:** Resistance 6, Essence 6;
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Native, Reactor
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisites: Ox-Body Technique

Essence permeates every fiber of the Solar's being. Lawgivers with this Charm have learned to focus that Essence upon their vital centers, imbuing their very cells with limitless energy. Whenever a Solar with this Charm heals damaged health levels, she recovers two motes per level. After twenty motes have been restored in this fashion in the course of a scene, the Solar only gains one mote per health level healed. When twenty more motes have been paid out in this manner within the same scene, the Solar only gains one mote per two health levels restored. This healing may only occur as a result of rest or of Solar Charms which heal damage. Though this Charm is permanent, it is perpetuated and substantiated by regular meditation upon inner forces turning outward. It is a sacred power which relies upon the Lawgiver's utmost care for her own well-being. This power fails the Solar if she inflicts harm upon herself or allows others to harm her: injuries from attacks thrown without killing intent will not yield motes when healed.

Survival

Guiding Light Shines On

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Survival 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: Trackless Region Navigation

Guided by the light of the Solar Exalted, none shall lose their way. Flaring his anima to a towering iconic representation that surges a mile into the sky, the light of the Solar's Essence shines through all barriers and obstacles and may be seen up to (Essence x 10) miles away. All attempts to navigate toward the Solar automatically succeed—for both allies and enemies. Astrology used within this range returns only the message "THE LAWGIVER BECKONS."

At Survival 6+, Essence 6+ this Charm may be activated for a cost of 10m to provide one of two alternate benefits. The Solar may act as a beacon only for those he wishes to attract without needing to flare his anima; alternately, the Solar may send his anima burning even higher into the sky, extending the range of its visibility and navigation benefits to (Essence x 100) miles.

Life-Sustaining Shelter Preparation

Cost: 10m, 1wp; Mins: Survival 5, Essence 5;
Type: Simple (One dramatic action)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: Food-Gathering Exercise, Hardship-Surviving Mendicant Spirit

The Solar Exalted may survive anywhere. By his mastery of Survival, he may guarantee this protection to his followers. Even in the depths of Hell or the tunnels of the Labyrinth, Solars using this Charm may erect a shelter which is stable and safe from forces which would seek to harm those within. Once she has found shelter large enough to protect all of her followers from the elements (an Intelligence + Survival roll with a difficulty of the Magnitude of the character's entourage), the Solar personally builds this shelter. She places representations the five elements at the center and directional boundaries of the shelter (these representations can be actual examples of each element, such as twigs, stone, cinders, etc, or the Solar may use a few drops of blood, paper effigies, Dragon-Blooded willing to sit still, or other tokens) during its construction, blessing the configuration with his power and claiming all within its borders as his dominion. For a larger group, the Solar supervises the process of building this shelter (an action normally requiring one hour), but otherwise using the same process as described above.

This Charm protects an area large enough to house the Solar and up to her Essence in Magnitude of her followers. The inclement conditions of harsh weather hold no sway over the camp—all individuals within are protected as though with Hardship-Surviving Mendicant Spirit. Moreover, the camp is immune to the inclement conditions of alien worlds. The Wyld will not mutate the camp's land, the Solar's followers, or their belongings, nor will Malfeas's toxic miasma poison them. The Solar and her followers may respire Essence normally even in the Underworld or the Blight Zones of Autochthonia.

Moreover, the Solar's followers will take no harm from any nourishment scavenged within the confines of the camp. Wyld berries will not poison them, nor singing fish give them mutations. The iridescent locusts which swarm across the sands of Cecelyne will not infect them with demonic taint.

Finally, the Solar's Food-Gathering Exercise may secure enough food to feed the entire camp with only a single use—even if there is no food to be had in the region. As if produced by faith alone, the Solar finds clean water flowing from the rocks of Malfeas, fresh fish in the acrid seas of Kimbery, and living fruit upon dead branches.

A second purchase of this Charm at Survival 6+, Essence 6+ sanctifies the camp as Holy ground. Creatures of darkness must spend five points of Willpower to set foot within the camp unless formally invited by the Solar.

God-King Benevolence

Cost: —; **Mins:** Survival 7, Essence 7; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: Obvious
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: City-Moving Secrets, Element-Resisting Prana

The unbound anima of the Solar Exalted subverts the wrath of nature, cowing the elements in order ensure the safety of the followers of the sun. When faced with the unmitigated purity of the sun's light, all lesser forces must bow. By voluntarily flaring her anima into an enormous pillar of light, the Solar banishes the wrathful elements. Lava flows part or harden to admit the passage of the Solar's followers. Flesh-scouring sandstorms whirl about and leave them untouched. The Solar may extend the effects of Hardship-Surviving Mendicant Spirit to a unit he leads with a Magnitude of up to his Essence, so long as that Charm is active. They are also immunized against toxic atmospheres such as the miasma of Malfeas.

The Twilight Caste

Craft

Keen Understanding of the Core Imperfection

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-OK, Touch
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: Shattering Grasp

The Solar touches a structure or object and gains a perfect understanding of what can damage or destroy it, and how well. Furthermore, for this Charm's duration, her attacks ignore the target's soak and deal to it (Essence x 5) additional dice of damage. If the object is completely indestructible, the Charm's duration becomes Instant, and Lawgiver is instead granted divine inspiration, discovering an existing Flaw of Invulnerability (created by the Storyteller) that would permit the object's destruction.

Design Beyond Limit

Cost: —; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 4 **Type:** Permanent

Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Durability-Enhancing Technique

The Solar Exalted see potential in the matter and Essence of Creation far beyond the petty limitations of Primordial vision—and make that potential reality. A character who knows this Charm may design artifacts and manses more efficiently.

The character may cap a demesne with a manse rated one dot higher than the demesne. For example, the Lawgiver could cap a 3-dot demesne with a 4-dot manse; the difficulty of all design rolls and the required construction time would be that of a 3-dot manse, but the resultant structure would be a 4-dot manse in all regards (producing a 4-dot hearthstone, having creation points equivalent to a 4-dot manse [see **The Books of Sorcery, vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**], and so forth). The Solar may still deliberately weaken his designs to produce one-dot manses, if desired. If used to design a 5-dot manse, Design Beyond Limit does not raise it to N/A level, instead providing ten additional creation points with which to design its features, and it making the manse a potential geomantic channel to sustain a N/A level.

Genius and excellence springs from the Solar's hands almost unbidden when crafting artifacts. He needs only accumulate a number of successes equal to an artifact rated one dot lower than her actual project (see **Exalted**, p. 134). For example, if attempting to forge a grand daiklave, the Solar would need only 30 successes rather than the usual 60. This Charm provides no benefit when the Solar deigns to construct one-dot artifacts.

Holistic Miracle Understanding

Cost: —; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 5 **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Design Beyond Limit

The Solar craftsman has progressed beyond applying discrete bits of knowledge and skill—every part of him is an extension of his prowess, and intuitive understanding blossoms from every aspect of the world around him. The Solar perfectly understands how to recreate any object he makes use of. When he climbs into a warstrider, he is able to estimate what prayers accompanied its creation, the temperatures used to forge its armor, and the order in which its parts were assembled. When he fires a bow, he deduces the materials and methods used to create it—and to fletch the arrow it just fired. When he eats a cake, he deduces all the particulars of its recipe.

Any effort the Solar undertakes to precisely reproduce an object analyzed by this Charm reduces its cumulative difficulty by half and the total number of successes required by his (Essence x 2), to a minimum of 5. With Craft 6+, Essence 6+ the Solar also counts each hour of work invested in building such a replica as three hours of labor.

This Charm cannot perfectly analyze N/A-rated wonders like the Five-Metal Shrike or unique miracles of Primordial (or stranger) design such as the Sword of Creation, the elemental poles, or the Well of Udr. Instead, it grants the Solar a sense of vague but potent inspiration—a clue as to where useful information about or elements of the wonder's construction might be sought. On all occasions when the Solar Exalted have attempted to use Holistic Miracle Understanding to examine an Exaltation, they have experienced only an encouraging-but-vague sense that the answer rests within themselves.

The Art of Permanence

Cost: —; **Mins:** Craft 6, Essence 6 **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Durability-Enhancing Technique

The Lawgiver leaves the world eternal monuments to her genius. Anything she uses Craft to create will not age, erode, wear out or otherwise diminish through the natural processes of time and use. Nor will it require maintenance. It can, however, be deliberately destroyed. Applying this Charm's benefit raises an item's effective Resources value by one. Applying it to an artifact raises the artifact's effective background rating by one dot. The benefit granted by this Charm is optional; the Solar may still produce lesser works, if she wishes.

Investigation

Legacy-Detecting Glance

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Investigation 4, Essence 4;
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Know the Soul's Price

The superior detective is aware that the physiognomy of a subject may reveal that subject's history. The Lawgiver knows this and more, for he may see into *souls*. The character makes a quick study of a subject, allowing him to see his target's genetic inheritance so acutely that he may discern their ethnicity and even the bloodline from which they arose—commensurate with his Lore rating. The character's discernment of heredity is so keen that he can tell which gente's bloodline a Terrestrial descends from at a glance.

As the Lawgiver grows in experience, so does this Charm's capabilities. At Investigation 5+, Essence 5+, the Solar catches physiognomic cues more readily; he can know if people are genetically related just by looking at them, and in what manner; or what a Dragon-Blooded target's Breeding is and exactly who the Terrestrial is descended from. The Lawgiver is also able to see into spirits; by glancing into a person's eyes or speaking to them for any length of time, the Lawgiver can see who they were in their former life.

At Investigation 6+, Essence 6+, the Solar need only look at someone while using this Charm to see directly into

their soul: the Exalt can see his target's past 10 incarnations. By using Legacy-Detecting Glance at this level while speaking with Celestial Exalted, the character's past life memories begin to resonate with the Exaltation before him, discerning the previous bearer of the subject's Exaltation. If the Lawgiver were to handle an Exaltation in Lytek's office directly while using this Charm, he could discern the identity of every person to have contained that exaltation. At Investigation 7+, Essence 7+, the Lawgiver can use this Charm to see directly into a targeted Chosen's Exaltation and discern all of the bearer's past incarnations; alternately, he may examine the subject's soul and witness its last 100 incarnations. At Investigation 8+, Essence 8+ the Solar may examine a subject's soul and trace its reincarnation history all the way to the beginning.

When activating this Charm, the Solar may choose to look into the genetic, mimetic, or Exalted history of his subject, but not all three at once.

The benefits of this Charm extend beyond genealogical trivia. If the Solar knows Evidence-Discerning Method and has ever used it to profile any previous incarnation of the subject's soul or Exaltation, he automatically recovers that profile and may employ Evidence-Discerning Method against the subject for a cost of 1m.

Oracular Magistrate Understanding

Cost: —; **Mins:** Investigation 5, Essence 4;
Type: Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Evidence-Discerning Method

The Solar's Evidence-Discerning Method is permanently enhanced, strengthening her understanding of those she has profiled. The Charm's Duration becomes Instant; profiles no longer require committed Essence to grant a mechanical benefit. A profile remains valid until the subject's Motivation or Virtues permanently change (temporary changes brought about by magic will not spoil a profile).

At Essence 5+, the Solar may roll (Wits + Investigation) one month before an individual he has profiled is planning to undertake any sort of premeditated larcenous enterprise (examples might include robbing a bank, staging a kidnapping, attempting an assassination, or, in the case of the Yozis, escaping from Hell). This roll has a difficulty of half the subject's (Intelligence + Larceny), rounded down. Success grants the Solar an idea of what the subject plans to do, including at least the general location and nature of the crime. Examples include: "Splendid Magister is planning to illegally experiment on hun souls within a private, hidden manse on the Blessed Isle," "the Ebon Dragon is going to try to break out of Hell with the assistance of a Yozi cult in Denandsor," or "Tammuz is going to attempt to murder his Solar Mate aboard a pleasure yacht." The Charm introduces plots to unravel, rather than solving them for the Solar in and of itself.

At Investigation 6+, Essence 6+ the Lawgiver may also make this roll to realize from subtle context clues whenever a profiled subject comes within (Investigation x 5) miles of him. The Solar may also anticipate non-premeditated larcenous actions at this level, though he suffers a -5 external penalty on attempts to do so.

Lawgiver's Parable Defense

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Investigation 7, Essence 7;
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK Native
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: Oracular Magistrate Understanding

A Lawgiver can stop the hands of time to protect the ones he loves. This Charm allows the character to find evidence of crimes that have yet to be committed, thereby preventing future tragedies. The Solar may make (Wits + Investigation) rolls to detect impending threats to any person or location he has an Intimacy toward, even those posed by individuals he has not profiled. The difficulty of this roll is always 5. This warning manifests itself one week before the danger actualizes itself. For example: "The mercantile district of Hollow will be destroyed by a magically-triggered earthquake" or "My Lunar mate will be slain by another Exalt." Spending one Willpower when the roll is made grants the Solar a flash of intuitive insight gleaned through context clues in his surroundings—the Storyteller informs the Solar's player of a place where he might profitably begin investigating the impending disaster.

As the Era of Dreams progresses, a growing number of Solars have stopped using this Charm, suspecting some defect in its design—surely Lawgiver's Parable Defense must be in error when it points to the Solars themselves as the threats that menace the things they love.

Lore

Legend-Drawing Invocation

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 4;
Type: Simple (Speed 3, DV -0)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisites: Essence-Lending Method

By speaking to the soul of an artifact, a Solar may remind a broken wonder of its legendary purpose, briefly restoring it to working order. Channeling Essence through her sagacious knowledge, the Solar is able to revive a legendary wonder and temporarily restore it to functionality. The Solar may restore a broken or damaged artifact to full working order so long as Essence is committed to sustain this Charm. In order to use this Charm, the Solar must know what the artifact in question is and what it does.

Terrestrial Edification Program

Cost: —; **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 5; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: Obvious, Training

Duration: One week
Prerequisite Charms: Legendary Scholar Curriculum

The Solar's Harmonious Academic Methodology is permanently enhanced by her greater enlightenment. The Solar may now use her instruction to enlighten mortals, granting them the enlightened essence blight (see **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. II—The Wyld**, p. 148). She also abolishes the 4-dot training cap from Harmonious Academic Methodology and Legendary Scholar Curriculum; only the age and Essence of her students limits their potential to absorb knowledge at the Solar's feet. She may also use Harmonious Academic Methodology to impart knowledge of thaumaturgy, sorcerous initiation Charms, or spells, assuming her students are capable of using such magic.

Shinmaic Communion

Cost: 30m, 2wp; **Mins:** Lore 7, Essence 7;
Type: Simple (One day-long dramatic action)
Keywords: Native, Obvious, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Wyld Cauldron Technology

The concepts which engender the universe fall readily into the grasp of the Solar Exalted. Emptying himself of all thought and desire, the Lawgiver becomes a vessel for the knowledge of the shinma. Entering a trance state, his eyes become unblinking lanterns and his caste mark appears, glowing the same stark white for one full day. During this time, the Solar subtly alters universal principles with the force of his will, to great effect. The character may use Shinmaic Communion to target a landscape he has created with Wyld-Shaping Technique, redefining its relationship with the great cosmic elements known as the shinma. The character gains ten 'points' with which to edit the region in accordance to his will, which may be spent on the following modifications:

• **Nirupadhika**, the Way, governs spatial relationships. For one point the Solar may enchant the roads in the region such that they prevent travelers moving along them from getting lost, or infallibly lead them to specific places regardless of where they intend to travel. Two points allow the Solar to speed up or slow down travel according to his design; by default, this halves or doubles travel times, though each point invested beyond the initial two raises this by a factor of one. Three points may designate points within the region as impossible to miss, or occlude them so that all efforts to find them suffer an external penalty equal to half the Solar's Lore. Four points make the region mobile, able to move (Solar's Lore miles / day). Each additional point spent on mobility doubles the region's movement rate. Five points doubles the interior size of the region without altering the size of its borders—the region is simply bigger on the inside. Each additional point spent on this aspect increases the region's size by a factor of one.

• **Dharma**, the Cup, governs corrosion, ignorance and desire. For one point, staying within the region for at least one week counts as a scene spent building an Intimacy of hatred toward a particular social group not native to the region. Two points cause each week spent within the region to count as a scene eroding an Intimacy of the Solar's choice. Three points create a tenor of desire within the region according to the Solar's definition; all actions which directly reject this desire are taken at a -2 internal penalty, while all actions in pursuit of it enjoy a +1 circumstantial bonus die. Four points produce a regional agenda—the Solar defines an Intimacy, and each time an individual sleeps within the region, this counts as a scene spent building that Intimacy. Five points hide knowledge about a particular thing from those within the region, inflicting an external penalty equal to (Solar's Lore / 2) on all attempts to uncover information about the thing; alternately, the Solar may ensure that anyone who seeks a certain thing will find it. This thing must exist within the region, be intangible, of limitless supply, and likely to bring the individual significant turmoil in the future. Valid examples, then, might include worldly insight, occult secrets, or love.

• **Nirvishesha**, the Ring, governs identity. One point raises or lowers the region's level of Wyld infection by one stage, for example changing a Tainted Land to a stretch of Bordermarches. Two points summon a certain common variety of little god or minor elemental to flock to the region, according to the Solar's will (consider the differences between a region full of field gods as compared with one full of bloody hands). Three points may create or close a shadowland within the region, with a diameter no greater than one mile. Four points may create an Essence bias within the region with the same range of flavors as demesnes enjoy (the five elements, Solar, Lunar, vitriol, etcetera). Beings matching this Essence bias raise their hourly respiration rate by four motes. Five points may alter the cycle of life and death within the region. This may guarantee that all souls go on to lethe, linger as ghosts, or plunge into Oblivion; or it might create a closed reincarnation loop, where all residents who enter lethe within the region are guaranteed to reincarnate somewhere within its borders.

• **Nishkriya**, the Sword, governs conflict. For one point, the region takes on a martial tenor—its people slowly become more generally warlike and inclined to the ways of battle. Each season spent within the region acts as a scene of building a positive intimacy of some kind toward conflict into the Policy of all social groups. For two points, the region becomes a magnet for conflict—it will begin to produce natural resources needed or coveted more by the region's neighbors than by the region itself. For three points, the region becomes a den of brotherly raiders—all military units raised within the region have a Drill one higher than normal, and all individuals enjoy a +2 situational bonus to all attempts to take something from another person or group by force. Four points formidably defends the region against invasion—its animals attack intruding military forces, and

the land itself rises up in protest, causing all movement to be across what is considered difficult terrain, and producing a -1 external penalty to all military activities by invaders. Five points tithed to Nishkriya turns the region into a weapon against hostile forces attempting to move into the Lawgiver's domain, raining down at least one environmental attack per hour against any invading military unit, of a sort devised by the Solar—avalanches, rains of lightning, supernatural ice storms and localized earthquakes are only the beginning of the woes that may be hurled at unwelcome guests.

• **Nirvikalpa**, the Staff, is the medium through which communication occurs. One dot makes the region a gathering place for societies, by increasing its yield of timber or making it more fecund farmland. Two dots make the region a magnet for commerce, increasing the amount or value of mineral resources found within. Three dots make the region a point of interaction between its inhabitants and the supernatural world, by seeding the region either with raw materials capable of being refined into the magical materials, or with those materials directly. Four dots makes the region a point of communion between Creation and Heaven, by causing each prayer uttered within the region to count as though it had been spoken from five mouths rather than one. Five dots makes the region a communication network between Creation and itself, drawing dragon lines together to create a three-dot demesne. This value may be raised by one dot per additional point invested.

The Solar is not obligated to spend 'left-over' points, if he does not wish to do so. A region may only be affected by one use of Shinmaic Communion at a time; additional uses cancel any existing alterations and overwrite them. Shinmaic Communion's effects vanish upon the Solar's death, unless a surcharge of one permanent point of Willpower is paid upon the Charm's activation.

This Charm may be purchased up to (Lore) times. Each purchase after the first grants two additional points to spend on shinmaic alterations.

Shinmaic Calibration

Cost: 20m, 1xp; **Mins:** Lore 7, Essence 7;
Type: Simple (One dramatic action)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Native, Obvious, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Shinmaic Communion

Having communed with the foundational elements of the cosmos, the Solars forge miracles. This Charm must be activated in a region the Solar has altered with Shinmaic Communion. The character defines a wondrous aspect or blessing for inclusion within the region. Much like artifact crafting, this Charm is conceptually broad and depends on cooperation between players and Storytellers to design uncanny wonders that later Ages will disbelievingly mythologize and dream of. The parameters of the effect depend on the Shinmaic Communion elements affecting the region this Charm is used in.

• **Nirvikalpa** determines the power of the miracle. One point affecting the region permits the Solar to produce works equivalent to mundane effort. Two points may produce uncanny effects equivalent to thaumaturgy. Three points produce wonders equivalent to Terrestrial Circle sorcery. Four points are equivalent to the Celestial Circle, and five points may produce awe-inspiring effects comparable to Solar Circle sorcery. Zero points limits the effects to only the weakest happenstance, the equivalent of mood lighting—effects with no mechanical repercussions at all.

• **Nishkriya** determines the strategy of the miracle. Each point of Nishkriya invested in the region allows one trigger to be built into the miracle. Examples of potential triggers include "entering the region," "praying to the Yozis," "sleeping within the region," "stealing from a merchant," "marching under the flag of a foreign power," or "disguising one's identity."

• **Dharma** determines who the miracle affects. One point permits only a very limited subset of a population—old men of Varangian descent. Two points allows the miracle to affect a population—Varangians. Three points permits a category of magical beings to be targeted (such as gods, or Dragon-Blooded). Four points affect all individuals who wish to be affected. Five points allows the miracle to target everyone within the region. Zero points limits the miracle to working upon the environment; it cannot affect people at all.

• **Nirvishesha** determines how long the miracle persists. One point causes the effect to last unto the third generation (60 years). Two points last unto the seventh generation (140 years). Three points last until the 30th generation (600 years). Four points last unto the 50th generation (1,000 years). Five points create a permanent miracle. Zero points invested in Nirvishesha produces a miracle lasting a single paltry year.

• **Nirupadhika** determines the scope of the miracle. One point affects *all* regions the Solar has shaped out of the Wyld within a single Direction. Two points affect all such regions he has shaped within the boundaries of Creation, and any realms of the Faraway which he has visited. Three points affect all of the above, as well as the entirety of Creation. Four points affect all of Creation as well as all directly adjoining realms (the Underworld, Malfeas, Yu-Shan, Autochthonia, the Wyld). Five points are conjectured to affect all of existence—even those conceptual frontiers the Exalted have yet to discover or invent. Zero points invested in Nirupadhika affects only the Shinmaic Communion-marked region in which the Charm is used.

For example, a Solar might lay a blessing of protection on a region for seven generations, so that all invading armies are scoured at its borders by enormous pillars of white-hot sunfire and other horrifying manifestations of Adamant Circle destruction. This would require that the region be affected by two points under Nirvishesha, five under Dharma, five under Nirvikalpa, and two under Nishkriya. Or a Solar might attempt to permanently ennoble all the cosmos so that anyone attempting to initiate into the practice of sorcery will receive

this tutelage by the world itself. This would require five points of Nirupadhika, five points of Nirvishesha, four points of Dharma, one of Nishkriya, and two points of Nirvikalpa.

Crafting a miracle is an extended dramatic action using a dice pool of (Intelligence + Lore) with an interval of one day, a difficulty of (points of Nirupadhika used), and a cumulative difficulty of (total number of points used x 10). Abandoning the effort at any point before completion causes the effect to unravel harmlessly, and the Solar is refunded the xp cost of the Charm. A botch causes the miracle to erupt in some dangerous and unpredictable manner—at best, everyone in the region is likely to have a *very* interesting day.

This Charm's miracles take effect automatically once crafting is complete, unless the Solar has utilized one or more points of Nirupadhika. In that case the miracle becomes what is known as a shinmaic potentiality or "Miracle Shell," an Essence-shaped working which exists in potential but does not interface with Creation. Greater arts than Shinmaic Calibration are required to integrate a Miracle Shell into reality—the Salinan Working is likely the most well-known example of such an integration.

Medicine

Science of Mutation

Cost: 10m per mutation point, 1wp; **Mins:** Medicine 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Simple (Dramatic Action)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Shaping, Stackable, Touch
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Wholeness-Restoring Meditation

The Lawgiver need not only heal, but may re-create bodies as she sees fit. After she spends five hours performing a Medicine-based action (and making an Intelligence + Medicine roll), her target gains or loses points of physical mutations no greater than the Solar's successes. (See **Exalted**, pp. 288-290, **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Lunars**, pp. 206-209, and **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. II—The Wyld**, pp. 144-148. Poxes and deficiencies are one point; afflictions/debilities, two points; blights/deformities, four points; abominations, six points.) This procedure inflicts a number of levels of lethal damage equal to the point value of the mutation bestowed (extras cannot die from this treatment unless the activation roll botches).

This Charm can remove Wyld mutations, but the mutations it *grants* aren't usually of the Wyld. Unless the storyteller rules otherwise, mutations granted by this Charm don't restrict the target's ability to live in Creation.

Miracle Worker's Redemption

Cost: —; **Mins:** Medicine 5, Essence 5; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: Native, Reactor
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Wholeness-Restoring Meditation

Creation sets a grim course for those who cycle through it. By healing others, a Solar finds the power and resolve to continue her journey. The Lawgiver regains two motes per health level restored to another character through the application of her healing arts, so long as that character's wounds were not inflicted by the Solar or at the Solar's behest. Once per story, the Lawgiver may waive this benefit to instead reduce her Limit by one point.

A Hood on Death

Cost: 20m, 1wp; **Mins:** Medicine 7, Essence 7;
Type: Simple
Keywords: Obvious
Duration: Instant
Prerequisites: Ailment-Rectifying Method, Contagion-Curing Touch

Transcending individual treatment, the Solar exercises sovereignty over disease, giving it form at her behest. The Solar selects a specific disease. All instances of the targeted disease within (Essence x 20) miles are immediately pulled from those who suffer from them, traveling at the speed of prayer to the Solar's location. There they coalesce over the course of one day, leaping together in a roiling mass of filth and shadow that eventually becomes a single, powerful plague god of that particular disease—one which harbors an indestructible Intimacy of loyalty to the Solar who caused it to come into being. The spirit may somewhat resemble the Solar in appearance. This god is equivalent to a spirit of the second rank or third rank, depending on the virulence and magnitude of the disease and its outbreak (see **The Compass of Celestial Directions, vol. III—Yu-Shan**, pp.122-124) The spirit always has the *Bane Weapon* Charm, which is efficacious against other spirits of the disease it represents, and a special Charm called *Consume Sickness*, which allows the spirit to spend 10 motes to draw out the sickness it represents from a person and consume it, gaining a point of Willpower or restocking a Virtue channel in the process. This Charm may only function if a number of individuals of Magnitude 6 or above are infected with the disease within the targeted area.

Occult

Magic-Shattering Strike

Cost: 15m; **Mins:** Occult 5, Essence 4;
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Mirror (Magic-Devouring Strike), Obvious
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Spirit-Detecting Glance

Before Brigid discovered sorcery, the Solar Exalted had to counter the world-twisting powers of the Primordials through other means. Magic-Shattering Strike permits the Solar's attack to disrupt sorcery, necromancy, and Sorcerous-keyword Charms. The Lawgiver targets a spell or appropriate Charm and spends fifteen motes. The Charm or spell must be Obvious to the Lawgiver's senses to be a valid target for Magic-Shattering Strike. If the attack (which may use any combat Ability) successfully strikes the beneficiary of the spell, then the spell is broken as though targeted by the weakest level of countermagic capable of affecting it. If the spell creates or summons an automaton or spirit, the Lawgiver's attack must target that automaton or spirit. If the spell is a free-standing effect, such as Rain of Doom, then the attack must be generally aimed at the center of the spell's area of effect, and the effect is considered to have a Parry DV of (Circle x 3) for spells, or (Minimum Essence + 2) for Sorcerous Charms. Should the Solar successfully shatter a spell or Charm in this fashion, he gains (Spell's Circle x 4) or (Charm's Minimum Essence + 2) motes for doing so. Magic-Shattering Strike may explicitly be placed in a Combo with Charms of other Abilities.

Lunar Exalted have a similar Charm called Sorcery-Rending Talons, which is identical to Magic-Shattering Strike with the following exceptions: Its minimums are Perception 5, Essence 4, its prerequisites are God-Cutting Essence and Instinctive Essence Prediction (see **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Lunars**, p. 179), and it restores only (Spell's Circle x 3) or (Charm's Minimum Essence) motes on a successful application.

New Abyssal Charm: Magic-Devouring Strike (Prerequisites: Spirit-Sensing Meditation). This Charm is identical to its Solar counterpart.

The Time is Now

Cost: — (+10m, 1wp); **Mins:** Occult 6, Essence 6;
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Native, Obvious
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Solar Circle Sorcery

When the Solars graciously accepted the surrender of the vanquished Primordials, they gained authority over their numerous souls and mimetic races, including the power to summon and bind them into service. Sometimes waiting for Calibration—or even sundown—is an affront to the Lawgivers, as if to mock them for the mercies they once accorded. This Charm enhances the spells Demon of the First Circle and Demon of the Second Circle. At Essence 7+, this Charm's power expands to encompass Demons of the Third Circle as well. When casting one of these spells, the Solar may spend an extra 10 motes and one Willpower to gain the following benefits: The

casting time of the spell is reduced to a single hour, and the dramatic action used to shape this spell may begin at any hour of the day and on any day of the year. The concentrated power of the Solar's will visibly strains the boundaries of existence, causing a localized Calibration more ominous and bizarre than the natural fixing of Creation that marks the beginning and end of each year. For an area of (100 yards for a First Circle demon, 500 for Second Circle demon, and one mile for a Third Circle demon) around her, sunlight bleeds away as surely as the coming of midnight, and sounds somewhere between great hollow wails of torment and the grating of brass echoes out from her location. The Bureau of Destiny is made explicitly aware every time this Charm is used to enhance a summoning, and knows where it was used.

Whenever this Charm is used to summon a demon of the Third Circle outside of Calibration, the Solar must reflexively make a contested roll of his (Intelligence + Occult) against the Dodge MDV of each Third Circle demon he has currently bound. Failing this roll for a single demon permits all currently bound demons to slip free of their bindings.

Eclipsing the Sun

Cost: — (3m, 1wp or 3m, 1wp, 1 Limit);
Mins: Occult 6, Essence 6; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: Native
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Ghost-Eating Technique

It is the duty of the son to surpass his father. The Exalt may pay three motes and one point of Willpower whenever he activates a Charm with the Holy keyword. Doing so allows the Solar to treat the target of the Charm as if it were a creature of darkness. When using Eclipsing the Sun, the Lawgiver manipulates his instinctual understanding of Holy to supersede—if only for an instant—the will of Ignis Divine. Doing so against another Solar Exalted incurs the additional cost of one point of Limit, as the Exalt's will strains against the authority of the Most High.

Power from Darkness

Cost: 3m per Charm, 1wp; **Mins:** Occult 7, Essence 7;
Type: Simple
Keywords: Shaping
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: All-Encompassing Sorcerer's Sight, Solar Circle Sorcery

Veiling her nature in the essence of the eclipse, the Solar reaches through the cracks in the universe the Primordials forged to rip forth power hidden from lesser minds. This Charm allows the character to instantly learn one Charm per three motes committed to Power From Darkness. The only limit on this number is the amount of Essence the Lawgiver is willing to commit. These do not have to be Solar Charms, but they must be Charms a character of the Eclipse Caste could potentially learn through the Eclipse anima power. Power From Darkness is subject to the following limitations:

The character must satisfy the trait minimums and prerequisites of all Charms bestowed by Power From Darkness. The character must have not only personally witnessed all bestowed Charms in use, but must have analyzed them with All-Encompassing Sorcerer's Sight. Power From Darkness may not bestow spells or Combos, nor may Charms acquired through Power From Darkness be placed into Combos. The Solar activates bestowed Charms as though they had been learned with the Eclipse anima power. Finally, Power From Darkness may only be *activated* during Calibration, though it may be sustained normally with committed Essence throughout the year.

Whenever the character gains Limit while using Power From Darkness, she gains one extra point of Limit on top of whatever amount she would have normally accumulated. The Solar Exalted remain unaware of this flaw in the Charm.

A second purchase of this Charm, at Occult 10, Essence 10, reduces its cost to 2m per Charm, 1wp and upgrades the character's Limit gain from +1 to +2.

The Night Caste

Athletics

Unparalleled Acumen Meditation

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 4;
Type: Simple (Speed 3, DV -0)
Keywords: Combo-Basic, Mirror (Nimble Ghost Grace)
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: Graceful Crane Stance

The Solar's every move is effortless as sunlight. While she commits this Charm's motes, she's considered to automatically enjoy the effects of every Athletics Charm she knows that has a Minimum Essence of 2 or less, a non-variable cost, and a Duration of one scene. Furthermore, she cannot suffer internal penalties to Athletics rolls.

New Abyssal Charm: Nimble Ghost Grace (Prerequisite: Raiton's Nimble Perch). This Charm is identical to its Solar counterpart.

Unconquered Might

Cost: 7m; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 5;
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Mirror (Oblivion's Triumph), Obvious
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Increasing Strength Exercise

No barrier can hold against the Lawgiver's righteous strength. This is a perfect effect that supplements a feat of strength to break an object or shatter an obstruction. The object breaks; the door shatters.

At Athletics 6+, Essence 6+ the Solar may add a point of Willpower to the Charm's cost, permitting it to also destroy magical artifacts. This renders the Charm Simple, with a Speed of (Artifact's dot rating) minutes and a DV penalty of -3. N/A artifacts are immune to this Charm, as are objects which are specifically noted as being indestructible.

New Abyssal Charm: Oblivion's Triumph (Prerequisite: Corpse-Might Surge). This Charm is identical to its Solar counterpart.

Godspeed Steps

Cost: 3-7m or 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 5;
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Mirror (Death Draws Near), Obvious
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Lightning Speed

A Solar need only will himself to move with speed beyond all reckoning. This Charm allows the character to cross extreme distances with a normal Move action. Upon activating this Charm the Solar may travel up to (Essence x 10) yards for three motes, (Essence x 20) yards for four motes, (Essence x 40) yards for five motes, (Essence x 60) yards for six motes, (Essence x 100) yards for seven motes, and up to one mile by paying eight motes and one Willpower. When using this Charm, the Exalt is seen to flash from location to location instantaneously. This is not teleportation—the Solar must actually cross the intervening distance. Should the Lawgiver encounter a barrier that impedes his progress prematurely, he is refunded Essence and Willpower as appropriate to the distance already traveled—for example, if an Essence 5 Solar paid seven motes to traverse a 300-yard-long canyon instantly, but discovered a wall of invisible force blocking him after only 80 yards, he would be refunded three motes. This Charm may be activated no more than once per action.

New Abyssal Charm: Death Draws Near. (Prerequisite: Shadow Races the Light). This Charm is identical to its Solar counterpart.

Speed of Light Approach

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Athletics 6, Essence 6;
Type: Simple (Speed 4)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Mirror (Swifter Than a Scream), Obvious
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Godspeed Steps

A Solar who dedicates herself to the principles of speed is as omnipresent as sunlight, and just as impossible to grasp. All of the character's movement rates are doubled, as long as she is moving under her own power. More importantly, whenever the character takes a Move, Dash or Jump action, she vanishes into a blur, only to reappear at her destination. The Lawgiver is impossible to target while moving, unless the attacker succeeds on a reflexive (Perception + Awareness) roll against a Difficulty of (Solar's Dexterity). The Solar may be targeted normally during any tick on which she takes an action other than to Move, Dash or Jump.

A second purchase of this Charm at Athletics 7+, Essence 7+ triples the character's movement rates and causes any Move, Dash or Jump action she takes to count as an opportunity to re-establish surprise.

New Abyssal Charm: Swifter Than a Scream (Prerequisite: Death Draws Near). This Charm is identical to its Solar counterpart.

Awareness

Falling Sun Eyes

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Awareness 5, Essence 5;
Type: Reflexive (Step 1)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Holy, Illusion, Obvious, Shaping, Touch
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: Eyes of the Unconquered Sun

Speaking a condemnation into the world, the Lawgiver's eyes blaze like twin suns, while the rest of him darkens like the onset of night. Laying a hand upon his target, the Solar curses him with the gaze of the wrathful sun. While this Charm remains in effect, sunlight itself becomes the eyes of the Solar… and the target knows it. Wherever she should go, she feels the Solar's gaze upon her in the light of the sun. As a result, the target feels constantly watched and followed—even indoors, she can feel the baleful sun dogging her every step. As a result, all Awareness rolls to detect hidden characters are made at a -3 external penalty; the character cannot sort out true feelings of being watched from the ever-present oppression of the sun. This unnatural Illusion costs one Willpower to resist for a scene, and cannot be made to permanently vanish until the Solar lifts his curse. Moreover, the feelings instilled by this Charm are not wholly false—the sun's light shows the Solar all of the target's failings. Whenever the target fails a Virtue roll or spends Willpower to suppress a Virtue while touched by the light of the sun, the Solar is granted a vision of the target's moment of self-compromise. If the target is a creature of darkness, the sun's heat stifles them even indoors or at night; the character suffers a -1 external penalty to all actions while this Charm remains in effect. If in direct sunlight, such wretches suffer a blistering heat environmental effect (see **Exalted**, p. 131).

At Awareness 6+, Essence 6+ the Solar may use an enhanced version of this Charm costing six motes. Used in this fashion, all targets suffer the effects reserved for creatures of darkness, above. Additionally, if the Solar voluntarily ends this Charm by withdrawing committed Essence, creatures of darkness spontaneously combust in a blaze of sunfire, suffering a one-time environmental damage effect with Damage 10A, Trauma 5.

With Awareness 7+, Essence 7+, the Solar may issue a summons to targets afflicted with either version of this Charm, so long as they are within one mile of her. The summons is Obvious to the target's senses, as is the location where the Solar expects to meet (also within the same one-mile radius). The target has one day to reach this meeting point, and must arrive in daylight. Should she fail to do so, she will be branded with the Creature of Darkness mutation as a Shaping effect. At this level Solars may also target mortals with Falling Sun Eyes simply by speaking their name, dispensing

with the Touch Keyword. This is a favored method used by the Night Caste to summon alleged criminals to face trial by the law.

Ever-Watchful Sentinel Dedication

Cost: —; **Mins:** Awareness 5, Essence 5;
Type: Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Surprise Anticipation Method

The Lawgivers know those they love and those they have sworn to protect. No wicked treachery may deceive a Solar who has learned this Charm, for he sees with his heart as much as his eyes. The Solar automatically sees through any disguise, Illusion or other effect that would allow a being to falsely masquerade as a character the Lawgiver harbors a positive Intimacy for. He likewise knows any free-standing illusions or hallucinations which attempt to depict such characters for the vile falsehoods they are. This Charm does not cause the Solar to know the true identity of a character wearing such a false seeming—it only makes the attempted deception apparent to him. This Charm applies (Solar's Awareness) automatic successes to any effect-conflict roll-off.

Omniscient Ears Approach

Cost: —; **Mins:** Awareness 5, Essence 5;
Type: Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Unsurpassed Hearing and Touch Discipline

Hearing beyond hearing, the Lawgiver is supremely attuned to the tenor of his own Essence. Any utterance of his name by any individual anywhere in the same realm of existence becomes Obvious to his senses, as does the identity of the individual speaking his name. The Solar may reflexively spend 1m per long tick to hear exactly what the individual speaking his name is saying, and may continue to listen in for as long as he cares to spend Essence or has Essence to spend. He only hears the voice of individuals who have spoken his name, however; any replies that might occur are inaudible. At Awareness 7+, the Solar may hear his name when it is spoken by beings in other realms of existence.

All manner of wards against scrying automatically cause this Charm to fail; the Seal of Eight Divinities that separates Autochthonia from Creation is considered to be such a ward so long as it remains intact.

A second purchase of this Charm at Awareness 6+, Essence 6+ allows the Lawgiver to reflexively spend 5 Willpower to redefine the sound this Charm listens for. This must be a specific noise, rather than a general class of sounds; "the sound of the Guide to Meru I handed to Arlot landing in a trash bin" would qualify, as would "someone speaking the name of my wife, Lilith," but "anyone plotting against me" or "someone professing love to my wife, Lillith" would not.

There exists a similar Linguistics Charm, called The Ever-Vigilant Scribe (mins: Linguistics 5, Essence 4; Prerequisite: Discerning Savant's Eye), which alerts the character if anyone writes his name. Rather than listening in on a conversation, the Lawgiver has the option of spending 10m to memorize the entirety of the missive in which he is mentioned, for later detailed perusal. The Ever-Vigilant Scribe's repurchase benefit allows the character to remain vigilant for the writing of other particular words or phrases.

Abyssal Exalted, having cast their names away into Oblivion, cannot develop a Mirror to this Charm.

Dodge

Refinement of Flowing Shadows

Cost: — (+3m or +3m, 1wp); **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 4;
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Mirror (Thousandfold Shadow Dance)
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Seven Shadow Evasion

This Charm enhances its prerequisite. The Lawgiver may opt to pay a +3m surcharge when activating Seven Shadow Evasion, extending its duration to one tick rather than separately activating the Charm against each individual attack.

Solars with Essence 5+ may extend the duration of perfect dodging to one action by paying a +3m, 1wp surcharge. Only when the character's DV refreshes does the maelstrom of flickering shadows resolve back into the familiar form of the Lawgiver.

New Abyssal Charm: Thousandfold Shadow Dance (Prerequisites: Flickering Wisp Technique). This Charm is identical to its Solar counterpart, save that it delays Flickering Wisp Technique's reflexive relocation until the end of the tick or action, as appropriate.

Aegis of Altruistic Interposition

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 4;
Type: Reflexive (Step 2)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious
Duration: One action
Prerequisite Charms: Leaping Dodge Method

The Lawgiver dissolves into a swarm of flitting shadows, obfuscating the precise location of his allies and drawing attacks toward himself. He may apply a Dodge DV-based Defend Other action to *all* willing individuals within (Essence x 3) yards. At Essence 5+, this Charm's zone of protection may be extended to (Essence x 10) yards.

A second purchase of this Charm, at Dodge 6+, Essence 6+, adds an additional feature to Aegis of Altruistic Imposition: if the Lawgiver is struck by an attack intended for another while using this Charm, he may pay four motes and one point of Willpower in Step 9 to perfectly redirect that attack to a different character within the radius of the Charm. The attack does no harm to the Lawgiver, and instead applies its original roll and effects to its new target as a Counterattack.

Defend Other

Without Charms, defending another individual is a Speed 5, DV -1 Miscellaneous action. It requires that the character be within (Dexterity) yards of his ward, and allows him to interpose his Parry DV against attacks which target the individual he is protecting. If an attacker bypasses the character's Parry DV, she has the option of either letting the attack continue on to the guardian's ward (in which case the attack will need to use its remaining successes to also beat the ward's DVs), or she may simply let the attack strike the guardian himself. Parry-based perfect defenses such as Heavenly Guardian Defense may be used to automatically guard others, while dodge-based perfect defenses such as Seven Shadow Evasion do not impede attacks against the character's ward at all. Only one Defend Other action may be placed in a flurry. If multiple characters attempt to defend a single target, one guardian (generally the individual with the highest Parry DV) becomes the leader of the guard, who actually applies his DV against attacks. Each additional character guarding the same ward raises the leader's Parry DV by 1 when defending the ward. Up to five characters may simultaneously guard one human-sized ward on open ground.

Divine Witness of Utter Safety

Cost: — (+4m); **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 5;
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Mirror, Obvious
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Leaping Dodge Method, Seven Shadow Evasion

When the Primordials once uprooted mountains and cast them down against the armies of the gods. The Solar Exalted, embarrassed by such clumsy efforts, learned to absent themselves from the paths of these excessive demonstrations. A character who has learned this Charm may pay a four mote surcharge when invoking Seven Shadow Evasion to avoid an attack which inflicts damage on everything within an area (such as Lambent Bolt of Annihilation). The Solar's dodge deposits her at the nearest safe edge of the damage effect, if that location is within (Essence x 50) yards; walls and other obstacles are no impediment to this evasion. She may also carry out any consenting characters she is protecting with Defend Other actions at the time of activation. At Dodge 6+, Essence 6+ this restriction disappears, and the Solar's leaping dodges will carry her as far as necessary to remove her from the effect.

New Abyssal Charm: Shadow Fades at Dawn (Prerequisites: Flickering Wisp Technique, Foe-Shaming Defense). Mocking laughter marks the Abyssal's relocation away from the area of effect. This Charm is otherwise identical to its Solar counterpart.

Larceny

Shroud of Night's Law

Cost: 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 4;
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Illusion
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Stealing from Plain Sight Spirit

Only those individuals directly affected by the actions of a Solar using this Charm—such as people she's talking to or attacking—can notice what she's doing. This Charm is a perfect effect that can supplement any action, even obvious Charms or those lasting as long as a scene. This Charm's unnatural mental influence costs three Willpower to resist.

Gear-Stripping Method

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 4;
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Crippling, Touch
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Reversal of Fortune

Not all creators are as perfect as the Solars. In the magitech-rich Era of Dreams, haywire automaton servitors and war machines gone berserk must sometimes be dealt with. This Charm supplements an attempt to steal key parts from a machine in order to cripple or instantly disable it. The Exalt's hand flashes through the target, stripping out parts.

If targeting an automaton (zombies are valid targets for this Charm), roll the Solar's (Dexterity + Larceny), resisted by the target's highest DV. Characters with Craft (Magitech) may add (their rating in that Ability) in automatic successes to this attempt. If successful, automaton extras and mechanical booby traps are instantly disabled, falling into a heap at the Solar's feet. Non-extra automatons instead take the Solar's (Wits + Larceny + threshold successes) dice of unsoakable aggravated damage.

Targeting an artifact with a Repair rating requires the Solar to roll (Dexterity + Larceny), resisted by the user's highest DV. Until repaired, all attempts to use the damaged artifact suffer an external penalty equal to the Solar's threshold successes. If the artifact also requires maintenance, each threshold success counts as 100 hours of use.

Alchemical Exalted and spirits which have the appearance of machines (such as Autochthon's Divine Ministers) are invalid targets for the purposes of this Charm's effects.

King of Thieves Spirit

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 4;
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious, Touch
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Reversal of Fortune

When a Solar allows another to hold the idea that they own something, he is being generous; when he grows bored of pretending, he simply takes what he wants. This Charm supplements a blatant attempt to strip something from another person (treat as a disarm attempt using Larceny in the place of a combat Ability). The character explicitly can steal things in active use, such as weapons, clothing, or even armor, so long as he can reach them, or any object on the target's person which he is aware of (examples might include a coin purse held in a clenched fist inside of a pocket, a sheathed sword the target is menacingly fingering the hilt of, or the target's undergarments).

At Essence 5+, the Exalt may steal attuned artifacts, instantly breaking the artifact's attunement in the process.

With Larceny 6+, Essence 6+, the Exalt may reflexively and instantly attune a stolen artifact by paying its commitment cost.

With Larceny 7+, Essence 7+, the Solar may use King of Thieves Spirit to steal Alchemical Charms, though he may not attune to them. At Larceny 8+, Essence 8+ even this restriction vanishes, and the Solar may equip and wield a stolen Alchemical Charm, if he has an open Charm Slot in which to place it.

All attempts to steal armor suffer a -2 external penalty.

Stealth

Hooding the Solar Lantern

Cost: —; **Mins:** Stealth 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: Stackable
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Any Stealth Excellency, Easily Overlooked Presence Method

This Charm increases by five motes the thresholds at which a character's anima reaches new levels of brightness. The character's caste mark still becomes visible from certain angles when she spends her first mote of Peripheral Essence, however. This Charm may be purchased again for every Stealth dot the character possesses above 5. The Exalt also gains the ability to reflexively flare her anima to any higher level of display at no cost, if she wishes.

Everywhere and Nowhere Stance

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Stealth 5, Essence 5;
Type: Simple (Speed 4, DV -0)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Illusion, Touch
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: Mental Invisibility Technique

The eyes of the Solar Exalted are always watching. Through the use of this Charm, the Solar becomes omnipresent in the minds of the wicked. The Solar touches a target (this may require a Dexterity + Martial arts attack if the target attempts to avoid contact) and spends four motes. The sensation of the Solar's touch lingers on and on, eventually spreading to encompass all of the target's senses. So long as these motes remain committed, the Lawgiver seems to be constantly shadowing his mark—the target frequently glimpses the Solar leaning in doorways, or disappearing down alleys. He sees the Exalt's silhouette watching him from rooftops or following him through crowds. The Solar seems to be watching more often than not, always vanishing if confronted directly. This is an unnatural Illusion effect which costs two Willpower to ignore for a scene; the effects of the Charm end once the target has spent a total of twenty Willpower fighting it. The Lawgiver adds his Essence in bonus successes to all attempts to establish or re-establish surprise against individuals afflicted by Everywhere and Nowhere Stance—it becomes difficult to discern the Solar's true presence from the shadows in the target's mind.

A second purchase of this Charm at Stealth 6+, Essence 6+ permits the Solar to use this Charm on an area. Used in this manner, Everywhere and Nowhere Stance has a cost of 6m, 1wp. So long as the Solar commits Essence to the Charm, everyone in the affected region suffers visions of the Solar's presence, as detailed above, though with lower frequency—no more than once per scene. Individuals in the affected region may resist the Charm's Illusion for one Willpower per scene, but cannot permanently immunize themselves to it so long as they remain in the area. Everywhere and Nowhere Stance may initially be used upon an area a mile in diameter, but with Stealth 7+ the Solar may affect an area up to (Essence x 2) miles, and with Stealth 8+ may affect (Essence x 10) miles. At Stealth 9+ the Solar may spread her presence across (Essence x 100) miles, and with Stealth 10 the Lawgiver may encompass an entire Direction.

At Stealth 7+, Essence 7+, the Solar may add a point of permanent Willpower to the Charm's cost when used to target a region. Doing so changes the Charm's Duration to instant, requiring no Essence commitment on the part of the Lawgiver and rendering its effects permanent. The Solar's shadows will continue to haunt the area forever, even after his own demise.

Walking in Legend's Shadow

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Stealth 6, Essence 6;
Type: Simple
Keywords: Combo-OK, Illusion
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: Vanishing From Mind's Eye Method

Legend and fact soon become interchangeable in the lives of the Exalted, and the Solars embody this principle—to the degree that the Princes of the Earth sometimes find it necessary to hide even from themselves. This Charm allows the character to walk directly out of the ongoing narrative of his life, either dimming himself to the eyes of history, or increasing interest in his legend until he himself is all but forgotten.

Should the Solar dim himself, he passes from the active thoughts of Creation. His personal acquaintances will still recognize him, but strangers will not. Even if the Solar stands directly next to a poster bearing his face and name, those

without a personal relationship simply will not connect the two. The Lawgivers use this Charm to temporarily escape from the public eye. This unnatural mental influence costs four points of Willpower to resist, or only one if someone actively points out the Solar's identity.

Alternately, the Solar may enhance his glory until its glare blinds the world. The Lawgiver once again cannot be recognized as himself—even by those who know him. The reality of the man simply does not connect to the stature of his legend. Used in this mode, the Charm requires only two points of Willpower to resist, but offers an additional benefit: No action the Solar takes will besmirch his reputation, as bystanders are overcome by memories of the Exalt's glory days rather than circulating news of his misbehavior. For example, Desus could beat an orphan to death in the middle of the street, and any onlookers who recognized him would go home to reminisce about the time he bravely taught the behemoth Oliphem the cost of defying the Solar Deliberative. This unnatural mental influence costs three points of Willpower to resist.

The Eclipse Caste

Bureaucracy

Halo of Ministerial Dominion

Cost: 20m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 4;
Type: Simple (Dramatic Action)
Keywords: Combo-Basic
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: Speed the Wheels

The Lawgiver subtly assumes the reins of power by creating temporary positions and laws to exploit. His player rolls (Intelligence + Bureaucracy + Essence) to perform a dramatic action designed to seize control. This dramatic action generally requires one day of effort per dot of Magnitude of the bureaucracy the character attempts to gain support within, though stunts may reduce this period at the Storyteller's discretion. This roll must overcome the Dodge MDV of the leader of the targeted organization for the Charm to take effect. If successful, the character will have five dots of Backing in a particular bureaucracy, though her official status remains unchanged. The leader of the targeted bureaucratic organization may choose to block a successful activation by spending 5 Loyalty. Doing so immunizes the organization against this Charm for one season.

Market Buster Strike

Cost: 20m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 5;
Type: Simple (Dramatic Action)
Keywords: Combo-Basic
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Frugal Merchant Method

The Lawgiver may reward good citizens with wealth or ruin the unrighteous, her player rolling (Intelligence + Bureaucracy) in a dramatic action to decide the value (from Resources 0 to 5) of a commodity or currency in the economy within which the Solar works. This dramatic action generally takes one week of directly interacting with and influencing the market, though stunts may reduce this period at the Storyteller's discretion. This roll must overcome a difficulty of ([Bureaucracy + Influence] / 2), with the Bureaucracy and Influence values derived from the highest total rating possessed by any character who opposes the Solar's market manipulations.

Charter-Stripping Condemnation

Cost: 0m; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 6, Essence 6;
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Native, Reactor, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Foul Air of Argument Technique

That which the Solars have brought into the world, they may take away with a word. The shinma shiver as the Solar utters a condemnation into the cosmos, consigning to destruction a bureaucratic organization he has created. The Lawgiver's player rolls (Willpower + Bureaucracy) against a difficulty of the (Wits + Bureaucracy + Essence / 2) of the head of the targeted organization. Should this roll succeed, the targeted organization will collapse into utter ruin over the course of the next season: its employees resign, papers catch fire, office buildings are flooded or collapse into sinkholes. The Solar immediately gains a number of motes equal to twice the Magnitude of individuals employed by the targeted organization.

Alternate functions of this Charm exist, if the Solar has a rating of 6+ in the appropriate Ability:

With Craft 6+ the Solar may irreparably compromise artifacts and manses he has created, causing the magic to leak out of them. A daiklave simply becomes an inert hunk of orichalcum, while a manse will no longer channel Essence—it is simply a building sitting in a demesne. Roll (Willpower + Craft) against a difficulty of the owner's (Wits + Craft + Essence / 2). Success restores (rating x 2) motes.

With Occult 6+, the Solar may rend asunder spells he has cast, restoring (Spell's Circle x 3) motes.

With Lore 6+, the Solar may dissolve a landscape he created with a single invocation of Wyld-Shaping Technique back into the chaos from which it arose, restoring five motes.

With Integrity 6+, the Solar may destroy one of his own Intimacies, so long as he has held it for at least one season, restoring five motes.

This Charm may be activated no more than once per scene.

Visage Made Law

Cost: —; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 7, Essence 7;
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Native
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Bureau-Rectifying Method

Upon learning this Charm, the Solar impresses his identity upon the very fabric of the cosmos. The shinma open eyes they do not possess and behold the Exalt's face. They know him then, and will accept no substitutes.

Henceforth, all attempts to impersonate the Lawgiver suffer a -2 external penalty, and any character doing so suffers a three mote surcharge on the cost of all Charms while masquerading as the Solar. The motes spent to satisfy this surcharge are tithed to the Solar, delivered when he next awakens from at least one hour of uninterrupted sleep. The Solar may voluntarily exempt specific individuals from this cost and penalty, if he desires, and may just as easily revoke such exemptions. Additionally, whenever another individuals wears his face (either by magic or mundane disguise) that fact becomes Obvious to the Lawgiver when he next awakens—though the location, identity, and goal of the imposter are not revealed.

Finally, no effect may draw motes out of the Solar's Essence pool without his consent, and no form of magical mental influence may force him to give such consent.

Legend Lives On

Cost: —; Mins: Bureaucracy 7, Essence 7;
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Training
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Bureau-Rectifying Method

The Solar pours her very soul into the works she has brought forth in Creation. Upon learning this Charm, the character selects a bureaucratic organization she presently leads. Should the Solar come to no longer lead that organization (whether due to resignation, coup, or the organization's dissolution), she may spend one Willpower to target a different organization she leads; or she may spend five Willpower at any time to transfer this Charm's focus to a different organization.

This Charm takes effect when the Solar meets his final day. Upon death, rather than guarding the Lawgiver's corpse, his po soul becomes the quiet guardian of the targeted organization, bending its strength toward guiding the new leadership of the organization. In essence, the po does everything in its power to ensure the organization continues to run as though the Solar were still alive, sometimes prompting rumors that a Lawgiver has not truly died at all, but is simply guiding the organization in secret.

A po spirit empowered by this Charm possesses the Solar's Attributes, Abilities, Essence rating, and, in addition to an array of dangerous arcanoi, the following unique powers:

- All General Charms the Solar knew in life, though they may only be used to support, lead, or defend the organization the spirit is attached to.
- The ability to manifest itself in a form indistinguishable from the living Solar.
- The po cannot be permanently destroyed short of Ghost-Eating Technique or equivalent magic, reforming at sunset each evening so long as the idea remains in the heart's of the organization's members that the Solar or his vision lives on, and so long as the organization it was set to guide endures.

Furthermore, when the Solar's Exaltation next incarnates, this spirit will seek out the new hero and seek to teach her everything it knows about the organization and how to carry on the last incarnation's work, effectively and smoothly returning the fallen Solar to his rightful place at the head of the order. In addition to imparting detailed knowledge about the organization in question, this consists of a Training effect allowing the po to impart dots of Bureaucracy at a rate of one per week, up to a limit of the former incarnation's Bureaucracy rating. This may explicitly break the newly incarnated Solar's normal age cap—for example, a Solar who had only been Exalted for a year could be trained up to Bureaucracy 7 (the rating of her former incarnation), as a Training effect.

A similar Charm exists for the War Ability called The Unending March (Prerequisites: Heroism-Encouraging Presence), which targets a military organization and permits training in the War Ability.

Linguistics

Guiding Words of Solar Wisdom

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 4;
Type: Simple (Dramatic Action)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Training
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Letter-Within-A-Letter Technique

The Lawgiver passes on her holy insight. Perhaps by writing a tome or inventing a mantra, she gives a lesson focused on a number of teachings equal to her Linguistics. (These teachings may include specific Abilities, Charms, Essence, et cetera.) Those who study her teachings may increase those traits as though she were tutoring them. This Charm may be explicitly placed in a Combo with any Training-Keyword Charm, even in violation of standard Combo rules, permitting those effects to be encoded into the resultant magical training manual.

Beautiful Essence-Born Rune

Cost: 20m, 3wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 6, Essence 6;
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious, Training
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Flawless Brush Discipline

This versatile Charm allows Lawgivers to radically compress magical instruction while simultaneously encoding the theories or biases of the scribe into the lesson. The character meditates upon a Charm or spell she knows, and then designs a single glyph encompassing the totality of her understanding of the effect. This glyph transcends language and its meaning may be effortlessly intuited by any character capable of learning the Charm or spell the

glyph is based upon. Beautiful Essence-Born Runes contain more than instructions in the use of a Charm or spell, however; when created, they are also designed to encompass additional lessons desired by their creator. In game terms, each glyph contains one Charm or spell, and one Intimacy. Thereafter, characters who study the glyph may learn the spell or Charm coded into it a single scene, as a Training effect. However, the character *also* gains the Intimacy coded into the Charm, and it is fundamentally embedded into her understanding of the magic. The learned Charm or spell may not be used while the recipient does not harbor the encoded Intimacy. This restriction may be overcome, eventually, by spending an additional 2xp.

Designing a rune takes only (minimum Essence of effect) hours of effort, and a character may design an unlimited number of runes. Actually scribing the rune requires an investiture of Essence, as reflected in the Charm's cost.

Understanding of the Golden Tongue

Cost: —; **Mins:** Linguistics 7, Essence 7;
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Training
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Twisted Words Technique

This Charm empowers the Lawgiver to invent a new language, which she may then encourage mortals to adopt. The golden tongues created by this Charm reinvent the thinking of those who speak it. The Solar chooses:

- One specialty to bestow
- One Ability to diminish
- A number of Intimacies to build or erode equal to her Linguistics
- A number of hampered traits equal to her Linguistics
- A number of assisted traits equal to her (Linguistics ÷ 2)

After a month of primarily speaking the language, a person permanently gains the specialty, but loses a dot from the diminished Ability (and is refunded its experience cost, if he had any dots to lose). He counts hampered traits as being one higher for determining experience costs and trait maximums. He treats assisted traits as being one lower for those same purposes. Every scene a character speaks this language counts as a scene of building or eroding one of the encoded Intimacies.

Golden tongues lose potency if their purity is diminished. Linguistic drift must be battled constantly by the vigilant Lawgiver. This Charm may be re-purchased an unlimited number of times, to design additional golden tongues. Essence-users are immune to this Charm's effects.

Ride

Draft Horse Measure

Cost: 8m; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK
Duration: One day
Prerequisite Charms: Horse Skids Trick

The mounts of the Solar Exalted are as tenacious as their riders. The Lawgiver may use this Charm to lock on to a target no more than (Essence x 3) yards away. Doing so causes an invisible tether of force to bind his mount into an orbit around the target. Carried on the momentum of the target's movements, the Solar's mount may effortlessly keep pace with the target, moving freely to any point within (Essence x 3) yards in order to maintain the minimum distance required for this Charm. The Lawgiver's mount becomes tireless so long as Draft Horse Measure is in effect, and all Ride Charm costs are lowered by 2 motes (to a minimum of zero motes). This Charm does not confer the ability to fly or to run across water, so other Charms are required in order to ride the Silent Winds of Adorjan across Malfeas or chase Leviathan across the ocean.

At Ride 6+, Essence 6+ the Solar may tether himself to weather patterns, enabling him to draft behind a hurricane or trade wind.

Sun-Towing Method

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 5; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: Draft Horse Measure, Single Spirit Method

In the Time of Glory the Solars used this Charm to pull down the sky and drop mountains on the heads of the Primordials. In the Era of Dreams, a Solar once saved a caravan stranded in the desert after a Fair Folk attack by using Sun-Towing Method to haul their entire wagon train to Chiaroscuro with a single horse. Essence imbues the Lawgiver's mount with incredible strength to pull massive loads, also rendering any means used to attach the load (such as a rope tied off to a mount's saddle) unbreakable. The Solar's mount may pull any object with no loss of speed, regardless of the object's weight. This does not imbue the object with any unusual durability.

At Ride 6+, Essence 6+ Sun-Towing Method may be used to drag any vehicle, regardless of its size—even those normally large enough to qualify as structures, such as ships.

At Ride 7+, Essence 7+ the Solar may haul structures with a spherical mass up to up to (Essence x 50) yards in diameter. Should he tie off to a larger structure or landscape feature, his horse will tear out an appropriately-sized chunk and drag it away. For example, a Solar with Ride 10, Essence 10 could tear off the peak of a mountain and ride away with it at full gallop. Manses cannot be moved in this fashion.

Sail

Omnipotent Admiral Authority

Cost: 10m; **Mins:** Sail 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-OK, Mirror (Shadow-Driven Ghost Galleon), Obvious

Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: Storm-Weathering Essence Infusion

The Solar's anima erupts into an aureate corona which washes over a ship she owns or commands. The magic quickly sinks into the boards of the vessel, visible only by the lanyards which untie themselves, the sails which raise and lower in accordance to the Lawgiver's will, and the other processes by which the ship obediently tends to its own upkeep and operation. So long as this Charm remains in effect, the ship requires a crew of zero sailors. So long as the Solar remains within (Sail x 100) yards of the ship, she may direct its course as though she were onboard.

New Abyssal Charm: Shadow-Driven Ghost Galleon (Prerequisite: Ruthless Captain Efficiency). This Charm operates by filling vacant positions on the ship with murky apparitions drawn from the Abyssal's anima. It is otherwise identical to its Solar counterpart.

Invincible Solar Vessel

Cost: 8m; **Mins:** Sail 5, Essence 5; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-OK, Mirror (Black Fleet Vanguard), Obvious
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: Hull-Preserving Technique

The path of a Solar must not be impeded, nor the glory of his vessel diminished. While this Charm is in effect, any craft the Solar is aboard becomes immune to Shaping effects, and it and all passengers are immunized against the warping powers of the Wyld. Additionally, the ship will not burn, cannot be capsized by waves or impacts, and is immune to sorcery of the Terrestrial Circle and Sorcerous Charms of Essence 3 or below. The Solar may also declare one particular environmental hazard that the ship is immune to upon activating this Charm (for example, the acidic waters of Kimbery, or the razor-edged waves of a Wyld-tainted sea).
Finally, this Charm's prerequisite is also permanently improved, changing its duration to one action.

New Abyssal Charm: Black Fleet Vanguard (Prerequisites: Hull-Hardening Concentration). This Charm is identical to its Solar counterpart.

Ship and Soul Union

Cost: —; **Mins:** Sail 5, Essence 5; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: Native, Obvious
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Immortal Captain's Advantages

The power of the Solar Exalted extends to all things which enable their legends. This truth is demonstrated clearly by this Charm, through which any ship the Solar commands becomes an extension of his anima. Upon first purchasing this Charm, the Solar's ship gains the effect corresponding to his caste. Additional powers may be purchased for two experience points each. The Solar's vessel may only benefit from one effect at a time.

• Dawn: For three motes, the Solar's ship becomes an extension of his terrifying might for the rest of the scene—the minds of his opponents are clouded with fear at the thought of the reprisals that would be invited by assaulting such a vessel. Opponents must pay two points of Willpower to ignore this unnatural Compulsion if they wish to target the ship with their attacks. This power in no way prevents the ship's crew from being targeted.

• Zenith: For three motes, the Solar's ship becomes Holy ground for the rest of the scene. Any creature of darkness boarding the vessel enters an environmental hazard with (Damage 2A/action), Trauma (Sail).

• Twilight: The ship becomes aware of all threats approaching within (Essence x 30) yards, from above, below, or beside the ship; this warning is communicated to the Solar in the form of eerie sea-sounds which appraise him of the position and bearing of the threat (for example, something below the ship and approaching fast). This benefit costs one mote, and lasts for one day.

• Night: For three motes, a mist rises up around the ship's shrouding it from view. This grants a +3 bonus to all Stealth attempts, and reduces the cost of Sea Ambush Technique by one point of Willpower.

• Eclipse: The Solar may pay five motes to cause his anima to surmount the ship as a flag bearing complex sigils which may be understood by all observers. This flag may offer the terms of a truce, alliance, or financial arrangement. It is clear that this offer is genuine, and magically binding; should the captain of another vessel verbally agree to the terms offered by this flag, that fact becomes Obvious to the Solar and he may pay one Willpower to sanctify the oath as though with the Eclipse anima power. Additionally, if the character is a member of the Eclipse caste, he may sanctify any oath spoken aboard his ship that he is aware of for a cost of only one point of Willpower.

At Sail 6+, Essence 6+ this Charm gains the Stackable Keyword, and the Solar may simultaneously apply up to (Essence - 4) different effects at a time.

Socialize

Golden Courtier Misdirection

Cost: 7m; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Social
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Any Socialize Excellency, Mastery of Small Manners

This is a perfect defense against attempts to read the character's intentions, Motivation, Intimacies, Virtues or other social qualities (including the Charm Sagacious Reading of Intent), unless the Solar draws on those qualities to assist her socially. Furthermore, the character decides what it is that people who attempt to discern these factors determine.

Web-Cutting Eyes

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 5; **Type:** Reflexive

Keywords: Combo-OK, Mirror (Merciless Dissecting Stare)
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Mastery of Small Manners

The Solar's cunning gaze cuts across all subtleties of motive and concealment, laying bare the intentions of those who stand before him. While this Charm is active, all attempts to read the motivation of other characters (see **Exalted**, p. 131) are made at difficulty 1.

New Abyssal Charm: Merciless Dissecting Stare (Prerequisite: Exquisite Etiquette Style). It is identical to its Solar counterpart.

Mastery of Society Technique

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 5;
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Understanding the Court

Seasoned Princes of the Earth are no longer surprised by the schemes and treacheries of their subjects and peers. Their petty games are transparent before the Lawgiver's jaded eyes. While this Charm is active all social magic directed at the character becomes Obvious to his senses. At Socialize 7+, Essence 7+ this Charm's duration becomes Indefinite. At Socialize 9+, Essence 9+, its cost drops to 1m.

A second purchase of this Charm at Socialize 6+, Essence 6+ adds a second benefit: While the Charm is active, any social Charm directed at a social unit the character is a member of or which includes loyalty to him as part of its Policy becomes Obvious to his senses, though the identity of the character attempting to influence his social group is not automatically made known to him. For example, if a young Solar attempts to use Taboo-Inflicting Diatribe on the capital of a prefecture the Solar rules, he becomes aware that someone is attempting to influence the people of the city with Taboo-Inflicting Diatribe, but would have to personally investigate to discover the identity of the offender.

Lunar Knacks and Charms

Stewards are masters of mutability. They are unequaled at changing form, and they excel and dealing with changing environments and situations. First Age Knacks and Charms reflect this, offering arrays of solutions for the various conflicts in the Age of Wonder.

Form Acquisition Knacks: Animal

Illimitable Beast Declaration

Prerequisites: Emerald Grasshopper Form *or* Towering Beast Form, Essence 5, Stamina 5

Lunars who develop this Knack for their shapeshifting know no limit to the size of natural animals they may hunt. It extends the capabilities of Emerald Grasshopper Form into the infinitesimal, so there is no natural animal too small. It likewise improves Towering Beast Form into the infinite, so no natural animal is too large. If the Lunar cannot hunt a natural animal that is larger than the Last Supplicant or smaller than the head of a pin, it is not because he lacks the ability—it is because the animal does not exist.

A character without Emerald Grasshopper Form is limited to infinitely larger forms and one without Towering Beast Form is limited to infinitely smaller forms. Possessing small forms, such as a flea or a tiny krill, add 3 or more to the Lunar's DVs (though also probably make parrying impossible). Lunars who take enormous forms also learn to absorb massive amounts of damage, as successfully evading an attack becomes increasingly unlikely with growing size.

Emperor Ox Expansion

Prerequisites: Mountainous Spirit Expression, Essence 5, Stamina 5

Lunars with this Knack crush their opposition with the sheer might of a massive spirit shape. The character spends a point of Willpower when donning her spirit shape to make it large enough to engage in mass combat as a unit with a Magnitude equal to the Lunar's Essence. Represent the Lunar's size outside of mass combat by increasing her Strength and soak by an amount equal to her Essence.

Assuming the Emperor Ox Expansion form takes time. The Speed of the shapeshifting action is measured in long ticks, and even a Lunar using Lightning-Change Style requires one long tick to activate Emperor Ox Expansion.

Form Acquisition Knacks: Human

Compassionate Mirror Nature

Prerequisites: Prey's Skin Disguise, Essence 3, Perception 4

The Lunar understands a compassionate alternative to the standard hunt for a human's shape. She dedicates the sacred hunt to Luna with an invocation of her belief in guarding Creation and its life, then she pursues her quarry as normal. Once the period of observation is over, she renders her victim unconscious (not dead) and tastes his blood. She acquires his shape permanently, but the victim lives. When the victim dies, the effects of Flickering Star Infusion begin as normal, as if the Lunar had killed the victim outright. Taking a human form in this way triggers no Compassion roll.

Courtesan's Possession

Prerequisites: Compassionate Mirror Nature, Essence 4, Wits 4

Blood is unnecessary for a Lunar who applies this Knack to his shapeshifting. He may add a target of his sacred hunt through the act of sexual intercourse rather than by slaying it and taking its heart's blood (or by merely defeating it, as with Compassionate Mirror Nature). It must still come at the

culmination of a full hunt, unless the Exalt possesses Life of the Hummingbird and wishes to have the form only temporarily.

Form Acquisition Knacks: Miscellaneous

Moon and Earth Song

Prerequisites: Laurels-and-Ivy Technique, Essence 7, Perception 7

This Knack allows the Lunar to pay 10m, 1wp to assume the form of a natural geographic feature—a cloud bank, a mountain, a forest, a stretch of river, a creeping fog. The Lunar must have within her heart's blood library the form of a spirit corresponding to the feature she wishes to become—a river god, for example, if she wishes to become a river. The Lunar is only semi-mobile in this form, moving at most ten miles per day, and unable to directly act upon anything venturing within her boundaries, though she may observe the interior of her being from any point as though she were present, and adds three dice to all Perception rolls to notice intruders within her. While not immune to damage in landscape form, per se, the Lunar is formidably protected—destroying a Lunar wearing the form of a mountain, for example, would likely require Solar Circle sorcery or powerful artifacts of mass destruction.

The Lunar may not destroy any existing landscape features by using this Knack; existing geography instead reconfigures itself to account for the new inclusion. For example, if the Lunar were to become a river winding its way through the middle of Whitewall, the city's streets and roads would temporarily route themselves around it, span the Lunar with bridges, and so forth. A Lunar who became a forest in Nexus would briefly transform Nexus into a thriving trade city located in the heart of a forest. The Lunar also may not assume a geographic form in a place where it is impossible for that feature to exist (clouds, for example, are rarely found underwater, and mountains and rivers generally do not float two hundred feet above the ground), unless she is in the Wyld. Finally, the Lunar's Tell extends to blanket her in a veil of normalcy; observers must pierce the Tell in order to realize there is anything unusual about a mountain suddenly springing up overnight.

Form Acquisition Knacks: Supernatural

Heavenly Servant Imitation

Prerequisites: Green Sun Child, Hearth-and-Flame Shell, Essence 6, Intelligence 6

Luna's Children were never meant to take the shapes of the gods. That ability would only encourage ambition that even pre-rebellious Incarnae thought to fear. Some Lunars transcend this limitation, mastering a blood hunt capable of adding a god to the Lunar's library of forms. The hunt takes the same basic amount of time as hunting a human. Acquiring a god without blood requires the Lunar to consume its divine ichors or other vital part. The Lunar cannot use any of the god's Essence-fueled powers.

Essential Mirror Form

Prerequisites: One of various Knacks, Essence 6+, Intelligence 6+

To be masters of infiltration, the Lunar Exalted must mimic their victims' powers. Essential Mirror Form gives the Lunar the ability to use the Essence-based powers of one kind of supernatural creature, as defined by the Knacks that make them valid targets of the sacred hunt. This includes basic elemental powers such as Dragon's Suspire and unique Charms the creatures possess. She can activate such powers only as long as she remains in the form to which those powers are natural. Each such invocation requires an additional cost of one point of Willpower, and since displaying an anima returns a Lunar to one of her true forms, the Lunar has a limited amount of Essence with which to work. If using a Charm or power acquired in this way activates the Lunar's anima to a degree that forces her back into a true form, the effect functions as normal. Effects with extended durations end when their descriptions say, not early because the Lunar leaves the shape.

This Knack can be purchased multiple times to affect additional creature types, though it never makes available the Charms of other Exalted. Primordial Charms (including those of the Yozis) are considered "the Charms of other Exalted" for the purpose of this Knack. This Charm also will not allow Lunars to use any Charm with the Native Keyword. To purchase this Knack, the relevant prey must be a valid target of the sacred hunt. The Lunar must also have an Essence and Intelligence two higher than the Essence and Attribute requirements for the Knack that opens that type of creature to the Lunar's hunt.

General Charms

Impossible (Attribute) Improvement

Cost: —; **Mins:** (Attribute) 5, Essence 5;
Type: Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Instinctive (Attribute) Unity, Flawless (Attribute) Focus

Stewards hone their strengths. This Charm permanently increases the maximum rating of the chosen Attribute by one. Raising the Attribute to that level requires the normal expenditure of experience.

Strength

Crippling Charms

Herd-Strengthening Tactic

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Strength 6, Essence 6;
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Fury-OK, Obvious
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Inviting the Winter Wolf

A Lunar's punishment endures. This Charm may supplement any action that causes a Crippling effect and makes that effect permanent. Surgical attempts to right the issue fail, and even Exalted do not heal the injury with its associated wounds. It withstands supernatural methods that heal Crippling effects. Resolve conflicts with this statement using the "Unstoppable Force, Immovable Object" rules in **Exalted** (on p. 179 of the core rulebook).

When invoked as part of Relentless Lunar Fury, all Crippling attacks the Lunar makes in the duration are permanent but do not resist effects that explicitly cure Crippling wounds.

Damage Enhancement Charms

Besieging the Bastion of Form

Cost: —; **Mins:** Strength 5, Essence 6; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Form-Destroying Touch

Besieging the Bastion of Form improves its prerequisite. The Lunar may spend an additional five motes of Essence and one point of Willpower when activating Form-Destroying Touch to add one of the following effects:

• The Sickness effect progresses much more rapidly. After it would normally begin harming its victim, the victim's player must roll to resist damage and mutation every *hour* instead of every day. The Charm runs its course after 25 more hours.

• The Sickness effect continues to affect its victim until the victim dies or something cures the supernatural disease.

• Failure to resist the Sickness effect inflicts two levels of aggravated damage but no pox. Alternatively, failure afflicts the victim with two poxes but no aggravated damage. Poxes may double up to cause a single affliction or promote an existing mutation faster than normal.

Upon purchase of Besieging the Bastion of Form, a player picks one of the preceding options. Additional options cost two experience points apiece. Storytellers and players may work together to come up with more options. A character can apply only one option to a single use of Form-Destroying Touch.

Friend of the Plague

Cost: —; **Mins:** Strength 6, Essence 7; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: Fury-OK
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Besieging the Bastion of Form

Those whom the Stewards condemn invariably die; when she leaves the battlefield, they are defeated. This Charm

permanently enhances Form-Destroying Touch, giving it the Fury-OK tag. When so used, the Charm inflicts its effects on everyone the Lunar successfully touches. The character may apply one of the additional effects from Besieging the Bastion of Form by also activating it with Relentless Lunar Fury. Besieging the Bastion of Form cannot be activated as part of a fury unless Form-Destroying Touch is.

Feats of Strength Charms

Iron Tyrant Impact

Cost: 8m; **Mins:** Strength 5, Essence 6;
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Lightning Flash Might Methodology, Yeddim's-Back Method

Worldly materials do not hinder the Stewards. This Charm supplements a feat of strength to break a mundane object, rendering the attempt automatically successful. With Strength 7+, Essence 7+, the Lunar may add a point of Willpower to the Charm's cost, permitting it to also destroy magical artifacts. This renders the Charm Simple, with a Speed of (Artifact's dot rating) minutes and a DV penalty of -3. N/A artifacts are immune to this Charm, as are objects which are specifically noted as being indestructible.

Dexterity

Defensive Charms

Flowing Body Ascension

Cost: — (+3m, 1wp); **Mins:** Dexterity 6, Essence 5;
Type: Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Flowing Body Evasion

This Charm enhances its prerequisite. By spending another three motes and a point of Willpower when activating Flowing Body Evasion, that Charm's duration becomes one action. (Note: Flowing Body Evasion's duration of one action in **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Lunars** is actually an error; its duration should be instant.)

Becoming Water's Envy

Cost: —; **Mins:** Dexterity 5, Essence 6; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: Fury-OK
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Flowing Body Evasion

This Charm enhances its prerequisite, giving it the Fury-OK keyword. Activating Flowing Body Evasion with Relentless Lunar Fury allows the Lunar to automatically dodge one attack (of which she is aware) each action. Additional unbeatable dodges in a single action require the Lunar to activate Flowing Body Evasion separately. The character suffers a Flaw of Invulnerability applicable to Flowing Body Evasion for the duration of Relentless Lunar Fury.

World-Bending Guardian Attentiveness

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Dexterity 6, Essence 6;
Type: Simple
Keywords: Obvious, Wyld
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Finding the Needle's Eye, Flowing Body Evasion

Stewards guard the world; in exchange, the world guards them. The Lunar imbues the fluid world around him with a portion of his Essence and charges it with his defense. The Exalt's surroundings bend to make him safe, from effects as mundane as a bending tree branch or dipping swallow intersecting a missile to space bending or air becoming dense as steel to deflect a blade.

The character constantly benefits from the effects of a Defend Other action used on his behalf by the Wyld itself. This Defend Other action has a DV of two per degree of surrounding Wyld, from two in the Bordermarches to eight in Pure Chaos. Since the defender is the Wyld itself, attackers may not choose to divert their attacks to strike the Wyld rather than the Lunar, and no other effect may force them to attempt to do so. Lunar Exalted use this Charm for an advantage against the Fair Folk on those monsters' own turf.

Movement Charms

Moonlight Hunt

Cost: 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** Dexterity 6, Essence 6;
Type: Simple
Keywords: Obvious, Wyld
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Mist-Walking Prana

Stewards know the flaws in the world. With this Charm, the Lunar detects cracks in the Wyld and may walk through them to travel short distances. For the rest of the scene, she may travel up to (Essence x 10) yards without crossing the intervening space as a Move action. She need make no movement—she simply changes location. This translation through space is so unnoticeable and unpredictable that she may attempt to reestablish surprise in the wake of such movement.

Star Falls Through

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Dexterity 7, Essence 7;
Type: Reflexive (Step 9)
Keywords: Combo-Basic, Counterattack, Obvious, Shaping, Wyld
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Snake Body Technique, Moonlight Hunt

Stewards refuse assaults on their favored grounds. With lightning speed, the Lunar tricks someone who attempts to harm her into a Wyld instability. In a silver-and-rainbow flash, the aggressor disappears. The Lunar makes a standard close-range counterattack. If the attack succeeds, the aggressor is lost in the warp of the Wyld for ten ticks, reappearing

in a place of the Lunar's choosing up to (Lunar's Essence) miles away. The Lunar may not relocate his opponent to an immediately hazardous location (so, no teleporting her into the air above a volcano).

Speed and Extra Action Charms

Unhesitant Scorpion Lash

Cost: —; **Mins:** Dexterity 6, Essence 6; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Octopus and Spider Barrage

Lunar heroes strike with unhesitating speed. Unhesitant Scorpion Lash permanently enhances the character's capabilities. When he invokes a Charm that provides a flat number of extra actions for a flat cost, the Lunar adds two to the number of actions provided.

Greedy Mosquito Bite

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Dexterity 6, Essence 5;
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Fury-OK, Obvious
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Lightning Stroke Attack

Like the greedy mosquito, some warrior Lunars cannot resist reaching for a second strike. This Charm gives them the speed to succeed. When this Charm supplements a successful attack, the character's strike plunges into the fresh wound a second time. Revisit Steps Seven–Ten of attack resolution and inflict all damage from the attack again.

Activated with Relentless Lunar Fury, the character inflicts extra damage on every successful attack. This damage is applied separately and never exceeds minimum damage for the original blow.

At Essence 7, the Lunar may spend four more motes on this Charm to include the effects of all Charms (rather than just damage-increasing Charms) while revisiting Steps Seven–Ten.

Stamina

Endurance Charms

Moonsilver Absorption

Cost: —; **Mins:** Stamina 6, Essence 5; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: Obvious
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Unstoppable Juggernaut Incarnation

This Charm permanently enhances Unstoppable Juggernaut Incarnation. When the character uses that Charm, he does not record *any* of the damage inflicted in the otherwise lethal blow; it now includes aggravated damage. The character's body shines like moonsilver as it shifts around the blow.

Fury Charms

Relentless Lunar Horde

Cost: —; **Mins:** Stamina 5, Essence 6; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: War
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Relentless Lunar Fury

Relentless Lunar Horde allows the Lunar to use Relentless Lunar Fury while leading a military unit, rousing her warriors into a frenzy. In addition to its standard effects, the unit increases its Close Combat Damage rating by one, increases its Morale by two, does not lose Endurance for the duration and cannot assume close formation. Used in this fashion, Relentless Lunar Fury's duration is counted in long ticks.

Healing Charms

Purging the Tarnished Silver

Cost: 5+m, 1wp; **Mins:** Stamina 6, Essence 5; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Obvious
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Instinctive Stamina Unity, Halting the Scarlet Flow

A silver aura surrounds the Lunar as her most serious wound disappears. She heals one aggravated wound for every five motes she spends on this Charm.

Territory Charms

Native Son's Grace

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Stamina 5, Essence 4; **Type:** Reflexive (Step 7)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Fury-OK
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Any Stamina Excellency, Frenzied Bear Fortification

When an attack would hit the character, she instead deflects it onto a nearby terrain feature at the last moment. She ducks behind a tree, rolls under a table, shuts a door in the attacker's face or darts through the coral reef. All damage from the successful attack is applied to the terrain feature rather than the Lunar, and this Charm doubles the attack's damage in Step Seven. This Charm only protects the Lunar from damage, and not from any other effects of the attack.

The character must be within an area that she owns as a person owns an object (see **Exalted**, p. 238) to use this Charm. Charms such as Boundary-Marking Meditation (see **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Lunars**, p. 170) help mark such territory. This is considered a unique Flaw of Invulnerability.

Using this Charm with Relentless Lunar Fury allows the character to take advantage of her surroundings for the duration. Halve all damage she suffers before soak. Damage dice lost to this effect harm terrain used for the defense.

Indestructible Recursive Design

Cost: 8m; **Mins:** Stamina 4, Essence 4;
Type: Simple (Speed 5, DV -2)
Keywords: Combo-OK
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: Hide-Toughening Essence

Lunars are survivors, accustomed to the hardships the world demands of its heroes. Knowing that misfortune is inevitable, hardy Stewards prepare for the worst. With a few moments' concentration, the Lunar causes his body to grow redundant physical systems—secondary organs, reinforcing musculature, additional ligaments. The character gains additional -1 health levels equal to the human true form's Stamina. These levels persist as long as the Charm remains active, and vanish as soon as damage is marked off in them; as the Lunar's additional body parts are destroyed, they sublimate back into the Essence that formed them.

Charisma

Animal and Training Charms

Loyal Beast-Friend Enlightenment

Cost: —; **Mins:** Charisma 6, Essence 5; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Nature-Reinforcing Allocation

This Charm permanently enhances Nature-Reinforcing Allocation. It increases the Lunar's training capabilities, allowing him to endow target animals with:

- One additional dot in *any* Attribute and Ability. Assume the animal's Social Attributes begin at one dot. Although the creature might not be able to use them all (it can understand languages with Linguistics but still not speak any, and it is hard to navigate a Bureaucracy without words and writing), it understands how.
- Intelligence 3, if the animal is his familiar.
- Up to two additional -1 health levels and up to two -2 health levels. Each health level requires one invocation of Nature-Reinforcing Allocation. Health levels trained via this Charm cost the animal (12 – wound penalty associated with health box) xp each, or (6 – wound penalty associated with health box) bonus points during character creation.

Erudite Beast-Mind Expansion

Cost: —; **Mins:** Charisma 6, Essence 6; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Nature-Reinforcing Allocation

This Charm permanently enhances Nature-Reinforcing Allocation. It increases the Lunar's training capabilities. The maximum number of dots the Lunar can add to any trait that he is able to train becomes equal

to half his Essence. He can increase his familiar's Intelligence by one greater.

Silver Blood Infusion

Cost: —; **Mins:** Charisma 7, Essence 7; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: Stackable
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Nature-Reinforcing Allocation

Stewards shape their realms' creatures. This Charm permanently enhances Nature-Reinforcing Allocation and the Lunar. The character may invoke Nature-Reinforcing Allocation to makes one previous invocation of the Charm hereditary. The target must drink the Lunar's blood for the Charm to take effect. The Lunar also gains (Charisma ÷ 2) extra successes on uses of Craft (Genesis) concerned with anything Nature-Reinforcing Allocation can target.

Snake-Vine Integration

Cost: —; **Mins:** Charisma 8, Essence 7; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Nature-Reinforcing Allocation

This Charm permanently enhances Nature-Reinforcing Allocation, making plants valid targets. Plants begin with all Abilities and Attributes (except Stamina) at 0 unless they are already capable of mobility, and even their instincts are poor until they have at least Intelligence 1. (On the off chance that someone is playing an uplifted rosebush, the first dot of an Attribute costs 5 xp.)

Unstoppable Beast-Warrior Indoctrination

Cost: —; **Mins:** Charisma 7, Essence 6; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Lesson of the Winter Wolf, Loyal Beast-Friend Enlightenment

Herds and packs serve the Stewards without hesitation. This Charm permanently enhances Wolf Pack Training Technique. When using Wolf Pack Training Technique on a military unit of animals, the Lunar makes them into such unified armies that they achieve Might (Essence ÷ 2) while under his command.

Holy Charms

Morning Blossoms Blooming

Cost: 12m, 1wp; **Mins:** Charisma 7, Essence 7;
Type: Simple (Speed 7)
Keywords: Holy, Obvious
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Scathing Lunar Condemnation

Enemies fear to tread lands Lunars claim. The character dedicates where she stands to Luna and to Gaia, forbidding any foe of theirs from approaching her. Silver light shines on her from the heavens and flows outward, illuminating an area (10 x Essence) yards in radius with silver radiance. All environmental damage other than that generated by the Charm itself, the Essence respiration issues produced by the Underworld and Blight Zones within Autochthonia, and all hostile Shaping Actions will have no effect on individuals within the area so blessed. Creatures of darkness treat being within the region as an environmental effect with Damage 1A/action and Trauma (Lunar's Essence)L. The Lunar may reflexively grant or revoke amnesty, excluding specific creatures of darkness from the Charm's environmental damage (most commonly bound demons; or, in the Time of Tumult, a Lunar's Abyssal or Infernal mate).

Territory Charms

Feral Cat Tread

Cost: —; **Mins:** Charisma 7, Essence 7; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Ranging Wolf Marking

This Charm permanently enhances Boundary-Marking Meditation. It increases the maximum area of that Charm's targeted region to (Essence x 1000) square miles. Purchasing Feral Cat Tread does not automatically expand existing uses of Boundary-Marking Meditation.

Manipulation

Belief Charms

Mirror-Shattering Word

Cost: —; **Mins:** Manipulation 6, Essence 5;
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Wyld
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Lost Mirror Flight

Luna rules madness in Creation, and her Chosen act in her name. This Charm permanently enhances Lost Mirror Flight. When using Lost Mirror Flight, the character may double the cost to make the madness permanent. In the Wyld, making insanities permanent costs only one mote extra.

False Burrow Gift

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Manipulation 6, Essence 6;
Type: Simple (6 long ticks)
Keywords: Combo-Ok, Illusion, Social
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Lost Mirror Flight

Stewards tend others' homes. This Charm instills in its target a false belief about their concept of "home" and reinforces this belief with an Intimacy. The beliefs that home is under attack, is already destroyed, is nearby or is lost forever count, as do the ideas that the target has been exiled from home, that home embodies certain political views or that home is a different place altogether. Instilling this false belief requires a successful (Manipulation + [Performance or Presence]) roll against the target's MDV. Against a group, the highest MDV contests it. It costs two Willpower points for a victim to ignore the belief for one scene.

Committing the Charm's cost invokes an additional Illusion effect. While the Charm persists, the world appears to support the belief. The target sees the ruins of a destroyed home city or feels the stones former countrymen throw at the returned exile. Releasing the commitment ends the Charm's effects in total.

Feint Charms

Butterfly Eyes Face

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Manipulation 6, Essence 6;
Type: Simple (Speed 3)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Illusion
Duration: (Essence) actions
Prerequisite Charms: Butterfly Eyes Fist, One of the Herd

Lunars are not who they seem. The target of this Charm suffers an Illusion effect, believing the Lunar to be a nearby person and vice versa unless the target's reflexive (Perception + Awareness) roll beats a difficulty equal to the Lunar's Manipulation score. Spending one Willpower point allows the target to tell who is who for one action. After the target has spent three Willpower, the effect ends.

Butterfly Eyes Enhancement

Cost: —; **Mins:** Manipulation 8, Essence 7;
Type: Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Any Butterfly Eyes Charm

This Charm permanently enhances all Butterfly Eyes Charms the Lunar knows. Their costs increase by one mote, and the Willpower cost to fend off their mental influence increases by one.

Military Unit Charms

First in School Assumption

Cost: 4m, 2wp; **Mins:** Manipulation 6, Essence 6;
Type: Simple (4 long ticks)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Social, War
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: School in the Reeds Technique

Stewards suffer no armies on their soil not allied with them. The Lunar causes the target military or social unit to treat her as its commander or leader for all purposes. She must be a solo unit to use this Charm. Her player makes a contested roll of (Manipulation + [Performance or War]) against the current leader's (Charisma + [Performance + War]); the Lunar suffers an external penalty equal to the unit's effective Drill. If successful, the unit treats the Lunar as its leader for the rest of the scene. The previous leader becomes a solo unit or, if he's willing, a special character in the stolen unit.

When individuals in a stolen unit normally recognize their true leader through supernatural means—if they're zombies with a link to the necromancer who raised them, for instance, or creatures created through sorcery—this Charm functions for (Essence x 2) long ticks before it ends. If the original leader (or a legitimate replacement) does not reclaim command, the group becomes a mob. Lunars who look too different from a legitimate leader—such as a dashing human commanding stolen demon troops—suffer the same time restriction.

Appearance

Disguise Charms

Air Body Style

Cost: 10m; **Mins:** Appearance 5, Essence 5; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious, Shaping
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: Clover Can't Be Found

Walls and gates erected to hide prey from the hunter are of no concern to a Lunar. Likewise, the keenest eyes and canniest screening for her Tell only make a Steward laugh. Briefly drawing her anima into her body, the Lunar inverts her own physical nature, causing herself to dematerialize. She may freely interact with other dematerialized beings and attempt to enter sanctums as a spirit would. However, should the Lunar's anima flare to the 11m+ level it becomes visible even to those who cannot see dematerialized beings.

Interaction Charms

Stance-as-Thought Stride

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Appearance 6, Essence 5; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-OK, Illusion, Social
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Observed Predator Instinct, Glance-Oration Technique

Lunars inspire those around them. With this Charm active, every first glance at the character triggers a specific thought or sort of thought. The Lunar chooses if she wants every person who looks at her to think something specific ("she's dangerous," "she's hiding something"), to see what they most want to see in her, or to see what they least want. The Lunar does not appear as anything other than what she is, though. The magic is in the conclusions others draw. Perhaps the evil vizier believes the Lunar is here to aid the satrap, while the merchant's son believes the Lunar is his arranged wife-to-be, arriving just in time to eliminate his chance to flee with his true beloved. Or maybe the vizier knows with one look that the Lunar is harmless, while the son believes that the Lunar will help him escape his arranged marriage. This effect creates an instant Intimacy that remains until a subject eliminates it naturally. This unnatural mental influence costs two points of Willpower to resist.

Devil Body, Terror Face

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Appearance 7, Essence 7;
Type: Simple
Keywords: Combo-OK, Illusion
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Stance-as-Thought Stride

Stewards also inspire fear. Every person sees her worst fear when looking upon the character using Devil Body, Terror Face, be it an overseer with baying hounds for an escaped slave or the fetich soul of Isidoros for an Exalt. This is an Illusion effect. All actions taken that oppose the Lunar suffer an external penalty equal to (Lunar's Essence – subject's Valor).

Victims of this Charm may spend one Willpower to make a (Willpower + Integrity) roll at a difficulty equal to the Lunar's Appearance. Success lets the person ignore the terrifying visage for a number of actions equal to her Integrity. Spending three Willpower outright accomplishes the same effect without a roll.

Perception

Essence Charms

God-Body Dissection

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Perception 6, Essence 6;
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Crippling, Obvious
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Spirit-Maiming Essence Attack

Lunar Exalted weaken their prey before the final assault. The Steward sees all aspects of her target as discrete pieces; targeting one, his attack severs it. This is a standard attack that eliminates one Charm, Combo or spell from a spirit or raksha's repertoire if it inflicts at least a level of damage. The Lunar decides which power he denies the target. Lost Charms integrated into Combos can be used as part of those Combos but not alone. God-Body Dissection cannot sever permanent Charms, Native Charms, sorcery-enabling Charms, or Assumptions. The target is still considered to know removed Charms for the purpose of fulfilling prerequisites for other Charms. Targets regain lost powers a number of days later equal to (Lunar's Essence – target's Essence). If this total is zero or less, the power returns at the end of the scene.

God-Body Consumption

Cost: —; **Mins:** Perception 8, Essence 7;
Type: Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: God-Body Dissection

This Charm permanently enhances God-Body Dissection. After successfully severing a spirit's power with that Charm, the Lunar devours it. It becomes inaccessible to the spirit until the Lunar's death. This Charm may not permanently devour panoply Charms, such as the signature Charms of the Incarnae.

Eye on the Spider

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Perception 6, Essence 6; **Type:** Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: All-Encompassing Sorcerer's Sight

Stewards are in tune with their protectorate, Creation. The Lunar's eyes shine silver with a rainbow patina, and he becomes aware of the threads that bind people to fate. He gains a general sense of where the Loom tugs them, incidentally adding a number of automatic successes equal to his Essence to divine a person's future (usually through the thaumaturgic Art of Astrology). The Lunar also discerns whether any given creature is or is not bound to the Loom of Fate.

Evading the Spider's Eye

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Perception 4, Essence 4;
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK
Duration: (Essence) days
Prerequisite Charms: Eye of the Cat

Canny Lunars know when they are being watched, and may use this heightened sensitivity to move through the world unseen—even by the pattern spiders. A Lunar using this Charm moves through the moments and spaces that escape the notice of the tenders of the Loom of Fate, rendering him invisible to astrological predictions and the Loom. All attempts to use the Loom or astrology to divine the Lunar's location or future automatically fail. Furthermore, the Lunar may observe many secrets from his vantage point between destiny's threads; all Sidereal Astrology becomes Obvious to his senses. If he chooses, he may even follow the threads of infectious destiny back to their point of origin; by starting with an individual who has had an ascending or descending destiny placed on him, the Lunar may track down the Sidereal who laid the blessing or curse, adding (Perception) automatic successes to all tracking rolls. This Charm does not inform the Lunar of which Sidereal laid any given Sidereal Astrology effect on an individual; in order to find out, he must follow destiny's thread and see where it leads.

Intelligence

Insight Charms

Predator's Insight

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Intelligence 5, Essence 5;
Type: Simple (Dramatic Action)
Keywords: Combo-OK
Duration: One hour
Prerequisite Charms: Lessons in the Blood

Lunar Exalted learn much from their prey. By consuming the mind of a creature, the character using this Charm learns what that entity knew. Devouring a brain takes an instant (for the smallest), 10 minutes (for a normal-sized human) or longer (for behemoths and other strange creatures). More exotic targets require the character to consume the seat of their minds, which he locates with a ([Perception or Intelligence] + Occult) roll.

The character then has access to everything the creature once knew. For animals, this amounts to a few subtle

instincts and familiarity with the region—the animal's den and sources of food. People's knowledge is more varied and valuable.

Any time during the Charm's duration, the character can rummage through the victim's memory as a miscellaneous action. The victim's clear memories are just as clear to the Lunar. Things a victim barely recalled require an (Intelligence + Investigation) roll to find, and the foggiest memories are at difficulty 2+. Digging out something the victim kept secret (while alive) requires the same roll at a difficulty equal to the victim's Integrity.

If the character uses this Charm on a target whose form he can take, he may spend one experience point to call upon the creature's memories as long as he retains the shape. (It is most useful to buy this benefit after a successful sacred hunt.) When in that form thereafter, he can activate this Charm to call upon those memories for another hour. Predator's Insight is a grotesque way to learn new Charms or Abilities, if the player has enough experience points to spend.

Perfect Outsider Understanding

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Intelligence 6, Essence 6;
Type: Simple
Keywords: None
Duration: One day
Prerequisite Charms: Predator's Insight

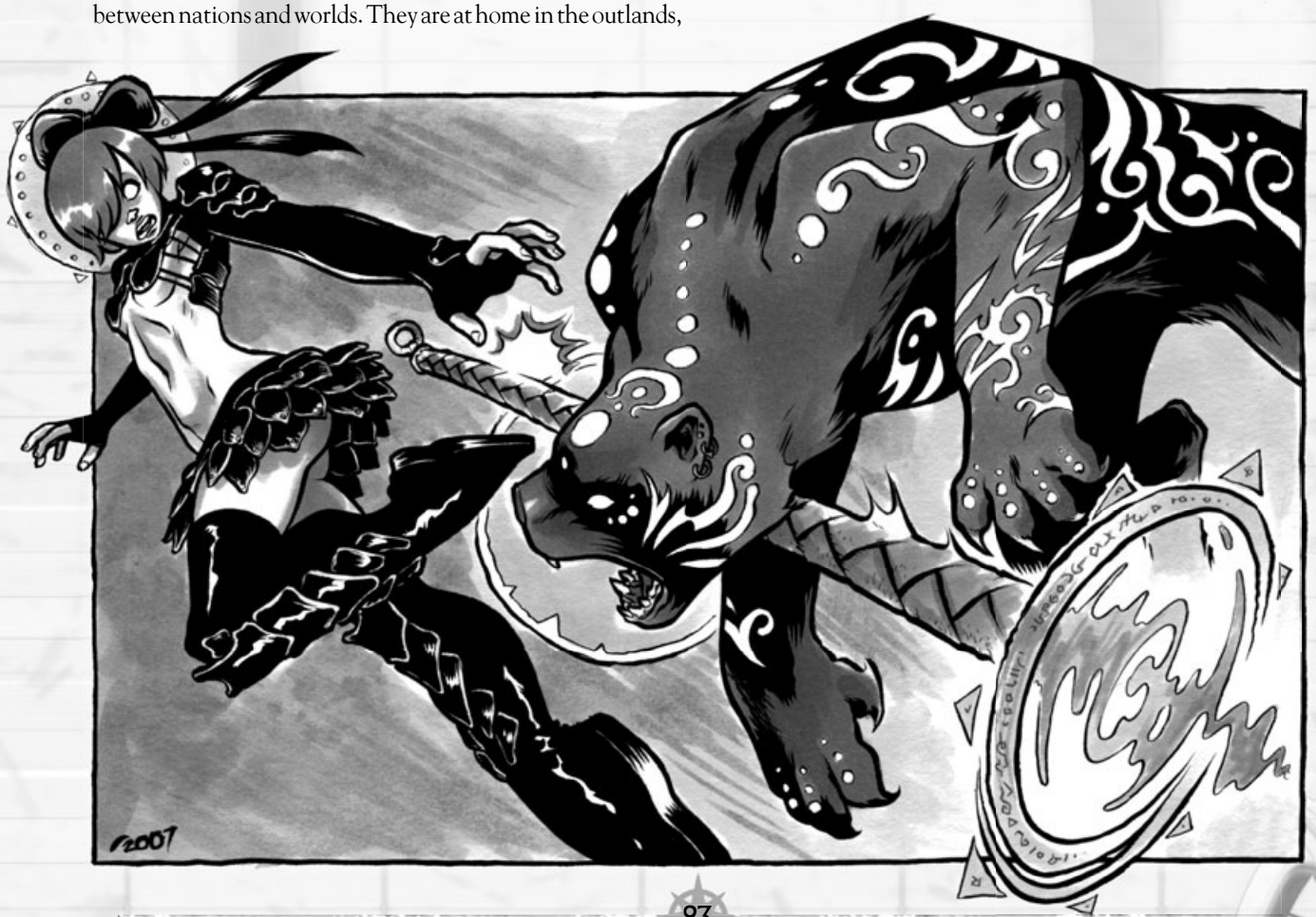
Luna's Chosen are the ultimate outsiders, freely walking between nations and worlds. They are at home in the outlands, recognized as kindred spirits and ideal champions by the odd inhabitants of the Threshold and beyond. Upon purchasing this Charm, the Lunar selects a particular sort of outsider from the following list: Demons, Dragon Kings, elementals, ghosts, Jadeborn, Lintha, raksha. The Storyteller may add other alien races and classes of being to this list as he feels appropriate. When this Charm is active, the Lunar's player adds a number of automatic successes equal to the character's Intelligence to all social rolls for the character to deal with that particular class of outsider. Additionally, the Steward gains three artificial specialties in all of his Abilities focused on the outsider in question.

Additional outsiders may be added to this Charm for a cost of two experience points each. The Charm must focus on a single type of outsider, selected when activated, and if the Lunar wishes to deal with a different sort of being, she must deactivate the Charm and reactivate it.

Defeated Technique Mastery

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Intelligence 7, Essence 7;
Type: Simple
Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious, Training
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Predator's Insight

Stewards claim prizes from their defeated foes: part of their powers. The Lunar may activate this power to issue a formal challenge to an opponent of her own devising.



This could take almost any form—a foot race, combat to first blood or to submission, to be the first to seduce the regional satrap… almost anything will do. The target is free to refuse the challenge, but if she accepts and prevails, the Lunar owes her a boon to be named by the target. Refusing or failing to discharge this debt causes the Lunar to be punished as though she had broken an oath sanctified by an Eclipse with an Essence rating equal to her own. Requested boons may not be impossible or inherently lethal, but they may be very dangerous.

By contrast, should the Lunar win, she may claim one of the target's Charms. She may only claim Charms whose minimum traits and prerequisites she meets, and which she could have potentially learned either herself or with a Lunar equivalent of the Eclipse anima power. Sidereal Martial Arts remain inaccessible. While the Lunar has claim to a Charm, the Lunar may freely use the effect as though it had been learned with the Eclipse anima power, and the target suffers a three mote surcharge on its activation cost. The Lunar's claim ends after one month has elapsed, though she may permanently retain the power if she wishes as a Training effect. Doing so immediately cedes her claim over the Charm, restoring its cost to normal for the original owner. Charms the Lunar could normally learn retain their standard experience point and activation costs; Charms which would require the Eclipse anima power to learn cost 20 experience points and have a two mote surcharge when activated.

If either the Lunar or the target agree to the challenge in bad faith (i.e., intending to rig the contest so that the Lunar may simply learn a power the target knows), the Charm fails to function.

Wyld Charms

Eternal Wyld Gift

Cost: —; **Mins:** Intelligence 6, Essence 6;
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Wyld
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Burgeoning Wyld Infliction

This Charm permanently enhances Burgeoning Wyld Infliction, allowing the Lunar to double the Charm's activation cost in order to make the mutations permanent. In the Wyld, making the mutations permanent is free and mandatory.

Donning the Rainbow Mantle

Cost: 5+m, 1wp; **Mins:** Intelligence 7, Essence 7;
Type: Simple
Keywords: Obvious
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Withdrawal of Assumptions

Stewards command the surroundings they protect. Invoking this Charm surrounds the character in a diaphanous cloak of shifting sensations. Most stimuli are colors of Creation, but some are impossible, unknown hues, curious sounds, smells and so on. For the duration, the Lunar may use Charms with the Wyld keyword as though she were in a Wyld zone. Every five motes committed to this Charm increases the effective depth, from five motes for Bordermarches to 20 motes for Pure Chaos. The Lunar extends this capability to others at a cost of two additional Willpower per person.

Wits

Concealment Charms

Sunset Hibiscus

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Wits 5, Essence 6; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-OK
Duration: One scene or indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: Secure Den Prana

Just as the Lunar makes himself and things disappear, he conceals Essence from those who can see such things. Used on himself, neither his Essence trait nor his Charms or artifacts make him more visible to those using Essence sight (such as All-Encompassing Sorcerer's Sight). He may likewise use the Charm on others. Using Sunset Hibiscus on artifacts or on extant Essence effects (such as enduring Charms or spells) renders them invisible to Essence sight, though the Lunar must be able to see them to target them in the first place. Used on a person, the Charm always lasts one scene. When used on an object or intangible collection of Essence, the Lunar may commit the Essence longer for an indefinite effect.

Uses of Sunset Hibiscus are invisible to all forms of Essence sight.

Fluid Essence Refinement

Cost: —; **Mins:** Wits 7, Essence 6; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Sunset Hibiscus

The Stewards' magic is not overt. This Charm permanently enhances the Lunar's capabilities. The character's use of Essence is subtle, making it difficult for opponents to find and target. When a foreign effect threatens to suppress, manipulate or otherwise adversely affect a Charm, spell or supernatural effect the Lunar has invoked or created, add an amount equal to the Lunar's Wits to the difficulty to do so. When there is no roll (and thus no difficulty to increase), the foreign effect fails. Add a number of successes equal to the Lunar's Essence to any opposed rolls to determine which effect overrides the other. This Charm has no effect on Countermagic spells.

Frozen Ripple Lair

Cost: 14m, 2wp; **Mins:** Wits 6, Essence 7; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Obvious, Wyld
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: Secure Den Prana, Blinking Eye of Chaos

This Charm is identical to Secure Den Prana, but the Lunar declares a time differential for her den in Else-

where. Time within the redoubt moves faster or slower than it does in Creation by a factor equal to or less than the Lunar's Essence.

Reaction Charms

Soldier Bee Emulation Extraction

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Wits 6, Essence 6;
Type: Reflexive (Step 2)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Counterattack, Obvious, Shaping
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: Hungry Eagle Method, Secure Den Prana

The Steward creates invisible pouches of Elsewhere that he uses in combat. For the Charm's duration, any person who attacks him risks losing his weapon into one of these pockets. Only a body's natural weapons are safe. Any attack the Lunar successfully parries or dodges slips into a pouch, unless he chooses otherwise. Players of characters who successfully strike the Lunar roll (Wits + [relevant Ability]) at a difficulty equal to the Lunar's Wits, unless the Lunar chooses otherwise. Failure indicates that the weapon disappears into Elsewhere. No more weapons disappear than a number equal to the Lunar's Essence. The Charm lasts until the Lunar releases the commitment, at which time the weapons fall to the ground before the people from whom he stole them.

Sidereal Charms

Throne Shadow Style

This Charm tree comprises the natural Sidereal style of unarmed fighting. The Viziers say: "Every Sidereal is a master of the arts—even on his first day in the dojo." Other Exalted tend to dismiss this logic as an idle boast, missing the point of Throne Shadow style. Viziers instinctively understand that the aspects and individuals of the world make for the best weapons, not fists or blades—and as a result, they tend to think of this martial art as Fate's Guardian style.

For other Exalted, this is a Celestial Martial Arts style that emulates and imitates the ways of the Seers of Heaven. They may learn the core Charms of the style, but may not expand upon it or learn any special extension Charms.

For Sidereals, these Charms are ordinary Sidereal Charms, bringing the esoteric power of destiny to bear in their quest to guide Creation and its rulers toward a better future. Sidereals may invent new Charms for this tree, and these are considered Sidereal Charms, not Celestial Martial Arts Charms. This distinguishes Throne Shadow style from the other instinctively-grasped art of the Sidereals, Violet Bier of Sorrows, which is a closed style designed for the Viziers by the Maiden of Endings.

Weapons and Armor: This style counts as unarmed attacks the cestus, fighting gauntlet, khatars, pankrator's cestus, tiger claws, and other such 'brawling aides,' as well as improvised weapons. It is compatible with any sort of armor.

A Tale of Two Styles

Fate's Guardian style continues to be practiced into the Time of Tumult, but never again matches the widespread popularity it enjoys in the First Age. The breaking of the Mask, murder of the Solars, and exile of the Lunar Exalted all undermine the elements that make this style a lynchpin of First Age Sidereal power. With the removal of the most potent of the Sidereals' common students and allies, and the difficulties that Arcane Fate introduces to recruiting long-term mortal or Dragon-Blooded assistants, Throne Shadow is slowly eclipsed in popularity by Violet Bier of Sorrows in the days after the Usurpation.

Lotus Eye Tactics

Cost: 1m or 3m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2;
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: None

Sidereals understand the world; much of their power to act upon the world proceeds from this fact. When the character perceives an individual whose Martial Arts rating is equal to or higher than his own, that fact becomes Obvious to his senses unless the character is using a supernatural disguise of some kind. Alternately, for a cost of 3m, the character knows all combat Abilities a perceived individual possesses which are rated equal to or higher than his Martial Arts rating.

Lion Mouse Stratagem

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2;
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Illusion
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: None

Sidereals deceive the world, presenting themselves as less than what they are; much of their power to act upon the world proceeds from this fact. The Sidereal cloaks herself in the humble and unassuming air of the neophyte student, the civil servant, or the hanger-on in the company of legends. She seems unthreatening, imposing a -3 external penalty on all attempts to gauge her nature and the level of her skill. This unassuming mien also makes it difficult to view the Sidereal as a serious threat; all attempts to re-establish surprise enjoy a bonus of (Sidereal's Essence) dice. This Charm constitutes a form of unnatural mental influence costing two Willpower to resist for one scene.

Sifu's Useful Fingers

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 2;
Type: Simple (One dramatic action)
Keywords: Combo-OK

Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: None

Sidereals advise the world; much of their power to act upon the world proceeds from this fact. Disdaining such crude weapons as fighting gauntlets or appropriated barstools, the Sidereal turns others into his instruments—be they pawns or kings. The Sidereal may enlighten an individual with five minutes of one-on-one advice and simple-but-profound martial demonstrations. The beneficiaries of such instruction temporarily enjoy one bonus dot of Martial Arts and add the Sidereal's Martial Arts rating to their Dodge MDV so long as the Vizier commits Essence to this Charm. She may sustain a commitment to up to (Essence x 2) beneficiaries at once. Sidereals know such beneficiaries as shadow fingers.

If the character is a Sidereal Exalt, she automatically becomes aware when one of her shadow fingers is attacked, regardless of the distance separating them.

Throne Shadow Form

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Form-type
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Lion Mouse Stratagem, Lotus Eye Tactics, Sifu's Useful Fingers

Combining insight, deceit, and the shadow fingers she has accumulated, the Sidereal makes a terrible fist with which to guard all things within destiny's design. While this Form is active, all shadow fingers within (Dexterity x 3) yards are considered to be protecting the martial artist with a Defend Other action at all times. Additionally, the Sidereal may launch coordinated attacks with her shadow fingers, substituting Martial Arts for War, and such attempts are made at difficulty 1 regardless of the number of fingers participating in the attack. The Sidereal and her fingers may also strike dematerialized targets while this Form is active, though this Charm does not help them find and target such beings.

Shadow Lost in the Court

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 2;
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Shadow Throne Form

The world of the Exalted is a world of vast, eye-catching luminaries; nobody notices a shadow lost in the tangle of the crowd. This Charm enhances an attempt to re-establish surprise in a crowd (defined as a scene in which at least 20 characters are present), producing a -2 external penalty on attempts to spot the Sidereal. If the Sidereal has at least two shadow fingers present, this also qualifies as a crowd, permitting her to attempt to re-establish surprise.

Pneuma-Sealing Strike

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;
Type: Reflexive (Step 1)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Crippling, Obvious
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Shadow Lost in the Court

Sidereals are known for their discretion, never sullying the courts of the Lawgivers with the blood of would-be assassins or the screams of intercepted fanatics. Their killing arts are cleaner than that. This Charm supplements an unarmed martial arts attack. Should it successfully strike its target, that individual's breath is sealed, and he begins suffocating (see **Exalted**, p. 130). The target may make a reflexive (Strength + Athletics) roll every thirty seconds at a difficulty of the martial artist's Essence rating to attempt to break free and resume breathing normally. Until he does so, he suffers a -2 internal penalty to all actions. The martial artist may also restore a target's breath by striking them with this Charm again.

If used by a Sidereal Exalt, then this Charm may alternately be used to steal the target's breath altogether. The Sidereal may subsequently try to strangle the target with her own breath, treating such attempts as a dire chain-assisted grapple attempt. Should the target regain her breath, this weapon vanishes from the Sidereal's grasp.

Deadliest of All Weapons

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;
Type: Reflexive (Step 1)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Poison
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Pneuma-Sealing Strike

There is no deadlier weapon than truth, which Sidereals may unleash on destiny's behalf. Should an unarmed attack supplemented by this Charm strike its target, they are poisoned with a toxin with the following traits: (Special/one hour, 5, —/—, -1). Rather than doing damage, this toxin infects the victim's chakras and her mind, rendering her incapable of lying or dissembling. Should she speak, she may only speak the truth as best she knows it.

Clear Eyes Defense

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 2;
Type: Reflexive
Keywords: Combo-OK, Counterattack
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Throne Shadow Form

The Sidereals are destiny's guardians and the eyes of the Exalted. Their vision must not be clouded, and those who would attempt such stratagems must be punished. While this Charm is active, the Sidereal may launch an unarmed Martial Arts counterattack in step nine against any individual who attempts to inflict unnatural mental influence on him. If this influence is ongoing, the counterattack triggers the first time the Sidereal is exposed to it after activating Clear Eyes Defense.

If the character is a Sidereal Exalt with Essence 3+, then a counterattack which successfully strikes its target also perfectly negates the unnatural mental influence which triggered it.

Welcoming the Uninvited Guest

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;
Type: Simple (Speed 3, DV -0)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious
Duration: Five actions
Prerequisite Charms: Throne Shadow Form

Striking the air with her palm, the Sidereal sets an Essence-vibration racing through the world. The Exalt makes an unarmed martial arts attack; all hidden characters within (Martial Arts x 10) yards must make a reflexive opposed Dexterity + Stealth roll against the attack's successes. Should the Sidereal garner more successes, then a series of ripples and distortions in the air give away the individual's location and render stealth impossible for five actions. This Charm also automatically reveals dematerialized beings within its range in this manner.

Finger-Stealing Handshake

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3;
Type: Simple
Keywords: Combo-OK, Servitude
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Clear Eyes Defense, Welcoming the Uninvited Guest

Improvisation is a cherished skill of brawlers and courtly guardians alike. The Sidereal rolls (Charisma + Martial Arts), issuing an exhortation to abandon arms and loyalties and rally to him for the sake of the world's preservation. This battlefield plea is ineffective against heroes and supernatural beings, but the weak minds of the world's extras may be easily swayed to change their loyalties. Compare the Sidereal's roll to the highest MDV of any hostile extra present; should the Sidereal succeed, (Essence x 2) extras switch sides and immediately begin fighting under the Sidereal's leadership (assuming that so many are present). These extras are considered to be shadow fingers until the end of the scene; after that point, the Sidereal must use Sifu's Useful Fingers on them if he is to retain them as his tools. This Charm's unnatural mental influence costs three points of Willpower to resist.

If the character is a Sidereal Exalt with Essence 4+, then this Charm may also win the loyalty of mindless automatons, including undead, though such beings add their master's Essence to their MDV if they are under magical control.

World as Weapon Mastery

Cost: —; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;
Type: Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Deadliest of All Weapons, Finger-Stealing Handshake

Those who wield the world as a weapon are never alone, and as such, cannot be defeated. The attacks of the Sidereal's shadow fingers are now considered to be her unarmed attacks for the purpose of Charms of Throne Shadow style.

Throne Shadow Extensions

Flow-Breaking Strike

Cost: 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4;
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Crippling, Stackable
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Finger-Stealing Handshake

Feeling along a tenor of fate, a Sidereal may strike at her opponent's relevance, separating the momentous from the also-ran. This Charm supplements an unarmed martial arts attack; should the attack strike its target, that all of that target's actions raise their Speed by one for (Sidereal's Essence / 2, round up) actions. Subsequent strikes reset this timer and cumulatively increase the Speed of the target's actions. This Charm may not raise a target's Speed higher than 7.

The Lotus Blossoms

Cost: —; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5;
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Native
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Lotus Eye Tactics, One complete Celestial Martial Arts style

Masters of space and time, Sidereals embody the principles which engender the Martial Arts. This Charm replicates the effects of the Solar Charm Divine Transcendence of Martial Arts.

Showing the Secret Hand

Cost: 10m; **Mins:** Martial Arts 6, Essence 6;
Type: Reflexive (Step 9)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Counterattack
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Clear Eyes Defense

The Sidereal, having enriched the world with his lessons, has earned its gratitude. It moves to punish those who would attempt to strike down such a wise master. All shadow fingers within range of the Sidereal's attacker reflexively launch one attack with the combat Ability of their choice at that individual. With Martial Arts 7+, Essence 7+ the Sidereal may add a one-Willpower surcharge to this Charm's cost to automatically render this mass-counterattack a coordinated attack. Individual shadow fingers may opt not to participate in this attack if they choose, at no cost. This Charm may be used no more than once per action.

Dragon-Blooded Charms

As the elite shock troops and junior officers of the Celestial Exalted, the Dragon-Blooded seldom have need or opportunity to develop their Essence to the same heights as their betters. Still, those who are determined and enlightened enough to explore the birthright of the Elemental Dragons can unlock awesome and terrible vestiges of the Primordial power that flows through Gaia's greatest souls.

New Keywords

Dynasty: A Charm with this keyword has effects on descendents, defined as anyone who traces direct lineage to the Exalt with the Charm (such as children, grandchildren, etc.). Some of these Charms distinguish between Dragon-Blooded and mortal descendents, as noted in their description.

Martyr: A Charm with this keyword has a greater effect if the Exalt voluntarily forfeits his life when activating it. The mystical suicide joins the Terrestrial's soul and Essence directly to the Elemental Dragon associated with his aspect, subsuming the totality of his name and being into the Dragon like a drop of water returned to the ocean. Only the empty shell of the Terrestrial's body remains, unless it is consumed by the Charm's effect. When using the Martyr keyword, death substitutes for the usual cost of the Charm, and it may be expressly activated as a reflexive action regardless of its normal type, allowing Terrestrial elders to fight to the last mote and still unleash one final act of greatness. Characters may activate one Martyr effect with their death, plus one different additional one for every dot of Essence above 6. (An Essence 10 paragon—if such a being existed—could die the death of five dragons.)

Purity: Charms with this keyword channel the Elemental Dragons directly through racial birthright and cannot be learned by Dragon-Blooded who lack the minimum Breeding listed for the Charm. Eclipse Caste Solars can learn these Charms despite lacking Breeding, but they do so as if the Charms required a minimum Essence one dot higher than usual.

Air Aspect

Linguistics

Honored Ancestor Exhalation

Cost: 10m, 2wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 6, Breeding 3; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Dynasty, Martyr, Purity
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: Speech Without Words, With One Mind

The voice of a progenitor lends hope and purpose to his descendents. Upon activating this Charm, the Exalt chooses a Motivation (which may differ from his own). Whenever one of the Exalt's descendents channels a Virtue while taking an action that directly supports this Motivation, the descendant does not spend a Virtue channel to do so and substitutes her ancestor's Essence rating for the rating of the channeled Virtue. Because these dice are considered Virtue dice, such bonuses do not count against Excellency limits. Exalted may use only a single activation of this Charm at a time, and characters may tap into only one ancestor per action. With the Martyr effect, the Charm lasts as long as the family does, passing the legacy to each generation.

Characters wishing to be part of a family lineage subject to a Martyr usage of this Charm may possess (subject to the Storyteller's approval) one such Motivation per dot of the Family Background (see **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**, p. 109). Buying Family in this manner negates the normal bonuses for buying that dot of the Background. Ancestors purchased with this Background are assumed to have died with Essence 6. Optionally, rather than using an additional dot of Family to add a second Motivation, such dots may be used to upgrade an existing ancestor's Essence rating by one dot, up to a maximum of Essence 8.

Lore

Endless Coils Enlightenment

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Lore 6, Essence 6, Breeding 5; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Emotion, Obvious, Purity
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Eternal Mind Meditation, Elemental Succor Method

The strength of the Dragon-Blooded lies not in their individual prowess, but in their vast collective might. Upon activating this Charm, the user and every Terrestrial within a one-mile radius feels a sense of kinship and pride in their race. This feeling instantly forges an Intimacy of loyalty to the Dragon-Blooded Host as a whole, which endures or fades normally once the Charm ends. Only those in range when Endless Coils Enlightenment activates are targeted, and they remain affected regardless of distance. Those who later enter the radius are not affected.

Whenever a Terrestrial dies while affected by this Charm, every other affected character temporarily learns every Dragon-Blooded or Terrestrial Martial Arts Charm the deceased knew until the end of the scene, provided they meet trait minimums. (Out-of-aspect mote costs apply.) If the user of Endless Coils Enlightenment dies before the end of the scene, the effect continues for its full duration.

Occult

Mantle of Elemental Fusion

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Occult 6, Essence 6; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-OK, Elemental, Obvious, Touch
Duration: Indefinite
Prerequisite Charms: Spirit Chaining Strike

By means of this Charm, a Dragon-Blood may physically meld with an elemental of the same aspect as himself in order to wear its power. To activate this Charm, the Exalt must successfully reach into the center of the elemental's body as an unarmed attack. His player then makes a (Charisma + Occult) roll with a difficulty equal to the spirit's Essence (unless the spirit cooperates, which removes the need for the roll). Bonding with an elemental whose Essence is greater than the Exalt's is impossible. Upon a successful activation, the elemental's form oozes into the Dragon-Blood's aspect markings and becomes part of his body. For as long as the Charm

lasts, the spirit cannot be physically attacked, and the Exalt knows all of its Charms. If the Exalt dies, so does the spirit. Melding also carries lingering psychological side effects for both parties, as each chooses one Intimacy per scene to give to the other. Exalted who frequently use this Charm evince all manner of unusual quirks and appetites. This Charm may be placed in a Combo with Charms of other Abilities.

Stealth

Hidden Maelstrom Cloak

Cost: None (+1m per ally or +1wp for a vehicle);
Mins: Stealth 5, Essence 5; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: None
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Dragon Shroud Technique

This Charm enhances an Exalt's Dragon Shroud Technique, extending the Charm's duration to Indefinite and automatically giving the characteristics and benefits of being invisible (-2 successes to spot or attack him, plus greater ease in launching surprise attacks or reestablishing surprise). In addition, the character may extend the Dragon Shroud Technique to as many allies as he has dots of Essence, as long as they join hands at the time of activation. He may, instead, cloak a single vehicle or warstrider by touching it (increasing the cost as noted). Cloaked vehicles may be hidden with Stealth as if they were the Exalt, without penalties for size, using Wits instead of Dexterity. Anything cloaked by Dragon Shroud Technique appears if it travels more than (Stealth x 5) yards from the Exalt or the Charm ends.

Thrown

Hurricane Hand Gesture

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 5;
Type: Simple (Speed 4)
Keywords: Combo-OK, Elemental
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Deadly Blades of the Five Dragons

The Exalt gestures toward an opponent, and an invisible force emanates from her hand as an unblockable attack using her (Dexterity + Thrown + Essence) and a Range of 300 yards. If the attack hits, the Terrestrial may knock the target prone, drive him gently to his knees or send him flying back (Essence + Thrown + 5) yards. If a hurled target strikes a solid object, he and it suffer bashing damage equal to the remaining yards he would have traveled (possibly lethal, depending on the barrier). Targets significantly larger than human size cannot be thrown but may be knocked down. The Dragon-Blood may also impose an elemental effect according to her aspect. **Air** throws targets upward for double distance rather than back, leaving victims to fall normally. **Earth** inflicts three levels of unsoakable aggravated damage to Wyld creatures forced to kneel, petrifying the bodies of the slain. **Fire** catches the target alight for 4L damage. **Water** smashes, doubling knockback distance. **Wood** imposes sleep as a Poison effect on living targets knocked down if attack successes exceed their Stamina. Victims do not awaken until the end of the scene unless they suffer damage levels.

Exalted with Essence 6+ may target units with a Magnitude no greater than their Essence (or an equivalent number of scattered individuals) with a single attack costing eight motes of Essence and one point of Willpower. This attack can knock a unit back or down like an individual. Applying the earth effect to a unit of Wyld creature extras obliterates it, likely leaving special characters merely wounded. Applying a wood effect to a unit whose members are all below the Stamina threshold lulls the whole unit to sleep.

Earth Aspect

Awareness

Earth Reclaims Her Bounty

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Awareness 5, Essence 6, Breeding 3;
Type: Simple (Speed 7, DV -2)
Keywords: Elemental, Martyr, Obvious, Purity, Shaping
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Entombed Mind Technique, Essence Disruption Attack

Those capable of sensing Essence respire motes from the component dragons and breath of Gaia. By means of this Charm, the life of the world takes back what is hers. The Dragon-Blood designates a single animate target within (Essence x 10) yards as a Shaping effect. If that being has Essence 1, then its life force or animating energy drains into the earth, killing the target instantly and painlessly with any soul falling into Lethe. Beings with Essence 2+ fare better, losing one Willpower point from metaphysical shock and a number of motes equal to the Dragon-Blood's (Essence x 5) that visibly discharge into the nearest surface of the earth. Thereafter, until the end of the scene, any Exalt who uses the Charm Feeling the Dragon's Bones (see **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**, pp. 140–141) within a mile of the discharged Essence feels the energy and may draw any number of these motes into herself as part of activating that Charm. The Martyr effect requires the Exalt to target himself, in which case all Essence users without an elemental aspect within (Essence x 10) yards suffer the Charm's normal drain effect. The Exalt's Essence condenses into a demesne sharing his aspect with a level equal to his Breeding.

Craft

Unchain the Dragon's Heart

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Craft 6, Essence 6; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Combo-Basic, Obvious
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Stone-Carving Fingers Form, Charm of Greater Unmaking

By grabbing hold of a hearthstone and squeezing, an Exalt using this Charm may shatter its crystallized energies and conduct the Essence surge back into the world through

himself. In addition to destroying the gem with a deafening thunderclap and a flash brighter than the noonday sun, the Charm restores a number of motes equal to (the stone's rating x 5) to the Terrestrial's Essence pool and causes his anima to explode to the 16+ mote level. Breaking the hearthstone thus doesn't harm the stone's manse, which grows a replacement in days equal to its rating. It is possible to attack hearthstones that are externally socketed in an enemy's artifacts, but the Exalt must first win control of a grapple and activate this Charm (which gently releases the opponent).

With Essence 6+, a Dragon-Blood may use this Charm to attack any targeted hearthstone within (Essence x 10) yards by squeezing his fist and making an unblockable attack with an accuracy pool of Wits + Craft (Air or Earth). If the attack succeeds, the stone shatters, and its energies arc to the Terrestrial's hand.

Integrity

Thicker Than Stone

Cost: None; **Mins:** Integrity 5, Essence 5, Breeding 3;
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Dynasty, Martyr, Purity
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Unflagging Vengeance Meditation, Inviolate Dragon Spirit

It is said that blood is thicker than water. For the Dragon-Blooded, water is an insufficient comparison. Whenever a character with this Charm faces any form of mental or social influence from someone who isn't a blood relative that is intended to make him knowingly harm a blood relative through action or inaction, he treats the attempt as an unacceptable order. If the attack was clearly and intentionally directed to incite betrayal, the Exalt's player may have the character enter uncontrolled Limit Break to punish the would-be manipulator with just enough restraint to avoid harming blood relatives who stay out of the way.

A blood relative is defined as anyone with whom the Exalt can trace mutual direct ancestry to a single Dragon-Blooded progenitor. The larger the character's family is, the broader the Charm's protection is (though the character relying on the benefit of the Charm must be aware of the relationship between himself and the person he would otherwise knowingly harm). An Exalt with Essence 6+ extends the benefits of this Charm to all Dragon-Blooded direct descendents with Breeding 3+, allowing him to serve as the common ancestor defining blood relations. Such elders may also use the Martyr keyword to indefinitely extend these benefits as a bulwark against outsiders.

The Family Background may be used to represent a character under the benefits of the Martyr form of this Charm (though only if the character possesses Breeding 3+), as with Honored Ancestor Exhalation. The Exalt is considered to be linked by the Charm's Martyr benefit to (Magnitude [2 + Number of dots of Family allocated]) other blood relatives.

Storytellers should very carefully consider the implications of allowing characters in Second Age games to purchase this benefit, as it can easily grow to encompass entire Great Houses, potentially shifting the tone of an **Exalted** series. By default, it is assumed that the Empress has gone to great lengths to discourage the Martyr form of Thicker Than Stone from being used within her Dynasty, as it suits her purposes for her children to constantly be set at the throats of their brothers and sisters. Lookshy, by contrast, has no such manipulative agenda, but the gentes of the Seventh Legion are considerably less numerous than their Dynastic counterparts and have fewer elders to learn the Charm.

Resistance

Perfected Scales of the Dragon

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Resistance 6, Essence 6, Breeding 4;
Type: Simple
Keywords: Combo-OK, Elemental, Martyr, Obvious, Purity
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: All five (Element) Protection Forms

Gaia herself is not the world, but her power and souls flow and pool through Creation as its living Essence, and the world loves its mother. Partaking of this love, an elder Dragon-Blood and his personal possessions cannot suffer damage or other negative physical conditions except those caused by the following: environments/substances from outside Creation, intentional actions of beings with Essence 4+, powers of artifacts/hearthstones rated 4+, anything outside fate, or any other source the Storyteller deems sufficiently alien or powerful enough to circumvent the scope of this protection. If the character knows Unfeeling Earth Meditation (see **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**, p. 148), he also ignores all forms and effects of deprivation and internal distress for the duration, including hunger, thirst, exhaustion, suffocation and pain. The Martyr usage of this Charm forestalls the Exalt's death until the end of the scene, until which he cannot suffer any damage but gains no protection from other negative effects. Exalted with Resistance 7, Essence 7 may purchase this Charm again to extend its duration to Indefinite. A third purchase at Resistance 8, Essence 8 reduces the cost to one mote.

The distant love of the Emerald Mother for her grandchildren is of limited efficacy in the face of the Exalted. Rather than being immune to physical harm from such characters, the Dragon-Blood instead enjoys +15B/+15L natural soak, Hardness 10B/10L, and (Essence / 2) automatic successes on all rolls to resist Poison effects and environmental damage originating with such Exalts.

War

As in the Beginning

Cost: 50m, 5wp; **Mins:** War 7, Essence 7, Breeding 5;
Type: Simple (Speed one hour, DV -3)
Keywords: Elemental, Martyr, Obvious, Purity

Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Dragon Vortex Attack

In the time before humanity, primeval Creation rumbled with the aftershocks of its making and the roars of the Elemental Dragons. So may it be again when the mightiest among the Dragon-Blooded host unleash their fury upon the world. Upon activating this Charm, elemental forces spread out for one hour to herald impending doom. Unless stopped by the mercy or death of the Exalt, this buildup concludes with a disaster appropriate to her aspect over an area with a radius in miles equal to her Essence, centered up to a number of miles away equal to her Essence. In the outer half of this radius, the effects impose significant penalties and undesirable conditions for the scene. Within the primary core of the disaster, the power of the Elemental Dragon manifests directly for one attack. All damage caused by this Charm is considered to be environmental damage; barring protection from such catastrophes, only a perfect parry or dodge can avoid the dragon's wrath. Storytellers should feel free to assess other logical indirect effects as appropriate to the stated effects of this Charm. A Martyr activation of this Charm cannot be prevented once set in motion. It subsumes the Exalt's body and soul alike into her progenitor Dragon.

Air: The sky darkens with sudden roiling clouds, drenching everything in the radius with torrential rains. In addition to causing flash flooding, visibility is reduced to none and all non-reflexive actions in the area suffer a -5 external penalty from distraction. Within the primary core, the iconic presence of the Elemental Dragon of Air coils downward and sucks everything into the lightning-blasted typhoon, inflicting 100B piercing damage on everything in a column as high as the sky itself.

Earth: The land shakes and grinds horrifically throughout the radius, while the center tears apart in the yawning chasm of the Earth Dragon's jaws. All in the area of effect suffer knockdown each action that they remain in contact with the earth, unless they are aided by some form of supernatural balance. Everything that falls into the chasm is crushed for 120B piercing damage, after which any survivors must climb over 500 yards up the walls of the crater. Use of this effect at sea triggers a massive suction whirlpool, which causes rough seas for seaworthy vessels (and a -2 external penalty to crewmembers), but imposes the effects of a hurricane at sea on all swimmers (see **Exalted**, p. 155). Damage inside the whirlpool is the same as for a sinkhole.

Fire: A stream of molten magma explodes up from the deepest bowels of the earth as the iconic presence of the Dragon of Fire flies to the surface, incinerating everything in its path. Where it erupts, it sends clouds of ash and soot that impose a -5 external penalty. Inside the central half, the geyser inflicts 75L piercing damage and reaches aerial targets up to 500 yards above. This effect works equally well at sea, leaving behind a small island when the lava cools.

Water: Usable only at sea or over sufficiently large bodies of water, this effect boils and shapes the waves into a towering tsunami avatar of the Elemental Dragon of Water. This super-wave is not limited to the central half, but instead inflicts 100B piercing damage on everything in its range and everything flying above the waters up to 500 yards high. Afterward, the spray and churning waters impose a -3 external penalty, on top of the usual effects of tempest-wracked waves for swimmers (see **Exalted**, p. 155).

Wood: The emerald coils of the Elemental Dragon of Wood writhe over land and sea, trailing sudden growth of thorny vines or tangling seaweed erupting over the entire area. The full radius of the Charm becomes indefinitely impassable until the dense vegetation can be cleared. Treat the entire area as extreme terrain with actual barricades (see **Exalted**, p. 163), with the same rules assessed against individual travelers. This growth paralyzes units and naval vessels on the battlefield as it grows around them. Although characters do not suffer immediate damage from the vines, structures across the entire radius suffer 30B piercing damage from the roots tearing apart foundations and pulling down walls. Worst of all, the plants in the core bloom with deadly pollen comparable to coral snake venom (see **Exalted**, p. 131). Although flying characters are safe from the vines, the pollen cloud reaches 300 yards into the air.

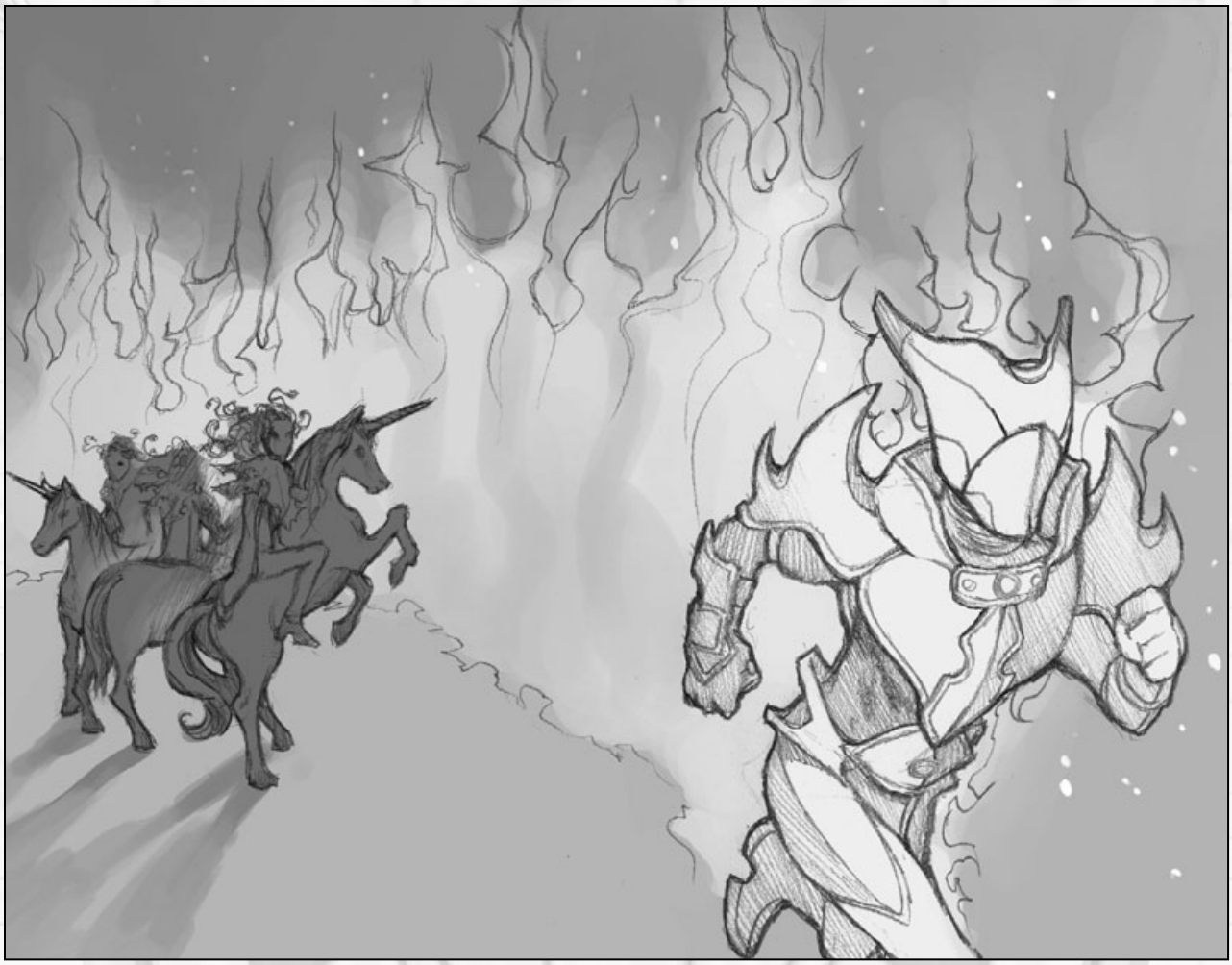
Fire Aspect

Athletics

Seething Dragon Footprint

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 5;
Type: Simple
Keywords: Combo-Basic, Elemental, Obvious
Duration: One scene
Prerequisite Charms: Dancing Ember Stride

When the Elemental Dragons moved over the newly shaped Creation, their passage divided the gossamer motes of lingering chaos into their own aspects, carving Cytherea's malleable sea of the mind into Gaia's image. With this Charm active, the character's personal movement rate triples, and he suffers no height restriction while using Dancing Ember Stride. In conjunction with other Charms that increase movement speed, only the greatest benefit applies. The character may also trail a "fence" of elemental energy at will, which stands a number of yards high and wide equal to his Essence rating and lingers as long as the Charm remains active. Anyone attempting to pass through this barrier suffers a number of dice of lethal damage equal to the Dragon-Blood's Essence, plus the various elemental effects imposed by Elemental Bolt Attack (see **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**, pp. 133–134). Those who remain inside the fence suffer this harm each action. The barrier also provides 90% cover to those attacking through it and obliterates mundane projectiles up to arrow-size fired into it. Besides fencing enemies into a confined space, Terrestrials most commonly use the Charm to scribe aerial calligraphy for signaling across vast distances.



Dodge

Evasive Elemental Dispersion

Cost: None; **Mins:** Dodge 6, Essence 6; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: Elemental, Obvious
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Any Elemental Defense Technique, Any Unassailable Body of (Element) Defense

This Charm permanently enhances a Dragon-Blood's Unassailable Body of (Element) Defense Charms, allowing her to dissolve on any tick unless environmental conditions disallow the specific version. Whenever she activates these Charms, she may also transform into an explosion of elemental energy that inflicts a number of levels of lethal damage equal to her Dodge to everything within (Dodge x 5) yards. The explosion also inflicts an appropriate aspect-based elemental effect as Elemental Bolt Attack (see **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**, pp. 133–134). She immediately reintegrates anywhere within this radius as limited teleportation.

Melee

Ordained Talon of Draconic Fury

Cost: None (1m to draw); **Mins:** Melee 6, Essence 6;
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Elemental, Obvious
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Ghost-Fire Blade, Refining the Inner Blade, Portentous Comet Deflecting Mode, Ringing Anvil Onslaught

A proper Terrestrial swordsman attains intimate awareness of her favored artifact weapon long before she achieves superhuman mastery. With this Charm, a jade weapon's least god becomes a component of its master's soul, forging permanent attunement without committed motes. Thereafter, the weapon cannot be harmed by any force as long as its owner lives, nor may others attune to or wield it without botching each action taken with it. While the proper character wields it with Melee (or Martial Arts, if it's designed for such use), the weapon glows sun-bright with all benefits of a weapon

enhanced by the Charm Dragon-Graced Weapon (see **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**, p. 156) in accordance with the wielder's Aspect, plus adding its owner's Essence to its Accuracy, Damage, Defense and Rate. If the weapon is within (Melee x 5) yards, its owner may reflexively draw it to her empty hand in a bright flash for one mote.

Once a character learns this Charm, she can exchange her weapon for another of equal or greater power by paying three experience points, but purchasing this Charm again insults both weapons and forfeits all bonuses.

Solar Exalted possess a similar Charm called Honored Companion of the Sun. It is identical to Ordained Talon of Draconic Fury except for the following aspects: its prerequisites are Fire and Stones Strike and Summoning the Loyal Steel; it may only be used on orichlacum weapons; it lacks the Elemental Keyword; and it does not replicate Dragon-Graced Weapon. The weapon raises the Solar's minimum damage by one and counts 10s twice for the purpose of determining damage. Unlike Dragon-Blooded, Solars may buy this Charm as many times as desired to cover different weapons.

Finally, the Lawgiver's Lunar mate may wield a weapon enhanced with Honored Companion of the Sun without requiring attunement or suffering botches, if the Solar desires.

Presence

Purity Crucible Strike

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Presence 6, Essence 6;
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious, Training
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Any Terrifying (Element) Dragon Roar

Although they are descended from human stock, the Dragon-Blooded are not human, and interbreeding with their inferiors sullies their blood. Terrestrials developed this Charm to cull the unworthy and elevate those who aspire to greatness beyond their parent's shame.

Purity Crucible Strike can enhance any Melee or Martial Arts attack. Although it is traditionally delivered without mercy at the conclusion of an elaborate hazing ceremony, a pulled blow suffices as long as the attack hits. Mortals struck by the attack die instantly, their blood burnt to ash in the fires of judgment. Non-human beings suffer no effects, having no humanity to scorch, nor do Celestial Exalted or Breeding 5 Dragon-Blooded whose purity is beyond reproach. (The Charm also has no effect on Terrestrials whose Essence is higher than that of the user.) The player of a Dragon-Blooded target whose Breeding is less than 5 must make an (Essence + Breeding) roll at difficulty (Breeding + 1). Stunts enhancing this roll must recall prior conduct proving the Exalt's worth as a Dragon-Blood. Failure results in death. Success raises the target's Breeding by one dot as a Training effect costing three experience points (maximum Breeding 5). Exalted with Breeding 4 or less may learn this Charm, but may target only themselves with penitent self-mutilation until they refine their lineage to Breeding 5.

Socialize

Implacable Progenitor Mien

Cost: None; **Mins:** Socialize 6, Essence 6, Breeding 5;
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Dynasty, Purity
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Jade Defense, Wary Yellow Dog Attitude, Brother-Against-Brother Insinuation

Subsuming the smoldering resolve of her lineage into her spirit, a Dragon-Blood may become equally inviolable and implacable. She adds a bonus to her Dodge and Parry MDV equal to the Magnitude of the unit that would be formed by assembling all her living Dragon-Blooded descendents. This bonus does not apply against the social attacks of a direct ancestor. In addition, all descendents apply this same value as a penalty to their MDV when attempting to resist their ancestor's social attacks unless they also know this Charm.

Water Aspect

Bureaucracy

Humble Exemplar Attitude

Cost: 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 5;
Type: Simple
Keywords: Emotion, Martyr, Social
Duration: One year
Prerequisite Charms: Bestow the Saffron Mantle, Testing the Waters

Although it is not the place of the Terrestrial Exalted to rule Creation, their honorable example can have a profound positive effect on others, inspiring shame in those who fail to live up to the standard. The Exalt may target an individual or social unit with Essence or Magnitude (respectively) no greater than his Bureaucracy, provided he addresses the individual or belongs to the unit and is not its leader. While this Charm remains active, every social attack against the target that is intended to make it follow its Motivation or official Policy (rather than its current course of action) is considered unnatural mental influence, halving the target's MDV. The Martyr effect of this Charm requires public suicide in the target's presence, but increases the maximum target Essence/Magnitude to the Terrestrial's (Bureaucracy + Essence) and the effect lasts until the target changes its Motivation/Policy.

Investigation

Dredged Murmurs Hunch

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Investigation 5, Essence 5, Breeding 3;
Type: Simple

Keywords: Purity
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Bloodhound's Nose Technique, Clear Water Prana

As the geomantic presence of the Elemental Dragons flows through every corner of Creation, Gaia's component souls passively observe all that takes place within Creation's borders. The totality of this information is too much to consciously absorb, even for a Primordial, but uncounted fragments sink into the murky depths of collective memory. By means of this Charm, a Dragon-Blood may lift some of that information to the surface of his own mind.

On activation, the Exalt poses a question and his player makes an (Investigation + Breeding) roll. Provided that some answer to the question has ever existed in Creation, the number of successes rolled indicates the clarity of the intuitive hunch the Dragon-Blood experiences, which is never a direct answer, but rather a clue directing her toward the answer. With one success, the clue is accurate but extremely cryptic. With three successes, the hunch provides useful but vague or incomplete information. With five or more successes, the clue is a vital piece of the puzzle, usually suggesting an angle of inquiry or action the Exalt hadn't previously considered. Repeated use of this Charm to explore the same topic yields no additional information until the Exalt has made sense of prior clues, as judged by the Storyteller.

Larceny

Flowing God-Dragon Stance

Cost: 5m + 1m per ally, 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 5; **Type:** Simple (Speed 3, DV -0)
Keywords: Combo-OK
Duration: One day
Prerequisite Charms: Window-in-the-Door Technique

It is the nature of water to flow around all obstacles unchanged, and so it is for a Dragon-Blood with this Charm. Upon activation, the Exalt's body and personal possessions dematerialize, though he remains visible to materialized onlookers. While dematerialized, the character breathes the living Essence of Gaia instead of air, so he can "phase" through solid or liquid objects without worry but cannot draw breath outside Creation. Additionally, attacks enhanced by Charms or other magic besides Excellencies affect the character and any passengers as if they were corporeal unless the Exalt has Essence 6+.

The character may share the benefits of this Charm with as many willing allies as he has dots of Essence, provided all join hands at the time of activation. If the Exalt ends the Charm or dies, all passengers have one action to vacate any solid objects before they materialize once more with whatever horrific consequences the Storyteller can devise.

Martial Arts

Drowning in Understanding Kata

Cost: 25m, 5wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Enlightening, Martyr, Obvious, Touch, Training
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Tiger-and-Bear-Unity, one complete Celestial style

The Exalt launches a formalized flurry of blows at a willing Exalted student, compressing every movement and stance of a Celestial martial arts style into a single kata. At the conclusion of the display, the pupil falls unconscious, his body and soul forcibly battered into submission. Over the next five days, his fevered dreams extract lessons from the repeated memory of the kata. If he lacks a Motivation centered on learning martial arts, the overwhelming insights shatter his mind, and he never awakens from the coma. With sufficient dedication, he awakens knowing the Charms Tiger-and-Bear Awareness and Tiger-and-Bear Unity (see **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**, p. 195) as a Training effect. If he is a Dragon-Blood, he may then practice Celestial martial arts like any Terrestrial who learns these Charms in a conventional manner. With Martyr usage, the pupil awakens (assuming he does so) knowing all Charms for one entire Celestial martial art that the teacher knew as a Training effect, on top of the basic initiation. He cannot use any Charms for which he fails to meet the trait minimums until he raises those traits to appropriate levels. Drowning in Understanding Kata is a Celestial martial arts Charm and may be learned as such.

Incidentally, an Essence 7+ Sidereal with mastery of a Sidereal martial arts style may use this Charm's Martyr effect to impart that style in a single scene of training (using the aforementioned rules for style gifting). If the pupil lacks the right Motivation, has not mastered a Celestial style or is incapable of learning Sidereal martial arts, he dies at the end of the scene instead of his teacher.

Sail

Waves Like Clouds Voyage

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Sail 5, Essence 5; **Type:** Simple
Keywords: Obvious
Duration: One day
Prerequisite Charms: Seven Seas Wind-Luring Chanty, Storm-Outrunning Technique, Sturdy Bulkhead Concentration, Deck-Striding Technique

Speeding a ship for a quick burst has its uses, but most journeys are long-term endeavors. Once the Dragon-Blood activates this Charm onboard a vessel, his anima releases a pulse of liquid energy that enfolds the contours of the ship in a bubble extending five yards from the hull. This energy gently drags the vessel beneath the waves while allowing it

and everyone aboard to operate as if protected by a Water Aspect anima. While so submerged, the ship moves at twice its normal speed and may take full advantage of its three-dimensional environment through normal propulsion (using currents instead of wind to fill sails). Crew unwise enough to leave the safety of the bubble had better hope they are close enough to the surface to reach air before they drown. If the Exalt dies or fails to renew the Charm each day, the protection ends, serving as a considerable deterrent to mutiny. This Charm can enchant a skyship, allowing it to fly through the ocean with the aforementioned benefits.

Wood Aspect

Archery

Essence Thorn Cannonade

Cost: 3m per weapon, 1wp; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 5;
Type: Simple
Keywords: Combo-OK, Obvious
Duration: One day
Prerequisite Charms: Swallows Defend the Nest, Sparrow Dives at Hawk, Ravenous Thorn Technique

Most Archery Charms are incompatible with large artifact energy weapons. Not so for the Dragon-Blooded gunner who possesses this Charm. By touching an artifact with a rating no greater than the Exalt's Lore and activating this Charm (or laying hands on the hull of a vehicle equipped with such weapons), the Terrestrial's anima grows circuit-like patterns of vines that entwine and interface with the machinery as an obvious physical enhancement of the weapon. While active, all Dragon-Blooded Archery Charms are compatible with the artifact's attacks as if they were a personal-scale Archery weapon unless the Storyteller deems the Charm's effects inapplicable by function. Some effects might need slight modification for scale at Storyteller discretion, such as using Lore instead of Medicine to discharge the ongoing damage from Ravenous Thorn Technique. This Charm cannot enchant weapons that fire energies that are alien to Creation, such as pyre flame or Ligier's light.

Medicine

Transcendent Gaian Harmony

Cost: None; **Mins:** Medicine 6, Essence 6, Breeding 5;
Type: Permanent
Keywords: Elemental, Purity
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Most Beneficent Seed of the Five Dragons

Beyond mere modulations of aspect, Transcendent Gaian Harmony exploits the inherent interconnectedness of the Elemental Dragons as part of a greater whole. Upon purchasing this Charm, the Exalt permanently gains the anima power of a chosen aspect and no longer has to pay the surcharge to use Charms of that aspect. Whenever he uses a Charm with different effects per aspect, he may choose which known element to express. Charm clusters purchased separately by element are not affected. This Charm does not actually change the Exalt's aspect, it merely permits incorporation of subsidiary elements.

Characters can purchase this Charm once per dot of Essence they have above 5, allowing a theoretical Essence 9 Dragon-Blood to integrate all five elements. Savants postulate that a fifth purchase might facilitate evolution into an entirely new type of being.

Performance

Puissant Precursor's Monologue

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 5;
Type: Supplemental
Keywords: Combo-OK, Compulsion, Dynasty, Emotion, Martyr, Social
Duration: Instant
Prerequisite Charms: Soul-Stirring Performance Method

They're no Lawgivers, but the Dragon-Blooded can still touch the hearts and minds of those who listen. This Charm may enhance any Charisma-based Presence or Performance social attack in which the Exalt encourages a target audience to embrace his own Motivation or a reasonable extrapolation (such as "Lead my family to greatness" becoming "help family X achieve greatness"). If any target consents to the attack without defense, her Motivation changes to the proposed Motivation and she regains full Willpower points from the newfound sense of purpose. Audiences who already share this Motivation gain only one Willpower point from the first such oratory in a scene.

The Storyteller should consider the totality of a character's Intimacies and current situation when deciding if that character will put aside her old purpose to take up the proposed cause. This Charm has more power over a Terrestrial's direct descendents, who regard it as unnatural mental influence (albeit sincere) and must pay three Willpower points if the attack succeeds to avoid embracing the new Motivation. The Martyr effect of this Charm fully replenishes the Willpower points of all characters in earshot with a positive Intimacy toward the Exalt.

Ride

By the Grace of Gaia

Cost: None; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 5; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: Elemental, Obvious, Shaping
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: Five-Dragon Horseman Prana, Dance of the Jade Bridle

Although mortal beasts make perfectly fine steeds for young Terrestrials with the right Charms, they do not properly complement the greatness of elders. To gain this Charm's benefits, the Exalt must sacrifice a mount with whom he has built a mutual Intimacy of loving affection. The Elemental Dragon answers this prayer by interceding with Gaia, who shapes the dead animal's remains into a

completely new creature with the same traits as the sacrifice. This animal has none of the memories or identity of the sacrifice and looks different, with elemental markings appropriate to its owner's aspect. It is considered a five-dot familiar with all the powers of such and also possesses permanent enchantments duplicating the effects of the Charms Great Heart Companion, Elemental Halo's Mercy and Five-Dragon Horseman Prana (see **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Dragon-Blooded**, pp. 181–182). This mount will not accept riders other than its owner unless it is supernaturally compelled. It dies when its master does. Should the mount perish sooner, its owner may petition for a replacement with a new sacrifice, but the Dragons ignore those who abuse Gaia's gifts.

Survival

Well-Tended Garden of the Soul

Cost: None; **Mins:** Survival 5, Essence 5, Breeding 3; **Type:** Permanent
Keywords: Martyr, Purity
Duration: Permanent
Prerequisite Charms: None

Although Dragon-Bloods cannot match the longevity of their Celestial masters, some can at least approach it. Without this Charm, a Terrestrial lives 250 years, after which his player makes a (Stamina + Resistance) roll for each decade the character lives thereafter. (The difficulty begins at 1 then increases by one each decade.) Failure means the character dies of old age sometime in the coming decade. With this Charm, the character adds his (Essence + Breeding) to the pool. Using the Martyr effect ensures actual immortality of a sort, in that Dragon-Blooded direct descendents perfectly know how their ancestor would act in any given situation if they bother to consider the fact. They are, however, under no compulsion to do as their ancestor would.

If the Exalt has Essence 6+, stunts that recall and emphasize the character's physical purity in the preceding decade prevent the difficulty from increasing on that roll. Such stunts include abstaining from sex with mortals, avoiding recreational drugs or similar vices, eating a simple vegetarian diet with nothing besides tea or water, and having all Virtues rated 3+. The Storyteller should gradually increase the strictness of these stunt awards as the character ages.

ARISE, FLORIVET! STAND BEFORE ME IN OBEISANCE!
THE WHIM-OF-THE-WIND ANSWERS, MISTRESS.
HOW WOULD YOU COMMAND—
QUIET! I'M NOT FINISHED YET!
NOW COME, ORABILIS, END OF ALL WISDOM! ATTEND ME!
MISTRESS, NOOO!
Impossible. Calibration is not for months yet. How did I get here?
ORABILIS...
SILENCE, DEMON! I'M THE ONE ASKING QUESTIONS!

CHAPTER THREE

WONDERS OF THE AGE

Under the Divine Mandate of Heaven and the leadership of the Exalted, humanity has ascended from a lowly Primordial servitor race to the dominant species of Creation. Within the Realm, basic infrastructure transforms the living Essence of Gaia into commonplace wonders. Beyond, the tributary nations of the Threshold lease and purchase as much of this opulence as they can afford, advancing their own lot at the cost of deepening the Deliberative's power over every facet of daily life. What follows is a basic primer on the state of technology at this time, broken down by broad categories with examples.

TRANSPORTATION

Every major city in Creation is linked to the network of gates of auspicious passage, which can, for an enormous cost in Essence, teleport important officials across Creation in the blink of an eye. For less urgent travel, the Realm's aerial and oceangoing fleets rapidly move cargo and passengers throughout the world. No one rides animal steeds except as status symbols of unhurried importance or because that beast provides transportation comparable to Essence-powered vehicles (such as some Exalted familiars and engineered mounts do). The Celestial Exalted routinely travel to Yu-Shan and explore other realms of existence.

For a more detailed examination of artifact vehicles used in the Age of Splendor, see Chapter Two of **Wonders of the Lost Age**. Gates of auspicious passage are covered on page 50 of that book.

WAYPOINT SHRINE (ARTIFACT ••)

These distinctive roadside monuments arrange five marble columns inscribed with prayers to Mercury around a shallow meditation pool. Travelers who rest at any of these shrines and throw a few coins in gratitude to the Maiden of Journeys reap the fruits of their piety, renewing their strength for the voyage. In game terms, the shrines use the Essence generated by a Resources • sacrifice to remove all fatigue conditions, with one mote from each transaction taxed by the Division of the Golden Barque in Yu-Shan. Having no other place appointed for them, the Essence-depleted coins fill an infinite jar in the sanctum of Madame Marthesine of the Lost. A waypoint shrine's

Beyond Four Magical Materials: Exotic Elements

The Realm officially recognizes only four magical materials—orichalcum, moonsilver, starmetal and jade—since no other alloys metaphysically correlate to the Exalted. Unofficially, many of the Chosen also include soulsteel based on proven alchemical symmetry. Substances not on this list can also define the core properties and function of an artifact, however, especially given the Realm's access to Wyld shaping, Malfean ores and specialized factory-cathedrals. An artifact constructed from an exotic element may replace a magical material bonus with another Storyteller-approved power of comparable potency. Such items, however, are always considered to be made of a "wrong" material for the purposes of construction and attunement. Accordingly, most exotic element artifacts use a fivefold harmonic adapter (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**, p. 57) or use the material as nothing more than an exotic ingredient and possible justification for unusual powers.

Example: Adamant Weapon/Armor Material Bonuses: Close-combat and ranged weapons: Extremely sharp cutting edges and jagged extrusions inflict piercing damage with each attack (or impose a -4 soak penalty after halving soak if the attack is already piercing). Armor: With superior resistance to cutting attacks and virtually no weight, tempered adamant armor adds 3L soak and reduces the mobility penalty by one.

magic does not prevent fresh exertions from imposing new penalties, but these consecrated rest stops may be found at the crossroads of major highways throughout the civilized parts of Creation. Those partaking in frequent renewals of their vigor move at the speed of a drawn carriage rather than conventional foot/cart pace (see **Exalted**, p. 264) and find their journey significantly more pleasant.

Quality of Life

The only Realm citizens without satisfactory food and shelter are mistreated slaves. Most citizens have every domestic convenience they could want, from powered lights and running water to lift tubes that effortlessly carry them between the floors of towering high-rise apartments. In the Threshold, things aren't quite so grand, but most conveniences can be found at some level in all but the most rural and backwater communities. The Exalted tightly control the weather and the flow of major rivers to maximize agricultural production and industrial works, circumventing other inconvenient aspects of nature as needed for specific projects. Disease comes only as a result of industrial accidents or deliberate experiments, and with enough resources poured into anagathic treatments, favored mortals live as long as the Exalted permit. Human races dwell freely in previously uninhabitable regions of Creation's original landmass, to say nothing of hovering aerial cities or floating oceanic metropolises or the vast regions terraformed from the Wyld. The Exalted themselves want for nothing, requisitioning or creating whatever they desire from the abundant resources of Creation and beyond.

Transperfect Domestic Tool (Artifact •)

The Realm affords its citizens commonplace luxuries surpassing the wildest extravagance imagined outside its borders. Artifact versions of common tools and utensils are virtually unbreakable (15L/15B soak, 10 levels needed to damage/20 to destroy) and perform their functions so well that they provide a two-die bonus to actions using them for this purpose. Alternatively, such devices provide a single minor enchantment appropriate to their nature—such as self-heating cooking pots, self-rotating millstones, self-cooling storage jars, stained-glass windows that provide sufficient illumination for a room or incense braziers whose smoke prevents airborne transmission of non-magical diseases within an enclosed area. Generally, such enchantments always function while the artifact is in use without requiring further effort or power from the user, powered entirely by ambient Essence from abundant intersections of dragon lines. Because of their durability and reliability, transperfect domestic tools usually outlast their owners to become treasured family heirlooms, though they do not function in geomantically damaged areas such as shadowlands or the Wyld.

In addition to facilitating comfort and making life easier, these artifacts also serve a subtler purpose as magical reminders of Exalted benevolence. Specifically, the decorations on these minor wonders depict popular legends or iconography glorifying the Chosen. Each scene spent using one of these tools for its intended purpose counts as a scene of building or reinforcing an Intimacy of loyalty to the Deliberative.

Divinity Requisition Badge (Artifact • to ••)

These delicate blown-adamant scrolls contain the auspicious calligraphy of a state-sanctioned prayer wrapped around a starmetal signet. Each weighs barely more than a feather and would fit comfortably in a child's fist. The badges require no committed motes to empower. Instead, the talismans draw Essence from correct prayers spoken by those who carry them, adding preprogrammed eloquence to sacred entreaty like the sacred architecture of Ondar Shambal.

Form and Function

Published artifacts for **Exalted** generally provide specific descriptions of their appearance and usage in an effort to evoke particular imagery or simply make the magical gizmo a little more memorable than a ubiquitously interchangeable magic ring or bracer. Yet, just as a single set of mutation rules can represent warping exposure to the Wyld, surgical upgrade into a magitech cyborg or a mystic birthright from a supernatural ancestor, so too may the examples of published artifacts lend themselves to creative interpretation.

When considering variant artifact designs, Storytellers should make sure that a proposed change in form doesn't inadvertently alter function along the way. A delicate gauze-thin veil of enchanted silk that grants spirit sight when bound over the eyes becomes significantly more durable (and presumably useful) as a metal mask, so it needs a commensurate drawback to balance out the change. Conversely, a sorcery-capturing cord (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, p. 39) gains nothing substantial from being changed into a crystal spellcatcher sphere, especially if the operation of the latter's controls takes the same action as tying or untying knots on the cord. Yet for some character concepts, the orb simply fits better and affords different ranges of stunts in its use.

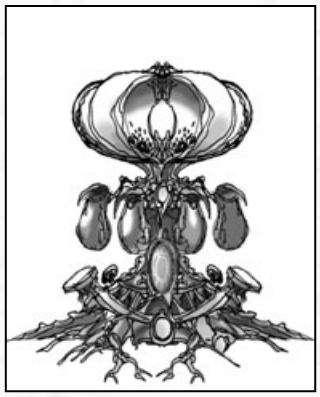
Of course, Storytellers shouldn't be afraid to change function to make more suitable artifacts for a series, if that's what they are trying to do. It doesn't take much to tack on an extra power or two to raise an artifact's rating a dot, though reductions in function sometimes take a bit more clever reworking to balance fairly. As an added plus, building on an existing skeleton in either direction means that most of the work has already been done.

From an in-game perspective, the Age of Splendor is a miraculous setting in which the Exalted long ago conquered the basics of what was possible and spent centuries applying those designs to the fashions of the day. It is quite reasonable to imagine that sorcery-capturing cords and spellcatcher spheres existed side by side and that each blueprint has held greater popularity at different points. Especially learned savants might even be able to tell the exact year when an artifact was made just by looking at its style and decorative motifs. After all, what sets the tone of over-the-top First Age decadence better than a demigod questing for an epic weapon to match her new dress?

Note that the only legal use for prayers dedicated to demons is to announce a summoner's intentions in advance, requiring the creature to prepare itself as the Chosen instructs in advance of its scheduled servitude. Unauthorized or improper mortal use of divine prayers also carries strict punishment, as such actions embarrass the Chosen who negotiated the terms of these artifacts. Correspondingly, deities who ignore authorized badges must answer to the divine censors, none of whom wish to compose a letter of apology to the Office of the Hierophant.

The following table lists the various models of this device by Artifact rating and the scope of prayer roll bonuses.

Rating	Effect
•	+3 successes on prayers to gods or Exalted (or demons).
•	+7 successes on prayers to specific god or Exalt (or to a specific demon); may address the unknown divine overseers of a specific facet of Creation instead.
••	+7 successes on prayers to gods or Exalted (or demons).

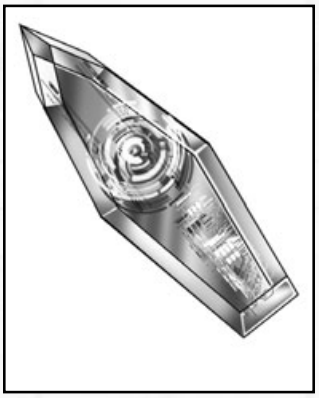


Diagnostic Garden (Artifact •••)

This large but delicate vegetative artifact exists as a symbiotic colony of floral species bred to respond to ambient health with distinctive patterns of growth and bloom. Learning to read the garden's cues takes a full month of observation and instruction (or a season without a teacher, but requiring Medicine 5 and Craft [Wood] 5). Savants who are willing to learn the floral syntax, however, may use a diagnostic garden's buds and stalks as an early warning detector for diseases, malnutrition, poor exercise or anything else that threatens their communities.

Diagnostic gardens need watering with alchemical substances worth Resources 3 each week, as well as careful pruning to align their leaves to local Essence flows. Pruning requires a successful (Perception + Craft [Wood]) roll, difficulty 4, to perform correctly. Failure to perform either maintenance disables the artifact until it receives a season of good care.

If the garden is killed, it regenerates in a year unless it is attacked at the root with Charms or other magic. Anyone who knows how to use the artifact can make a (Perception + [lowest of Medicine and Craft (Wood)]) roll, difficulty 5, to analyze the health of every living being within 10 miles as a dramatic action that takes one hour. For every threshold success rolled, the analyst learns the answer to any single health-related question pertaining to current information within the garden's radius. These questions may be posed sequentially, so as to clarify an answer with follow-up investigation. Wise analysts begin with open-ended questions like "What is the most serious health concern in the area?" to determine what they should examine more closely.



Essence Capacitor (Artifact • to •••••)

Repair: 3

Each of these luminous shards of crystallized Essence inlaid with orichalcum circuitry shares most of the same properties as a hearthstone and also comes in five ascending models of power. Important differences exist, however. First, the stones have no aspect, so they confer no hearthstone powers. Second, the artificial capacitors do not channel power from an external source, but instead collect and discharge ambient motes through artificial respiration like a living Essence wielder. As such, they can store only enough Essence to supply 25 hours of continuous power. Fortunately, every two hours spent inactive allows a crystal to recover one hour of power, provided the crystal is in an area where it can respire. This also means artifacts need three equal capacitors to provide the continuous Essence flow of one hearthstone of equal rating (two charge while the third supplies power). Consequently, many Exalted install Essence capacitors only as emergency generators for large artifacts in case anything calamitous happens to a critical manse. Capacitors require annual servicing and cleaning by highly competent technicians to remove impurities that collect around conduction filaments. Failure to perform this maintenance means the gems have a cumulative 10% chance each year of randomly exploding sometime during use, inflicting (rating x 10)L damage on everything within a 50-yard radius.

Artificial Entities

The inanimate sentient machines called perfected calculation arrays and their mobile automaton brethren aid their Chosen creators with all manner of civil and military tasks, with the most impressive example being the super-intelligent and almost divine omnipresence of I AM. In addition, Exalted genesis laboratories churn out hosts of new species daily, many of them sentient, though not all afforded equal rights under Realm law. Some of the more impressive entities serve as organic infrastructure, metabolizing raw materials into medicines or exotic ingredients for other artifacts. The divisions between natural and artificial blur even further taking into account the vast cross-sections of the populace who have received modifications and/or upgrades to their physiology. Finally, some Primordial-made races still coexist with humanity, from the hunted and hated vestiges of the Lintha to the dwindling grandeur of the Mountain Folk, the pelagials and the Dragon Kings.

Mutation-Based Upgrades

As former mortals elevated to godlike power, the Exalted have an almost innate fascination with transhumanist potential. They either love the human form for its simple elegance or despise it as a vestigial weakness on the path to transcendent omnipotence, but both schools of thought define themselves by the exigencies of the human condition. While human purists hone themselves into paragons of every arena of mortal endeavor, their liberal counterparts analytically unravel biomotonic formulas and challenge the inviolability of their intelligent design. From such research arose new subspecies races to tame the clouds and the ocean abyss, with superior longer-lived bodies perfectly adapted to their assigned environments. Although the People of the Air and People of the Sea represent the largest experiment in wholesale eugenics, they are more remarkable for their publicity and popular appeal. Most transhuman agendas go unreported, while their devotees quietly alter themselves at every opportunity in accordance with strange visions of perfection. This kind of cultish fanaticism is more popular among elite mortals jockeying for the ostensible status of favored guinea pigs. The Chosen are not immune to the lure of guided evolution, however, especially as some were even members of created races before drawing their Second Breaths. It is a sign of the times that it is now only mildly titillating for a Solar Exalt to display more prominent fangs than his Lunar spouse, and

that more than one Exalt has openly set aside all pretenses of the human form to become something else.

The process of induced mutation varies, especially as the term encompasses a range of possible alterations. Wyld exposure offers one of the most direct and simple methods available, but power questing is generally seen as needlessly risky and imprecise compared to the made-to-order precision of genesis technology. It should also be noted that not all "mutations" are organic in nature. Clockwork prosthetic legs engineered for superior running speed aren't technically mutations, but it becomes a question of semantics when the result is functionally analogous to an actual mutant with gazelle legs. How a human transcends her origin is irrelevant as long as she transcends.

Game Effects: Whatever their source, actual mutations come in two basic varieties: external and internal. External mutations include any Shaping effects wrought by an environmental force such as the Wyld or the Labyrinth. Such changes do not cost bonus or experience points but carry drawbacks such as their possessors eventually being unable to survive outside the source environment. In contrast, internal mutations obtained through heredity or genesis technology do not make beings less viable in Creation. Such benefits do come with a price in bonus and experience points, though. External mutations follow set rules that often vary between phenomena and seldom offer reliable upgrades (power questing notwithstanding). Regardless of origin, however, all internal mutations use the same basic system, which is that the total "package" of mutations has a bonus point cost equal to (sum of positive mutations – sum of negative mutations), minimum cost zero. If the character acquires internal mutations in play (which typically involves some form of sorcery, genesis retromorphing or similarly exotic event), the package costs experience points equal to double its bonus point cost. In the event the mutant lacks sufficient experience points to pay for the change, the magic is considered a Training effect and deducts from future experience point gains until the debt is paid. For more detailed information on playing members of created races (or beastmen), see pages 157–160 of **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. II—The Wyld**.

Biomagitech Implants (Negative Mutation). The character's upgrades are actually complex prosthetic artifacts constructed with Craft (Magitech) and implanted directly into his body. Although the powers conferred by these implants use standard mutation rules, their cosmetic effects may need reinterpreting to convey their origin. For example, pincers and self-vibrating saws fit a technological theme better than claws and barbs. Because these upgrades depend on intricate clockwork mechanisms, they must receive monthly adjustment and replacement of worn-out components from qualified technicians as per normal artifact maintenance, with the Repair rating based on the degree of negative mutation associated with the implants: 2 (deficiency), 3 (debility) or 4 (deformity). For each day of overdue upkeep, one positive mutation deactivates, possibly leaving the mutant in a crippled state if a sensory organ or a limb shuts down. If a life-critical system shuts down, use drowning rules to model organ failure. Constructing a mutation package is like designing any other artifact, with its level based on the relative power and utility it confers relative to its drawbacks (making most packages level 2–4). Once built, the package requires surgical installation as per the rules on page 70 of **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**, with Surgery: (total number of positive and negative mutation points)/5 hours/4/3.

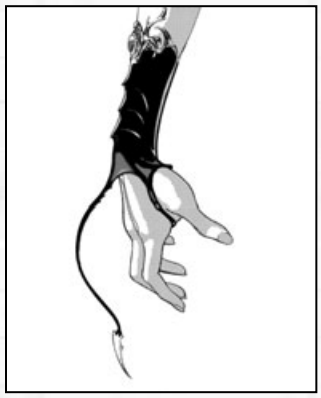
Biomotonic Replicant (Artifact • to •••••)

While the Chosen flirt with immortality, most of Creation cannot match their vigor or resilience. The sad truth is that mortals die little slower than mayflies, however faithful or beloved they might be. While many Exalted eventually come to accept this truth as part of their transition to elder status, others staunchly refuse to let time and death take what rightly belongs to them. After all, what was made can be remade. A life is no exception. So-called biomotonic replicants are not revivified originals, of course, as resurrection is a particularly stubborn impossibility the Exalted have yet to conquer. The quality of the duplication is akin to an identical twin, however, which is usually more than enough likeness to fondly remember a cherished courtesan. Building a biomotonic replicant requires some sample of the original organism's tissue to serve as an exotic ingredient unless the engineer works from an existing template stored in a genesis lab. In any case, such a facility is absolutely vital for some complex work. Mundane workshops lack the necessary tools.

Making a replicant that copies the body of a mortal being who had no Essence powers is comparatively easy, as the replicants are really just humans, albeit artificially gestated ones (•). Unfortunately, such organisms are largely blank slates with the same Attributes as the original, basic starting Virtue allocation and 10 dots of preprogrammed Abilities. Making a replicant that actually copies the personality and memories of the original is significantly harder (••). Such an organism requires additional exotic ingredients that might carry those experiences, such as the original's ghost, intact brain or reincarnated soul. Alternatively, the Exalt can vivisect the original at a genesis laboratory to reverse engineer her template, in which case memories and all learned traits remain frozen at the point of death. This method allows every replicant in the production run to carry that same initial identity.

Adding supernatural powers or upgrades to the design only increases the project's complexity and Artifact rating.

There are many powers the Chosen have never been able to copy, though—Exaltation foremost among them. Current researchers hope to circumvent this limitation with truly perfect replicants, which might be able to confuse a Solar Essence at the moment of death, instantly Exalting a backup body to ensure true immortality. To date, such experiments have yet to show any results other than leading to better replicant designs, but the potential rewards have lured many prominent genesis engineers to toy with the idea.



Chaomorphic Symbiote (Artifact • to •••••)

As cutting edge as a new pair of wings might be, many Exalted just don't feel comfortable altering themselves in a permanent fashion until they are really sure that doing so is right for them. Chaomorphic symbiotes provide that middle option, designed for quick attunement and quick removal as circumstances warrant.

In their natural state, these genesis artifacts exist as viscous masses of iridescent protoplasm. Contact with a willing host awakens them, at which point they rapidly ooze across the offered surface to form a membrane and begin the attunement process. After five minutes of bonding, the organism soaks completely into its host's tissue and out of sight, forcing a one-mote commitment, but remains visible to Essence sight. Discontinuing the attunement to a chaomorphic symbiote forcibly ejects it through available orifices and pores, inflicting one level of unsoakable lethal damage to the host.

While hosting one of these artifacts, a character can manifest any or all of the mutations programmed into it, transforming her body as needed to access these powers. Hosting requires a reflexive indefinite commitment of ([sum of positive mutations manifested – sum of negative mutations manifested] x 2) motes. (The difference between the two aforementioned sums cannot be less than zero, even if the symbiote has more negative mutations manifested than positive ones.) The Artifact rating of the symbiote determines the maximum number of mutation points that may be conferred, as noted on the accompanying table. This value also caps the total value of positive mutations that may be programmed into the artifact at the time of its Creation. (Negative mutations do not count against the limit, but Storytellers should probably limit them to a total value no greater than the total value of positive changes.) Mutations gained this way do not decrease one's viability in Creation.

Mortals can even attune to these devices without enlightened Essence if they dare, as the process temporarily gives them a pool of (Essence x 10) motes with which to manifest mutations. This power comes with a steep price however, as the symbiote generates the motes by feeding on its host's life, aging her at twice her normal rate like a set of aegis-inset amulets (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**, p. 71). Still, it makes a fascinating maintenance-free alternative to gunzosha armor (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**, p. 81).

Rating	Mutation Points
•	2
••	4
•••	8
••••	12
•••••	16

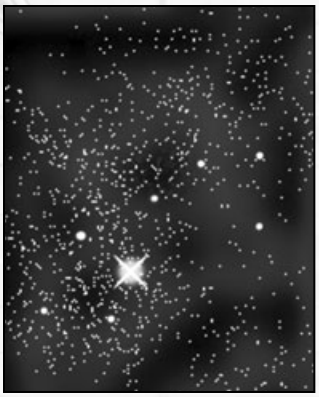
Shaping Technology

Blessed with the power to shape order out of chaos, the Lawgivers have devoted significant resources to expanding their command over reality. They are not alone in their research. The Sidereals scrutinize and nudge the sublime calculations of destiny as aggressively as the pattern spiders permit, while introspective Lunars grind prey down to their component motes to unlock new forms and states of being. Even the Terrestrials grope about with the simplest shaping engines wrought by their betters, tragically aware of the discipline's importance without access to the advanced Charms needed to explore the metaphysical underpinnings of the five elements.

With Creation's borders pushed back to nearly twice its size at the end of the Primordial War, Shaping technology defines the literal and metaphorical frontiers of existence. There is nothing the Fair Folk fear more than the weapons that freeze their gossamer dreams to rigid and brittle forms. Beyond the Fair Folk, the shinma who underlie possibility itself might fear the meddling of the Chosen, but who would know their fear from an immeasurable flutter in an abstract quality? For their part, Exalted cauldronists rejoice in the possibilities that await when they may alter the fundamental laws governing the interactions of motes or names or the intrinsic sequence of causality. Perhaps even death and time will yield at last, surrendering their vain impossibilities to the all-conquering genius of the Chosen.

Sublime Interstice of Incongruity (Artifact ••)

This bizarre artifact has no physical substance, but rather exists as a minor miscalculation in the astrological sign of the Mask that occasionally manifests in high-Essence destiny algorithms. Discerning a convergence of space and time where such an anomaly might appear requires a successful (Intelligence + Craft [Fate]) roll, difficulty 5.



Even then, the character learns only where the variable has a chance of stabilizing sometime in the reasonably near future before paradox destroys it. If the Exalt puts himself in the right place at the right time (or wrong place at the wrong time, as is more often the case), he can pluck the error directly from the pattern spiders' work and attune it for one mote. The artifact's power then subtly removes all traces of his existence from Creation exactly as per the rules for Arcane Fate (see **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Sidereals**, pp. 119–121). The fate cloak lasts only as long as the anomaly remains attuned. Breaking commitment frees the artifact's power from the borders of space and time, forcing its former owner to track it down anew to restore its benefits. The handful of Sidereals who know about the error's existence have noticed that the events leading to each appearance seem to belong to a larger pattern of interconnected omens. Of course, this theory also raises the uncomfortable possibility that the anomaly's nature cloaks some inscrutable power from the collective memory of the Tapestry.

Hand of the Great Maker (Artifact •••)

Among his many wonders, Autochthon designed the Exalted, the Jadeborn, the behemoth progenitor of humanity, the first gods, the artifact paradigm founded on the magical materials and the pattern spiders that weave the Loom of Fate under the direction of the Maidens and their Chosen. In spite of the Deliberative's political decisions that indirectly resulted in Autochthon recusing himself from Creation, many Solars maintain reverence for the Primordial and ritually invoke his name while creating wonders. Such invocation goes a step further in the Hand of the Great Maker, a shaping artifact that filters a Solar's motes through the vestigial Autochthonian energy extant beneath the aspect-coding of a Solar Exaltation. By amplifying Lawgiver Charms with this Primordial Essence, the wielder unlocks vastly greater power to reshape the cosmos.

This artifact takes the form of an intricate orichalcum and adamant gauntlet with clockwork components and bubbling motonic condenser rods that fill with lightning-white Autoch-

Battlefield Shaping

During the Primordial War, the enemies of the gods wielded devastating rapid Shaping Charms against Creation to strike at the forces of the Exalted, much as the Lawgivers have since learned to do with the Hand of the Great Maker and other prodigies of their reality-engineering experiments. Regardless of wielder, rapid Shaping effects can affect a battle in the following ways:

Demesne: Where gradual creation of a demesne raises a wellspring of untamed Essence, rapid creation of one resembles a geyser. The resultant explosion mirrors Essence buildup, but does not harm the demesne in any way.

Land: Rapid shaping of topography has the expected effects on structures and residents. Every individual and unit suffers immediate knockdown unless they have some form of supernatural balance or magical resistance to such effects. They also suffer 15 levels of bashing (and piercing) damage from the cataclysm unless the shaper works with their safety in mind. Structures less durable than most manses remain standing only at the will of the shaper. Although objects and individuals protected against Shaping suffer none of these immediate effects, everyone and everything in the area must still contend with the environmental conditions wrought by the change. For example, liquefying a plain into a sea forces those caught in it to swim or drown, while every object on the field sinks or floats according to its buoyancy.

Magical Things: Generally speaking, most Shaping effects can't accelerate the creation of artifacts or manses quickly enough to alter the outcome of a battle.

People: Like conjuring a magic sword with a Charm for personal combat, rapid shaping can create entire units of extras and the competent mortal officers to lead them. More cynically, doing so can provide a disposable buffer unit to wear away a powerful opponent's Essence.

Wealth: An army without equipment isn't much of an army. Rapid shaping can generate wealth in the form of mundane equipment (up to perfect quality) that comes into existence sized for and equipping any chosen allies in the vicinity.

thonian Essence while worn. To attune the item, the owner need only activate the Chaos-Repelling Pattern Charm (limiting the item to Solar use; see **Exalted**, p. 216). As it attunes, the gauntlet sparks to life with a deep electric hum and extends the activating Charm's duration to Indefinite. Whenever the Solar deactivates that Charm, attunement to the Hand of the Great Maker also lapses. With the superior protection afforded by this extended duration, the Lawgiver may boldly stride into the far reaches of chaos to impose his will.

Once attuned, the artifact's other powers require a level-5 Solar hearthstone inset in a socket in the palm in order to function. While so powered, the Solar may "bank" up to (Willpower + Essence) successes rolled while using Wyld-Shaping Technique (see **Exalted**, pp. 216–217). This process accumulates ambient potentiality and stores flux particles of mass-energy for later use. Banked successes remain in the gauntlet until spent or until attunement lapses. The user can spend any number of successes to sculpt chaos using the rules for Wyld-Shaping Technique as a Speed 7, DV -5 action. If the Solar sets an attuned protoshinmaic vortex (see p. 116) in the palm instead, he can do all of the aforementioned with an increased maximum pool of 30 banked successes. More impressively, the vortex allows him to use Wyld-Shaping Technique inside Creation as if he were within the Bordermarches. The Charm cannot create a demesne inside the Tapestry, though, and it still cannot make permanent things without Wyld Cauldron Technology. Unfortunately, a botch at any point while shaping inside Creation causes the vortex to destabilize and rupture, flooding the area with chaos as described on page 116. One recent attempt to pry open the way to Autochthon's exile with a vortex-charged Hand of the Great Maker ostensibly unlocked seven of the eight metaphysical seals warding the dimensional interface, but the Solar could not pry open the eighth seal or prevent the others from closing again when the effort failed.

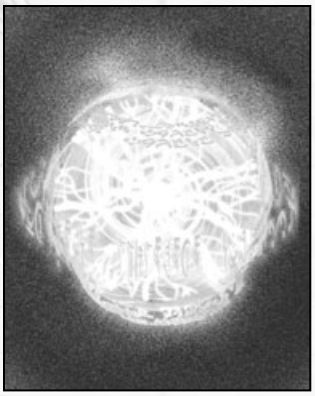
Vault of Woven Dreams (Artifact ••• to •••••)

Repair: 5

Technologically similar to the reality engines used to terraform the Wyld, vaults of woven dreams are complex enchanted structures with malleable internal reality designed to accommodate their owner's every fantasy. The size of the vault determines its artifact rating (••• for a single room the size of a large office or •••• for a vault the size of a luxurious townhouse). These artifacts also require an inset hearthstone of an equal rating for power and must receive maintenance once a month or they malfunction with whatever horrific consequences the Storyteller imagines for a broken reality engine.

With proper power and upkeep, the interior of a vault of woven dreams can be controlled by addressing its integrated perfected calculation array and spending a variable number of uncommitted motes as a diceless reflexive action. For each mote spent, the user may instantly apply the effects of one success with Wyld-Shaping Technique to create people or inanimate objects as portable wealth (see **Exalted**, p. 216–217) or alter created people or units as if using Wyld Cauldron Technology (see **Exalted**, p. 217). Alternatively, the vault can delete any number of its current constructs for a single mote. Entities created within a vault of woven dreams partake some of their reality from the user who requested them. Therefore, they may know anything that that individual does to the degree that such copying is intended as part of the construct's design (for instance, to produce a challenging sparring partner or ideal concubine). Objects or people created in the vault have even less reality than those shaped out of the Wyld, so they instantly evaporate into scattering wisps of light if they are taken outside the vault or if the device loses power. As a security precaution, a vault of woven dreams may be configured at the time of its creation to obey only a particular type of Exalt, a specific individual, anyone with the appropriate password or according to any other filter. These hard-coded fail-safes can't be altered, however, without dismantling and rebuilding the artifact as a Repair 6 maintenance.

The most sophisticated models of this artifact are no larger than a wardrobe, with a mosaic panel on one surface artistically rendering the device's contents in real time. What makes these five-dot, Repair 6 wonders so miraculous is their power to fold Elsewhere around their internal geometry like a divine sanctum, making them larger on the inside than the outside. Within such a vault, the user may expand the boundaries of its internal space by spending motes like successes used to create land with Wyld-Shaping Technique, and may shape all facets of the interior from the outside by manipulating the mosaic. Furthermore, the flow of time within the vault may be reset relative to the flow of time through Creation for a single mote, provided nothing real exists within the device to interfere with the distortion. This quality allows created societies or worlds to model tectonic events or new sociological paradigms before introducing such elements into Creation at large. Indestructible adamant walls such as those of Yu-Shan border the created space, with only the mosaic as a portal in the wall permitting travel to the artifact's exterior. (Recognized users may spend a single mote to pass through in either direction.) Keep in mind that the slightest interruption in power deletes all constructs and shunts everything real outside of the vault, so a backup power system is highly recommended. All attempts to permanently stabilize one of these artifacts as a recursive sub-Tapestry have met with spectacular failure, to the point the Maidens have kindly requested that the Solar Exalted stop taking pattern spiders from the Loom of Fate for the experiments.



Protoshinmaic Vortex (Artifact •••••)

One of the most insanely powerful and dangerous wonders of the Realm, a protoshinmaic vortex (or PSV) is an artifact of pure Essence that can only be created in regions of Pure Chaos by a Solar possessing Lore 7+ using Wyld Cauldron Technology. Unlike most artifacts, a vortex's creation may be accelerated more than tenfold by the process, and the devices require no raw or exotic materials other than the underlying matrix of the Wyld. If a Solar leaves one of these artifacts unfinished, accumulated successes bleed away at the rate of five per day until the embryonic bubble evaporates completely.

Once conceived, a protoshinmaic vortex appears as a translucent ball of plasma the size of a child's heart in which impossible shapes flutter and undulate. Those capable of perceiving Essence directly see it for what it really is, a living aspect of transcendent potential compressed to a specific space and time. This compression is inherently unstable, so it requires expenditure of five successes with Wyld-Shaping Technique once per month. (This upkeep can be performed in Creation as if in the Bordermarches.) For each missed maintenance, the artifact has a cumulative 10% chance of losing motonic cohesion and reverting to a non-defined state, turning everything within a one-mile radius into Pure Chaos. Everything caught in the initial blast that is not immune to Shaping or protected by a perfect defense evaporates into component motes, leaving any survivors to contend with the "usual" effects of exposure (see **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. II—The Wyld**, p. 140). Each century that passes heals this breach by one category of the Wyld. A suicidal Solar can deliberately rupture containment with a single success from Wyld-Shaping Technique in lieu of stabilizing it. It is likely that other methods exist to trigger immediate containment failure (as decided by the Storyteller). The technology is new enough that its creators have yet to fully document its potential.

The power of a vortex almost makes all of its risks worthwhile. Attuning to one takes the same effort as attuning to a demesne, though current owners cannot sense or stop others from doing so. When placed in a dedicated hearthstone socket to power an artifact, the PSV supplies *all* of that artifact's geomantic Essence needs. If any effect needs to reference its rating or needs to temporarily drain dots of energy to fuel an immediate effect, the PSV is considered a level-6 hearthstone that recovers one dot of energy per minute (rather than the usual one per hour rate for most such effects). Since the artifact can provide energy to only one source at a time, characters cannot draw Essence from a PSV while using it to power an artifact.

The most amazing and terrifying fact about PSVs is that all the energy they provide comes from the exterior corona that current motonic technology can tap. The structure of the interior compresses physical and metaphysical laws too tightly for scrutiny, though a leading hypothesis proposes that the core pandimensionally folds an entire Wyld continuum into the artificial congruity. The Deliberative currently remains divided on whether to widely refit major Realm assets with PSVs, but this deadlock has not stopped many Lawgivers from giving their personal panoplies and vehicles PSV upgrades.

Panoplies of the Chosen

As the ordained rulers of Creation, the Chosen construct the best artifacts solely for their own use. These wonders are too diverse and too numerous to make universal statements about their use, but Realm fashion considers it tacky to go about dripping with mismatched baubles. The fewer actual items worn or used, the better, as consolidation implies greater versatility and power. An "everything but the kitchen sink" approach looks like blatant overcompensation. Circumstances certainly modify these expectations. For instance, military parades and public galas are supposed to be dazzling, awe-inspiring affairs. At least in Celestial society, it is never enough that an artifact functions. It must also complement that function with an aesthetically pleasing and appropriate design, preferably tailored to the fashion of the day. Terrestrials generally take a more pragmatic view, favoring items for their utility and historical legacy since powerful items usually become Gens heirlooms after their original owners die.

Warfare

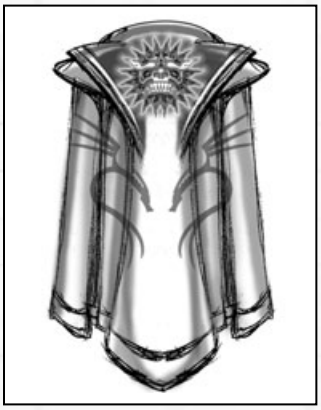
The most advanced Essence weapons can destroy (or create) geological features or cities, while the Realm Defense Grid can do the same to entire continents. Most military-grade weapons inflict devastation comparable to First or even Second Circle sorcery attack spells, with the wide range of personal armaments allowing elite mortals to fight like Dragon-Blooded and giving favored Terrestrials the prowess of young Celestials. Properly equipped Solars approach genuine invincibility, save perhaps to each other.

Information on energy weapons, power armor, superweapons and other combat artifacts commonly used during the Age of Splendor can be found in **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**.

Motonic Disrupter Lens (Artifact ••)

Repair: 2

Designed specifically for immobilizing and capturing Essence users, these wonders modulate the discharges from artifact energy weapons such as implosion bows and lightning ballistae. Installing (or removing) this refit requires a Repair 2 maintenance, after which the weapon no longer inflicts actual damage. Instead, any Essence user hit by an energy-diffusing blast loses motes equal to the attack's raw damage. Beings who lose all remaining motes to such an attack cannot activate Essence powers or respire motes for a number of hours equal to the weapon's Artifact rating, though existing magic remains intact. Against manses, Essence-scattering attacks inflict normal harm but double their raw damage. Artifact weapons that have a motonic disrupter setting that can be used in lieu of standard damage with any shot add +1 to their Artifact rating and Repair rating (maximum of 5 for both).



Vestment of Holy Vigilance (Artifact •• or ••••)

Although the Chosen can respire Essence from the collective prayers of their worshipers, they cannot normally hear specific prayers directed to them as gods or demons do. With one of these artifacts, that limitation no longer applies. Empowering one of these decorative wonders requires a three-mote commitment, and the Exalt can attune an item made only from the appropriate magical material (making jade models extraordinarily rare). Once donned, the artifact allows its wearer to reflexively hear all prayers directed at her as if they were whispered in her ear. To prevent distraction, only the most widely repeated or desperate of entreaties rise above the indecipherable murmur of the rest unless the Exalt is actively meditating to listen to all prayers (and recovering Essence normally for meditation while doing so). Exalted who use these artifacts as tools of rulership often schedule holy hours when they will hear prayers to make sure that nothing slips through the cracks. As a final benefit, the closeness facilitated by these artifacts adds one bonus dot to the attuned wearer's Cult rating (maximum Cult •••••).

Upgrading Artifacts

Improving an artifact starts with the same process as designing a completely new artifact. Once construction begins, however, the design requires fewer exotic materials than normal (with a difference equal to the former Artifact rating) and similarly reduces the number of cumulative successes needed to rebuild it by an amount equal to the successes needed to build it in its former state. Using this process, it is possible to join seemingly unrelated designs to spectacular results. For instance, a goremaul refitted with qualities of a perfected calculation array might become an intelligent weapon that teaches and guides its owner.

Artifact •••• versions of this device have all of the features listed thus far, but cost five motes to attune. In addition, wearers of these vestments may telepathically compose a reply to any prayer as a reflexive action costing one mote. Only one reply is permitted per prayer, though it may be of any length. The supplicant receives a vision of the Exalt's iconic anima speaking the Chosen's words in thunderous proclamation.

Metasorcerous Phylactery (Artifact ••••)

These talismans usually take the form of large jewelry items such as bracers, torcs and crowns, although some Chosen prefer staves or wands. Combining Creation's four magical materials with Malfean brass in elaborately complex designs, the composite wonders can be attuned (or built) only by sorcerers. Each requires a combination of an inset level-3+ hearthstone and a 10-mote commitment to function. (Variants of this artifact using soulsteel and Underworld materials similarly boost necromancy.)

Whenever a sorcerer casts a sorcery spell while attuned to exactly one metasorcerous phylactery, he may channel dots from the item's inset hearthstone to augment the casting, temporarily reducing the stone's power output (and rating). Until a drained hearthstone returns to full charge, it has no powers. Furthermore, an arcane link remains between the depleted stone and phylactery, preventing any other power source from fueling it during this time. Channeled dots return at the rate of one per hour and may improve a spell in any of the following ways, allocated as desired:

Cost: The spell costs three fewer motes per dot spent (minimum 10 motes). Alternatively, the spell's Willpower point cost decreases by one per three dots spent (minimum one Willpower point).

Power: If the spell references the sorcerer's Essence rating, he is considered to have a rating one dot higher for every three dots spent.

Mastery: If the spell requires a dice roll, each dot spent adds one success to the roll.

Range: If the spell has a range measured in actual distance, each dot spent improves it by a factor of one (x2 with one level, x3 with two, etc.).

Duration: If the spell has a fixed duration, every two dots spent increases this time by a factor of one (x2 with two levels, x3 with four, etc.)

Trigger: For a cost of one dot, the spell does not have any apparent effect on its target (no rolls are made, if applicable). Instead, the effect happens when a specific event the sorcerer names at the time of casting takes place in the presence of the target. (The effect can be anything from a time delay to someone performing a specific action, et cetera.) In the interim, the spell remains visible to Essence sight and may be dispelled with countermagic. Once the spell goes off, it does so as if the target were adjacent to the sorcerer, and the sorcerer's player then makes any necessary rolls (using the traits his character had when he cast the spell). Suspended spells can remain dormant indefinitely if their trigger conditions never occur. Only one spell may be keyed to a particular trigger until that trigger has discharged, and only one trigger at a time to a particular spell. For example, the sorcerer could not key five Flights of the Brilliant Raptor to all trigger when he shouts "Now!" Nor could he establish five different conditions under which Travel Without Movement will whisk him away to safety. The sorcerer may sustain a number of simultaneous triggers no greater than the rating of the hearthstone powering his phylactery. Removing that hearthstone cancels all spells and triggers.

Manifestation: For a cost of one dot, the sorcerer may change the way a spell achieves its normal function, substituting a Storyteller-approved effect more appropriate to the sorcerer's anima and mood. For example, a magma kraken might be changed into tendrils of electricity, but it would still inflict the same damage and would be the same spell. Other than providing a host of stunt possibilities, changing the effect decreases the likelihood that others will recognize the spell (+2 difficulty) and may circumvent narrowly defined defenses (such as immunity to fire, which avails nothing against acid).

Infinite Resplendence Amulet (Artifact ••• to •••••)

Consisting of aspect-dedicated magical material lattices embedded in synthetic adamant matrices, these thumbnail-sized baubles are the most ubiquitous artifact garments currently in fashion among the Chosen. Some elder Exalted object to them on principle, especially the "wear nothing you didn't make" purists and the "mansions of closets" hedonists, though the latter sometimes collect hundreds of amulets to display their collection of brand glyphs from highly regarded Exalted and Jadeborn artisans. Although the devices vary by model, each costs five motes to attune. The devices have the following common features:

Modular Attire: The amulet can generate any form of outfit the wearer can imagine, however grand or humble. Changing the setting requires contact and a diceless miscellaneous action. Repairing or cleaning a worn outfit takes the same action as creating a new one. Created clothes have no reality beyond being an extension of the amulet, so they dissolve or flow back into the artifact if they are removed for any reason. Most wearers integrate the amulet itself as an accessory of each outfit, especially to show off impressive brand glyphs.

Protection: Regardless of configuration, enchantments in the amulet provide +1L/+1B soak (which does not count as armor for Charm purposes), plus an extra success to all Resistance or Survival rolls to reduce or avoid the effects of deleterious environmental conditions, toxins or disease.

In addition, each amulet also has one material-specific feature by default. Composite designs cost •••• for one additional feature or ••••• for all four material features. Provided a copy of the artifact incorporates the material that naturally resonates with its wearer, there is no commitment surcharge to attune a composite model.

Orichalcum: These amulets create clothes as constructs of solidified light, giving them a palette of colors and textures worthy of a Solar's glory. As an Obvious effect, such raiment gives its wearer +4 Appearance and inhibits stealth like an 8–10 mote anima banner does. The Solar may hide this glory to make humbler attire if his pride permits, but the bonus is all or nothing.

Moonsilver: Extruding outfits as a diaphanous second skin grown from liquid metal tendrils, these amulets provide superior protection and camouflage on demand. The wearer gets two bonus dice to Stealth rolls and two bonus dice to assume a disguise with Larceny, as well as replacing the usual soak bonus with +5L/+5B (that stacks with and is still not considered armor for Charms).

Starmetal: Weaving clothes from strands of the wearer's own fate, these amulets provide extremely subtle and understated elegance. Such garments conceal numerous pockets folded into Elsewhere, providing sufficient storage space to carry up to a ton of assorted items safely out of reach of the world, provided the objects could actually fit through a pocket

opening no larger than a foot across. Only the attuned wearer can reach into Elsewhere via these pockets; to others, they are merely stitched folds. In the event of the wearer's death, his corpse fades into Elsewhere with his possessions for burial among the interstices of fate, leaving only his enchanted clothes to mark his passage.

Jade: Micro-articulated jade scales unfold from the amulet into glossy military uniforms appropriate for elite Dragon-Blooded officers. When worn by a unit relay, the wearer counts as five relays for the purposes of preventing communication failure. When worn by a unit commander, her dignified example provides one bonus dot each to Drill and Morale, as well as +1 Might if the unit has Magnitude 3 or less.

Advanced Geomancy

The rules in **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex** provide a detailed overview of geomantic technology that survives into the Second Age. Such wonders pale before the architectural triumphs of the Age of Splendor, however, when infinite ambition applied near-infinite wealth to conquer the world's Essence. Some of the features listed here require others as prerequisites for installation. These requirements differ from the minimum traits or other conditions needed to construct a particular feature in game, as structure limitations also apply to manses acquired during character creation

One-Point Powers

Exotic Aspect

Lore 6 or built by entities corresponding to the aspect.

A manse with this feature does not correspond to the basic cosmological precepts and forces that govern Creation's geomancy. It may be a prehuman relic of the Primordials or their servants, an exercise in applied Essence theory or perhaps an outpost constructed by beings who aren't native to the Tapestry. Whatever the origin, the manse is neither Terrestrial nor Celestial, but resonates with a force such as chaos (a specific shinma), vitriol (an element present in Malfeas) or any of the six Autochthonian elements (crystal, lightning, metal, oil, steam or smoke). Players should work with their Storytellers to choose an appropriate aspect and then determine what favored manse powers or hearthstones are appropriate for that choice. Unless the geomancer is fortunate enough to cap a demesne of the same aspect, all rolls to design, build or repair the manse add one to the difficulty from the incongruity. Once the manse has capped its demesne for a number of years equal to their combined rating, the demesne synchronizes aspect and the penalty disappears.

Geomantic Nexus

Structure: Network Node

This feature upgrades a manse into the central hub of its geomantic network, giving it any number of additional

Creation Points to allocate to Essence-fueled powers rather than innate architectural features or external qualities. Yet powers purchased with any of these bonus points function only when they have sufficient energy points committed to them from Geomantic Relay manses on the same network, making them subject to external disruption. A manse with Geomantic Nexus can override control of any manse in its network unless that manse is another nexus, as if it had the appropriate password activation (**The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, p. 68) to do so. Actual authorization passwords are required for a nexus to control or preempt another nexus, however, such as to create a primary control node.

Example: A level-2 nexus manse has Veil of Shadow designated as a nexus power. Because this is a nexus power, the manse cannot use it unless it has at least two energy points committed to it from relays.

Geomantic Relay

Structure: Network Node

Geomantic Relay affords no benefits to a manse other than increasing its strategic value. Instead, the manse generates a number of energy points equal to the number of relays installed in it (to a maximum number equal to its rating). The relay can commit these points to any Geomantic Nexus manse on the network, but cannot shift this allocation without some form of active controls.

Example: A level-4 manse houses three relays, turning the three Creation Points spent acquiring the power into a pool of three energy points. It can commit two of these points to one nexus and one to another, commit all three to one nexus or wastefully hoard these points to no effect.

Living Manse

Craft (Genesis) 5

The manse is actually a living being in its own right, with all of its powers flowing equally from geomantic principles and genesis-engineered biology. The Ability needed to build or repair such a structure is Craft (Genesis) rather than Craft (Earth), but this power otherwise does not modify a manse other than serving as a structural prerequisite for more advanced technology.

Two-Point Powers

Host-Binding Circle

Occult 5; **Structure:** Level 3+

A manse with this power has a room dedicated to the practice of summoning demons, with orichalcum rings and sorcerous glyphs of power inlaid directly into the blackened marble. When casting the spell Demon of the Second Circle, the sorcerer may name a progeny race of that demon during the casting. If the binding succeeds, the demon bows and shatters into a maelstrom of green flames and whirling sand. When these pyrotechnics settle, the sorcerer finds the demon replaced with a bound a unit of its First Circle children with Magnitude equal to half the sorcerer's Essence (rounded up).

As an alternative effect, if the manse has a rating of 4+ and the sorcerer has an Occult rating higher than a target Second Circle demon's permanent Essence, the Exalt may attempt to summon it using this circle on any night rather than just on the new moon. Success may bind that demon or a group of its progeny as normal.

Immutable (Earth, Solar Favored)

Structure: Maintenance 1

A manse with this feature creates an island of stability around itself. The tides of the Wyld and other Shaping effects originating from outside the manse cannot affect anything in its range, though this power does not reverse existing Shaping effects brought into the radius. While this power typically extends Creation's laws, the Wyld Revocation power (**The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, p. 77) might assert its rewritten nature as a cosmological constant, while manses with the Outside Fate power (**The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, p. 76) may be warded by otherworldly powers.

Master's Workshop Manse

Appropriate Craft 4

The manse has rooms converted into a master's workshop stocked with the appropriate tools and supplies for a number of different Craft Abilities equal to the manse's rating (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, p. 28 for further explanation). This feature can be purchased multiple times to further increase the range of Craft Abilities the workshop can accommodate.

Self-Stabilizing

Craft (Genesis) 5 (for living); **Structures:** Living Manse or Wyld Revocation

Like a wound clotting to stem its bleeding, a manse with this feature can grow internal patches to prevent Essence accumulation from reaching critical levels. The manse can automatically stabilize one dot of Power Failure per minute (or every hour while this power is damaged), though this property only prevents explosion and does not actually fix the damage.

Three-Point Powers

Dynamic Architecture (Lunar Favored)

Wits 6; **Structures:** Maintenance 2

A manse with this feature is capable of transforming from one design to another, allowing it to have two distributions of its Creation Points (allocated with Storyteller approval). Each additional purchase of this power costs only one Creation Point and provides another configuration to choose from, though all modes must have each purchase of this power and the same drawback ratings assigned to Sacrificing Hearthstone Levels and Maintenance.

Manses with Habitability 3 transform without regard for occupant safety, inflicting 30B piercing damage to everyone who is not nimble enough to duck and roll out of the way of

the shifting rooms. Doing so requires a difficulty 5 (Dexterity + Dodge) roll. (The Central Control room is always safe, if there is one.) More hospitable manses change forms without any risk of harm to occupants. The transformation sequence takes five minutes (or long ticks) to complete. Without some form of active controls, the transformation occurs automatically according to established programming or a fixed schedule and cannot be overridden from doing so.

Floating (Air Favored)

Craft (Magitech) 5; **Structures:** Essence Vents, Maintenance 2

A manse with this power floats above the demesne it caps, up to a maximum height of (rating x 200) yards from the ground. This puts it out of reach of many besiegers, though also necessitating some way for owners to fly up to their property (or have it lower a basket or levitation platform, the latter of which makes an excellent magical convenience—per the power on p. 67 of **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**). With active controls, the structure can descend or ascend to its altitude ceiling and perform other simple maneuvers comparable to those conferred by Limited Mobility (**The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, p. 70), but the manse cannot actually move from the pillar of buoying Essence on which it rests. If this power becomes damaged, the manse safely sinks for a minute to make a gentle landing. If the power deactivates entirely, the hard fall shatters the manse on impact for instant Essence buildup. A variation of this feature does not raise the manse itself, but rather allows the manse to levitate a single object of equal or lesser size over it, such as to "dock" a skyship without running its engines and accruing concomitant upkeep.

Integrated Utility Artifacts

Craft (Magitech) 4

With each purchase of this power, a manse gets (rating x 2) dots worth of artifacts built directly into the structure of the manse itself. These items must be of a strictly utilitarian nature rather than combat systems, but this power otherwise follows the same restrictions and rules as Integrated Essence Artillery (**The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, p. 76).

Life-Sustaining (Wood Favored)

Structure: Comfort Zone

A manse with this enchantment suffuses its environment with an overabundance of living Essence, increasing the vitality of those within it. This energy has several effects, which may be individually or collectively limited to specific areas or classifications of beneficiaries using standard control options. (They affect everyone in the manse's zone of influence at the default setting.)

Anagathic: Provided that individuals do not spend more than one day away from the manse's zone of influence each week, they extend their projected life span (+25% for ●●●, +50% for ●●●● and no measurable aging for ●●●●●).

Boosted Immunity: Individuals bathed in the energies add the manse's rating in bonus successes to all Resistance rolls against Poison or Sickness effects.

Healing: Within the manse's zone of influence, living beings heal two extra levels of bashing damage per hour, one lethal per hour and one aggravated every five hours.

Regeneration

Craft (Genesis) 5 (for living); **Structure:** Living Manse or Wyld Revocation

A manse with this power can actually restore its pattern when damaged. This restoration may be a function of regenerating biology or a modified principle of natural law, but regardless of origin, the manse simultaneously heals all internal and external structures at the rate of one bashing/lethal level per hour (or per day for aggravated). Dots of Power Failure disappear as soon as they have regained an appropriate number of health levels, restoring features to a damaged or fully operational state as appropriate to their rating. Healing from other causes of Power Failure takes hours equaling the damage levels required for each dot of Power Failure. This power cannot allow a manse to meet its own Maintenance requirements or reverse Power Failure caused by missed upkeep.

Four-Point Powers

Atelier-Manse (Expanded)

Craft (Magitech) 5, other Craft 5; **Structure:** Maintenance 3

When one of these automated assembly lines builds an object, the manse normally uses the traits of its hearthstone bearer as they were at the time the manse received orders to start production. If the manse has Ability Enlightenment (**The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, p. 75) dedicated to an appropriate Craft, however, it cannot garner fewer than four successes on rolls for that Craft regardless of the actual roll (preventing the natural botches that result from human error). Alternatively, a sentient manse (per the power on p. 79 of **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**) can substitute its own traits if they are better than those of its hearthstone bearer. If an Atelier-Manse power becomes damaged for any reason, it will not work again until it has been fixed as a large Repair 4 artifact. Once a manse has atelier capacity, upgrading it to work with another elemental Craft Ability costs only one Creation Point. In all other ways, this power uses the rules on page 75 of **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**.

Consecrated

Priesthood of the appropriate deity

A manse with this feature is not simply a temple to a greater power, but a hallowed sanctuary that blesses the pious and sears the flesh and souls of its patron's enemies. In addition to providing all of the benefits of Temple Manse (**The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, pp. 73–74), this feature aids all actions taken by priests of the

appropriate deity within its zone of influence like a Well-Flavored Aspect tailored to them (**The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, p. 68). Finally, enemy entities do not just lose Essence and Willpower recovery within range of the manse, they also suffer one level of unsoakable aggravated damage and lose one Willpower point per minute. This injury takes whatever form is appropriate to the manse and affects immaterial beings. Entities drained of all Willpower must obey an irresistible Compulsion effect to flee the area as quickly as possible.

Essence Shield

Craft (Magitech) 5, War 4

A manse with this power can envelop itself in a coruscating barrier of impervious Essence shaped from its own demesne. By default, this shield forms snugly around the manse like an architectural exoskeleton, but it can encase a larger territory in a bubble through Zone of Influence (**The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, p. 75). Once raised, the shield stops intruders and blocks all external attacks aimed for the manse with a Hardness of (rating x10)B/L and half that against aggravated damage. Piercing effects halve the protection normally. Attacks that fail to overcome the shield's Hardness have no effect. Any attack that penetrates the Hardness still inflicts no damage, but collapses the shield and inflicts one dot of Power Failure on the manse. An overloaded shield cannot operate again without Repair 4 maintenance. A manse's Essence Shield can be calibrated to bar incorporeal beings as per Chasm of the Material (**The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, pp. 75–76) by installing a lesser version of that feature for one Creation Point (in which case the shield is solid, but spirits may dematerialize again once they cross it).

Extended Zone of Influence

This power duplicates and improves upon the functions of Zone of Influence (**The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, p. 75), but the manse's range expands to its rating in miles. If the manse has Pasiap's Buried Whiskers (**The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, p. 70), the range of that power increases to its rating in miles as well.

Making What Where

Between **Exalted**, **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age** and **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, the rules for artifact creation can be somewhat confusing. What follows are consolidated clarifications and some errata:

Magitech artifacts are defined as complex non-living artifacts with interconnected moving parts and/or Essence manipulation capabilities. The Storyteller remains final arbiter of whether an artifact fits these criteria. Unless they are built with imperishable techniques, the items also require some form of recurring upkeep. Building these wonders uses Craft (Magitech) with standard artifact-creation rules, but this process cannot succeed without a sufficiently advanced facility. See **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**, pages 8–9, and **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, page 28, for information on these categories: master's workshop (•••) for Repair 1–3 items, flawless workshop (••••) for Repair 4 and an ideal workshop (•••••) for Repair 5–6. Maintaining or repairing magitech uses the rules on pages 6–9 of **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age** and uses Craft (Magitech), though it is possible for less learned artisans to substitute a mundane Craft at a higher difficulty.

Simple Artifacts are basic "Essence goes in, magic comes out" devices that seldom have much in the way of moving parts and normally don't require any kind of recurring upkeep to stay in working order. If an item lacks obvious complexity and doesn't specify the frequency or consequences of its maintenance needs, the presence of a Repair rating doesn't automatically make it magitech. (For example, most of the wonders in **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age** have Repair ratings even though they aren't all magitech.) As before, this is the Storyteller's call. Building and repairing simple artifacts uses the rules in Chapter One of **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex** and can be done at any kind of workshop using relevant mundane Crafts.

Genesis Artifacts are artificial or artificially modified organisms with complexity and power comparable to non-living artifacts. (See **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**, pages 116–118, for more information.) Such artifacts never have or need Repair ratings, as the capacity to heal is a fairly universal property of life and may be medically assisted. The level of workshop required to build a living being with Craft (Genesis) using standard artifact-creation rules depends on the item's rating. It is possible, though, to use a facility one category too primitive at a -2 external penalty in lieu of any workshop-related dice bonuses: 1–2 (flawless workshop; ••••) and 3–5 (ideal workshop; •••••). The actual construction process mirrors that of conventional artifacts, right down to the reverse-engineering benefits for scanning or vivisecting a sample organism to copy it.

Guardian Force

Craft (Genesis) 5, Craft (Magitech) 5, or other ability to bind a Guardian.

This feature mirrors Bound Servant Force (**Oadenol's Codex**, p. 71), save that the unit consists of Guardian entities (**Oadenol's Codex**, p. 73) with a Drill of 5.

Mobile

Craft (Magitech) 5; **Structures:** Essence Vents, Central Control, Geomantic Nexus, Maintenance 4

A manse with this feature is truly a marvel, not merely a stationary emplacement but a massive vehicle capable of uprooting itself from its foundations and journeying elsewhere. The moment the manse disconnects from its demesne, it suffers effective Power Failure to 0 dots, which would normally disable this power and make mobility a moot point. The nexus manse, however, can continue to fuel Essence powers using committed energy points supplied by Geomantic Relays, including an additional number of points equal to (rating^2) to enable actual mobility (or twice that for flight systems). Depending on its design, a mobile manse might crawl on mechanical legs, hover inches above the ground, swim through the water, levitate through the air or anything else. As a vehicle, the manse has Speed 10/20mph, Maneuverability -1S (Lore 5) and needs no crew besides a single pilot using the Central Control. While the manse is away, its demesne remains safely capped by an elaborate capstone structure with the durability of a basic level-1 manse. Landing on this foundation platform allows the manse to reconnect with its demesne. If the demesne explodes from Essence buildup while its manse is away, the manse suffers immediate and total Power Failure and cannot receive relayed energy points. Sudden power loss obviously has more immediate consequences for an airborne manse than one crawling across the ground.

Ultra-Deadly Perimeter Defenses

Various Crafts at 5, Larceny 5

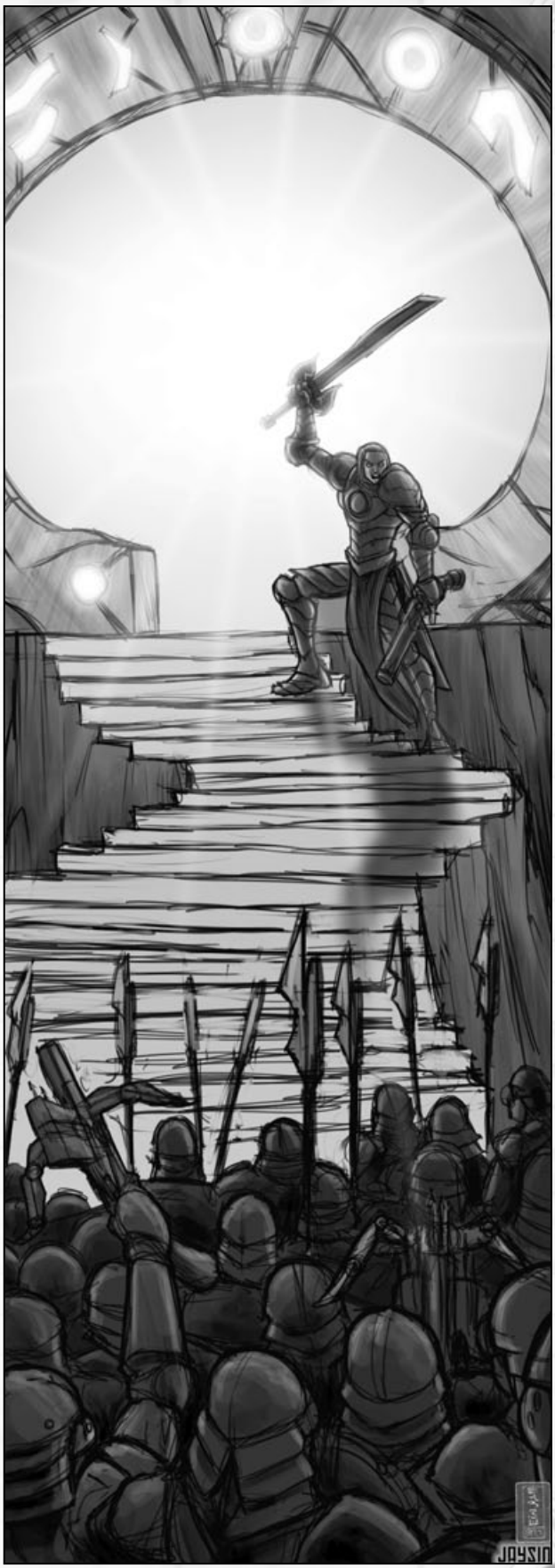
This feature duplicates Ultra-Deadly Traps (**The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, p. 74), but each purchase applies the chosen hazard against anyone attempting to enter the manse's range. Should an intruder somehow penetrate into the manse's interior, the perimeter defenses cannot harm him further. With active controls or some form of password activation, the defenses may be safely bypassed by those permitted to do so.

Five-Point Powers

Factory-Cathedral (Expanded)

Craft (Magitech) 6; **Structure:** Maintenance 4

A factory-cathedral is an ideal workshop designed to construct magitech and simple artifacts of *any* rating (including assembling level-5 components into an N/A wonder)—not simply those rated 4 or less as erroneously indicated on page 78 of **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—**



Oadenol's Codex. Using its automated production systems, a factory-cathedral can also build artifacts without ongoing involvement from its owner (like an atelier-manse can). More importantly, these structures can simultaneously produce batches of the same artifact if they have sufficient raw materials, up to a total number of copies equal to the members in a unit with Magnitude (5 – artifact rating). If a factory-cathedral power becomes damaged for any reason, it will not work again until it has been fixed as a large five-dot, Repair 5 artifact. In all other ways, this power uses the rules provided in **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**.

Gate of Auspicious Passage (Sidereal Favored)

Craft (Magitech) 6; **Structures:** Geomantic Nexus

The manse serves as a travel hub for one of the fabled gates of auspicious passage (**The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**, p. 50). Prior to coming online, the gate must be precisely calibrated to its network with extensive research and programming as an extended (Intelligence + Lore) with a roll interval of one week and a cumulative difficulty of (100 x the total number of gates in the network, including this new one). If the character hasn't done this before and doesn't have guidance from someone who has, double the cumulative difficulty. Once it has been properly linked to the gate network, the artifact allows instantaneous teleportation to or from any other gate on the network through the non-space of Elsewhere, needing only a successful difficulty 1 (Intelligence + Lore) roll to select the intended destination. For each minute a gate remains open as a one-way portal to its destination, it drains 25 energy points from the combined geomantic relays providing Essence. Once the gate runs out of energy points or a controller on either end terminates the connection, the four-yard-diameter portal collapses, and the drained relays gradually restore the network's spent output at the rate of one point per hour. While a manse has an open portal, it cannot be targeted as a valid destination by other gates.

Genesis Laboratory

Craft (Genesis) 6, Craft (Magitech) 6; **Structure:** Maintenance 3

This feature is basically a factory-cathedral for creating living artifacts, aiding Craft (Genesis) instead of Craft (Magitech). These facilities replace Temple Manse properties with Analytical Senses (**The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Oadenol's Codex**, p. 71), however, as it is far more important that they be able to understand the complexities of living Essence than channel the enlightenment of a higher power.

Infernal Oracle (Solar Favored)

Occult 6

A manse with this power contains a summoning room as per Host-Binding Circle (see p. 120), but one that is significantly larger and more imposing. At each new moon, a sorcerer can dare to cast Demon of the Third Circle as if it were Calibration with one key difference: A successfully bound demon does not fully appear in Creation and can be compelled only to answer one question truthfully before returning to Malfeas. Of course, nothing stops the demon from twisting its words, lying by omission and taking the question out of context, but any sorcerer capable of summoning such a fiend should already know what to expect.

Synergistic Overmind

Intelligence 8; **Structures:** Geomantic Nexus, Sentient

This feature vastly upgrades a sentient manse's processing power, giving it additional successes to all Mental Attribute rolls equal to the Magnitude of a unit with members equal to the power dots committed by Geomantic Relays to the upgrade. Dice pools with zero dice do not receive this bonus, but the parallel processing algorithms also reduce multiple action penalties for flurries that consist entirely of mental actions or actions to control manse functions by one per manse in the network. This property can potentially allow a consciousness inhabiting a large network to multitask dozens or even hundreds of separate thoughts without penalties. The upper limits of I AM have yet to be accurately measured, especially since its Solar creators wisely restricted its authority to requisition geomantic energies for its own growth without a legislative act by the Deliberative.

HE COULD HAVE JUMPED, I GUESS.
THAT HE COULD. CERTAINLY LOOKS THAT WAY.
CHIAROSCURO'S NO DARI, BUT IT HAPPENS.
THAT IT DOES.
EXCEPT IF HE JUMPED, THAT THING WOULDN'T BE HERE, WOULD IT?
THAT IT WOULDN'T.
HMPH!
AND NOW IT'S GIVING US ATTITUDE. THAT'S NOT NORMAL BEHAVIOR, IS IT?
IT ISN'T.
YOU'VE BEEN ACTING STRANGE EVER SINCE MY PARTNER SUMMONED YOU. WHY?
MAYBE IT'S GOT SOMETHING TO HIDE. MAYBE IT... HELPED?
WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO KNOW, MORTALS?
OH, WE'LL FIND OUT. THE PREFECT'S MEN ARE ON THEIR WAY.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE MORTAL

Regular Mortals

By definition, Creation's mortals are inherently lesser, regardless of whether they are simple farmers, Essence-using martial artists, fierce and noble Dragon Kings or exotic Darkbroods living far beneath Creation. With the exception of beings who are either the enemies of the Deliberative—such as the Darkbroods—or largely outside its influence—such as the inhabitants of the more independent communities of Dragon Kings—mortals (and especially all of the many varieties of humans) are subjects of the Deliberative. At best, mortals can become minor functionaries who may command a wing of troops, direct the operations of a small factory-cathedral or manage a single RPC. Within the Exalted-dominated Deliberative, humans and most other mortals will never rule a domain or even a small city.

Soldiers

The following are a sample of some of the more common mortal military professions and their standard weapons and armor. The standards of training are exceedingly high in the Age of Splendor because the widespread use of Charms such as Tiger Warrior Training Technique and artifacts that similarly enhance mundane training allows new recruits to be trained to a very high level of expertise before they ever see battle.

Regular Infantry

The inexperienced and green troops that make up much of the militias of the Second Age are almost unknown in the First Age, since advanced instruction techniques make certain that all soldiers possess adequate training.

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

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

Abilities: Archery 3, Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Bureaucracy 2, Craft (Earth) 1, Dodge 2, Integrity 2, Linguistics 1, Lore 1, Martial Arts 2, Medicine 1, Melee 3, Occult 1, Presence 1, Resistance 2, Socialize 1, Stealth 2, Survival 1, War 3

Join Battle: 4

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 3B, Parry DV 3, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 4, Damage 6B, Parry DV 1, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 4, Damage 3B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Knife: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 6L, Parry DV 3, Rate 3

Straight Sword: Speed 4, Accuracy 8, Damage 8L, Parry DV 4, Rate 2

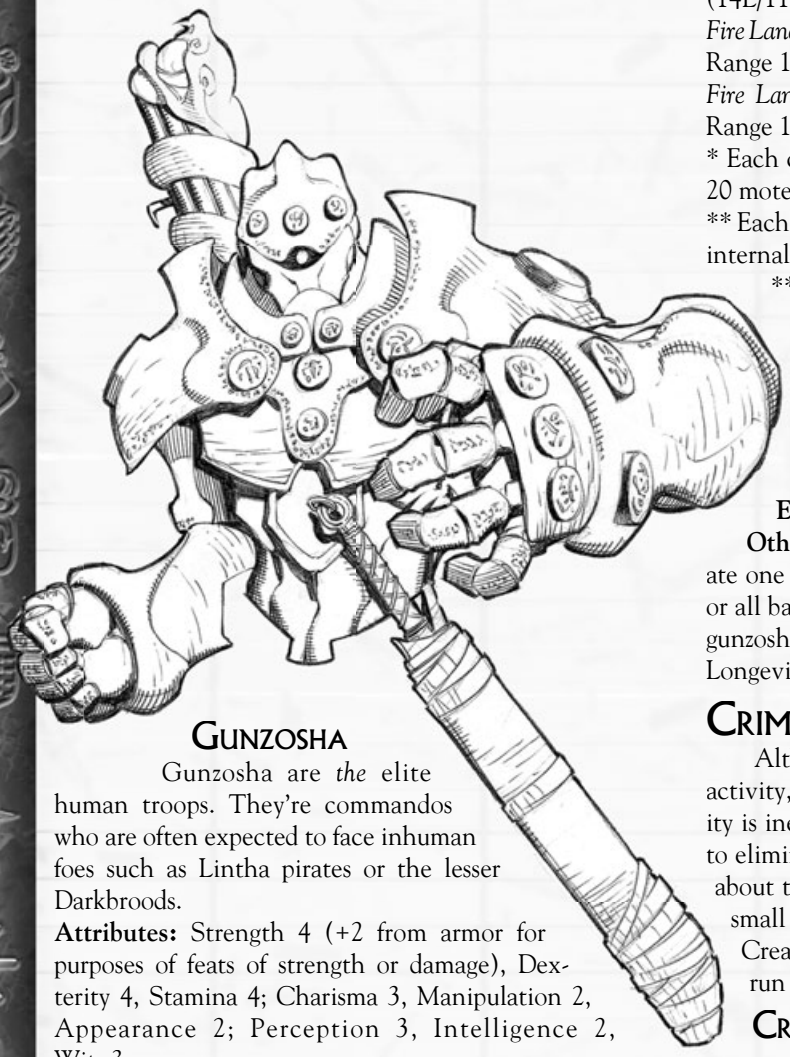
Mechanized Crossbow: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 7L (piercing)*, Range 300, Rate 1**

* Uses armor-piercing bolts equivalent to target arrows.
** Crossbows equipped with a repeating magazine have a Rate of 2 until they run out of ammunition (10 bolts), but require a simple action to load a new magazine.
Plasma Tongue Repeater: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 10L, Range 20 (max. range), Rate 1
Soak: 8L/10B (Reinforced breastplate, +8L/7B)
Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap
Dodge DV: 2 **Willpower:** 6
Essence: 1
Other Notes: These troopers form the bulk of any army, Deliberative or no. They are also regularly used for riot control in the principalities. Riot-control troops replace the straight sword with a cudgel, and instead of armor-piercing bolts, they are issued blunt-headed fowling bolts and fragmenting bolts that duplicate the effects of frog crotch arrows. All regular infantry are issued perfected boots. These characters are often extras.

Ashigaru

Ashigaru are highly trained and superbly equipped front-line troops who are expected to face inhuman foes such as Lintha pirates or the lesser Darkbroods.
Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4; Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2; Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3
Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 3, Temperance 2, Valor 4
Abilities: Archery 3, Athletics 3, Awareness 3 (+2 from armor), Bureaucracy 2, Craft (Earth) 2, Dodge 3, Integrity 3, Investigation 2, Linguistics 3, Lore 2, Martial Arts 3, Medicine 2, Melee 4, Occult 2, Presence 2, Resistance 3 (+2 against poison and disease, from armor), Ride 2, Socialize 2, Stealth 3 (+2 moving/+3 stationary, from armor), Survival 3, Thrown 2, War 4
Join Battle: 8
Attacks:
Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 3B, Parry DV 4, Rate 3
Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 6B, Parry DV 2, Rate 2
Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 6, Damage 3B, Parry DV —, Rate 1
Straight Sword: Speed 4, Accuracy 10, Damage 8L, Parry DV 4, Rate 2
Plasma Tongue Repeater: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 10L, Range 20 (max. range), Rate 1
Shock Pike (melee): Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 8L, Parry DV 4, Rate 2
Shock Pike (ranged):* Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 10L, Range 50 (max. range), Rate 2
* Each ranged attack drains two motes from the weapon's 20 mote internal battery.
Soak: 7L/10B (Ashigaru armor, +7L/6B, Hardness: 4L/4B, fatigue value 1)
Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap
Dodge DV: 3 **Willpower:** 7 (6)
Essence: 1
Other Notes: These weapons are the most common ones for ordinary duties. Marines are issued tiger shark armor and short spears instead of straight swords, and airborne drop troops who jump out of sky ships are issued jump belts, as well as short swords instead of straight swords and fuel

bolt launchers or mechanized crossbows instead of plasma tongue repeaters.



Gunzosha

Gunzosha are *the* elite human troops. They're commandos who are often expected to face inhuman foes such as Lintha pirates or the lesser Darkbroods.

Attributes: Strength 4 (+2 from armor for purposes of feats of strength or damage), Dexterity 4, Stamina 4; Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2; Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

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

Abilities: Archery 4, Athletics 3, Awareness 3 (+2 from armor), Bureaucracy 2, Craft (Earth) 3, Dodge 3, Integrity 3, Investigation 2, Linguistics 3, Lore 2, Martial Arts 3, Medicine 2, Melee 4, Occult 2, Presence 2, Resistance 3 (+2 from armor), Ride 2, Socialize 2, Stealth 3 (+4 from armor), Survival 3, Thrown 2, War 4

Join Battle: 8

Attacks: (+2 to all attacks, +2 to Damage and +1 to Parry DV from armor)

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 10, Damage 6B, Parry DV 5, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 9B, Parry DV 3, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 9, Damage 6B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Chopping Sword: Speed 4, Accuracy 12, Damage 13L/4, Parry DV 5, Rate 2

Fuel Bolt Launcher: Speed 6, Accuracy 11, Damage 18L, Range 30 (max. range), Rate 1

Fire Lance (melee): Speed 5, Accuracy 11, Damage 10L/7L (14L/11L charged*), Parry DV 6, Rate 2

*Fire Lance (streamer)***:* Speed 5, Accuracy 12, Damage 10L, Range 150 (max. range), Rate 2

*Fire Lance (fan)****: Speed 5, Accuracy 15, Damage 7L, Range 100 (max. range), Rate 1

* Each charged attack drains one mote from the weapon's 20 mote internal battery.

** Each attack drains two motes from the weapon's 20 mote internal battery.

*** Each attack drains five motes from the weapon's 20 mote internal battery and can hit up to three separate targets within three yards of each other.

Soak: 9L/13B (Gunzosha armor, +9L/9B, Hardness: 5L/5B, -1 mobility penalty, fatigue value 1)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 3 **Willpower:** 7

Essence: 1

Other Notes: The armor allows the wearer to regenerate one level of bashing damage per action during combat or all bashing damage every minute outside of combat. All gunzosha troops possess both aegis implant amulets and the Longevity pox.

Criminals

Although the Deliberative officially condemns criminal activity, its members are well aware that some criminal activity is inevitable. It's just human nature. So rather than try to eliminate all crime, they typically let petty criminals go about their business as long as their organizations remain small and their ambitions simple. More than that, in fact, Creation's largest criminal organizations are invariably run by Celestial Exalted.

Criminal Gang Member

The members of Creation's various criminal gangs mostly consist of clever thieves, brutal thugs, deadly assassins and secretive fences who live in the cities of Creation and do their best to avoid official notice.

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

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

Abilities: Archery 2, Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Bureaucracy 2, Dodge 2, Integrity 2, Linguistics 1, Larceny 2, Lore 1, Martial Arts 2, Medicine 1, Melee 3, Occult 1, Presence 1, Resistance 2, Socialize 1, Stealth 2, War 3

Join Battle: 4

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 3B, Parry DV 3, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 4, Damage 6B, Parry DV 1, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 4, Damage 3B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Knife: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 6L, Parry DV 3, Rate 3

Chopping Sword: Speed 4, Accuracy 7, Damage 10L/4, Parry DV 2, Rate 2
Plasma Tongue Repeater: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 10L, Range 20 (max. range), Rate 1
Soak: 4L/8B (Buff jacket, +4L/5B)
Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap
Dodge DV: 2 **Willpower:** 6
Essence: 1
Other Notes: The traits cover ordinary burglars and thugs. Assassins wear chain shirts under ordinary clothing and often carry mechanized crossbows. Criminal gang members are usually extras.

Enhanced Criminals

As with any other endeavors, mutations and the ability to manipulate Essence and attune various Essence-powered artifacts can be a great boon to criminals, which is why such things are much in demand among the criminal underworld. Training in Terrestrial martial arts is very rare, and almost no criminals can gain training in Terrestrial Circle Sorcery, because the Deliberative understands the vast destructive potential of unlicensed sorcery. (Its agents brutally punish offenders with slow, agonizing death.) Instead, most criminals who can manipulate Essence use it to attune various artifacts. Because of their relative rarity, the Deliberate keeps careful track of artifacts with ratings of four or more dots. Also, wearing or wielding a highly visible artifact such as a suit of ashigaru armor or a fire lance swiftly calls the attention of Deliberative peacekeepers. Everything from jade chain shirts or silksteel armor, to switchklaves or wall eaters are exceedingly popular among those who can use them, though, as are artifacts such as gloves of martial readiness and gauntlets of distant touch. Similarly, a single set of wound mending needles can allow an Essence-using criminal to rapidly and discreetly heal fellow criminals injured by peacekeepers.

Most Essence-using criminals do not have enlightened Essence. Instead, they resort to drugs or artifacts that allow them to temporarily channel Essence. One of the most common options is a combination of a skin mount amulet (see **Books of Sorcery, Vol. 1—Wonders of the Lost Age**, p. 72) and two- or three-dot Essence capacitors (see p. 111), which combine to give the criminal a small but useful Essence pool. Best of all, by ditching the Essence capacitor, a criminal can seem to be a perfectly ordinary mortal to anyone using any form of Essence sight or some similar Essence-detecting ability. The true elite of the criminal underworld are the few assassins and enforcers with enlightened Essence who are trained in the dreaded Fivefold Shadow Hand Style of martial arts.

Enhanced Criminal

The wealthiest and most successful mortal criminals either enlighten their Essence or use artifacts or drugs to allow them to use Essence-powered artifacts. These criminals are the elite of the underworld, using artifacts that allow them to defeat most mortal opponents and most forms of mundane security.
Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2; Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 2
Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 3, Temperance 2, Valor 3

Abilities: Archery 3, Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Bureaucracy 2, Craft (Fire) 2, Dodge 2, Integrity 1, Linguistics 1, Larceny 3, Lore 2, Martial Arts 2, Medicine 1, Melee 3, Occult 2, Presence 1, Resistance 2, Socialize 1, Stealth 3, War 3
Join Battle: 4
Attacks:
Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 3B or 3L, Parry DV 3, Rate 3
Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 6B or 6L, Parry DV 1, Rate 2
Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 5, Damage 3B, Parry DV —, Rate 1
Knife: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 6L, Parry DV 3, Rate 3
Power Mace (melee):* Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 13L/4 (piercing) or 18B/4 (piercing), Parry DV 3, Rate 2
*Power Mace (ranged)**:* Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 10L or 15B, Range 60 or 100, Rate 2
* Costs two motes to activate for a scene.
** Each shot costs two motes.
Plasma Tongue Repeater: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 10L, Range 20 (max. range), Rate 1
Soak: 6L/12B (Reinforced buff jacket with concealed plates, +6L/9B, fatigue value 2)
Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap
Dodge DV: 2 **Willpower:** 6
Essence: 1
Essence Pool: 12 (two skin mount amulets, each fitted with a three-dot Essence capacitor)
Committed Essence: 8
Other Notes: This criminal also possesses the Claws and Night Vision poxes, both gained from illegal enhancement facilities. Also, the equipment listed here is typical of criminal bodyguards and enforcers. Enhanced assassins wear silksteel armor and carry either gloves of martial readiness or switchklaves. Enhanced burglars typically wear either a pair of gauntlets of distant claws or a pair of gauntlets of distant touch, an ordinary buff jacket and use either a belt of aerial mobility or a wall eater. Enhanced criminals who can afford only one skin mount amulet and a single three-dot Essence capacitor carry switchklaves and wear mundane reinforced buff jackets.
Some enhanced criminals have enlightened Essence and Essence 2, for an Essence pool of 20. Such characters must spend a Willpower point to access motes beyond the first 6.

Law Enforcers

On the other side of the crime coin are the forces of law enforcement. Criminals cannot be allowed free rein in the lands governed by the Deliberative, so its various principalities organize forces of mortal police charged with keeping the peace.

Mortal Peacekeepers

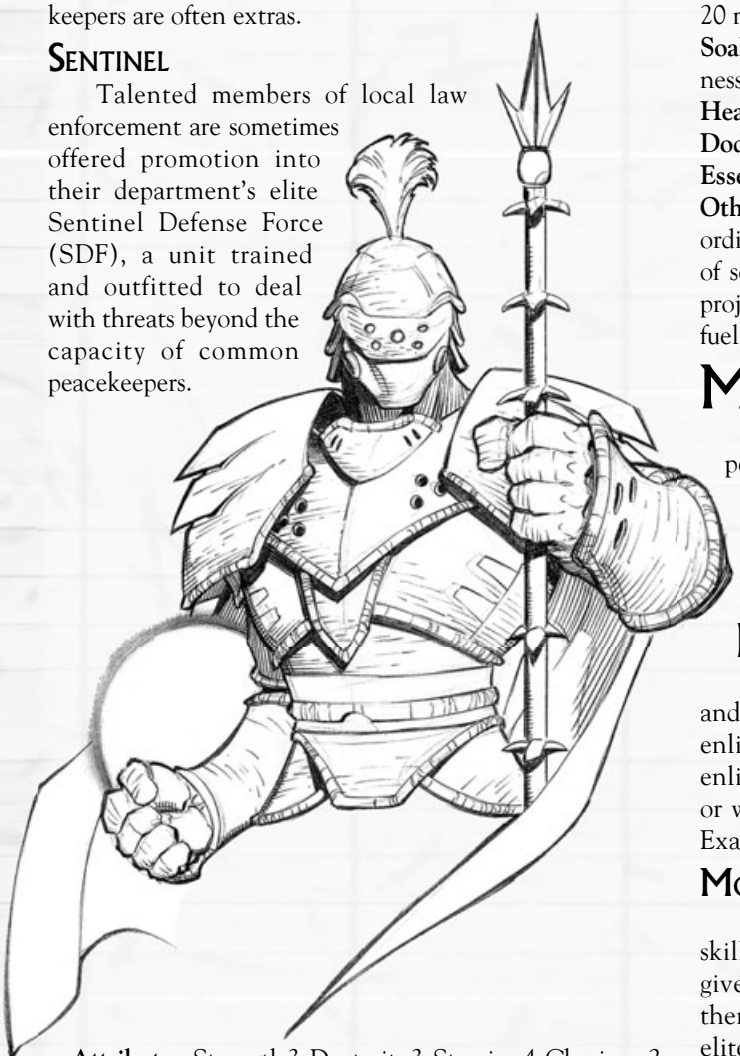
While Dragon-Blooded and enlightened mortals make up the elite branches of law enforcement, most street-level peacekeeping is performed by ordinary mortals who do everything from investigate crimes to break up bar fights. They wear distinctive buff jackets that are discreetly reinforced.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3; Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2; Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 2
Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 3, Temperance 2, Valor 2
Abilities: Archery 2, Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Bureaucracy 2, Craft (Wood) 1, Dodge 2, Integrity 1, Investigation 2, Linguistics 1, Larceny 1, Lore 2, Martial Arts 2, Medicine 2, Melee 3, Occult 1, Presence 2, Resistance 2, Socialize 2, Stealth 2, War 3
Join Battle: 4
Attacks:
Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 3B, Parry DV 3, Rate 3
Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 4, Damage 6B, Parry DV 1, Rate 2
Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 4, Damage 3B, Parry DV —, Rate 1
Cudgel: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 11B, Parry DV 2, Rate 3

Knife: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 6L, Parry DV 3, Rate 3
Plasma Tongue Repeater: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 10L, Range 20 (max. range), Rate 1
Soak: 6L/12B (Reinforced buff jacket, +6L/9B, fatigue value 2)
Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap
Dodge DV: 2 **Willpower:** 6
Essence: 1
Other Notes: Private security guards typically wear ordinary buff jackets and are armed with straight swords. Some peacekeepers and private security guards carry mechanized crossbows instead of plasma tongue repeaters. Mortal peacekeepers are often extras.

Sentinel

Talented members of local law enforcement are sometimes offered promotion into their department's elite Sentinel Defense Force (SDF), a unit trained and outfitted to deal with threats beyond the capacity of common peacekeepers.



Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4; Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2; Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3
Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 3, Temperance 2, Valor 2
Abilities: Archery 3, Athletics 3, Awareness 3 (+2 from armor), Bureaucracy 2, Craft (Wood) 2, Dodge 3, Integrity 3, Investigation 2, Linguistics 3, Lore 2, Martial Arts 3, Medicine 2, Melee 4, Occult 2, Presence 2, Resistance 3 (+2 from armor), Ride 2, Socialize 2, Stealth 3, Survival 3, Thrown 2, War 4
Join Battle: 8
Attacks:
Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 3B, Parry DV 4, Rate 3
Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 6B, Parry DV 2, Rate 2
Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 6, Damage 3B, Parry DV —, Rate 1
Shock Pike (melee): Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 8L, Parry DV 4, Rate 2
Shock Pike (ranged):* Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 10L, Range 50 (max. range), Rate 2
* Each ranged attack drains two motes from the weapon's 20 mote internal battery.
Soak: 7L/10B (Sentinel defense force armor, +7L/6B, Hardness: 4L/4B, fatigue value 1)
Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap
Dodge DV: 3 **Willpower:** 6 (5)
Essence: 1
Other Notes: These weapons are the most common for ordinary SDF duties. In case of widespread civil unrest, units of sentinels will often be issued Essence twisters or panic projectors to disperse crowds, and heavier weapons such as fuel bolt launchers or small Essence cannon.

More than Human

Although ordinary mortals make up more than 98 percent of all humans, there are also others with powers and abilities considerably beyond those of ordinary mortals. Some mortals can use Essence, while others are changed by powerful magics or have ancestors who endured such changes centuries or millennia ago.

Enlightened Humans

Occupying an intermediary position in both authority and supernatural power between mortals and the Exalted, enlightened humans are those rare few who have either enlightened their own Essence through years of hard work, or who (more commonly) have been blessed by gods or Exalts with this potent gift.

Mortal Martial Artist

Mortal soldiers who demonstrate exceptional martial skill and a high level of spiritual purity are sometimes given special training to enlighten their Essence and are then trained in Terrestrial martial arts. These are the true elite of the mortal troops, who regularly fight alongside younger Dragon-Blooded soldiers.
Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4; Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2; Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3
Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 3, Temperance 3, Valor 3
Abilities: Archery 3, Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Bureaucracy 2, Dodge 3, Integrity 3, Investigation 2, Larceny 2, Linguistics 2, Lore 3, Martial Arts 4, Medicine 2, Melee 3, Occult 2,

Presence 2, Resistance 3, Ride 3, Socialize 2, Stealth 3, Survival 3, Thrown 4, War 4

Charms: The first five Charms of any Terrestrial martial arts style. The most common are Crimson Pentacle Blade Style, Five-Dragon Style, Golden Exhalation Style and Golden Janissary Style. A very few of these martial artists are instead secretly trained in the officially forbidden Fivefold Shadow Hand Style.

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 4B, Parry DV 5, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 7B, Parry DV 3, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 8, Damage 4B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Knife: Speed 5, Accuracy 10, Damage 7L, Parry DV 4, Rate 3

Soak: 5L/7B (Silken armor, +5L/3B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 4 **Willpower:** 6

Essence: 2

Essence Pool: 20 (must spend a Willpower to access motes beyond the first 6)

Other Notes: All mortal martial artists are offered the Longevity pox, and each has a specific form weapon that she is trained in. In addition, mortals who follow styles that allow armor typically wear either jade reinforced breastplates or yoroi rapid response armor.

Mortal Thaumaturge

Mortal thaumaturges and sorcerers are the elite of the mortal scholars and technicians working for the Deliberative. They represent some of the brightest and most dedicated mortals in all of Creation.

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

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

Abilities: Athletics 1, Awareness 2, Bureaucracy 3, Craft (Genesis or Magitech) 3, Dodge 1, Integrity 2, Investigation 3 (Research +2), Larceny 1, Linguistics 3, Lore 4, Martial Arts 1, Medicine 3, Melee 1, Occult 4 (Art of Alchemy +3, Art of Enchantment +3, Art of Geomancy +3), Performance 2, Presence 2, Resistance 2, Socialize 3, Stealth 1, Survival 1

Join Battle: 5

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 2B, Parry DV 3, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 4, Damage 5B, Parry DV 1, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 4, Damage 2B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Knife: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 5L, Parry DV 2, Rate 3

Soak: 4L/8B (Buff jacket, +4L/5B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 3 **Willpower:** 6

Essence: 3

Essence Pool: 30 (must spend one Willpower to access motes beyond the first 10)

Other Notes: All mortal martial thaumaturges are offered the Longevity pox.

The Blessed Mortals

In the first centuries after the end of the war against the Primordials, the Celestial Exalted celebrated their victory as the victory of all humanity. In response to this idea, a trio of Copper Spiders sought out several thousand human volunteers and transformed them into three of the Deliberative's most impressive achievements—the people

of the air, the people of the sea and the people of the earth. The first are humans with gorgeous wings who fly as well as the swiftest of birds. The second are aquatic humans with gills and the ability to live indefinitely under water. The third had large white-less eyes, blue skin and claws suitable for digging and are ideally suited to live in the networks of caverns underneath Creation.

Blessed Mortals and Exaltation

As befits their name, blessed mortals can also all be blessed with Exaltation. They have exactly the same chance as any other mortal to become one of the Celestial Exalted. Also, because so many of these beings work in the Deliberative, many have had frequent contact with the Dragon-Blooded over the centuries. Therefore, the blood of the Terrestrial Exalted runs through the veins of many of them. As a result, as many as one in 1,000 of the blessed races draws a second breath as one of the Terrestrial Exalted. Over the millennia, even the diminutive minikins have had two Celestial Exalted among their number, as well as many dozens of Dragon-Blooded.

As with any mortal or beastman who possesses beneficial mutations, when such beings become Exalted, they lose all mutations such as Longevity, Short Life and Enlightened Essence and need not pay bonus points for them. The remaining mutations function normally and must be paid for with the character's bonus points. See **The Book of Celestial Directions, Vol. II—The Wyld**, pages 158-160 for further information.

Known as blessed mortals, these beings were created both as a way to expand the Deliberative into the air, under the waves and beneath the earth while also celebrating the wondrous power of the Celestial Exalted and the benefits they deliver to their mortal subjects. As a result, all blessed mortals were granted life spans approximately twice as long as those of ordinary mortals. In the millennia that followed the founding of the Deliberative, other Celestial bioengineers created additional varieties of blessed mortals, including the herd guardians and later the minikins, to aid the Exalted in different tasks or in different areas of Creation. As creations of the Lawgivers, blessed mortals have a special relationship with the Deliberative. Blessed mortals are often given special treatment for placement in positions within the Deliberative government and are usually granted preferential status for obtaining licenses for Essence enlightenment, thaumaturgical training, medical training or training in working with Essence-based technologies. Although there are only around 20 million blessed mortals in all of Creation, they are significantly represented in positions of power and authority.

The Herd Guardian

Initially created to serve as caretakers and companions for Ahlat's Glorious Cattle, the herd guardians' success at these duties soon persuaded some Exalts to seek their services as game wardens for the vast savannas of the Southeast, caring for the animals on the numerous large hunting preserves located there. Today, herd guardians are found throughout the South, but remain most common in the Southeast.

Herd guardians are a dark-skinned people with the golden, white-less eyes and retractile claws of lions. Their inhuman feet and lower legs are like a hairless blending of human and hunting cat, and their feet are similarly clawed. Other than their legs, eyes and claws, they appear fully human. However, they can endure the exceptional heat of the Far South without discomfort and can run all day without tiring, regularly traveling as fast as 15 miles in one hour or 200 miles in an average day's travel. Although they can forgo sleep for as long as desired, dreaming forms an important part of their spiritual life, so they normally sleep several hours a night for the sake of enjoyment. They are hunting carnivores who dine on the flesh of animals they cull from the herds they protect. They require large amounts of meat to survive.

Herd guardians are a proud, nomadic people who take their duties seriously and worship the Unconquered Sun at a series of ancient shrines located throughout the Southeastern savanna. Most follow the herds they protect and care for, never remaining in one location for more than a week. They regularly move their camps every two or three days. To assist them in their travels, each herd guardian tribe owns a single vehicle identical to a traveling pagoda (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**, p. 45-46) in size, speed and power source, but considerably less lavish. These vehicles are four-dot artifacts, known as traveling camps. They provide the tribes with mobile workshops, libraries, fresh water, medical facilities and places where the very young, the old and the injured can rest. These vehicles and their other occasional pieces of Essence-technology are controlled by tribal thaumaturges who all possess enlightened Essence, or by one of the occasional Dragon-Blooded or God-Blooded herd guardians. Other than the small amounts of personal goods each tribe member is permitted to keep on board their traveling camp, they carry everything the need on their backs.

In addition to protecting and keeping track of the vast preserves of the Southeast, herd guardians are also well represented among the employees of the Deliberative government of the South. Many serve as emergency service personnel and peacekeepers, and like all blessed mortals, their petitions for Essence enlightening are commonly granted. Therefore, they also work as physicians, as special forces troops and in similar high-profile positions. Several thousand are employed in the hunting city of Tamar-Kas.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3; Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3
Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 3, Temperance 2, Valor 4
Abilities: Archery 3, Athletics 3, Awareness 3 (Smell +2), Bureaucracy 1, Craft (Wood) 2, Dodge 3, Integrity 2, Investigation 1, Linguistics 3, Lore 2, Martial Arts 3, Medicine 2, Melee 3, Occult 2, Performance 1, Presence 1, Resistance 3, Ride 1, Socialize 2, Stealth 3, Survival 3, Thrown 3, War 3
Join Battle: 6 (8)
Attacks:
Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 3B or 3L, Parry DV 4, Rate 3
Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 6B or 6L, Parry DV 2, Rate 2
Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 6, Damage 3B, Parry DV —, Rate 1
Spear: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 8L/11L, Parry DV 4, Rate 2
Javelin: Speed 4, Accuracy 8, Damage 8L, Range 40, Rate 2
Plasma Tongue Repeater: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 10L, Range 20 (max. range), Rate 1
Soak: 5L/6B (Hide breastplate, +5L/3B)
Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap
Dodge DV: 3 **Willpower:** 7
Essence: 1
Other Notes: Herd Guardians possess the Claws, Elemental Adaptation (Fire), Enhanced Smell, Fangs, Longevity and Night Vision poxes, as well as the Gazelle's Pace and Inexhaustible afflictions and the Diet (Pure Carnivore) debility.

Minikin

Perhaps the strangest of the blessed mortals are the minikins. Many forms of Essence-based technologies are complex, delicate and difficult to repair. Although only the most powerful and fragile creations of the First Age require regular maintenance, some undergo periodic upgrades, and all require servicing if they are damaged. Approximately 2,000 years ago, Owl-Over-Water, a Lunar scholar and sorcerer of the No Moon Caste, decided to create a race of miniature humans specially designed to repair advanced devices. Using the already short Djala people as her base, she created a blessed race specifically designed to work on and inside complex devices. Each minikin appears to be one of the Djala people who is less than two and a half feet tall, and who possesses exceptionally flexible joints and an innate ability to work Essence.

In succeeding millennia, minikins proved themselves so useful that they soon became much in demand for other tasks, including mining fragile materials, performing delicate surgery and spying. Although they are considerably less numerous than the other races of blessed mortals, there are more than 100,000 minikins working throughout Creation. Most know at least some thaumaturgy, many are skilled technicians, and some are highly accomplished sorcerers or martial artists.

Minikins are unique among the blessed mortals in that they have no actual homeland. Instead of flying cities, undersea domes, deep caverns or the vast Southern savanna,

most minikins live in cities or research installations. Many such places contain special districts where the buildings, streets and other conveniences are built at 40 percent human scale, places where ordinary mortals appear as giants wandering amidst the diminutive masses. Because need for their services is somewhat limited, however, even the largest cities or factory-cathedral towns rarely contain communities of more than 2,500 minikins.

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

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

Abilities: Athletics 1, Awareness 2, Bureaucracy 3, Craft (Genesis or Magitech) 3, Dodge 1, Integrity 2, Investigation 3 (Research +2), Larceny 1, Linguistics 3, Lore 4, Martial Arts 1, Medicine 3, Melee 1, Occult 4 (Art of Alchemy +3, Art of Enchantment +3, Art of Geomancy +3), Performance 2, Presence 2, Resistance 2, Socialize 3, Stealth 1, Survival 1

Join Battle: 5

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 1B, Parry DV 3, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 4B, Parry DV 1, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 5, Damage 1B, Parry DV –, Rate 1

Knife: Speed 6, Accuracy 7, Damage 4L, Parry DV 2, Rate 3

Soak: 0L/2B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 4 **Willpower:** 6

Essence: 3

Essence Pool: 30 (must spend one Willpower to access motes beyond the first 10)

Other Notes: Minikins possess the Longevity and Skin Color poxes, the Tiny affliction and the Enlightened Essence blight. Most are thaumaturge-technicians, though minikin spies are regularly employed by the Deliberative's peacekeepers and among the retinues of various justly or unjustly paranoid Exalts. A few are trained in martial arts, usually the Night Breeze style, or occasionally either the Ill Lily Style or the Golden Exhalation Style.

Person of the Air

Created to tame the frontiers of the North, the people of the air look like beautiful humans with enormous white-feathered wings growing from their shoulders. To demonstrate their power and the glory of the Deliberative, the air folk's Copper Spider creators endowed them with the wings and eyes of birds of prey and unusually long lives. The air folk have since expanded to all corners of Creation, though their capital is still the magnificent city of Sezakan, located in the mountains of the Northwest.

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

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

Abilities: Archery 3, Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Bureaucracy 2, Craft (Air) 1, Dodge 3, Integrity 2, Linguistics 1, Lore 1, Martial Arts 2, Medicine 1, Melee 2, Occult 1, Presence 1, Resistance 2, Socialize 1, Stealth 2, Survival 1

Join Battle: 4 (6 if sight is used to detect the threat)

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 2B, Parry DV 3, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 5B, Parry DV 1, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 5, Damage 2B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Knife: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 5L, Parry DV 3, Rate 3

Soak: 0L/3B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 3 **Willpower:** 6

Essence: 1

Other Notes: People of the Air possess the Enhanced Sight and Longevity poxes and the Wings abomination.

Person of the Earth

Mountain Folk control the regions under the Blessed Isle, and their Darkbrood enemies control the regions immediately around that. The tunnels and caverns underneath the further portions of the Threshold are somewhat emptier, though, and are filled with all manner of mysteries (as well as much buried wealth and exotic dangers). To explore these strange subterranean lands and mine the large amounts of adamant, magical crystals and other materials found there, the Exalted created a people perfectly suited for life underground. Their skin is bright azure and as smooth and hairless as the hide of a dolphin. Their only hair is on the tops of their heads. They have short claws on their hands and feet that allow them to defend themselves and to climb and dig with consummate ability. They also possess large featureless black eyes that can see normally even in the total absence of light.

In the late First Age, most people of the earth live and work in the vast caverns underneath the North and South, inhabiting exotic subterranean cities illuminated only by the dim blue light of various eternally glowing crystals. They have regular commerce with nearby mortal cities, and several thousand live in both Chiaroscuro and Three Force Mesa. Most, however, keep to themselves. Some people of the earth have formed close friendships with the Mountain Folk, and there are small communities of Mountain Folk in some of their cities, as well as more than 10,000 people of the earth living in the Mountain Folk metropolis of Urvar.

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

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

Abilities: Athletics 1, Awareness 2, Craft (Earth) 3, Dodge 1 (Cave Ins + 3), Integrity 2, Investigation 2, Linguistics 1, Lore 1 (Subterranean +2), Martial Arts 1, Melee 1, Occult 1, Presence 1, Resistance 2, Socialize 1, Stealth 3, Survival 3

Join Battle: 4 (6 if sight is used to detect the threat)

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 4, Damage 2B or 2L, Parry DV 2, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 3, Damage 5B or 5L, Parry DV 0, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 3, Damage 2B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Hammer: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 11B/3, Parry DV 2, Rate 3

Knife: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 5L, Parry DV 2, Rate 3

Soak: 5L/9B (Buff jacket, +4L/5B; "Fur," +1L/1B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 1 **Willpower:** 6

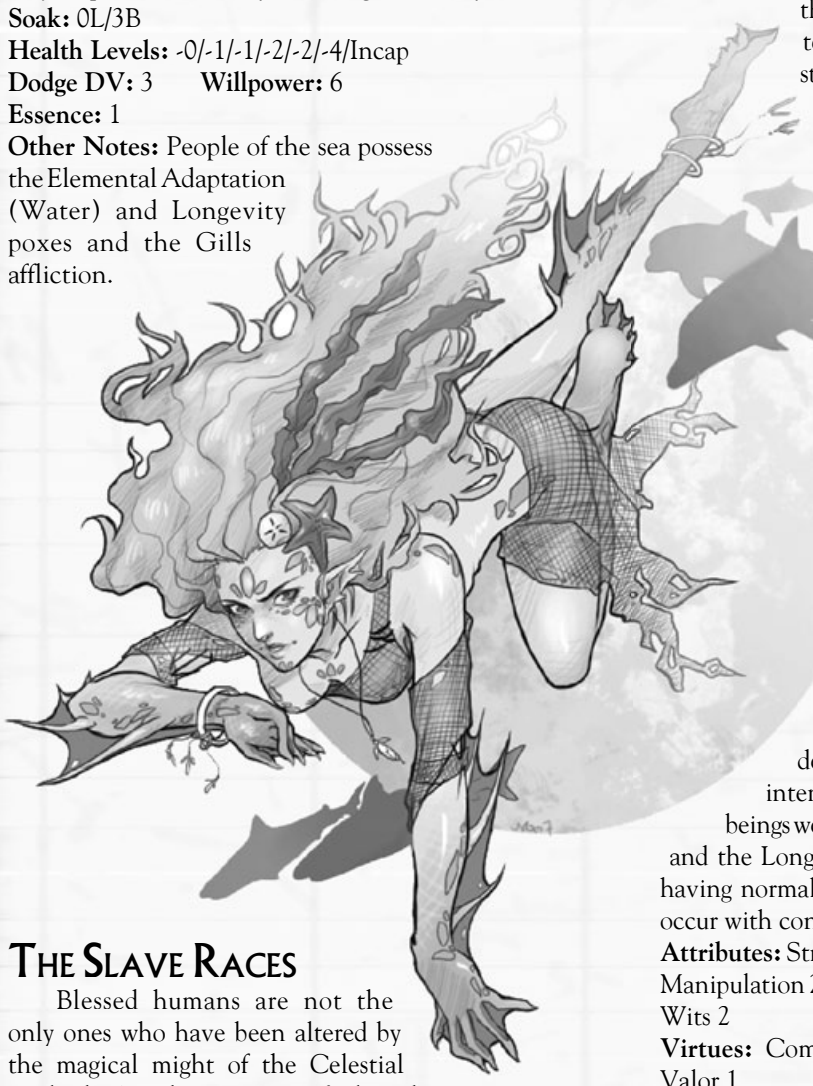
Essence: 1

Other Notes: People of the earth possess the Claws, Enhanced Sight, "Fur," Longevity and Night Vision (x2) poxes, as well as the Wall Walking blight. Possessing the Night Vision pox twice allows people of the earth to see in total darkness as well as ordinary mortals can in full daylight. Although they are protected as if they had the Fur pox, people of the earth have exceedingly tough, azure skin rather than actual fur.

Person of the Sea

People of the sea look like nothing more than attractive Westerners, with the blue or green hair and pale, blue-tinged skin sometimes found in the West. Their most obvious differences are the large but elegant gill slits on their neck that extend a palm's breadth down their back. On land, the slits close and resemble unusually symmetrical scars. The only other marks of their true nature are their unusually long lives and the tough webbing between the first joint of their fingers and the entirety of their slightly over-long toes. The sea folk were engineered by their Twilight creators to extend the dominion of the Deliberative beneath the waves of Creation's seas. They have performed most admirably, having spread from their Western point of origin to inhabit submerged cities beneath many of the world's large bodies of water.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 5; Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 2
Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 3, Temperance 2, Valor 3
Abilities: Archery 3, Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Bureaucracy 2, Craft (Wood) 1, Dodge 3, Integrity 2, Linguistics 1, Lore 1, Martial Arts 2, Medicine 1, Melee 2, Occult 1, Presence 1, Resistance 2, Socialize 1, Stealth 2, Survival 1
Join Battle: 4
Attacks:
Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 2B, Parry DV 3, Rate 3
Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 5B, Parry DV 1, Rate 2
Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 5, Damage 2B, Parry DV —, Rate 1
Knife: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 5L, Parry DV 3, Rate 3
Soak: 0L/3B
Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap
Dodge DV: 3 **Willpower:** 6
Essence: 1
Other Notes: People of the sea possess the Elemental Adaptation (Water) and Longevity poxes and the Gills affliction.



The Slave Races

Blessed humans are not the only ones who have been altered by the magical might of the Celestial Exalted. Another variety of altered human secretly labors in the most distant portions of Creation. The Celestial Exalted rarely talk about these beings, and Deliberative law prohibits the I AM network from broadcasting information about them. When they discuss them at all, Celestial Exalted refer to them with terms such as "altered producers" or "modified strategic resource extractors," but the Terrestrial Exalted and enlightened mortals within the Deliberative refer to them by a more honest term: "slave races."

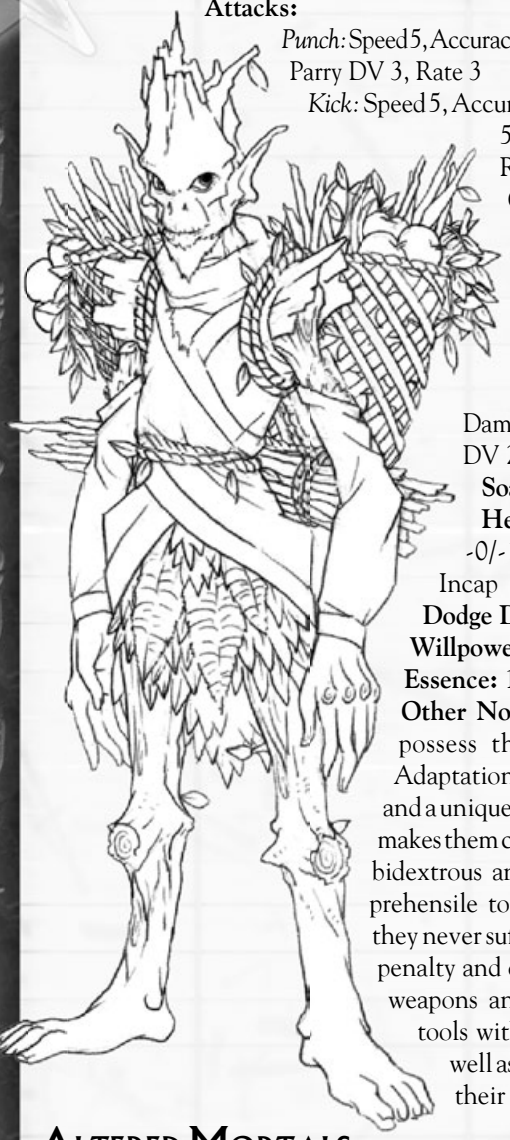
Slaves Races and Exaltation

During the High First Age, the rulers of the Deliberative forbade Lytek, the god of Exaltation from Exalting any of the slave races. Also, Dragon-Blooded were forbidden from having relations with slave races. As a result, during the High First Age, slave races almost never became Exalted. Naturally, these rules broke down during the Shogunate and decayed completely shortly after the beginning of the Second Age. In the Second Age, members of former slave races can become all varieties of Exalted.

Tree Folk

The oldest slave race is the tree folk of the Far East. Originally conceived as a new form of blessed mortal designed to inhabit the farthest reaches of the East, several local administrators consulted with the savant in charge of this project, and convinced her that these beings could form the basis of a bold social experiment. To accomplish this, the tree folk were completely isolated from the rest of Creation, interacting only with automated flying shuttles carrying supplies in and various rare and potent plant products out—and with the Celestial Exalted when they stopped by to check out the experiment's progress once a decade. Since one of the project's directors was interested in the evolution of their societies, these beings were specifically denied both advanced medicine and the Longevity pox given to blessed mortals, because having normal mortal life spans allowed social changes to occur with considerably greater speed.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2; Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 2
Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 1, Temperance 2, Valor 1
Abilities: Athletics 3, Awareness 2, Craft (Wood) 3, Dodge 2, Integrity 1, Investigation 2, Linguistics 1, Lore 1 (Plants +2), Martial Arts 2, Melee 1, Presence 1, Resistance 2, Socialize 1, Stealth 3, Survival 3
Join Battle: 4



Attacks:
Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 2B, Parry DV 3, Rate 3
Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 5B, Parry DV 1, Rate 2
Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 5, Damage 2B, Parry DV —, Rate 1
Knife: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 5L, Parry DV 2, Rate 3
Soak: 0L/3B
Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap
Dodge DV: 2
Willpower: 6
Essence: 1
Other Notes: Tree folk possess the Elemental Adaptation (Wood) pox and a unique affliction that makes them completely ambidextrous and gives them prehensile toes. Therefore, they never suffer an offhand penalty and can even hold weapons and manipulate tools with their feet as well as they can with their hands.

Altered Mortals

In addition to those whose ancestors were altered long ago, some humans either purchase or petition for the right to gain various mutations. Any mortal who has three or more dots in Resources and no outstanding warrants for criminal acts can purchase any of the poxes found in the **Exalted** core book, **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. II—The Wyld**, pages 144-146 or **The Manual of Exalted Power—The Lunars**, pages 207. Almost 10 percent of all mortals possess the Longevity pox and more than six percent possess some other pox, usually cosmetic alterations, such as Fur, Feathers, Skin/Hair Color, Enhanced Senses or one of the Elemental Adaptation poxes. As long as they avoid looking like predatory monsters sporting claws, fangs and reptilian scales, most mortals view individuals with visible poxes as either wealthy eccentrics or trendy and glamorous people worthy of both envy and emulation.

Characters with Resources of three dots or higher can obtain up to (Stamina + Essence) poxes but cannot stack poxes. Stacking poxes or gaining afflictions, blights or abominations requires special approval from the Deliberative and is usually granted only as a reward for exceptional service or to help prepare a character for an unusual or challenging career. Because all mutations are gained in specially designed biogenesis tanks, mortals suffer no mental or physical ill effects when gaining them.

Beastmen

Beastmen are relatively uncommon during the First Age. Despite their millennia-long life spans, only a few Lunar Exalted breed large retinues of beastmen to act as their assistants, guards and retainers. Some Solar and Sidereal Exalted, especially those who take Lunar lovers, also have small retinues of beastmen. If their creators die, beastmen often find employment with other Exalts, especially among other Lunar Exalted with similar totems.

While mutations and blessed mortals are unremarkable and well accepted aspects of mortal society, most mortals find beastmen to be somewhat uncanny and threatening. As a result, beastmen are rarely found in mortal cities or RPCs unless they are on Deliberative business or a mission from an Exalted patron.

Lunars often enlighten the Essences of beastmen who are either their favorites or who are the most accomplished of their number. They then teach these beastmen Terrestrial martial arts (or occasionally sorcery) and have them serve as their honor guards.

God-Bloods and Exalted Half-Castes

Gods, elementals and the Exalted all occasionally breed with mortals, producing children who take after both parents. These children occupy a strange intermediate position in society. Some are content to remain the pampered children of powerful parents. Because most live no more than two or three centuries, children of gods or the Celestial Exalted can often simply become hobbies for their parents. The children of beings with significantly lower status, however, such as elementals or the Dragon-Blooded, rarely have the opportunity to spend their lives being pampered pets. Instead, most of these children, as well as the more ambitious children of various Celestial beings, either join the Deliberative government and serve in some intermediate capacity, or they become independent merchants, scholars or artists. Some even become entertainers or gamblers.

Non-Humans

Creation also contains a number of non-human mortal races, specifically the Dragon Kings, the Mountain Folk and the Darkbroods. All are relics of the days before the Deliberative, when the Primordials ruled Creation. Both the Dragon-Kings and the Jadeborn are close allies of the Deliberative, while the Darkbroods are either its enemies, or

at best, strange and eldritch beings whom the Deliberative distrusts and with whom it prefers to avoid dealing.

Dragon Kings

Dragon Kings are long-lived reptiles with powers attuned to the five elements. Most of their number were utterly obliterated during the war with the Primordials, but almost 25 million Dragon Kings still survive. Many live in the city of Rathess (in the East), the city of Ssaaneth (in the Southwestern), the city of Vesathar (in the North) and in similar isolated locations throughout Creation. The Deliberative gives Dragon King communities a special status as independent, self-governing client states.

Dragon Kings regularly trade with the Deliberative, and communities of as many as 20,000 Dragon Kings can be found both in Creation's largest cities and in Yu-Shan. Most Dragon Kings keep to themselves, though, and are content to bask in their ancient glories.

Raptok Warrior

The Raptok are the native Dragon Kings of the East, savage and wise beings who worship the Unconquered Sun with great zeal. The Raptok offer the hearts of captured enemies and criminals up to their patron god on a regular basis even in this enlightened era.

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

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

Abilities: Archery 3, Athletics 3, Awareness 3 (Hearing +1, Smell +2), Bureaucracy 2, Dodge 2, Investigation 3, Linguistics 2, Lore 3, Occult 3, Martial Arts 3, Medicine 2, Melee 3, Performance 1, Presence 2, Resistance 2, Socialize 2, Stealth 2, Survival 3 (Track by Smell +2), Thrown 2, War 3

Paths: Dragon Kings possess many powerful abilities. By spending three motes of Essence, they can add their Essence score to their Strength, Dexterity, Stamina, Perception or soak score for a full scene. They can enhance only one of these traits at a time. They can also spend three motes to activate a power identical to the anima powers of Air-, Earth-, Fire- and Wood-aspected Dragon Bloods, but they can use only one such anima power at a time. These Dragon Kings can automatically see all immaterial spirits and can spend two motes of Essence to be able to physically attack an immaterial spirit, demon or elemental for a scene.

Finally, the Dragon Kings possess the ability to control earth, fire and wood. They can spend three motes to make an attack with any of these elements with a dice pool of (Dexterity + Athletics + Essence) or (Dexterity + Archery + Essence) and a base damage equal to twice their permanent Essence. They can also spend five motes to cause any of the following effects. Each effect persists for a scene:

• A flammable object within 20 yards may be made to ignite as if touched by a torch.

• Fires up to the size of bonfires can either be instantly snuffed out or caused to burn twice as hot and twice as fast.

• With a thought, the Dragon King can shape stone and both living and dead wood within a number of yards equal to his Essence.

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Bite: Speed 6, Accuracy 7, Damage 6L, Parry DV 7, Rate 1

Claw: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 4L, Parry DV 5, Rate 3

Crystal Warclub: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 16L/4, Parry DV 7, Rate 2

Bracer of Crystal Bolts: Speed 4, Accuracy 9, Damage 8L (piercing), Range 100, Rate 2

Soak: 10L/12B (Scaled skin, +3L/3B, and discreet Essence armor, +5L/5B, Hardness: 2L/2B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 5 **Willpower:** 7

Essence: 4

Essence Pool: 30 **Committed Essence:** 15

Other Notes: None

The Mountain Folk

The position of the Mountain Folk in the late First Age is remarkably similar to their status in the Second Age. They control the regions underneath the Blessed Isle, while hordes of Darkbroods largely control the lands underneath the Inland Sea around the Blessed Isle. The tunnels and caverns underneath the Threshold consist of a mixture of regions

inhabited only by mindless eldritch beasts and subterranean lands controlled by the strange intelligences who largely avoid taking sides in the battles between the Jadeborn and the Darkbroods. The Jadeborn obey and pay tribute to the Deliberative, but the vast majority remains underground.

Artisan

The Artisans are the undisputed masters of Jadeborn society by dint of power and wisdom. Inhumanly beautiful, like glorious living statues, and as shrewd one might expect of the creations of the Great Maker Autochthon, they have attracted the ardor of even the Celestial Exalted in the past.

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5; Charisma 5, Manipulation 5, Appearance 6; Perception 6, Intelligence 7, Wits 6

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

Abilities: Archery 2, Athletics 1, Awareness 2, Bureaucracy 2, Craft (Earth) 4, Dodge 2, Integrity 2, Investigation 2, Linguistics 2, Lore 3, Martial Arts 1, Melee 2, Occult 3, Presence 3, Resistance 2, Socialize 3, Stealth 1, Survival 3, War 2

Charms: For five motes and one Willpower, the Artisan can emulate the Solar All-Encompassing Sorcerer's Sight Charm. For three motes, the Jadeborn may subtract five from all wound penalties. Also, for eight motes, the Warrior can transform his body into blue jade, gaining +4L/4B soak, subtracting five from any armor's fatigue value and doubling his leaping distance and halving any falling damage taken. Finally, the Artisan may lay a hand on any earthen object and reshape it with his will, affecting one cubic yard per mote spent to do so.

Join Battle: 8

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 4B, Parry DV 3, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 7B, Parry DV 1, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 5, Damage 4B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Hammerfist Bracer: Speed 6, Accuracy 6, Damage 12L (against animate targets) or 14L (against inanimate targets), Parry DV 3, Rate 1

Dragon Sigh Wand: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 12L, Range 30 (max. range), Rate 1

Soak: 7L/8B (Silken armor, +5L/3B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 4 **Willpower:** 8

Essence: 2

Essence Pool: 20 (11) **Committed Essence:** 9

Other Notes: None

Warrior

As the frontline troops of the Mountain Folk's ongoing war with the Darkbroods, Jadeborn Warriors are formidable opponents.

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

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

Abilities: Archery 2, Athletics 1, Awareness 2, Craft (Earth) 2, Dodge 2, Integrity 2, Investigation 2, Linguistics 1, Martial Arts 1, Melee 2, Occult 1, Presence 1, Resistance 2, Stealth 1, Survival 3, War 2
Charms: For three motes, the Jadeborn gains an extra dot of Valor. He also gains an additional dot for every five allies in sight using this power, up to a maximum of Valor 5. (Any dot that would push the Warrior beyond that makes him effectively fearless.) Also, for eight motes, the Warrior can transform his body into red jade, gaining +4L/4B soak, total immunity to non-magical flame and three additional soak versus magical sources of fire. This Charm adds two to his Join Battle as well.
Join Battle: 5
Attacks:
Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 4B, Parry DV 3, Rate 3
Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 4, Damage 7B, Parry DV 1, Rate 2
Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 4, Damage 4B, Parry DV —, Rate 1
Power Mace (melee): Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 14L/4 (piercing) or 19B/4 (piercing), Parry DV 3, Rate 2
Power Mace (ranged): Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 10L or 15B, Range 60 or 100, Rate 3
Mechanized Crossbow: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 7L, Range 300, Rate 1*
* Crossbows equipped with a repeating magazine have a Rate of 2 until they run out of ammunition (10 bolts), but require a simple action to load a new magazine.
Soak: 11L/13B (Articulated plate, +9L/9B, -3 mobility, fatigue value 2)
Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap
Dodge DV: 0 **Willpower:** 5
Essence: 2
Essence Pool: 20 (12) **Committed Essence:** 8
Other Notes: None

Worker

Workers form the backbone of Mountain Folk society. It is thanks to their toil that the Jadeborn's subterranean cities maintain their famed wealth and glory in spite of the Endless War against the Darkbroods.
Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4; Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2; Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 2
Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 3, Temperance 2, Valor 2
Abilities: Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Craft (Earth) 3, Dodge 1, Integrity 2, Investigation 2, Linguistics 1, Martial Arts 1, Melee 1, Occult 1, Presence 1, Resistance 2, Stealth 1, Survival 3
Charms: The Worker may respire Essence rather than air for up to nine minutes, but thereafter begins to suffocate. She may also supplement her diet with Essence, halving the amount of food she needs to eat in order to remain healthy.
Join Battle: 4

Attacks:
Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 3B, Parry DV 3, Rate 3
Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 5, Damage 6B, Parry DV 1, Rate 2
Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 5, Damage 3B, Parry DV —, Rate 1
Sledge: Speed 6, Accuracy 5, Damage 15B/4, Parry DV 1, Rate 1
Soak: 6L/9B (Buff jacket, +4L/5B)
Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap
Dodge DV: 3 **Willpower:** 5
Essence: 2
Essence Pool: 20 **Committed Essence:** 0
Other Notes: None

The Darkbroods

Some were horribly failed experiments that the Primordials locked away underground. Others were monsters that remained loyal to the Primordials and retreated deep underground when their masters lost the war with the Exalted. Some are strange creatures created long ago to live underneath Creation, and who remain there to this day. Finally, a few are mortals who were ordered by the Primordials to become servants of the inhuman Darkbroods, and who have been gradually transformed by various exotic forms of underground Essence leakage into semi-human dwellers in the depths.

Most of these beings are the enemies of all surface dwellers and fight an endless battle with the Mountain Folk. Not all of the Darkbroods, however, are utterly hostile to either humanity or the Jadeborn. Further from the underground homes of the Jadeborn, underneath the lands of the North and South, there are vast caves inhabited by beings who are deeply alien, but are neither the allies nor the enemies of the Deliberative.

The Underfolk

The most numerous of these neutral Darkbroods are exotic beings known as underfolk. There are two breeds of underfolk, one living in the caves underneath the North, another living in the many caves under the South. Both appear human in overall shape but have a monstrous nature that is apparent in all of the details of their appearance. Their lustrous pearl gray skin is slightly loose and wrinkled. Instead of hands and feet, they have fleshy palpi covered with small suckers. Instead of a face, they have two enormous faintly glowing eyes, each the size of a grapefruit. The underfolk of the North have eerie violet eyes, while the Southern underfolk have sickly green eyes. Their heads contain these two eyes and small beak-like mouths, but are otherwise entirely devoid of features.

Underfolk live in cities carved from quartz and obsidian and possess formidable Essence-using abilities as well as inhumanly keen senses. They attempt to either kill or flee from trespassers. They are, however, willing to make deals and alliances, including treaties of safe passage or even mutual aid. Underfolk are scrupulously law-abiding and regard any breach of a treaty, even a minor or accidental one, as an offense punishable by death. They also consider Essence use one of the basic attributes of all intelligent beings and regard ordinary mortals as dumb animals.

Underfolk are willing to trade with surface dwellers for various Essence-powered devices. Although not official enemies of the Deliberative, trading weapons, armor or other military technologies with underfolk is strictly forbidden, which is why they pay especially dearly for such items. They are also willing to trade for other wonders with more peaceful uses. Trade with the underfolk is not without risk, however. The underfolk never venture to the surface, since the touch of the sun burns them, inflicting one level of unsoakable bashing damage every minute.

Traders must, therefore, venture deep under the earth, in realms also inhabited by various dangerous creatures and more hostile Darkbroods. Also, underfolk must also personally approve everyone who wishes to trade with them. To gain their approval, an individual must travel to the edge of their deep realm either alone or in the company of others they have approved and wait until challenged by one of their number. Then, several underfolk examine the person and decide whether or not to approve him. They have an uncanny way of knowing if someone is secretly hostile to them or wishes to visit their realm under false pretenses. Rejected individuals who either remain in their realm or attempt to touch or otherwise impede any of the underfolk are killed. Even if the underfolk have specifically requested a particular shipment of goods, they refuse any shipment sent with someone unknown to them and either kill or flee from anyone they do not know personally. The people of the earth (see p. 136) maintain a number of merchants

with enlightened Essence who specialize in trading with underfolk and exploring their lands.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3; Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 1; Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 2
Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 3, Temperance 2, Valor 2
Abilities: Athletics 1, Awareness 4, Bureaucracy 2, Craft (Earth) 2, Dodge 2, Integrity 2, Linguistics 1, Lore 1 (Subterranean +3), Martial Arts 1, Medicine 1, Melee 2, Occult 4 (Art of Elemental Summoning +3, Art of Geomancy +3, Art of Husbandry +3), Presence 1, Resistance 2, Stealth 3, Survival 1
Join Battle: 6
Attacks:
Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 4, Damage 3B, Parry DV 2, Rate 3
Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 3, Damage 6B, Parry DV 0, Rate 2
Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 3, Damage 3B, Parry DV —, Rate 1
Soak: 0L/3B
Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap
Dodge DV: 3 **Willpower:** 6
Essence: 2
Essence Pool: 20
Other Notes: Underfolk possess the Night Vision (x2) and Enhanced Smell poxes, the Enlightened Essence and Wall Walking blights and a unique debility that renders sunlight deadly to them. In sunlight, one of the underfolk is at -2 on all dice pools and suffers one unsoakable level of bashing damage for each minute of exposure.

WHEW! THAT WAS FUN!
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYBODY IN YOUR CONDITION FIGHT LIKE THAT.
YOU WERE AMAZING.
I GUESS THAT'S HOW YOU'RE KEEPING IN SUCH GOOD SHAPE, HUH?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
THERE'S NO SECRET. I... I LOST THE BABY.
WHAT? WHAT'D I SAY?
OH.
DOES DESUS KNOW?
WELL, IT'S BEEN, WHAT, SIX MONTHS? YOU HAVEN'T EVEN GAINED A POUND.
WHAT'S YOUR SECRET?

CHAPTER FIVE
THE MIGHTY

Heirs to a time of unsurpassed splendor, the Exalted of the High First Age are some of the most powerful beings ever to stride the surface of Creation. Thanks to advances in medicine and highly potent anagathics, even the Dragon-Blooded of the period can grow to become creatures of awesome power. And their Celestial Exalted betters have grown strong enough to reshape Creation as they see fit… and perhaps to destroy all that is.

Chosen of the Unconquered Sun

Undisputed masters of Creation, the Solar Exalted are the mightiest of the mighty. Ruling the Realm's many principalities—either directly or through Terrestrial or Lunar Exalted proxies—and participating with their peers in the Deliberative, it is they who chart the future of Creation and its peoples.

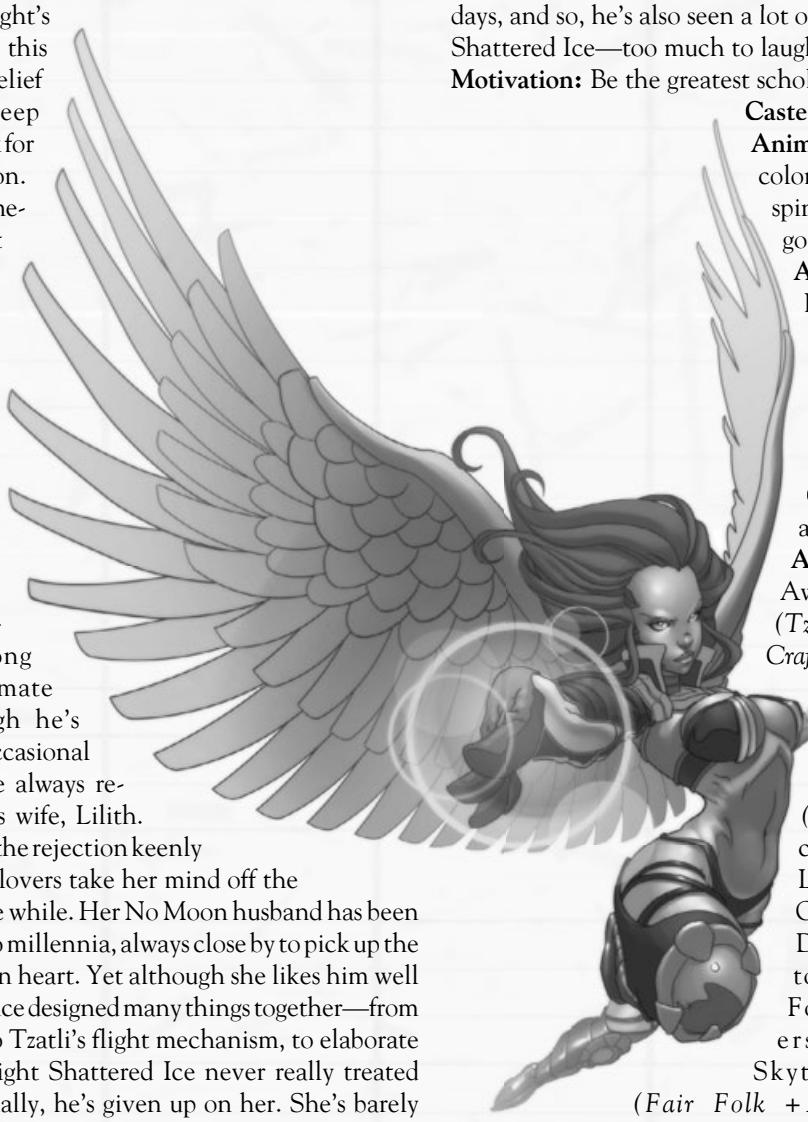
Bright Shattered Ice, Empress of Tzatli

The glittering sky-city of Tzatli is visible from most of the North. Its every building is shaped from clear sky-glass and covered in netted silver, with lightning arcing from each tower's top and shivering down its sides. The imperious Bright Shattered Ice rules Tzatli alone from a sapphire palace in the center, built after the pattern of her labyrinthine anima. Her iron fist keeps Tzatli one of the loveliest, most well-regulated dominions in Creation, and her freezing laboratories were the birthplace of I AM.

Along with most of her circle, Bright Shattered Ice is from the first "generation" of Solars. Under the Dragon Kings, she assisted in crystal-growing experiments and ran errands for biotechnologists. She fought alongside Solar Queen Merela in the Primordial War and was personally tutored by Autochthon in the making of artifacts. Later, when Brigid discovered sorcery, Bright Shattered Ice was one of the first to adopt its use. Inexhaustible ambition and extreme care have kept her at the head of scientific advances. She leads at least 60 percent of the Deliberative's technological panels and committees, and as one of the perennial Faithful, she's never once failed in her duties. Her means are not always the kindest, but they're undeniably effective and efficient. Naturally, she spoke and voted for Operation Wyldhand.

If she suspects that she hasn't been told of some important new discovery, the elder Twilight will immediately take action. Automaton spies and sorcerous scrying will be the first tack she takes against whomever she thinks might be withholding information. She may read up on his areas of expertise, then personally visit and inquire after his recent

progress. Next, she'll try politics: Knowing that age makes her word practically law in the Deliberative, Bright Shattered Ice will find or invent evidence of the discovery, then politely request in-session that the other person share it. Only after these comparatively harmless tactics will she do things such as summoning demons—or asking her circlemate Gold-Shadowed Arrow—to break into the other person's lab. In the Faithful Twilight's paranoid mind, all this is justified by the belief that she must keep abreast of new work for the sake of Creation. This paranoia is somewhat justified, but not all who keep secrets from Bright Shattered Ice do so from selfishness or wicked intent. Some merely worry about the consequences new technology could have in her merciless hands.



Bright Shattered Ice has long loved her circlemate Desus, but though he's willing to have occasional flings with her, he always returns swiftly to his wife, Lilith. The Twilight feels the rejection keenly every time. Other lovers take her mind off the pain for only a little while. Her No Moon husband has been there for her for two millennia, always close by to pick up the pieces of her broken heart. Yet although she likes him well enough and they once designed many things together—from her white wings, to Tzatli's flight mechanism, to elaborate new sorceries—Bright Shattered Ice never really treated him as a mate. Finally, he's given up on her. She's barely seen him for a thousand years.

Blessed with beautiful Northern-pale skin and long red hair, Bright Shattered Ice rarely feels the need to wear much beneath her wings of the raptor artifact. She took her name from a Primordial she slew, whose body left nothing behind but a plain of frozen fragments, and she sometimes dons a necklace of those same shards—preserved 3,500 years against melting by her technical virtuosity. Unlike many Exalts, she has no interest in birthing a dynasty, and has never borne a single child. The servants and companions who trail her are favored Dragon-Blooded lieutenants and tightly bound demons.

Limit Break: Conviction: *Deliberate Cruelty* (see **Exalted,** p. 105). Tzatli's crime rate is nonexistent, due to the horrifying punishments Bright Shattered Ice is only too happy to devise. Her viciousness is part of what alienated her husband and most of her lovers—save, ironically, for Desus, who can relate. Of course, Desus's careless seductions and abandonments are what add most often to her Limit these days, and so, he's also seen a lot of the worst side of Bright Shattered Ice—too much to laugh just it off.

Motivation: Be the greatest scholar in Creation.

Caste: Twilight

Anima Banner: An evening-colored labyrinth of ice that spins slowly, reflecting red-gold from every facet.

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 7, Stamina 6; Charisma 6, Manipulation 9, Appearance 7; Perception 7, Intelligence 9, Wits 8

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

Abilities: *Athletics 8*, Awareness 7, *Bureaucracy 9 (Tzatli +2)*, *Craft (Air) 10*, *Craft (Earth) 10*, *Craft (Fire) 9*, *Craft (Magitech) 7 (Flying Machines +1)*, *Dodge 8*, Integrity 7, *Investigation 10 (Research +3)*, Larceny 4 (Sabotage +2), Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Others: Dragontongue, Earthtongue, Flametongue, Forest-tongue, Riverspeak, Seatongue, Skytongue) 7, *Lore 10 (Fair Folk +1)*, Martial Arts 1, *Medicine 8*, Melee 6 (Cruel Wisdom +2), *Occult 9*, Presence 8 (Rhetoric +2), Resistance 7, *Ride 8 (Spirit Horse +2)*, Socialize 7 (Politics +3), Stealth 3, Survival 6 (North +1), *Thrown 8 (Cruel Wisdom +3)*, War 4 (Tzatli +3)

Backgrounds: Allies 5 (Legendary Ally), Arsenal 5, Artifact 5 (Legendary Artifact), Backing (Faithful) 5 (Legendary Backing), Command 4, Connections (Deliberative) 5, Cult 3, Manse 5 (Legendary Manse), Panoply 5 (Legendary Panoply), Reputation (Sorcery) 5, Reputation (Artificer) 5 (Legendary Reputation), Retainers 5, Savant 5 (Legendary Savant), Wealth 4

Charms: Ailment-Rectifying Method, All-Encompassing Sorcerer's Sight, Anointment of Miraculous Health, The Art of Permanence, Athletics Essence Flow, Authority-Radiating Stance, Body-Mending Meditation, Body-Purifying Admonitions, Bureau-Rectifying Method, Bureaucracy Essence Flow, Call the Blade, Cascade of Cutting Terror, Celestial Circle Sorcery, Chaos-Repelling Pattern, Chaos-Resistance Preparation, Consumer-Evaluating Glance, Contagion-Curing Touch, Courtier's Eye Technique, Crack-Mending Technique, Craft Essence Flow, Craftsman Needs No Tools, Crafty Observation Method, Devonian Absorption, Design Beyond Limit, Discerning Savant's Eye, Dodge Essence Flow, Durability-Enhancing Technique, Eagle-Wing Style, Enemy-Castigating Solar Judgment, Essence-Lending Method, Eternal Empress of Love Attitude, Evidence-Discerning Method, Excellent Emissary's Tongue, Eye of the Unconquered Sun, Falling Icicle Strike, Feather-Foot Style, First Athletics Excellency, First Craft Excellency, First Integrity Excellency, First Investigation Excellency, First Lore Excellency, First Medicine Excellency, First Occult Excellency, First Ride Excellency, First Thrown Excellency, Flashing Thunderbolt Steed, Flawless Brush Discipline, Flawless Diagnosis Technique, Flow Like Blood, Foe-Vaulting Method, Foul Air of Argument Technique, Frugal Merchant Method, Ghost-Eating Technique, Graceful Crane Stance, Harmonious Academic Methodology, Hypnotic Tongue Technique, Immanent Solar Glory, Increasing Strength Exercise, Indolent Official Charm, Infinite Athletics Mastery, Infinite Bureaucracy Mastery, Infinite Craft Mastery, Infinite Dodge Mastery, Infinite Investigation Mastery, Infinite Lore Mastery, Infinite Medicine Mastery, Infinite Occult Mastery, Infinite Ride Mastery, Infinite Thrown Mastery, Insightful Buyer Technique, Instant Treatment Methodology, Integrity-Protecting Prana, Investigation Essence Flow, Irresistible Questioning Technique, Irresistible Salesman Spirit, Joint-Wounding Attack, Judge's Ear Technique, Keen Hearing and Touch Technique, Keen Sight Technique, Keen Smell and Taste Technique, Keen Understanding of the Core Imperfection, Know the Soul's Price, Leaping Dodge Method, Legendary Scholar Curriculum, Letter-Within-a-Letter Technique, Lightning Speed, Lore Essence Flow, Magic-Shattering Strike, Majestic Radiant Presence, Master Horseman's Techniques (Harmony of Spirits Style, Horse-Summoning Whistle, Master Horseman's Eye, Speed-Sustaining Technique, Spirit-Steadying Assurances), Medicine Essence Flow, Mist on Water Attack, Monkey Leap Technique, Mountain-Crossing Leap Technique, Object-Strengthening Touch, Observer-Deceiving Attack, Occult Essence Flow, Order-Affirming Blow, Ox-Body Technique (x4), Poetic Expression Style, Phantom Steed, Power-Awarding Prana, Power from Darkness, Presence Essence Flow, Racing Hare Method, Reflex Sidestep Technique, Returning Weapon Concentration, Rings of Spiritual Frailty, Sagacious Reading of Intent, Science of Mutation, Second Athletics Excellency, Second Bureaucracy Excellency, Second Craft Excellency, Second Investigation Excellency, Second Linguistics Excellency, Second Lore Excellency, Second Melee Excellency, Second Occult Excellency, Second Socialize Excellency, Second War Excellency, Seven Shadow Evasion, Shadow Over Water, Shattering Grasp, Single Spirit Method, Soaring Crane Leap, Solar Circle Sorcery, Sometimes Horses Fly Approach, Sorcerer's Burning Chakra Charm, Speed the Wheels, Spider-Foot Style, Spirit-Cutting Attack, Spirit-Detecting Glance, Spirit-Repelling Diagram, Spirit Weapons, Supreme Perfection of Craft (Air), Supreme Perfection of Craft (Earth), Supreme Perfection of Craft (Fire), Supreme Perfection of Craft (Magitech), Supreme Perfection of Investigation, Supreme Perfection of Lore, Supreme Perfection of Medicine, Supreme Perfection of Occult, Supreme Perfection of Presence, Surprise Anticipation Method, Terrestrial Circle Sorcery, Terrifying Apparition of Glory, Third Athletics Excellency, Third Awareness Excellency, Third Craft Excellency, Third Dodge Excellency, Third Investigation Excellency, Third Lore Excellency, Third Medicine Excellency, Third Occult Excellency, Third Presence Excellency, Third Resistance Excellency, Third Survival Excellency, Thunderbolt Attack Prana, Touch of Blissful Release, Triple-Distance Attack Technique, Twisted Words Technique, Unbreakable Fascination Method, Underling Promoting Touch, Unsurpassed Hearing and Touch Discipline, Unsurpassed Sight Discipline, Unsurpassed Smell and Taste Discipline, Whirling Brush Method, Wholeness-Restoring Meditation, Will-Bolstering Method, Wind-Racing Essence Infusion, Wonder-Forging Genius, Worshipful Lackey Acquisition, Worthy Mount Technique, Wound-Cleansing Meditation, Wound-Mending Care Technique, Wyld Cauldron Technology, Wyld-Shaping Technique

Spells: Adamant Circle Banishment, Adamant Countermagic, Blood Lash, Blood of Boiling Oil, Calling the Stalwart Servitor, Calling the Wind's Kiss, Cantata of Empty Voices, Cloud Trapeze, Conjuring the Azure Chariot, Corrupted Words, Curse of Slavish Humility, Curse of Unyielding Mist, Curtain of Quartz, Death of Obsidian Butterflies, Demon of the First Circle, Demon of the Second Circle, Demon of the Third Circle, Dolorous Reflection, Droning Suggestion, Emerald Circle Banishment, Emerald Countermagic, Empathic Wind, Essence Inversion, Eternal Crystalline Encasement, The Eye and the Mouth, Eye of Alliance, Flight of Separation, Fugue of Truth, Geyser of Corrosion, God-Forged Champion of War, Hideous Confusion of Tongues, The Horse that Travels Earth and Water, Hound of the Five Winds, Imbue Amalgam, Impenetrable Frost Barrier, Impervious Sphere of Water, Incantation of Spiritual Discretion, Incomparable Body Arsenal, Infallible Messenger, Invoking the Eyeless Face, Invulnerable Skin of Bronze, Keel Cleaves the Clouds, Lightning Spider, Lightning Whip Smites the Water, Mercury's Deliverance, Mirage of Protective Shelter, Mists of Eventide, Mystic

Travel, Open the Spirit Door, Outside Worlds Within, Peacock Shadow Eyes, Personal Tempest, Pressed Beyond the Veil of Time, The Princes of the Fallen Tower, Private Plaza of Downcast Eyes, Rain of Doom, Raise the Puissant Sanctum, Ritual of Elemental Empowerment, River of Blood, Rune of Singular Hate, The Sacred Tongue, Sapphire Circle Banishment, Sapphire Countermagic, Shadow Summons, Shadow Theft, Shadows of the Ancient Past, Silent Words of Dreams and Nightmares, Solar Sanctuary, Sorcerer's Irresistible Puppetry, Soul Seal, Spirit of Might, Spirit Sword, The Spy Who Walks in Darkness, Sting of the Ice Hornet, Stormwind Rider, Summon Elemental, Summon Ghost, Summon the Heavenly Portal, Summoning the Greater Minions of the Eyeless Face, Summoning the Heart of Darkness, Summoning the Lesser Minions of the Eyeless Face, Swift Spirit of Winged Transportation, Technique Mirror, Theft of Memory, The Titan's Icy Breath, Threefold Binding of the Heart, Total Annihilation, Travel Without Distance, Unity of Dreams, Unity of the Closed Fist, The Violent Opening of Closed Portals, Voices of Distant Regard, Whirlwind of Fate, Winds of Confusion, Wood Dragon's Claw, Wrath of the Five Elements

Join Battle: 15

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 6B, Parry DV 5, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 9B, Parry DV 3, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 8, Damage 6B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Cruel Wisdom (Melee): Speed 5, Accuracy 19, Damage 13L, Parry DV 9, Rate 4

Cruel Wisdom (Thrown): Speed 5, Accuracy 22, Damage 13L, Range 100, Rate 4

Soak: 8L/11B (Discreet Essence armor, +5L/5B, Hardness: 2L/2B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 13 **Willpower:** 9

Essence: 10

Personal Essence: 39 **Peripheral Essence:** 93 (75)

Committed Essence: 18

Other Notes: Bright Shattered Ice built the city of Tzatli (see **Lands of Creation**, p. 143) during the Thousand Struggles Era. It's highly maneuverable, extremely defensible and has served as her circle's headquarters for centuries.

Her glorious wings of the raptor artifact is a ubiquitous part of Bright Shattered Ice's panoply, as she created this, the first such artifact, in order to soar through the skies in the company of her Lunar mate. The wings' hearthstone socket is fitted with a Third Hand Orb.

For defense, Bright Shattered Ice eschews heavy armor, trusting in her discreet Essence armor to defend her (backed by her powerful defensive spells and anima power). The left bracer of said armor is fitted with a Twice-Striking Lightning Prism.

Bright Shattered Ice's Artifact 5 daiklave, Cruel Wisdom, is a broad but thin blade that may be swung or thrown. It creates an icy sphere around its bearer that breaks all glamour sorceries save those flung by Northern Fair Folk. Those, it absorbs and shapes into viciously serrated shards, which fling themselves back at the attackers using Bright Shattered Ice's Thrown pool. If they hit, such shards infect the raksha with Creation's cruel wisdom, reducing the targets' Conviction and Valor immediately to 0. Cruel Wisdom's hearthstone socket is fitted with a Jewel of the Flying Heart.

The Twilight also typically carries an array of common First Age items. Examples include a hard mote, a handheld I AM glyph reader, a resplendent personal assistant, a dragonfly's ranging eye, a prayer transceiver module and perfected boots (all figured into her committed Essence).

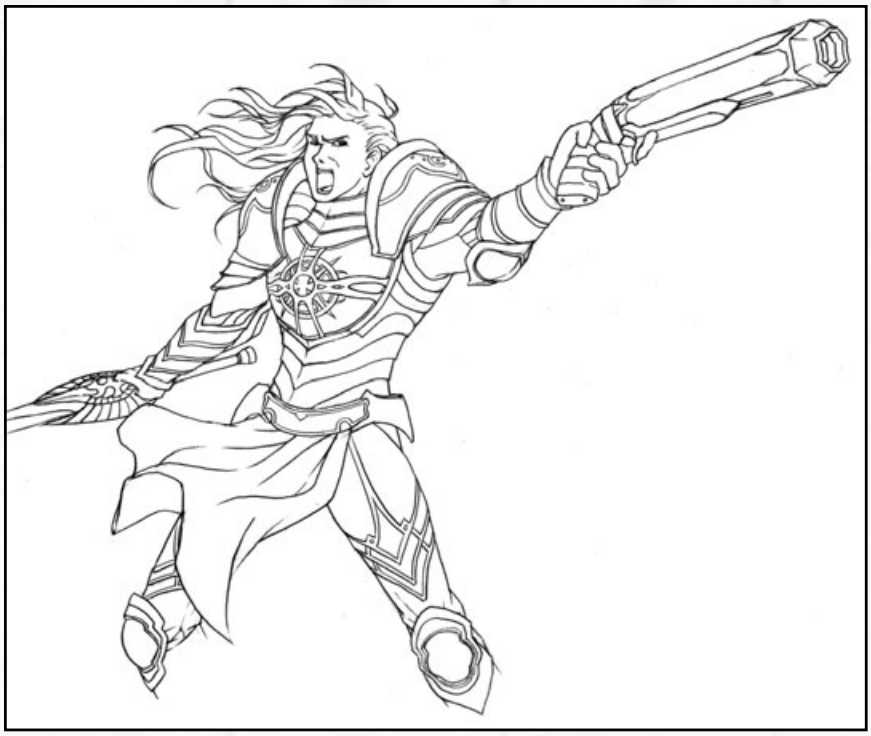
As one of the premier artificers of the Age, however, Bright Shattered Ice has at her disposal a huge number of artifacts useful in particular situations, as well as a veritable army of automaton servants at her beck and call. Of particular interest to the Twilight are artifacts that aid in her artifice. Her collection includes a hand of the great maker, a protoshinmaic vortex, a vault of woven dreams, and many others. She often transports artifacts she thinks she'll need in any given situation within cache eggs.

Contentious Sword, the Golden Blade

Solar Queen Merela was the greatest warrior of the Primordial War, but its greatest commander was Aofe, the Golden Blade. Aofe led the Exalted into battle with brilliant, blazing courage. She planned assaults that took down several Primordials at once, and her Dragon-Blooded soldiers bore the symbol of her sword on their armor and shields. She likewise took the lead against the Fair Folk during the Dissolution Invasion, strategically aided by the captured raksha general Dreaming Steel, with whom she had an affair. Indeed, after her assassination, Dreaming Steel used glamour to take her form and lead the final charge against his former kin.

That love affair is rarely discussed, and despite his aid to Creation, Dreaming Steel was hardly mourned by the Exalted when he died. Still, every subsequent incarnation of the Golden Blade remembers. The most recent Golden Blade died in a foolhardy foray into the Wyld, trying to discover if Fair Folk reincarnate, and his mantle was claimed by a blond Northern hunter who himself now struggles against those ancient dreams.

Contentious Sword didn't just inherit his prior incarnation's memories, but also the former Golden Blade's dynasty, daiklave, circle and Lunar wife. Ivory Feather loved her distracted ex-husband, and likewise loves his reincarnation, but her taciturn ways have led him to think her loyalty comes from nothing more than antique oaths. His circle, on the other hand, is quite welcoming. The other four members—Bright Shattered Ice, the Hierophant, Desus and Gold-Shadowed Arrow—are much older than he, and



they've come to see the Golden Blade (who's died and returned quite a lot) as something of a perpetual younger sibling. They address Contentious Sword with indulgent smiles and are always prepared to laugh off his eager foolhardy plans. This Golden Blade, though, is more serious than his recent predecessors, and finds his elders' estimation of him as fickle and harebrained to be quite irritating.

His dynasty is no better. Ever since the young Dawn Caste arrived in Meru over two centuries ago, they've held him to the impossible standards of their progenitor, as magnified by rumor and fading history. He'd feel guilty banishing them to the principality he inherited, so Contentious Sword has taken to avoiding Meru. He once thought to lose himself in training maneuvers with some of his Dragon-Blooded, but they also commented at length upon his former self, until he abandoned the exercises and didn't return.

As tours of the Underworld are a popular diversion among Creation's elite, Contentious Sword occasionally goes on them to seek Aofe's ghost. Her legend calls her levelheaded, and he thinks she'd be able to relate to him better than his circlemates. On some level, too, he wishes to hear more of Dreaming Steel. But he's not yet found Aofe's soul and fears she's passed into Lethe.

Trapped in the shadow of his illustrious predecessors, the Solar is frustrated by the world's failure to recognize his excellence. Certain elder Exalts have noticed this and begun to flatter him. Contentious Sword is a significant weak point for his four circlemates. They feel far more loyalty to him than he to them. Most of their esteem is built on shared experiences and his—even augmented by sorcerous memory-retrieval—only from dreams. His Faithful politics with Unionist leanings echo theirs, but more because they're the ones telling him how to vote than because those factions attract him. (Left to his own devices, he'd probably be more of a Militant.) There are many who could use an edge against his powerful circle, and he might be more than just an edge, a source of information or a method of planting ideas. Indeed, it might just be possible to demonstrate enough of his circle's weaknesses that Contentious Sword could be turned directly against its members.

Limit Break: To the surprise of his circlemates, who are accustomed to the Golden Blade being rather thoughtless and eager for battle, Contentious Sword's more likely to go into a Valorous *Self-Aggrandizing Sulk*. He's rather narcissistic and feels that he deserves quite a lot for his excellence. In general, he takes what he wants and calls it his due. If his desires are thwarted, he gains Limit, and will eventually withdraw into isolation, refusing to do absolutely anything for one full day. He can control this only in order to perform acts he has sworn to do.

Motivation: Prove himself on his own terms.

Caste: Dawn

Anima Banner: A golden blade cuts the air, shadowing his every strike.

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

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

Abilities: *Archery 4*, Athletics 3, *Awareness 3*, Bureaucracy 2, Dodge 2, Integrity 2, Investigation 1, Linguistics (Native: Skytongue; Others: Old Realm) 1, Lore 2, *Martial Arts 4*, *Melee 4 (Dawnlight +2)*, Occult 2, *Performance 4*, *Presence 4*, Resistance 3, *Ride 3*, Socialize 2, Stealth 2, *Survival 4*, *Thrown 1*, *War 4 (With Dragon-Blooded Aid +1)*

Backgrounds: Arsenal 3, Artifact 5, Command 3, Cult 1, Manse 3, Reputation (the Golden Blade) 2, Wealth 3

Charms: Blessing of Righteous Solar Spark Meditation, Blossom of Inevitable Demise Technique, Bulwark Stance, Cloud of Ebon Devils, Commanding the Ideal Celestial Army, Dipping Swallow Defense, Fire and Stones Strike, First Archery Excellency, First Martial Arts Excellency, First Melee Excellency, First War Excellency, Hardship-Surviving Mendicant Spirit, Hauberk-Lightening Gesture, Heavenly Guardian Defense, Hungry Tiger Technique,

Infinite Melee Mastery, Infinite War Mastery, Kiss of the Sun Concentration, Lightning Draw Stance, Majestic Radiant Presence, Ox-Body Technique (x2), Phoenix Flies on Golden Wings Attack, Righteous Devil Form, Rout-Stemming Gesture, Second Athletics Excellency, Second Performance Excellency, Second Presence Excellency, Second Survival Excellency, Third Awareness Excellency, Third Resistance Excellency, Third Ride Excellency, Trackless Region Navigation, Trance of Unhesitating Speed, Whirlwind Armor-Donning Prana

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Gauntlet: Speed 5, Accuracy 11, Damage 9B, Parry DV 6 (8 with Essence shield), Rate 4

Boot: Speed 5, Accuracy 10, Damage 10B, Parry DV 4 (6 with Essence shield), Rate 3

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 9, Damage 4B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Reaver Daiklave (Dawnlight): Speed 5, Accuracy 15, Damage 13L/3, Parry DV 6 (8 with Essence shield), Rate 3

Fiery Solar Cannon (The Sun's Kiss): Speed 5, Accuracy 12, Damage 9L or 18L, Range 300, Rate 1

Soak: 18L/20B (Orichalcum celestial battle armor, +15L/15B, Hardness: 10L/10B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 6 (8 with Essence shield) **Willpower:** 6

Essence: 4

Personal Essence: 18 **Peripheral Essence:** 46 (30)

Committed Essence: 16

Other Notes: Contentious Sword's reaver daiklave, Dawnlight, was forged by Kek'Tungssha herself, while his fiery solar cannon, The Sun's Kiss, was constructed by a second of Autochthon's Divine Ministers, Debok Moom. Aofe, the original Golden Blade, wielded both in battle against the Primordials. The Dawn Caste's celestial battle armor is of more recent construction, built by Bright Shattered Ice as a present upon Contentious Sword's Exaltation. The armor features enhanced durability, a voice of command and an Essence shield in addition to the standard package of battle armor traits. It is also set with a Crystal of Legendary Leadership, a Gemstone of Last Resort and a Stone of Shelter. When not busy leading his gunzosha in battle at the behest of his circle, the young Solar takes great pleasure flying his warbird through the wastes of the Far North, drawn there by vague memories of his earlier incarnations.

Dancer in Light

Each of his gestures (say those who have met Dancer in Light) is a hymn, a poem, a shaft of brilliance. Every footstep on the common street is no less than a dance. He hardly ever speaks—merely motions or tilts his head—and yet, his observers feel that they comprehend him totally (and may be brought to tears by his eloquence). Still, this Eclipse feels that no one truly understands him.

The full connotations and implications of the Dancer's movements are (he feels) lost on everyone, save two. The first, Node 3087, was once the part of I AM located in Dancer in Light's home. As it observed and serviced Dancer in Light, it learned his language and repeated it back to him with projected light displays. Thrilled, the Eclipse spent all his time at home, tutoring and growing close to I AM. But its odd experiences eventually caused Node 3087 to exhibit certain abnormalities, and Dancer in Light was notified that his node would need to be serviced—possibly replaced—before its strangeness replicated through the system. Panicked, the Solar resolved to take whatever steps were necessary to save his closest friend. In the end, he was forced to make an infernal deal in order to secretly disengage Node 3087 from the I AM network, secure it in an automaton body and grant it independent selfhood. Still, the deal wasn't so bad: He was merely asked to visit Malfeas seven times.

It was on the sixth safari (100 years ago) that he met the Second Circle demon Stanewald, Answer to the Earth. Enchanted, Dancer in Light followed her through the brass city until she noticed and deigned to partner him. Together, they invented whole new harmonies of movement. New paths split open through the demon city rather than let them fetch up against the end of a street, and they earned a vast and monstrous audience that, despite its nature, wept to see them. At the end of their five-day marathon, the exhausted Dancer begged Stanewald to return to Creation with him, and she accepted.

Protected by the Treaty of Broken Ribbons, Stanewald lives with Dancer in Light. They aren't lovers: What they have is already far more than that, and neither particularly craves that release. (Indeed, each occasionally mentions that lack of such release improves their dancing.) Stanewald has taught the Eclipse certain demonic techniques, and though she didn't set out to corrupt him, she sometimes can't help but point out how superior the Primordial-run world was—especially since Dancer in Light already complains about his "largely worthless" fellow Solars. He's on the verge of becoming an infernalist, and might already be deemed one if any of Creation's other overseers bothered to look.

Node 3087 was Dancer in Light's only close companion for centuries, and the Dancer's comparatively recent kinship with Stanewald drives it mad with jealousy. It knows the Dancer still cares for it and will protect it, but it has little experience with such irrational emotions and may eventually feel driven to take action. As it now oversees Dancer in Light's entire dominion, this could be problematic. It also recently learned of Salina's opposition to the Principle of Hierarchy, and is contemplating how it may turn the popular Zenith's dislike to its advantage. Stanewald, after all, is descended from She Who Lives In Her Name.

Limit Break: Temperance: *Contempt of the Virtuous* (see **Exalted**, p. 105). Dancer in Light has little patience for his

fellow Solars and their foibles. When he bothers to attend the Deliberative, he aligns himself with the Fugitive faction (such as it is) and often cannot resist making his disgust clear with a few well-chosen gestures.

Motivation: Find the ideal dancing partner.

Caste: Eclipse

Anima Banner: A shimmering white, androgynous silhouette that flickers through a dance.

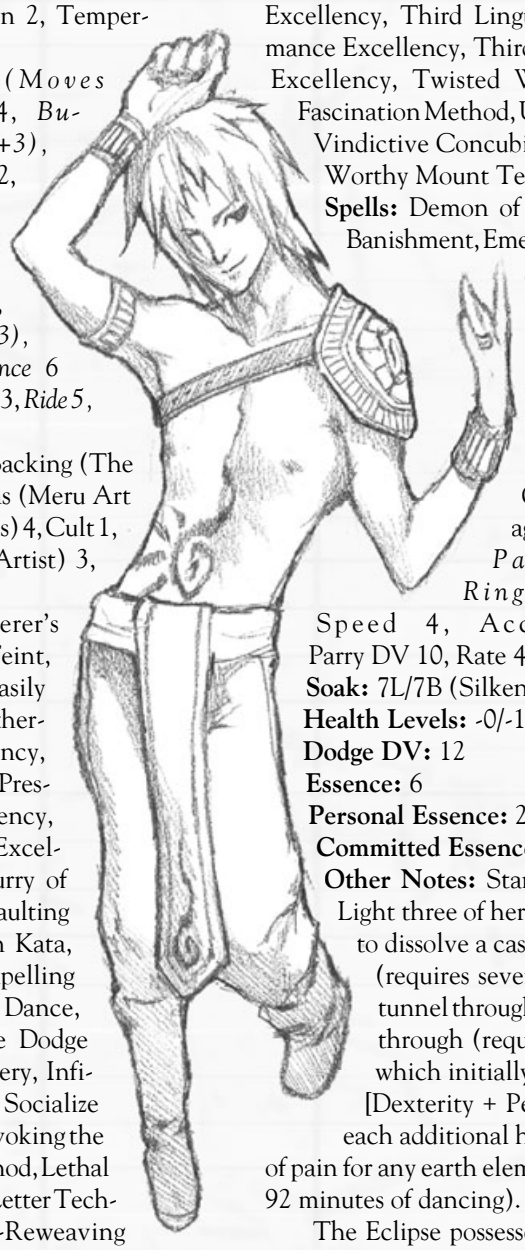
Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 6, Stamina 4; Charisma 5, Manipulation 5, Appearance 6; Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

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

Abilities: *Athletics 6 (Moves Beautifully +1)*, Awareness 4, *Bureaucracy 6 (With Node 3087 +3)*, *Dodge* 6, Integrity 5, Investigation 2, Larceny 3, *Linguistics (Old Realm; Others: Body Language, Dragontongue, Earthtongue, Flametongue, Forest-tongue, Riverspeak)* 6, Lore 5, *Martial Arts 6 (Wind-Fire Wheels +3)*, Occult 5 (Demons +3), *Performance* 6 *(Dancing +3)*, Presence 5, Resistance 3, *Ride* 5, *Sail* 5, *Socialize* 5, *Stealth* 4, War 2

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Arsenal 1, Backing (The Fugitives) 2, Artifact 2, Connections (Meru Art Scene) 3, Connections (The Fugitives) 4, Cult 1, Manse 3, Panoply 2, Reputation (Artist) 3, Retainers 2, Wealth 3

Charms: All-Encompassing Sorcerer's Sight, Dematerialize, Demure Carp Feint, Dreaming Pearl Courtesan Form, Easily Overlooked Presence Method, Feather-Foot Style, First Martial Arts Excellency, First Performance Excellency, First Presence Excellency, First Ride Excellency, First Sail Excellency, First Socialize Excellency, First Stealth Excellency, Flurry of August Leaves Concentration, Foe-Vaulting Method, Fragrant Petal Fascination Kata, Graceful Crane Stance, Heart-Compelling Method, Husband-Seducing Demon Dance, Infinite Athletics Mastery, Infinite Dodge Mastery, Infinite Martial Arts Mastery, Infinite Performance Mastery, Infinite Socialize Mastery, Infinite Stealth Mastery, Invoking the Chimera's Coils, Leaping Dodge Method, Lethal Paper Fan Attack, Letter-Within-A-Letter Technique, Lightning Speed, Memory-Reweaving Discipline, Monkey Leap Technique, Mountain-Crossing Leap Technique, Ox-Body Technique, Pearlescent Filigree Defense, Performance Essence Flow, Phantom-Conjuring Performance, Poetic Expression Style, Principle of Motion, Racing Hare Method, Respect Commanding Attitude, Resplendent Sash Grapple Technique, Sagacious Reading of Intent, Salty Dog Method, Second Athletics Excellency, Second Bureaucracy Excellency, Second Dodge Excellency, Second Integrity Excellency, Second Linguistics Excellency, Second Occult Excellency, Second Performance Excellency, Second Ride Excellency, Second Stealth Excellency, Seven Shadow Evasion, Seven Storms Escape Prana, Shadow Over Water, Soaring Crane Leap, Spider-Foot Style, Spirit-Cutting Attack, Spirit-Detecting Glance, Terrestrial Circle Sorcery, Third Awareness Excellency, Third Bureaucracy Excellency, Third Larceny Excellency, Third Linguistics Excellency, Third Performance Excellency, Third Sail Excellency, Third Socialize Excellency, Twisted Words Technique, Unbreakable Fascination Method, Unparalleled Acumen Meditation, Vindictive Concubine's Pillow Book Understanding, Worthy Mount Technique



Spells: Demon of the First Circle, Emerald Circle Banishment, Emerald Countermagic, Infallible Messenger, Summon Elemental

Join Battle: 9

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 13, Damage 5B, Parry DV 7, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 12, Damage 7B, Parry DV 5, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 12, Damage 5B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Paired Orichalcum Fate Rings (Whirling Dancers): Speed 4, Accuracy 17, Damage 8L, Parry DV 10, Rate 4

Soak: 7L/7B (Silken armor, +5L/3B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 12 **Willpower:** 7

Essence: 6

Personal Essence: 25 **Peripheral Essence:** 61 (54)

Committed Essence: 7

Other Notes: Stanewald has taught the Dancer in Light three of her demonic dances. One allows him to dissolve a castle into molten rock with a dance (requires seven days of dancing). One carves a tunnel through stone wide enough for him to pass through (requires 26 hours to start the tunnel, which initially extends a foot per success on the [Dexterity + Performance] roll and the same for each additional hour of the dance). One is a dance of pain for any earth elementals present to view it (requires 92 minutes of dancing).

The Eclipse possesses two estates on the Blessed Isle proper (one in Meru and one near the southern coast) as well as a small Eastern principality he seldom visits. (He leaves governance of it to a Dragon-Blood prefect.) The manses on these properties produce three hearthstones the Dancer wears at all times. A Freedom Stone is socketed into a skin

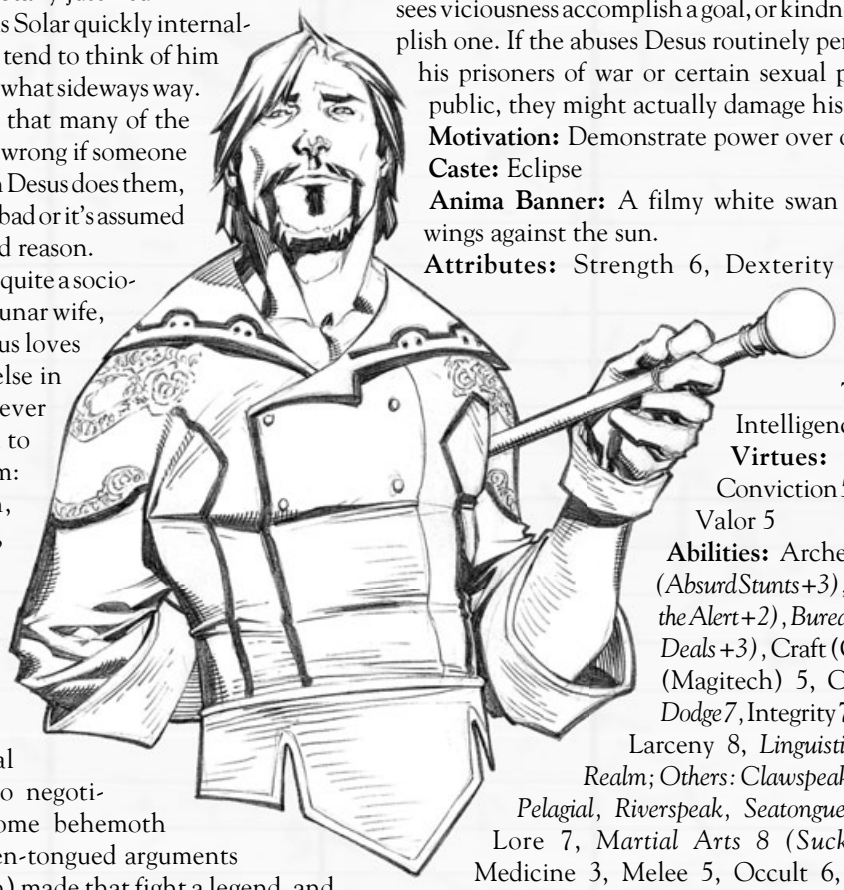
mount amulet in the center of his chest, a Monkey Stone is set into the right bracer of a pair of orichalcum hearthstone bracers he inherited from a prior incarnation, and a Gem of Dignity is set in an orichalcum hearthstone amulet.

The Dancer in Light is currently developing his own Martial Arts style based on his dancing, which treats wind-fire wheels as form weapons. He has not yet made Charms for it, however, and might seek the advice of more powerful beings.

Desus

His first incarnation was killed for deceit at the dawn of the Primordial War, but Desus never learns. Never an introspective man, the famous Eclipse doesn't really consider what he's doing when he's being manipulative. He doesn't rationalize lies to himself because he hardly notices them—they're just his way. Desus has long since learned how to frame just about any action as virtuous, or at least find a reason that'll explain it to others, and he's usually firmly convinced even himself that deceiving his close friend or torturing his mate was totally justified.

Those who meet this Solar quickly internalize his justifications and tend to think of him as goodhearted in a somewhat sideways way. They might understand that many of the things he does would be wrong if someone else did them—but when Desus does them, either they don't seem so bad or it's assumed he must have had a good reason.



And yet, Desus isn't quite a sociopath. In the case of his Lunar wife, Lilith, for instance, Desus loves her more than anyone else in the world. He's just never had any reason to learn to control his casual sadism: She'll take the pain, she'll never complain, and she'll keep loving him, so why shouldn't he mete it out? Indeed, the Eclipse has accomplished feats of astonishing heroism. During the Primordial War, he went alone to negotiate with the troublesome behemoth Oliphem. Desus's golden-tongued arguments (and swift sucker-punch) made that fight a legend, and him the toast of the Exalted Host. His inspired genius was critical to dealing with the diplomatic pitfalls of the Period of Long Silence. Every century or so, he goes on another highly visible quest to keep up his star power. He seems to have a sixth sense for those that will make him look *perfect*.

For the sake of his circlemates, particularly Bright Shattered Ice, Desus often votes alongside the Faithful, but he's not really in line with any faction. (He does have some sympathy for the Cauldronists and the Divisives, though.) Thus, as long as he can appear to be in the Faithful camp, he'll occasionally sneakily support another cause: perhaps by saying one thing in front of the Deliberative, while using body language to telegraph a subconsciously received message that says the opposite. His major services to Creation are his very visible quests.

Desus avoids overseeing his Southeastern estate as much as possible, spending his time mainly on exciting politics and romantic jaunts with Lilith. (His obvious devotion to his wife is publicly admired, sometimes even held up as a romantic standard.) His Eastern-golden skin is further tanned by the Southern sun, and his hair lightened to a medium gold-brown. He's unbelievably handsome in a sinister kind of way, but no one ever takes his devilish grin for the warning it is.

Limit Break: As the Conviction flaw *Deliberate Cruelty* (see **Exalted,** p. 105), save that Desus gains Limit whenever he sees viciousness accomplish a goal, or kindness fail to accomplish one. If the abuses Desus routinely perpetrates against his prisoners of war or certain sexual partners become public, they might actually damage his reputation.

Motivation: Demonstrate power over others.

Caste: Eclipse

Anima Banner: A filmy white swan that spreads its wings against the sun.

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 6, Stamina 4; Charisma 7, Manipulation 7, Appearance 7; Perception 6, Intelligence 5, Wits 7

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

Abilities: Archery 8, *Athletics 8 (Absurd Stunts +3)*, *Awareness 7 (On the Alert +2)*, *Bureaucracy 8 (Making Deals +3)*, Craft (Genesis) 5, Craft (Magitech) 5, Craft (Wood) 7, *Dodge 7*, Integrity 7, Investigation 5, Larceny 8, *Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Others: Clawspeak, Naval Ciphers, Pelagial, Riverspeak, Seatongue, Skytongue)* 6, Lore 7, *Martial Arts 8 (Sucker-Punch +3)*, Medicine 3, Melee 5, Occult 6, Performance 8 (Heroism +3), *Presence 9 (Seduction +2)*, Resistance 7, *Ride 6 (Winged Steeds +2)*, *Sail 9*, Stealth 7, *Socialize 9 (Lying +3)*, Survival 6 (Animal Husbandry +2), Thrown 4, War 6 (Naval Warfare +1)

Backgrounds: Allies 5 (Legendary Ally), Arsenal 1, Artifact 4, Artifact 2, Backing (Order-Conferring Trade Pattern) 4, Connections (Deliberative) 5, Connections (Solar Navy) 5,

Connections (Yu-Shan) 5, Cult 3, Manse 5, Panoply 4, Reputation (Dashing Adventurer) 5 (Legendary Reputation), Retainers 4, Salary 3, Wealth 4

Charms: Adamantine Fists of Battle, Armor-Penetrating Fang Strike, Ascendant Battle Visage, Athletics Essence Flow, Awareness Essence Flow, Battle Fury Focus, Body-Mending Meditation, Bureau-Rectifying Method, Chaos-Repelling Pattern, Clarity-of-Mind Moment, Crashing Wave Throw, Dancing with Strife Technique, Deck-Striding Technique, Destiny-Manifesting Method, Discerning Savant's Eye, Doldrums-Induced Tempo, Dragon Coil Technique, Drunken Monk Finds His Sandal, Drunken Monk Loses His Sash, Eagle-Wing Style, Element-Resisting Prana, Essence Arrow Attack (Dazzling Flare, Fiery Arrow Attack, Righteous Judgment Arrow), Essence Fangs and Scales Technique, Essence-Gathering Temper, Essence-Lending Method, Essence Plethora (x2), Essence Venom Strike, Eternal Elemental Harmony, Ever-Watchful Sentinel Dedication, Excellent Emissary's Tongue, Feather-Foot Style, Fine Passage Negotiating Style, First Appearance Excellency, First Archery Excellency, First Athletics Excellency, First Dexterity Excellency, First Integrity Excellency, First Larceny Excellency, First Martial Arts Excellency, First Performance Excellency, First Presence Excellency, First Ride Excellency, First Sail Excellency, Fists of Iron Technique, Flawless Brush Discipline, Flawless Pickpocketing Technique, Flawlessly Impenetrable Disguise, Flow Like Blood, Flowing Body Evasion, Foe-Vaulting Method, Foul Air of Argument Technique, Frugal Merchant Method, Full-Stroked Ramming Kick, Fury Inciting Presence, Gathering the Congregation, Ghost-Eating Technique, Godspeed Steps, Golden Courtier Misdirection, Golden Tiger Stance, Graceful Crane Stance, Ground-Denying Defense, Hammer on Iron Technique, Hardship-Surviving Mendicant Spirit, Heart-Compelling Method, Heaven Thunder Hammer, Heroism-Encouraging Presence, Hull-Preserving Technique, Hurricane-Predicting Glance, Hypnotic Tongue Technique, I Wasn't There Understanding, Immaculate Golden Bow, Immanent Solar Glory, Immortal Captain's Advantages, Increasing Strength Exercise, Indolent Official Charm, Inevitable Victory Meditation, Inexhaustible Bolts of Solar Fire, Infinite Athletics Mastery, Infinite Awareness Mastery, Infinite Bureaucracy Mastery, Infinite Dodge Mastery, Infinite Linguistics Mastery, Infinite Martial Arts Mastery, Infinite Presence Mastery, Infinite Ride Mastery, Infinite Sail Mastery, Infinite Socialize Mastery, Insightful Buyer Technique, Instinct-Driven Beast Movement, Integrity-Protecting Prana, Invincible Admiral Method, Invincible Solar Vessel, Irrepressible Bravery Tactic, Irresistible Salesman Spirit, Irresistible Silver Spirit, Knockout Blow, Leaping Dodge Method, Letter-Within-a-Letter Technique, Lightning Speed, Lightning Stroke Attack, Lock-Opening Touch, Majestic Radiant Presence, Martial Arts Essence Flow, Mastery of Small Manners, Mastery of Society Technique, Mob-Dispersing Rebuke, Monkey Leap Technique, Mountain-Crossing Leap Technique, Octopus and Spider Barrage, Omnipotent Admiral Authority, One of the Herd, Orgiastic Fugitive Form, Orichalcum Fists of Battle, Ox-Body Technique (x3), Ox-Stunning Blow, Perfect Reckoning Technique, Perfect Symmetry, Performance Essence Flow, Phantom Arrow Technique, Poetic Expression Style, Pounding Hammer of Devastation Technique, Principle of Motion, Racing Hare Method, Rain of Feathered Death, Reflex Sidestep Technique, Respect-Commanding Attitude, Ride Essence Flow, Rout-Stemming Gesture, Sagacious Reading of Intent, Sail Essence Flow, Sail-Furling Invulnerability, Salty Dog Method, Saturnalia Memoriam Kick, Sea Ambush Technique, Sea Spider Plunge, Seafaring Hero Form, Second Awareness Excellency, Second Bureaucracy Excellency, Second Linguistics Excellency, Second Lore Excellency, Second Socialize Excellency, Second Stealth Excellency, Second Survival Excellency, Second War Excellency, Secure Cat Stepping, Serpentine Evasion, Seven Seas Wind-Luring Chanty, Seven Shadow Evasion, Shadow Over Water, Ship-Claiming Stance, Shipwreck-Surviving Stamina, Shockwave Technique, Sledgehammer Fist Punch, Snake Form, Snake Strikes the Heel, Soaring Crane Leap, Socialize Essence Flow, Solar Hero Form, Solar Hero Supremacy, Speed of Light Approach, Speed the Wheels, Spider-Foot Style, Spirit-Cutting Attack, Spirit-Detecting Glance, Stealing from Plain Sight Spirit, Storm-Outrunning Technique, Storm-Weathering Essence Infusion, Striking Cobra Technique, Striking Serpent Speed, Ship and Soul Union, Stubborn Boar Defense, Stuck Rudder Infliction, Sturdy Bulkhead Concentration, Supremacy of War Method, Supreme Perfection of Athletics, Supreme Perfection of Martial Arts, Supreme Perfection of Performance, Supreme Perfection of Presence, Supreme Perfection of Sail, Supreme Perfection of Socialize, Surprise Anticipation Method, Swallowing the Lotus Root, Taboo Inflicting Diatribe, Terrestrial Circle Sorcery, Terrible Sail-Rending Assault, Third Dodge Excellency, Third Martial Arts Excellency, Third Resistance Excellency, Third Sail Excellency, Thunderbolt Attack Prana, Thunderclap Rush Attack, Twin-Fang Technique, Twisted Words Technique, Two-Fisted Merrymaker, Unbreakable Fascination Method, Uncoiling Serpent Prana, Understanding the Court, Unhealthy Miasma Stance, Unparalleled Acumen Meditation, Venomous Whispers Technique, Wary Swallow Method, Wasp Sting Blur, Wave-Riding Navy-Breaker, Web-Cutting Eyes, Whirling Brush Method, Wild Revelry Approach, Will-Bolstering Method, Wind-Dancing Method, Wise-Eyed Courtier Method, Worshipful Lackey Acquisition

Desus has developed a custom technique (Socialize 7/Essence 7) that influences everyone who has ever heard him speak into believing that he means well, no matter what he does. The system for Eternal Empress of Love Attitude (see p. 66) may be mirrored for this Charm, if necessary.

Spells: Blood Lash, Calling the Wind's Kiss, Emerald Circle Banishment, Emerald Countermagic, Infallible Messenger,

Invocation of the Living Ship, Keel Cleaves the Clouds, Lightning Whip Smites the Water, Mast-Shattering Spell, Open the Spirit Door, Storm Rider Enchantment, Summon Elemental, Viridian Mantle of Underwater Journeys, Written upon the Water
Join Battle: 14 (On the Alert 16)
Attacks:
Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 15, Damage 6B, Parry DV 8, Rate 3
Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 14, Damage 9B, Parry DV 6, Rate 2
Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 14, Damage 6B, Parry DV —, Rate 1
Gloves of Martial Readiness: Speed 5, Accuracy 17, Damage 12L, Parry DV 9 or 11, Rate 4
Swagger Stick (melee): Speed 4, Accuracy 11, Damage 9B, Parry DV 6, Rate 3
Swagger Stick (ranged): Speed 4, Accuracy 15, Damage 10B (piercing), Range 50, Rate 1
Soak: 7L/7B (Silken armor, +5L/3B)
Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap
Dodge DV: 12 **Willpower:** 8
Essence: 10
Personal Essence: 38 **Peripheral Essence:** 112 (90)
Committed Essence: 22
Other Notes: Desus' swagger stick contains a built-in very small concussive Essence cannon and may also be wielded in hand-to-hand combat (as a stick). His main form of transport is a folding ship given to him as a reward for the blinding of Oliphem. He owns more powerful craft, but enjoys the former ship more.

As one of the most powerful and shrewd Solars in Creation, Desus maintains a number of powerful manses on the Blessed Isle and abroad, which provide him access to a number of hearthstones. The Eclipse has a Seacalm Gemstone mounted on the back of his right-hand glove of martial readiness, a Gem of Dignity mounted in a hearthstone amulet and, unknown to all but Lilith, a Gem of Immortality set into a skin mount amulet over his heart.

Aided by the expertise (i.e., Science of Mutation Charm) of Bright Shattered Ice, Desus breeds custom simhata on one of his estates. These magnificent beasts are like the ones detailed on page 349 of **Exalted**, but are colored a deep red-gold and possess magnificent furred wings.

Desus' Ever-Watchful Sentinel Dedication is keyed to noticing danger to Lilith.

Gold-Shadowed Arrow

Over four millennia ago, when Gold-Shadowed Arrow was born, the Dragon Kings occasionally trained very talented humans as thaumaturge-commandos. These assassin occultists were assigned to take care of minor threats such as human serial killers or small errant monsters: things the Dragon Kings themselves didn't feel like dealing with. The best of them was a lithe, dark-skinned boy—and naturally, he was a prime candidate for the Night Caste. In the Primordial War, he was granted the Sun's gifts in order to stalk and kill the Yozis' most elusive souls.

This modest Solar declined to carve out his own principality during the Ochre Fountain Era, and has never done so since, though he keeps a small estate on the Blessed Isle. He serves his duty to Creation as guardian of the South. Although some Exalts grumble at this—and especially at his casual infiltrations into their principalities—none dare suggest that his duties be curtailed, for that might attract his suspicion.

They have reason to fear. Gold-Shadowed Arrow has indeed taken down corrupt Solars (though he considers himself above most Exalt-driven criminal disputes and won't pursue them unless asked to do so). Fellow Night Caste Gilded Whisper, who disrupted the Order-Conferring Trade Pattern and fled Queen Merela's righteous rage, just recently tasted death at his hands. At least, Queen Merela gives Gold-Shadowed Arrow the credit. He himself didn't claim it. Since no living being has spotted him outside the Deliberative, his estate or Tzatli for over 1,000 years, it's hard to be sure it was he. Still, the total lack of evidence for the murder leaves little doubt as to its perpetrator, as does the fact that six Exalted investigators who started looking into it each completely forgot the event within a week.

Young Exalts sometimes whisper that Gold-Shadowed Arrow's exacting standards would find *anyone* he closely observed corrupt. But they soon learn not to speak of him even in whispers, for he can hear his name from across Creation.

To watch over the South, Gold-Shadowed Arrow uses a method as entertaining as it is effective. He maintains a crime network throughout that fifth of the world, which—though it does contribute to social ills—also functions as an ideal method of attracting dissidents for him to observe. This gives him an excuse to play to his criminal strengths while serving society. In the Southeast, for instance, the only place he's failed to infiltrate is the Domain of Stately Order (a problem that preoccupies him). The rest of his efforts there include:

- One agent to track the "accidents" in Tamar-Kas
- One of the sacred cattle, who reports attempts to sway their loyalty (rare, but there was one Exalt who tried to "emancipate" them)
- Fifteen cat's-paws in the Brazen Lands, six of whom are tracked by the Dual Queens (and known to be tracked by Gold-Shadowed Arrow)
- Nineteen unwitting agents in Chiaroscuro, including a five-member cabal of unlicensed alchemists and a seven-member gang of God-Blooded smugglers
- Twenty-six corrupt officials in High Nyunda, ten of whom are bribing each other

Gold-Shadowed Arrow has sympathies with both the Unionists and the Faithful. He believes in the Unionists

because he believes wholeheartedly in the purity and righteousness of his Zenith circlemate, the Hierophant, who would be one of the top candidates for a single Solar commander. He believes in the Faithful because he, like Bright Shattered Ice, is of a rigorous and ambitious bent. Also like his Twilight circlemate, the Night Caste has never wanted children. Unlike her, he usually travels and works alone, unless he's on business with his circle or his fellow Night Caste Nasuno Jumong.

Limit Break: Gold-Shadowed Arrow isn't much for indulgence, and the self-righteousness born of his Temperance can lead him into *Irrational Saintliness*. He gains Limit when he sees negative consequences from others' indulgences, and after enough of that, he'll refuse all "self-centered indulgences" for a full day—even necessary ones. If injured, he'll refuse medical treatment and force himself onward. If offered aid, he'll turn it down even if he can't succeed without it. He may control this Limit Break in order to accept help that's offered, but still won't seek it out.

Motivation: Eliminate corruption. (Ironically, Gold-Shadowed Arrow's Intimacies toward his circlemates blinds him to their flaws, and his relative lack of social grace makes him easy for many of his peers to deceive.)

Caste: Night

Anima Banner: A shooting star fires with his arrows against dim grayness.

Attributes: Strength 8, Dexterity 9, Stamina 8; Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 4; Perception 9, Intelligence 9, Wits 9

Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 3, Temperance 5, Valor 4

Abilities: *Archery 10*, *Athletics 9 (Running +2)*, *Awareness 10*, Bureaucracy 7 (Planting/Finding Agents +2), Craft (Wood) 6 (Archery Materials +2), Craft (Water) 6 (Poisons +2), *Dodge 10*, Integrity 7 (Obvious Corruption +3), *Investigation 9 (The South +3)*, *Larceny 10 (The South +3)*, Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Others: Dragontongue, Earthtongue, Flametongue, Forest-tongue, Riverspeak, Seatongue, Skytongue) 7, Lore 8, *Martial Arts 8*, Medicine 5, Melee 9, *Occult 8*, Performance 5, Presence 4 (Intimidation +3), *Resistance 8*, Ride 8 (Chases +3), Sail 4, Socialize 4, *Stealth 10*, Survival 7, Thrown 8, War 7 (Guerilla Warfare +3)

Backgrounds: Arsenal 3, Artifact 5, Backing (Criminal Empire) 5 (Legendary Backing), Command 1, Connections (Criminal Underworld) 5, Connections (Meru) 5, Connections (South) 5 (Legendary Connections), Henchmen 5, Manse 5, Panoply 4, Reputation (Inescapable) 5 (Legendary Reputation), Retainers 5, Wealth 4

Charms: Accuracy Without Distance, Aegis of Altruistic Interposition, Alehouse Memory Stance, All-Encompassing Sorcerer's Sight, Angry Predator Frenzy Style, Arrow Storm Technique, Athletics Essence Flow, Archery Essence Flow, Armored Scout's Invigoration, Awareness Essence Flow, Behemoth-Slaying Attitude, Birdsong Over Blades, Blazing Solar Bolt, Blinded by Laughter, Blow-Concealing Gesture Technique, Body-Mending Meditation, Boundless Arrow of the Unconquered Sun, Bulwark Stance, Bureaucracy Essence Flow, Call the Blade, Cannibalistic Heritage

Technique, Cascade of Cutting Terror, Celestial Circle Sorcery, Celestial Tiger Hide, Chaos-Repelling Pattern, Charcoal March of Spiders Form, City-Moving Secrets, Consumer-Evaluating Glance, Courtier's Eye Technique, Craft Essence Flow, Crafty Observation Method, Crimson Leaping Cat Technique, Crushing Claw Technique, Dance of the Hungry Spider, Dipping Swallow Defense, Discerning Savant's Eye, Distracting Finger-Gesture Attack, Divine Witness of Utter Safety, Door-Evading Technique, The Dragon Dies in Bed, The Dragon Dies Screaming, The Dragon Succumbs, Eagle-Wing Style, Easily Overlooked Presence Method, Ebon Shadow Form, Element-Resisting Prana, Elusive Dream Defense, Elusive Flicker Evasion, Essence Arrow Attack (Dazzling Flare, Fiery Arrow Attack, Righteous Judgment Arrow), Ever-Watchful Sentinel Dedication, Everywhere and Nowhere Stance, Evidence-Discerning Method, Eye-Deceiving Camouflage, Eye of the Unconquered Sun, Falling Icicle Strike, Falling Sun Eyes, Feather-Foot Style, First Archery Excellency, First Athletics Excellency, First Investigation Excellency, First Larceny Excellency, First Martial Arts Excellency, First Melee Excellency, First Ride Excellency, First Stealth Excellency, First Thrown Excellency, Fivefold Bulwark Stance, Flashing Vengeance Draw, Flawless Pickpocketing Technique, Flawlessly Impenetrable Disguise, Flow Like Blood, Flying Mantis Kick, Foe-Vaulting Method, Forceful Arrow, Frugal Merchant Method, Fury Inciting Presence, Ghost-Eating Technique, Glorious Solar Saber, Godspeed Steps, Golden Artillerist Method, Graceful Crane Stance, Grandmother Spider Mastery, Grasping Claw Method, Grasping Mantis Defense, Hardship-Surviving Mendicant Spirit, Hauberk-Lightening Gesture, Heavenly Guardian Defense, Heroism-Encouraging Presence, Hooding the Solar Lantern, Hungry Tiger Technique, Image of Death Technique, Immaculate Golden Bow, Immunity to Everything Technique, In Doubt of Legions Spirit, Increasing Strength Exercise, Inexhaustible Bolts of Solar Fire, Infinite Archery Mastery, Infinite Athletics Mastery, Infinite Awareness Mastery, Infinite Dodge Mastery, Infinite Investigation Mastery, Infinite Larceny Mastery, Infinite Martial Arts Mastery, Infinite Melee Mastery, Infinite Occult Mastery, Infinite Resistance Mastery, Infinite Stealth Mastery, Insightful Buyer Technique, Investigation Essence Flow, Invincible Fury of the Dawn, Invisible Statue Spirit, Iron Arm Block, Iron Raptor Technique, Iron Whirlwind Attack, Irresistible Questioning Technique, Joint-Disabling Attack, Joint-Locking Technique, Joint-Wounding Attack, Judge's Ear Technique, Jumping Spider Strike, Keen Hearing and Touch Technique, Keen Sight Technique, Keen Smell and Taste Technique, King of Thieves Spirit, Know the Soul's Price, Lambent Bolt of Annihilation, Larceny Essence Flow, Lawgiver's Parable Defense, Leap from Cloaking Shadows Attack, Leaping Dodge Method, Leaping Mantis Technique, Legacy-Detecting Glance, Legendary Warrior Curriculum, Letter-Within-A-Letter Technique, Lightning Speed, Limb-Immobilizing Method, Lock-Opening Touch, Magic-Shattering Strike, Mantis Form, Mastery of Small Manners, Maw of Dripping Venom, Mental Invisibility Technique, Mist on Water Attack, Mob-Dispersing Rebuke, Monkey Leap Technique, Mountain-Crossing Leap Technique, Nest of Living Strands, Observer-Deceiving Attack, Occult Essence Flow, Omniscient Ears Approach, One Weapon, Two Blows, Oracular Magistrate Understanding, Owl Clutches at the Night, Ox-Body Technique (x6), Paralyzing Touch Attack, Pattern Spider Touch, Peony Blossom Attack, Perfect Mirror, Phantom Arrow Technique, Protection of Celestial Bliss, Racing Hare Method, Raging Tiger Pounce, Rain of Feathered Death, Rain of Unseen Threads, Ready in Eight Directions Stance, Refinement of Flowing Shadows, Reflex Sidestep Technique, Reversal of Fortune, Righteous Lion Defense, Rout-Stemming Gesture, Sagacious Reading of Intent, Second Awareness Excellency, Second Bureaucracy Excellency, Second Dodge Excellency, Second Integrity Excellency, Second Linguistics Excellency, Second Lore Excellency, Second Occult Excellency, Second Resistance Excellency, Second Survival Excellency, Second War Excellency, Seven Points of Weakness Strike, Seven Shadow Evasion, Shadow-Body Style, Shadow Over Water, Shadow-Stepping Motion, Shroud of Night's Law, Solar Counterattack, Soaring Crane Leap, Solar Flare Methodology, Speed of Light Approach, Spider-Foot Style, Spine-Shattering Bite, Spirit-Cutting Attack, Spirit-Detecting Glance, Stalking Cat Movement Meditation, Stealing from Plain Sight Spirit, Stealth Essence Flow, Striking Fury Claws Attack, Summoning the Loyal Bow, Supreme Perfection of Archery, Supreme Perfection of Awareness, Supreme Perfection of Investigation, Supreme Perfection of Larceny, Supreme Perfection of Stealth, Surprise Anticipation Method, Temptation-Resisting Stance, Terrestrial Circle Sorcery, Tiger Warrior Training Technique, There Is No Wind, Third Craft Excellency, Third Medicine Excellency, Third Performance Excellency, Third Thrown Excellency, Thumbnail Spider March, Thunderbolt Attack Prana, Tiger Form, Touch of Blissful Release, Traceless Passage, Trackless Region Navigation, Trance of Unhesitating Speed, Triple-Distance Attack Technique, Unconquered Might, Unfolding Retribution Stance, Unhesitating Dedication, Unnatural Many-Step Stride, Unparalleled Acumen Meditation, Unshakeable Bloodhound Technique, Unsurpassed Hearing and Touch Discipline, Unsurpassed Sight Discipline, Unsurpassed Smell and Taste Discipline, Vanishing from Mind's Eye Method, Wall Climbing Technique, War Essence Flow, Water Spider Bite, Whirlwind Armor-Donning Prana, White Veil Form

Spells: Assassin's Fatal Touch, Becoming the Wood Friend, Blood Lash, Cirrus Skiff, Cloud Trapeze, Coin of Distant Vision, Corrupted Words, Death of Obsidian Butterflies, Disguise of the New Face, Dolorous Reflection, Droning Suggestion, Emerald Circle Banishment,

Emerald Countermagic, Empathic Wind, The Eye and the Mouth, The Faithful Ally, Flying Guillotine, Fugue of Truth, Hidden Judges of the Secret Flame, Hound of the Five Winds, Infallible Messenger, Lightning Spider, Mists of Eventide, Open the Spirit Door, Peacock Shadow Eyes, Private Plaza of Downcast Eyes, Ritual of Elemental Empowerment, Sapphire Circle Banishment, Sapphire Countermagic, Servant of Infallible Location, Shadow Summons, Shadow Theft, Shadows of the Ancient Past, Shadowy Simulacrums of Smoke, The Spy Who Walks in Darkness, Summon Elemental, Summon the Heavenly Portal, Theft of Memory, Travel Without Distance, The Violent Opening of Closed Portals, Voices of Distant Regard

Join Battle: 19

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 3, Accuracy 18, Damage 9B, Parry DV 10, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 3, Accuracy 17, Damage 12B, Parry DV 8, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 3, Accuracy 17, Damage 9B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Gauntlets of Distant Claws (melee): Speed 3, Accuracy 21, Damage 14L, Parry DV 10, Rate 3

Gauntlets of Distant Claws (ranged): Speed 3, Accuracy 21, Damage 8L, Range 15, Rate 1

Orichalcum Short Powerbow (Eagle's Rain): Speed 3, Accuracy 21, Damage 13L, Range 300, Rate 2

Soak: 11L/16B (Yoroi rapid-response armor, +7L/8B, Hardness: 3L/3B, fatigue value 1)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 15 **Willpower:** 10

Essence: 10

Personal Essence: 40 **Peripheral Essence:** 94 (74)

Committed Essence: 20

Other Notes: In addition to his combat accoutrements, Gold-Shadowed Arrow can always be found with his *Windblade*-class personal transport (Raptor) and a belt-mounted amulet of shadow walking in addition to such common devices as a hard mote and I AM glyph reader. In addition, the Night Caste has a Artifact 3 cache egg available to him that typically contains numerous false identities and disguise materials, as well as any equipment he thinks he'll need for a particular mission. (It has also come in handy in the past as everything from hard cover to an easy means to dispose of a corpse.)

As an ancient and respected Solar Exalt, Gold-Shadowed Arrow has a number of powerful manses under his control. These produce a Windhands Gemstone (mounted in his right gauntlet of distant claws), a Gem of Perfect Mobility (mounted on his powerbow) and a Stone of Gender Transformation (mounted in a skin mount amulet on the back of his neck).

Gold-Shadowed Arrow does not have a cult. If he feels the power of one flickering within him, he'll make a point of hunting it down and dispersing it.

The Hierophant

Once little more than a mortal chirurgeon, the Hierophant was Exalted for his steadfastness and will to survive during the turbulence of the Thousand Struggles Era. He holds his position because, at his behest, his circle chose not to fight and worked hardest to resolve the Period of Long Silence. In the process, they gained treaties and favors from nearly all Exalted then alive. Furthermore, his circle contains three Primordial War survivors. Only a few others boast so many, and his is certainly the most cohesive. But, although he's uniquely powerful, he's never quite been able to wrest total control of the Solar establishment under the Unionist banner.

Always dressed in white robes, with his white hat and staff of office, the Hierophant lives a life of purity. He only indulges in sexual congress with his Lunar mate, and only when the sun and moon are in the correct alignment. His diet is one of plain rice and green vegetables, and he devotes two hours a day to breath exercises and martial meditations. And yet, though he doesn't understand it, he's grown subtly corrupt. His enormous principality's idyllic, rolling lawns and lushly perfect gardens are fed by irresponsible Essence-drawing engines that render swaths of Creation cursed and infertile. His retinue's members are all reshaped to be nine feet tall, lightly muscled, and colored white-and-gold. He calls this a tribute to the Unconquered Sun, but it's truly because he finds them exquisite. Those self-indulgent warpings have left the mortals incapable of surviving without a diet as expensive as it is wasteful.

But the Hierophant's worst corruption is his certainty that only *he* can properly lead the Deliberative. He's made an increasing number of back-room deals and irreligious policies for ambition's sake. (In his mind, of course, it's for Creation's sake.) He's even taken the name of his god in vain.

Limit Break: Compassion: *Heart of Tears* (see **Exalted,** p. 104). The Hierophant hardly ever sees innocents, however, and certainly never encounters suffering in his beautiful manicured estate. He believes that every mortal in Creation is doing just fine guided by Solar wisdom. Although he abstractly regrets the deaths caused by Operation Wyldhand, he was confronted by no actual evidence of the suffering—and still hasn't been. Immured in his ivory tower, it's easy for him to believe such things as Wyldhand to be regrettable necessities, to justify a growing number of corrupt policies and to turn a blind eye to any pain that might cause him to weep. The Hierophant, it's important to note, doesn't *want* to know about suffering, since knowing about it hurts so much. Attempts to inform him will generally lose his attention to distraction and denial.

Motivation: Become the single Solar leader. The Hierophant has an Intimacy to his circlemates.

Caste: Zenith

Anima Banner: A gold-clawed white panther tilts back its head and roars.

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Stamina 6; Charisma 8, Manipulation 7, Appearance 6; Perception 7, Intelligence 6, Wits 6

Virtues: Compassion 5, Conviction 3, Temperance 2, Valor 4

Abilities: Archery 2, *Athletics* 6, *Awareness* 7, Bureaucracy 7 (Government +3), Craft (Earth) 4, Craft (Genesis) 5, Craft (Water) 8, Craft (Wood) 3, *Dodge* 6, *Integrity* 8 *(Self-Righteousness +3)*, Investigation 6 (Government +2), Larceny 3, Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Others: Dragon-tongue, Earthtongue, Flametongue, Forest-tongue, Pelagial, Riverspeak, Seatongue, Skytongue) 8, Lore 7 (Treaties +3), *Martial Arts 7 (Staff +3)*, *Medicine* 8, Melee 4, Occult 8, *Performance* 8 *(Speeches +2, Deliberative +1)*, *Presence* 8 *(Righteousness +2)*, *Resistance* 8, Ride 4, Sail 5, Socialize 8 (Deliberative +2), Stealth 2, *Survival* 8, Thrown 3, War 6 (Tzatli +2, Defense +1)

Backgrounds: Allies 5 (Legendary Ally), Arsenal 5 (Legendary Arsenal), Backing (Deliberative) 5 (Legendary Backing), Command 5, Connections (Deliberative) 5 (Legendary Connections), Connections (The Priesthood of the Unconquered Sun) 5, Connections (Rogue Tributaries) 4, Cult 3, Henchmen 5, Manse 5 (Legendary Manse), Panoply 5, Reputation (Virtuous Priest of the Sun) 5 (Legendary Reputation), Retainers 5, Salary 4, Wealth 5 (Legendary Wealth)

Charms: Adamant Skin Technique, Ailment-Rectifying Method, Anointment of Miraculous Health, Armored Scout's Invigoration, Authority-Radiating Stance, Battle Fury Focus, Bloodthirsty Sword-Dancer Spirit, Body-Mending Meditation, Body-Purifying Admonitions, Bureaucracy Essence Flow, Cast Out Beyond Regard, Catching the Sun's Glance, Celestial Circle Sorcery, Cleansing Flame Strike, Contagion-Curing Touch, Destiny-Manifesting Method, Durability of Oak Meditation, Element-Resisting Prana, Elusive Dream Defense, Enemy-Castigating Solar Judgment, Essence-Gathering Temper, First Awareness Excellency, First Bureaucracy Excellency, First Integrity Excellency, First Martial Arts Excellency, First Medicine Excellency, First Melee Excellency, First Performance Excellency, First Resistance Excellency, First War Excellency, Flawless Diagnosis Technique, Friendship with Animals Approach, Fury Inciting Presence, Glorious Solar Plate, Golden Janissary Form, Guiding Light Shines On, Hardship-Surviving Mendicant Spirit, Hauberk-Lightening Gesture, Heart-Compelling Method, Heroism-Encouraging Presence, Husband-Seducing Demon Dance, Hypnotic Tongue Technique, Immunity to Everything Technique, Infatuation-Gathering Idol Methodology, Infinite Athletics Mastery, Infinite BureaucracyMastery, Infinite Awareness Mastery, Infinite Dodge Mastery, Infinite Linguistics Mastery, Infinite Integrity Mastery, Infinite Martial Arts Mastery, Infinite Medicine Mastery, Infinite Performance Mastery, Infinite Presence Mastery, Infinite Resistance Mastery, Infinite Survival Mastery, Instant Treatment Methodology, Integrity-Protecting Prana, Invincible Armor Invocation, Iron Kettle Body, Iron Skin Concentration, Irresistible Questioning Technique, Irresistible Salesman Spirit, Judge's Ear Technique, Life-Sustaining Shelter Preparation, Light-on-Dark Shield, Lone Spark Lights the Conflagration, Majestic Radiant Presence, Medicine Essence Flow, Memory-Reweaving Discipline, Mind-Blanking Rebuke, Mob-Dispersing Rebuke, Ox-Body Technique (x8), Paralyzing Combustion Imbuement, Performance Essence Flow, Phantom-Conjuring Performance, Phoenix Renewal Tactic, Presence Essence Flow, Resistance Essence Flow, Respect Commanding Attitude, Righteous Lion Defense, Rotten Leaf Arrested,

Rout-Stemming Gesture, Searing After-Image Passion, Second Athletics Excellency, Second Dodge Excellency, Second Lore Excellency, Second Occult Excellency, Second Presence Excellency, Socialize Essence Flow, Spirit-Cutting Attack, Spirit-Detecting Glance, Spirit-Maintaining Maneuver, Spirit-Repelling Diagram, Spirit Strengthens the Skin, Stubborn Boar Defense, Sun King Radiance, Supreme Perfection of Medicine, Supreme Perfection of Performance, Supreme Perfection of Presence, Supreme Perfection of Resistance, Survival Essence Flow, Temptation-Resisting Stance, Terrestrial Circle Sorcery, Terrifying Apparition of Glory, Third Investigation Excellency, Third Linguistics Excellency, Third Ride Excellency, Third Survival Excellency, Touch of Blissful Release, Transcendent Hero's Meditation, Unbreakable Warrior's Mastery, Underling-Promoting Touch, Unhesitating Dedication, War Essence Flow, Where Is Doom Inquisition, Whirlwind Armor-Donning Prana, Wholeness-Restoring Meditation, Willpower-Enhancing Spirit, Worshipful Lackey Acquisition, Wound-Cleansing Meditation, Wound-Mending Care Technique

Spells: The Battle's End, Burning Eyes of the Offender, Cloud Trapeze, Commanding Presence of Fire, The Crumbling Walls, Demon of the First Circle, Demon of the Second Circle, Emerald Circle Banishment, Emerald Countermagic, Gentle Call of Lethe, Hideous Confusion of Tongues, Infallible Messenger, Internal Flame, Invulnerable Skin of Bronze, Open the Spirit Door, The Parting of the Seas, Peacock Shadow Eyes, Purifying Flames, River of Blood, Sapphire Countermagic, Spirit of Might, Summon Elemental, Water from Stone

Join Battle: 13

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 13, Damage 5B, Parry DV 7, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 12, Damage 8B, Parry DV 5, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 12, Damage 5B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Orichalcum Wrackstaff (Staff of the Sun): Speed 4, Accuracy 18, Damage 9L/17B, Parry DV 9, Rate 4

Soak: 15L/16B (Silken armor, +5L/3B, and discreet Essence armor, +7L/7B, Hardness: 4L/4B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 10 **Willpower:** 8

Essence: 8

Personal Essence: 32 **Peripheral Essence:** 78 (39)

Committed Essence: 39

Other Notes: The Hierophant's orichalcum-inlaid wrackstaff also acts as a metasorcerous phylactery into which is set a Gem of Grace. In addition, the Zenith is always garbed in a vestment of holy vigilance, allowing him to respond to those who venerate him, should he so desire. He also is attuned to a royal warstrider, *Champion of the Sun*, modeled on his own image and armed with a warstrider fire lance identical in appearance, if not function, to his wrackstaff. He typically keeps the artifact attuned but Elsewhere (as reflected by his committed Essence). He also wears the Ring of the Deliberative, mounted with a Jewel of the Lawgiver's Authority and the Heart of the Realm, the unique hearthstone that allows its bearer to wield the Sword of Creation (as well as offering other abilities). As arguably the most powerful voice in the Deliberative, the Hierophant also has access to nearly any artifact he might need, from an I AM glyph reader to a directional Titan.

Salina

Taking no title, Salina is the current darling of the Exalted social whirl. Her unpretentious optimism endears her to nearly everyone, while her incredible energy attracts many adherents to her causes (and attracts attention from the many who believe her causes insane). Born in a time and place of peace and prosperity, Salina grew up believing that everyone's basically reasonable and good, and that understanding has never left her. When others do evil, she'll always say it's because they didn't properly understand the good.

Salina's first incarnation fought, of course, in the Primordial War and was killed by She Who Lives In Her Name—the Principle of Hierarchy. But before he fell against those crystal-trapped fires, the ancient Zenith had a vision: he saw what Creation might be like without her. Though the next to receive his Exaltation didn't recall his blinding insight, the third incarnation—Salina—did.

It's practically impossible to spread and sustain that vision in a world dominated by inbuilt and obvious hierarchies, but if anyone can do it, Salina can. Though her principality must contain certain hierarchies in order to be compatible with the Order-Conferring Trade Pattern, she's made every rank ceremonial, enforces no laws and confers no actual authority on anyone (including herself). When Salina sits in the Deliberative, she never votes as her elders instruct her, but rather along a highly eccentric set of principles that emphasize freedom and personal responsibility. Somehow, this disobedience has never gotten her in trouble, but there's always a first time.

Only a few hundred years after her Exaltation, Salina famously convinced one of the oldest sorcerers alive, Devon, that his school was in error and hers the truth. In a move that shocked the sorcerous establishment, Devon performed a Solar ritual that sent every Devonian treatise up in flames, then turned his entire Academy over to Salina (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. II—The Black and White Treatises**, p. 32). That gained everyone's attention, and the Salinan school became something of a fad. The Zenith took advantage of this fact to push her most ambitious idea: a Working that would make sorcery available to anyone who could learn it, as long as they wanted to. This, she hoped, would remove sorcery from the grip of corruptible Academies, making it a far more egalitarian discipline.

While certain elders such as Bright Shattered Ice opposed this Working, the young sorcerer attached it as a cleverly worded rider on a more popular measure. She then planned every step well before the measure passed—so by the time its opponents realized what they'd voted for, the Salinan Working was already complete.

Bright Shattered Ice and others were displeased, but there was little they could do beyond watch Salina like hawks. They've seized upon every subsequent proposal of hers and turned it over and over for new deceptions, but since she's accomplished her grand Working, Salina's been laying low. On her own time and in secret, she's been looking for a way to make every circle of sorcery available to everyone—even mortals. Success seems unlikely, but she's sure that if she can only manage this, all her anti-hierarchical dreams will be realized.

Salina's wildest proposal in the last few centuries was to throw a great Calibration Feast every year: it would last all five days, she suggested, and every Solar would be encouraged to attend (though only sorcerers would be closely observed). The idea was simple—since Third Circle demons can only be summoned during Calibration, and nobody wants a Third Circle demon in Creation, everyone should come and feast together during that time. Thus, social pressure accomplishes what sorcery-restricting laws might not. This comparatively mild suggestion was greeted with great acclaim, and Salina delivers a speech at every feast.

A short, compact woman, this Solar isn't too much to look at, but the force of her personality hits onlookers like a blow. Her every word draws an irresistible response, and her laughter is contagious. She's never lacked for the attentions of the opposite sex, though she hasn't yet found a Lunar to marry; and she likes having kids, whom she educates in a somewhat haphazard way and sends out to "do some good, like fight an invading raksha or something." In particular, she's got an on-again-off-again involvement with Joyous Youth Juritsu, a Lesser Elemental Dragon of Wood (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. IV—The Roll of Glorious Divinity I**, pp. 131-134), and a number of her children are his. She keeps a much closer eye on them than she does the rest, for Juritsu's favorite activity is taking over the bodies and selves of his descendants. He's sworn to her that he'd never do that to their children, but Salina's not sure the dragon can help his nature.

Limit Break: The intense Salina is so concerned about the welfare of others that observing even minor social problems is likely to send her on an *Unshakable Crusade*. Whenever she notices an injustice, she rolls Compassion to gain Limit, and once her Limit Breaks, she becomes obsessed with one of the injustices she saw. The Zenith will then attempt whatever action she thinks necessary to immediately repair the problem. This might include fighting enemies far too strong for her, sacrificing her life to make her point, et cetera. She can control this in order to keep from taking suicidal actions, but will still act in an extreme manner. For instance, if she's controlling a Limit Break and believes Bright Shattered Ice is an impossibly cruel woman who cannot be allowed to rule mortals, then Salina need not forcibly remove the Twilight from power, but must still do her level best to completely undermine the elder's rule. This Limit Break lasts for a full day.

Motivation: Create true freedom by eliminating hierarchy.

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

Caste: Zenith

Anima Banner: A blazing golden eagle dives forward with every forceful gesture she makes.

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5; Charisma 7 (12 with artifact), Manipulation 7, Appearance 4; Perception 6, Intelligence 7, Wits 6

Abilities: Athletics 6, Awareness 6, *Bureaucracy 7 (Sneaky Maneuvers +2, Cooperatives +1)*, Craft (Fire) 4, *Dodge 7, Integrity 7 (Her Crusades +3)*, Investigation 7 (Research +1, Social Problems +1), *Larceny* 6, Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Others: Dragontongue, Earthtongue, Firetongue, Forest-Tongue, Riverspeak) 5 (Demon Dialects +1), *Lore 7 (The Primordials +2)*, Martial Arts 3, Medicine 7, Melee 6, *Occult 7 (Sorcery +3)*, *Performance 7 (Rallying Supporters +2)*, *Presence 7 (Her Crusades +2)*, *Resistance* 6, Ride 4, Socialize 7 (Politics +1), *Survival* 5, War 3

Backgrounds: Arsenal 2, Artifact 5, Backing (Salinan School) 5 (Legendary Backing), Connections (Deliberative) 4, Connections (Terrestrial Bureaucracy) 5, Cult 1, Henchmen 5, Manse 3, Mentor (Devon) 5, Panoply 2, Reputation (Sorcerer) 5, Savant 5, Wealth 2

Charms: All-Encompassing Sorcerer's Sight, Authority-Radiating Stance, Bulwark Stance, Bureau-Rectifying Method, Bureaucracy Essence Flow, Celestial Circle Sorcery, Destiny-Manifesting Method, Dipping Swallow Defense, Elusive Dream Defense, Enemy-Castigating Solar Judgment, First Athletics Excellency, First Dodge Excellency, First Lore Excellency, First Medicine Excellency, First Melee Excellency, First Occult Excellency, Foul Air of Argument Technique, Frugal Merchant Method, Ghost-Eating Technique, Heart-Compelling Method, Heavenly Guardian Defense, Husband-Seducing Demon Dance, Hypnotic Tongue Technique, Indolent Official Charm, Infinite Bureaucracy Mastery, Infinite Dodge Mastery, Infinite Integrity Mastery, Infinite Larceny Mastery, Infinite Lore Mastery, Infinite Melee Mastery, Infinite Occult Mastery, Infinite Performance Mastery, Infinite Presence Mastery, Infinite Resistance Mastery, Infinite Socialize Mastery, Infinite Survival Mastery, Insightful Buyer Technique, Integrity Essence Flow, Integrity-Protecting Prana, Irresistible Salesman Spirit, Lion's Roar Recovery, Majestic Radiant Presence, Occult Essence Flow, Ox-Body Technique (x4), Performance Essence Flow, Phoenix Renewal Tactic, Presence Essence Flow, Ready in Eight Directions Stance, Righteous Lion Defense, Sacrosanct Soul Retribution, Salinan Absorption, Searing After-Image Passion,

Second Bureaucracy Excellency, Second Integrity Excellency, Second Investigation Excellency, Second Performance Excellency, Second Presence Excellency, Second Resistance Excellency, Second Socialize Excellency, Shinmaic Communion, Shinmaic Calibration, Should the Sun Not Rise, Socialize Essence Flow, Solar Circle Sorcery, Solar Counterattack, Sorcerer's Burning Chakra Charm, Speed the Wheels, Spirit-Cutting Attack, Spirit-Detecting Glance, Spirit-Maintaining Maneuver, Spirit-Repelling Diagram, Stubborn Boar Defense, Sun King Radiance, Supreme Perfection of Integrity, Supreme Perfection of Occult, Temptation-Resisting Stance, Terrestrial Circle Sorcery, Terrifying Apparition of Glory, Third Awareness Excellency, Third Larceny Excellency, Touch of Blissful Release, Transcendent Hero's Meditation, Underling Promoting Touch, Unhesitating Dedication, Worshipful Lackey Acquisition, Wound-Mending Care Technique

Spells: Abjuration of the Maidens, Adamant Circle Banishment, Adamant Countermagic, The Battle's End, Becoming the Wood Friend, Benediction of Archgenesis, Calling the Stalwart Servitor, Chariot of the Blazing Sun, Cloud Trapeze, Death of Obsidian Butterflies, Demon of the First Circle, Demon of the Second Circle, Demon of the Third Circle, Dolorous Reflection, Droning Suggestion, Emerald Circle Banishment, Emerald Countermagic, The Eye and the Mouth, The Faithful Ally, Food from the Aerial Table, Hideous Confusion of Tongues, Impenetrable Frost Barrier, Impervious Sphere of Water, Incantation of Effective Restoration, Infallible Messenger, Invulnerable Skin of Bronze, Light of Solar Cleansing, Malediction of the Distorted Compass, Mercury's Deliverance, Mists of Eventide, Mystic Travel, Open the Spirit Door, Outside Worlds Within, Paralyzing Contradiction, Purifying Flames, Ritual of Elemental Empowerment, Sapphire Circle Banishment, Sapphire Countermagic, Shadowy Simulacrums of Smoke, Sleep of Stony Safety, Spirit of Might, Spoke the Wooden Face, Sprouting Shackles of Doom, Solar Sanctuary, Stormwind Rider, Summon Elemental, Summoning of the Harvest, Travel Without Distance, Unbreakable Bones of Stone, Virtuous Guardian of Flame, Wheel of the Turning Heavens, Winds of Confusion

Join Battle: 12

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 5B, Parry DV 5, Rate 3
Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 8B, Parry DV 3, Rate 2
Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 8, Damage 5B, Parry DV –, Rate 1
Orichalcum Daiklave (Last Resort): Speed 5, Accuracy 15, Damage 11L, Parry DV 7, Rate 4

Soak: 10L/10B (Orichalcum chain shirt, 7L/5B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 10 **Willpower:** 9

Essence: 7

Personal Essence: 30

Peripheral Essence: 72

Committed Essence: 17

Other Notes: Salina's greatest treasure is a silver chain-girdle that was granted to her previous incarnation by a goddess. She always wears it (often under her clothing), for it adds 5 to her Charisma and negates all comparative Appearance penalties she might suffer in Social Combat—as well as the comparative bonuses of her opponent. (For instance, if she goes up against Bright Shattered Ice, she will neither lose three dice from all her rolls, nor will the Twilight elder gain three dice to all her rolls.)

Salina tries to keep her people from worshiping her, with indifferent success.

Chosen of Luna

Mates, confidants and seconds to the Solar Exalted, it is often the Lunar Exalted to whom the Lawgivers delegate their most important tasks and reveal their darkest secrets. Creatures of unsurpassed savagery and animal magnetism, the Stewards are the power

behind their enthroned Solars in some principalities, while in others, they are dominated into quiescence by their dictatorial spouses.

Ingosh Silverclaws

Sharp-eyed Ingosh Silverclaws is a respected member of the Silver Pact and a quiet adherent to the Winding Path. As one of Luna's chosen priests, Ingosh considers it his duty to honor her in his politics through experimental contradiction of established protocol. Ingosh's Solar mate is comfortable with Silverclaws' practices and appreciates them as a method of strengthening the principality the two close friends rule together. The Dawn Caste Ironbound Mercy endures jests from other Solars about who truly rules their land, but Mercy is comfortable with his mate-companion. He will become less so when he realizes that Ingosh Silverclaws shaped him—from Mercy's Exaltation after the Time of Cascading Years onward—to accept the Winding Path's way of influencing government.

Ingosh regrets the necessity of manipulating his instinctual mate's development, but he refused to endure another White Wing Passing. Mercy's earlier incarnation was dictatorial, intransigent, sexually insistent and disregarding of Ingosh's desires and advice; and she died during the Time of Cascading Years. Silverclaws' greatest secret would get him executed for crimes against the Realm and Heaven. Inexplicably isolated *with* his mate White Wing Passing for almost seven centuries, Ingosh murdered the Solar to protect her lands from her foolishness and to save himself from a lifetime of degradation. Luckily, no one knows the two Exalts shared their cascading-years experience.

Now, Ingosh and Mercy run the Southeastern Doves' Flight Hills Synarchy in concordance. They plan to apply for prefectural status once they clean up the last of White Wing Passing's wars, dangerous experiments and time-delayed revenges, using the money they save from tributes to better their people's lots and improve their utilization of the land's resources. Most neighbors are less thrilled. If the Synarchy becomes a prefecture, the neighbors lose their opportunity to retaliate for slights they remember of White Wing Passing and feel pressure to themselves become prefectures.

The only nearby principality not sabotaging the attempt to legitimize the region is that under the care of Tamuz, Ingosh's student in the nature of being a Lunar and in the arts of love. As Ingosh has consistently rebuffed all of Ironbound Mercy's advances, this is another secret whose revelation would sour things between the bonded pair.

Limit Break: The Curse of the Mother Hen

Motivation: Ensuring the survival and advancement of lands under his responsibility.

Caste: Waxing Moon

Anima Banner: A bear standing amidst misty violet and azure backed by a blinding silver light.

Spirit Shape: Small bear with wise eyes.

Tell: Expressive, sympathetic eyes visible in all his forms.

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 6, Stamina 5; *Charisma* 8 *(Getting My Way +3)*, *Manipulation* 8 *(Socialize +3)*, *Appearance* 8; *Perception* 8, Intelligence 6, Wits 5

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

Abilities: Archery 3, Athletics 6, Awareness 8, Bureaucracy 6, Craft (Air) 4, Craft (Fire) 5, Dodge 6, Integrity 7, Investigation 6, Larceny 4, Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Others: Clawspeak, Dragontongue, Earthtongue, Flametongue, Foresttongue, Riverspeak) 6, Lore 8, Martial Arts 5, Medicine 5, Melee 5, Occult 6, Performance 6 (Inspiration +2), *Presence* 8, Resistance 7, Ride 5 (Simhata +2), Sail 6 (Sand-Ships +3), Socialize 7, Stealth 6, *Survival* 6, Thrown 7 (Boomerangs +3), War 7

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Arsenal 3, Backing (Deliberative) 3, Command 3, Cult 1, Heart's Blood 6, Henchmen 4, Panoply 5, Reputation (Politics) 3, Retainers 4, Savant 1, Solar Bond 2, Wealth 4

Knacks: Changing Plumage Mastery, Compassionate Mirror Nature, Deadly Beastman Transformation*, Emerald Grasshopper Form, Flickering Star Infusion, Hearth-and-Flame Shell, Honing the Stolen Form, Humble Mouse Shape, Internal Form Mastery, Intimate Training Recollection, Life of the Hummingbird, Luna's Hidden Face, Mountainous Spirit Expression, Prey's Skin Disguise, Quicksilver Second Face, Subtle Silver Declaration, Taste of Luna's Champions, Towering Beast Form

* In his war form, Ingosh Silverclaws benefits from +1 Strength, Dexterity and Stamina and the positive aspects of the following mutations: Armored Hide, Enhanced Smell, Fangs, Night Vision, Talons, Wolf's Pace, Wood Adaptation. He may also benefit from various Gift Charms.

Charms: Blood-Kin Sense, Bruise-Relief Method, Butterfly Eyes Defense, Butterfly Eyes Enhancement, Cat-Face Presentation, Cat-Falling Attitude, Celestial Circle Sorcery, Charismatic Lunar Trick, Coiled Serpent Strikes, Commanded to Fly, Counting the Elephant's Wrinkles, Creating the Wolf Attitude, Culling the Pride, Dog-Tongue Method, Eye of the Cat, Falling Leaf Distraction, False Burrow Pursuit, Feeding the Bear Progression, Fertile Breath Inversion, Finding the Needle's Eye, First Charisma Excellency, First Dexterity Excellency, First Intelligence Excellency, First Manipulation Excellency, First Strength Excellency, Flawless Charisma Focus, Flawless Manipulation Focus, Flowing Body Evasion, Foe-Turning Rebuke, Foot-Trapping Counter, Forsaking the Blood Posture, Glance-Oration Technique, God-Body Dissection, God-Cutting Essence, Golden Tiger Stance, Graceful Crane Stance, Halting the Scarlet Flow, Hard-Nosed Denial Style, Herd Reinforcement Stance, Herd-Strengthening Invocation, Hibernation of the Dog, Impossible Manipulation Improvement, Inevitable Genius Insight, Inevitable Spoor Discovery, Instinct Memory Insertion, Instinctive Charisma Unity, Instinctive Dexterity Unity, Instinctive Essence Prediction, Instinctive Manipulation Unity, Irresistible Silver Spirit, Keen Hearing and Touch Technique, Labyrinth of the Beast, Lightning Stroke Attack, Lunar Hero Form, Mask of White Jade, Mirror Sight Dismay, Motive-Dissecting Eye, Octopus and Spider Barrage, Outworld-Forsaking Stance, Ox-Body Technique (x4), Perfect Symmetry, Rabid Beast Attitude, Rapid-Speech Technique, Relentless Lunar Fury, Riding the Secret Wind, Righteous Lion Defense, Second Appearance Excellency, Second Intelligence Excellency, Second Perception Excellency, Second Stamina Excellency, Secret Speech Method, Secure Cat Stepping, Sense-Borrowing Method, Silver Lunar Resolution (x6), Snake Body Technique, South Mastery Technique, The Spider's Trap Door, Spirit-Maiming Essence Attack, Subduing the Honored Foe, Tearing Claw Atemi, Terrestrial Circle Sorcery, Thieving Magpie Prana, Third-Veil Suggestion, Thousand Claw Infliction, Topiary Culture Meditation, True-to-the-Pack Dedication, Twin-Fang Technique, Wary Swallow Method, Wasp Sting Blur, Watchful Spider Stance, Wind-Dancing Method, Wolf Ear Advantage, Wolf Eye Advantage

Spells: Becoming the Wood Friend, Demon of the First Circle, Demon of the Second Circle, Dolorous Reflection, Emerald Countermagic, Eternal Crystalline Encasement, Eye of Alliance, Open the Spirit Door, The Princes of the Fallen Tower, Private Plaza of Downcast Eyes, Ritual of Elemental Empowerment, Sapphire Countermagic, Spoke the Wooden Face, Stormwind Rider, Summon Elemental, Wood Dragon's Claw

Join Battle: 13

Attacks:

Human:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 12, Damage 4B, Parry DV 7, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 11, Damage 7B, Parry DV 5, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 11, Damage 4B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Moonsilver Sky-Cutter (Winter Deaths): Speed 5, Accuracy 19, Damage 9L, Range 70, Rate 2

War Form:

Bite: Speed 5, Accuracy 10, Damage 5L, Parry DV —, Rate 3

Talons: Speed 5, Accuracy 11, Damage 8L, Parry DV 6, Rate 3

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 12, Damage 5B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Moonsilver Sky-Cutter (Winter Deaths): Speed 5, Accuracy 20, Damage 10L, Range 70, Rate 2

Soak: 15L/19B; 19L/24B in war form (Moonsilver articulated plate, +12L/14B, Hardness: 8L/8B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 10 (11 in war form) **Willpower:** 8

Essence: 8

Personal Essence: 24 **Peripheral Essence:** 128 (118)

Committed Essence: 10

Other Notes: Ingosh Silverclaws prefers to solve his problems, be they political or physical threats, in methods other than direct. It's a matter of making worship of Luna part of his every action. A favorite tactic is to throw Winter Deaths through scenery to end fights in clear decision.

Winter Deaths inspires those it strikes to think of their final breaths. A successful attack causes the target's player to roll (Willpower + Integrity) at a difficulty equal to the levels of damage the weapon inflicts. Failure halves the victim's MDVs versus social attacks that manipulate fear of death, hunger or other dangers of long winters. Winter Deaths always returns to its wielder.

Ingosh Silverclaws' moonsilver articulated plate armor, Finch Feather Fallen, hypnotizes people with its scintillating beauty. Any who see and attack its wearer deduct a number of dice equal to Ingosh's Essence from their attack pools.

Finally, 60 motes of the Lunar's Peripheral Essence comes from Silver Lunar Resolution and can only be replenished by working to preserve the Southeastern Doves' Flight Hills Synarchy.

Lilith

Two fames precede Lilith across Creation, to even the most ignorant barbarians' camp. The first is awe for her physical prowess, which has defeated many potent demons and behemoths in single combat. Second is profound respect for her devotion to Desus, her bonded Solar

mate. Overseeing their prefecture in the East, she takes her chosen leisure while he toys with Deliberative politics and lays strong foundations for him to take control of neighboring principalities. These ploys draw antipathy from their neighbors that Lilith deals with on her own.

Lilith's dark secret is the war in her heart between loathing and love for her mate. Some Lunars know the physical harm he occasionally inflicts on her, but they know little of the degree to which he controls her life. She interacts only with Seneschals of the Sun Kings, as "they are the only respectful Lunars." Desus directs her study of Charms and Knacks. Lilith is female to the core and is a Twin-Faced Hero only to please Desus. He forbids her some Charms that would allow her to deceive or hide from him. If Lilith's mate knew she could invoke Clover Can't Be Found, he would punish her greatly.

For all that, Lilith loves Desus dearly and is loyal to him. Even mastering Clover Can't Be Found with the knowledge that it would displease him was difficult for Lilith. A silver tongue that plays off Lilith's hate and fear for Desus is effective, if it manages to avoid triggering the many defenses Desus placed in Lilith's personality. Some such mental landmines cause Lilith to turn and walk away, afterward to remember only that the person speaking angered her and she left. And that's the best-case scenario. One Dragon-Blood caused her to tear him limb from limb and forget the incident. Lilith denies it ever happened. Other Celestial Exalted restrain their public contradictions out of respect and marvel at her dedication in private.

One of Lilith's few disobediences is this: She is the secret patron of an RPC in the Northeast. It is where she was born and spent her first 19 years of life. Exaltation stole her youthful love away as the relationship she thought she could have faltered beneath her glory and her acquisition of a husband and mate. For centuries, she's guided the village's fortunes. Her first love's many-times-great-grandson is just coming of age, and he resembles his forebear more than Lilith can bear. She is on the verge of taking him as a lover, something Desus has forbidden, under the rationalization that taking lovers is no insult among the Exalted and is often expected. What punishments Desus has planned for such an event, or that he has programmed Lilith to execute herself, remain to be discovered.

Limit Break: The Curse of the Whipped Dog

Motivation: Please Desus.

Caste: Waning Moon

Spirit Shape: A white spotted owl

Anima Banner: A cloak of white owl feathers, settled over her like wings.

Tell: Feathers in her hair.

Attributes: Strength 5, *Dexterity 7*, *Stamina 7*; Charisma 5, *Manipulation* 6, Appearance 5; Perception 4, Intelligence 4, *Wits* 6

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

Abilities: Archery 2, Athletics 5, Awareness 5, Bureaucracy 2, Craft (Water) 3, Dodge 5, Integrity 2, Larceny 5, Linguistics (Native: Riverspeak; Others: Forest-tongue, Old Realm, Seatongue, Skytongue) 4, Lore 4, *Martial Arts 7*, Medicine 3, Melee 4 (Spears +2), Occult 3, Performance 4 (Fooling Desus +3), Presence 4, Resistance 5, Ride 2, Sail 1, Socialize 4, Stealth 4, *Survival 5*, Thrown 2, War 1 (Ambush +3)

Backgrounds: Arsenal 1, Artifact 2, Cult 1, Heart's Blood 4, Manse 2, Panoply 3, Retainer 3, Sifu 2, Solar Bond 5, Wealth 2

Knacks: Changing Plumage Mastery, Constant Quicksilver Rearrangement, Deadly Beastman Transformation*, Emerald Grasshopper Form, Flickering Star Infusion, Hearth-and-Flame Shell, Humble Mouse Shape, Hybrid Body Rearrangement**, Illimitable Beast Declaration, Intimate Training Recollection, Laurels-and-Ivy Technique, Life of the Hummingbird, Lightning-Change Style, Prey's Skin Disguise, Quicksilver Second Face, Subtle Silver Declaration, Twin-Faced Hero

* In her war form, Lilith benefits from +1 Strength, Dexterity and Stamina and the positive aspects of the following mutations: Feathers, Night Vision, Small, Talons, Wings. She may also benefit from various Gift Charms.

** Hybrid Body Rearrangement allows Lilith to activate any of the following mutations as a shapeshifting action that costs one mote: Chameleon, Gills, Enhanced Sight, Armored Hide.

Charms: Agitation of the Swarm Technique, Armor-Rending Claw Fist, Bear Sleep Technique, Bruise-Relief Method,

Butterfly Eyes Defense, Butterfly Eyes Fist, Butterfly Eyes Tread, Claws of the Silver Moon, Clover Can't Be Found, Coiled Serpent Strikes, Crouching Tiger Stance, Den Mother Method, Dog-Tongue Method, Durable Battle Mind, Eagle Eye Advantage, East Mastery Technique, External Hide Perfection, Eye of the Cat, Falling Leaf Distraction, False Burrow Pursuit, Ferocious Biting Tooth, First Appearance Excellency, First Charisma Excellency, First Dexterity Excellency, First Manipulation Excellency, First Perception Excellency, First Strength Excellency, First Wits Excellency, Flawless Dexterity Focus, Flawless Manipulation Focus, Flawless Strength Focus, Flesh-Tearing Entanglement, Flowing Body Ascension, Flowing Body Evasion, Foot-Trapping Counter, Frenzied Bear Fortification, Furious Hound Pursuit, Furious Unhappy Recourse, Golden Tiger Stance, Graceful Crane Stance, Greedy Mosquito Bite, Ground-Denying Defense, Halting the Scarlet Flow, Hide-Toughening Essence, Impossible Dexterity Improvement, Impossible Manipulation Improvement, Impressions of Strength (Ogre's Loving Caress, Undeniable Might), Instinct-Driven Beast Movement, Instinctive Dexterity Unity, Instinctive Manipulation Unity, Inviting the Winter Wolf, Irresistible Silver Spirit, Jaws of the River Dragon, Keen Hearing and Touch Technique, Light-Footed Mountain Goat Stance, Lightning Stroke Attack, Lost Mirror Flight, Luna's Fortitude, Lunar Hero Form, Many-Pockets Meditation, Many-Armed Monkey Style, Mask of White Jade, Meerkat Alertness Practice, Might-Bolstering Blow, Mirror Sight Dismay, Octopus and Spider Barrage, One of the Herd, Ox-Body Technique (x4), Perfection of the Mockingbird, Perfect Symmetry, Prey-Hobbling Bite, Rabid Beast Attitude, Relentless Lunar Fury, Righteous Lion Defense, Running Through the Herd, Second Stamina Excellency, Secure Cat Stepping, Secure Den Prana, Silver Lunar Resolution, Snake Body Technique, South Mastery Technique, The Spider's Trap Door, Spreading the Wyld Roots, Steadfast Yeddim Meditation, Terrible Wolverine Onslaught, Thieving Magpie Prana, Thousand Claw Infliction, Throat-Baring Hold, True-to-the-Pack Dedication, Twin-Fang Technique, Unstoppable Lunar Wound, Wary Swallow Method, Wasp Sting Blur, Wind-Dancing Method

Join Battle: 11

Attacks:

Human:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 15, Damage 5B, Parry DV 8, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 14, Damage 8B, Parry DV 6, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 14, Damage 5B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Moonsilver Dire Lance (Luna's Fang): Speed 5, Accuracy 17, Damage 13L/17L, Parry DV 9, Rate 2

Moonsilver Short Powerbow (Luna's Bite): Speed 6, Accuracy 12, Damage 9L, Rate 2, Range 350

War Form:

Talons: Speed 5, Accuracy 16, Damage 8L, Parry DV 9, Rate 3

Talon Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 15, Damage 11L, Parry DV 7, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 15, Damage 6B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Moonsilver Dire Lance (Luna's Fang): Speed 5, Accuracy 18, Damage 14L/18L, Parry DV 9, Rate 2

Moonsilver Short Powerbow (Luna's Bite): Speed 6, Accuracy 13, Damage 10L, Range 350, Rate 2

Soak: 8L/9B; 8L/10B in war form (Moonsilver hearthstone bracers, +2L/0B, and moonsilver breastplate [Soaring Lovers]; 2L/2B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 13 **Willpower:** 7

Essence: 7

Personal Essence: 21 **Peripheral Essence:** 72 (58)

Committed Essence: 14

Other Notes: Lilith takes pleasure in bringing elegance, distilled brutality and smooth success to combat. She happily duels with friends and rivals and destroys enemies of the Realm wherever she finds them. She possesses a hearthstone known as the Midnight War Crystal set in her hearthstone bracer, which allows her to challenge any person she knows to combat in their dreams. It is identical to waking combat, but the Essence and Willpower spent and wounds taken are not real, and the victor regains one point of temporary Willpower upon waking. A Gemstone of Shadows is set in her powerbow.

Also, 10 motes of the Lunar's Peripheral Essence comes from Silver Lunar Resolution and can only be replenished by working to protect her RPC in the Northeast.

Ma-Ha-Suchi

The Wolf with the Red Roses is infamous as the terror of bedchambers across the Blessed Isle. The Solar Temen Ambereyes issues public chastisements of his platonic Lunar mate while privately encouraging Ma-Ha-Suchi's recreation. Despite the rare negative feeling the Wolf's habit engenders (and the Dragon-Blooded assassins that often accompany such feelings), it is a sharp and versatile political weapon for Ambereyes—and it delays the day that the Ma-Ha-Suchi seeks entrance into Ambereyes' bed.

Ma-Ha-Suchi is indiscriminate in partners, apart from his ambition to sleep with every Celestial Exalt, though few mortals intrigue him enough to attract his lust. He sleeps with few people more than once, and his only recurrent lover is Odovacar of Rust, husband-wife to a neighboring Lawgiver on the Blessed Isle. Odovacar's Solar mate is jealous and unforgiving of affairs that reach beyond that of convenience, so their trysts remain secret lest Odovacar,

Ma-Ha-Suchi and Temen Ambereyes suffer large personal and political consequences.

Some people consider Ma-Ha-Suchi an irredeemable rascal, others an enemy, but none deny him admission into their principalities or their homes. He is too charming a guest and too pleasant a companion. He is not the oldest, most powerful or most socially convincing of the Exalted, but he uses that to his advantage. When Ma-Ha-Suchi cannot overwhelm potential hosts with his personality, he disarms them with his youth. Only the Sidereal Hadeon (see p. 170) avoids the Wolf with the Red Roses without respite. Ma-Ha-Suchi is confident that they will meet, because he prowls Meru and the Blessed Isle for the very reason that all Celestial Exalted come there eventually.

The Lunar has estates in the Threshold, some personal, some shared with Ambereyes and one for secret meetings with Odovacar. He rarely visits them. Everything in the world is in Meru, so why would he spend his time in barbarism? Ma-Ha-Suchi feels the same way about the dominion he and Ambereyes administer on the Isle. While Ambereyes enjoys the arenas of political and economic combat, Ma-Ha-Suchi leaves the busywork to his Terrestrial subordinates and aids his bonded mate as an afterthought. I AM conveys no messages left for him regarding his duties in the prefecture, by longstanding command. This would cause trouble, but I AM intelligently selects messages to share based on content and originator and has never been chastised by Ma-Ha-Suchi on the matter.

Limit Break: The Curse of the Raging Bull

Motivation: Bed every Celestial Exalt.

Caste: Waxing Moon

Spirit Shape: A handsome, groomed and powerful wolf.

Anima Banner: Glorious bright white and silver behind grinning wolf teeth.

Tell: Sharp canines in his smile.

Attributes: *Strength* 5, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5; *Charisma 7*, *Manipulation 7*, *Appearance 7*; Perception 6, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

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

Abilities: Archery 4 (Showing Off +2), Athletics 5, Awareness 4, Bureaucracy 2, Dodge 4, Integrity 4, Investigation 3, Larceny 4, Linguistics (Native: Earthtongue; Others: Flametongue, Forest-tongue, Old Realm, Riverspeak, Seatongue, Skytongue) 6, Lore 2, Martial Arts 3, Medicine 1, *Melee* 5, Occult 3, Performance 6, *Presence* 6 *(Seduction +3)*, Resistance 4, Ride 3, Sail 3, Stealth 2, Socialize 6 (Idle Pastimes +2), *Survival 2*, Thrown 2, War 2

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Artifact 4, Artifact 3, Artifact 3, Artifact 2, Connections (Celestial Exalted Lovers) 4, Cult 2, Heart's Blood 2, Panoply 3, Reputation (Lover) 5 (Legendary Reputation), Retainers 3, Wealth 3

Knacks: Changing Plumage Mastery, Compassionate Mirror Nature, Courtesan's Possession, Deadly Beastman Transformation*, Flickering Star Infusion, Honing the Stolen Form, Life of the Hummingbird, Prey's Skin Disguise, Twin-Faced Hero

* In his war form, Ma-Ha-Suchi benefits from +1 Strength, Dexterity and Stamina and the positive aspects of the following mutations: Cheetah's Pace, Fangs, Fire Adaptation, Inexhaustible, Night Vision, Small, Tail, Talons, Thick Skin. He may also benefit from various Gift Charms.

Charms: Blood-Kin Sense, Bruise-Relief Method, Butterfly Eyes Defense, Cat-Face Presentation, Cat-Falling Attitude, Charismatic Lunar Trick, Chattering Magpie Inflection, Cobra Hypnotic Method, Counting the Elephant's Wrinkles, Dog-Tongue Method, East Mastery Technique, Falling Leaf Distraction, False Burrow Gift, False Burrow Pursuit, First Charisma Excellency, First Dexterity Excellency, First Manipulation Excellency, First Perception Excellency, First Strength Excellency, Foe-Marking Style, Foe-Turning Rebuke, Forgetful Victim Prana, Glance-Oration Technique, Graceful Crane Stance, Hard-Nosed Denial Style, Heightened Smell and Taste Method, Hide of the Cunning Hunter, Hide-Toughening Essence, Instinct Memory Insertion, Instinctive Charisma Unity, Instinctive Manipulation Unity, Irresistible Silver Spirit, Keen Hearing and Touch Technique, Keen Smell and Taste Technique, Light-Footed Mountain Goat Stance, Lightning Flash Might Methodology, Lost Mirror Flight, Mask of White Jade, Meerkat Alertness Practice, Mind-Blanking Fear Technique, Mirror Sight Dismay, Motive-Dissecting Eye, New Friend Aroma, Observed Predator Instinct, Outworld-Forsaking Stance, Ox-Body Technique (x2), Perfect Fear Scent, Perfect Symmetry, Rapid-Speech Technique, Righteous Lion Defense,

Scathing Lunar Condemnation, Secret Speech Method, Second Appearance Excellency, Second Stamina Excellency, Second Wits Excellency, Serpent's Tooth Reply, Silver-Swift Retort, Stance-as-Thought Stride, Steadfast Yeddim Meditation, Subduing the Honored Foe, Subtle Silver Command, Tearing Claw Atemi, Terrifying Lust Infliction, Third-Veil Suggestion, Unnoticed Confusion Attack, Wolf Ear Advantage

Join Battle: 9

Attacks:

Human:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 5B, Parry DV 5, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 8, Damage 8B, Parry DV 3, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 8, Damage 5B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Moonsilver Reaper Daiklave (Silver Sliver): Speed 4, Accuracy 16, Damage 9L, Parry DV 8, Rate 3

Moonsilver Short Powerbow (Touch of Grace): Speed 6, Accuracy 12, Damage 9L, Range 350, Rate 2

War Form:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 10, Damage 6B, Parry DV 6, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 9B, Parry DV 4, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 9, Damage 6B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Fangs: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 6L, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Talons: Speed 5, Accuracy 10, Damage 8L, Parry DV 6, Rate 3

Moonsilver Reaper Daiklave (Silver Sliver): Speed 4, Accuracy 17, Damage 10L, Parry DV 8, Rate 3

Moonsilver Short Powerbow (Touch of Grace): Speed 6, Accuracy 13, Damage 9L, Range 350, Rate 2

Soak: 8L/10B; 10L/12B in war form (Moonsilver lamellar, +5L/5B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 8 (9 in war form) **Willpower:** 7

Essence: 7

Personal Essence: 21 **Peripheral Essence:** 62 (49)

Committed Essence: 13

Other Notes: Ma-Ha-Suchi prefers love to war, but his image is everything. Given the choice between fighting and looking like a fool, he'll fight—but do everything he can to end the conflict gracefully and with some egg on his opponent's face. And he's good at it, too.

Aiding him in this are his uniquely designed weapons and armor. Silver Sliver is an elegant moonsilver reaper daiklave that accents Ma-Ha-Suchi's image. Add one success to called shots and attempts to show off with it. Touch of Grace is a moonsilver short powerbow that automatically hits any target, regardless of difficulty, that has no Defense Value, a quality he employs to show off. The damage rating assumes broadhead arrows. Ma-Ha-Suchi's moonsilver lamellar armor Lover's Embrace is beautiful, adding one to Ma-Ha-Suchi's Appearance in all forms. It makes him look particularly dashing after combat, increasing his Appearance by one more dot after it protects him from combat and for the scene that follows.

Tamuz

Tamuz's first love has always been war. As a youth, his delight was leading his friends against their rivals in play, plotting victories in team sports and exercising his natural aptitude for strategy board games. His admission into the Dejazmachy Steadfast Defenders surprised no one, and his meteoric rise through the ranks was entirely due to merit. He still made enemies, especially among those Dragon-Blooded he surpassed. Some of them remain alive, others passed their resentment to their descendents, and the lot of them plot in secret now that Tamuz is one of the elite Celestial Exalted. It was Tamuz's tenacity in the face of impossible odds and favoritism that earned him Luna's Blessing.

Exaltation proved Tamuz's right to high place in the army. The Dejazmachy's Queen Chiara is Tamuz's bonded mate, and in her name, he shaped her Steadfast Defenders into a conquering military worth those of any three neighboring tributaries. The Deliberative requested his service, and he distinguished himself in campaigns against the Fair Folk of all directions. In fact, his dedication to the task regardless of political consideration earned him lasting enmity among the Fair Folk and his allies.

Then, Queen Chiara recalled Tamuz from the field. She refused further entreaties for his services on his behalf, insisting that his place was with her, and set the Half Moon to governing the lands he had conquered for her in the earlier days of his Exaltation. This is a task to which the territory's Dragon-Blooded are better suited, but Chiara insists that Tamuz care for it personally. This creates weaknesses in the bureaucracy that enemies exploit, but he has little choice. He is Dejazmach Tamuz (a title Chiara's former incarnation bore but Chiara found distasteful and passed to her mate), and his duty is in the Starlit Ice Dejazmachy.

Impartial Tailor Teruko, a Sidereal of note in the Southern Convention, recently intimated to Tamuz that she was responsible for Tamuz's talent for strategy and his ascension to the heights that attracted Luna's attention. The Impartial Tailor's lie fools Tamuz so far, and the Lunar wonders whether he owes Teruko gratitude for the honor… or enmity for his current situation. Which he gives her, and whether she recognizes the danger before he does, remains to be seen, though Tamuz has already drawn up plans for the military conquest of all lands for which Impartial Tailor Teruko bears any responsibility as a theoretical exercise.

Limit Break: The Curse of the Lone Wolf

Motivation: Guide his people to military independence.

Caste: Half Moon

Anima Banner: Deep blues and silver-tinged browns that surround piercing eyes.

Spirit Shape: A sleek, fit gazelle hound.

Tell: His shadow has perked, peaked ears, no matter his actual form.

Attributes: Strength 3, *Dexterity* 6, Stamina 5; *Charisma* 7, Manipulation 6, Appearance 5; *Perception* 6, *Intelligence* 7, Wits 4

Virtues: Compassion 4, Conviction 3, Temperance 2, Valor 5

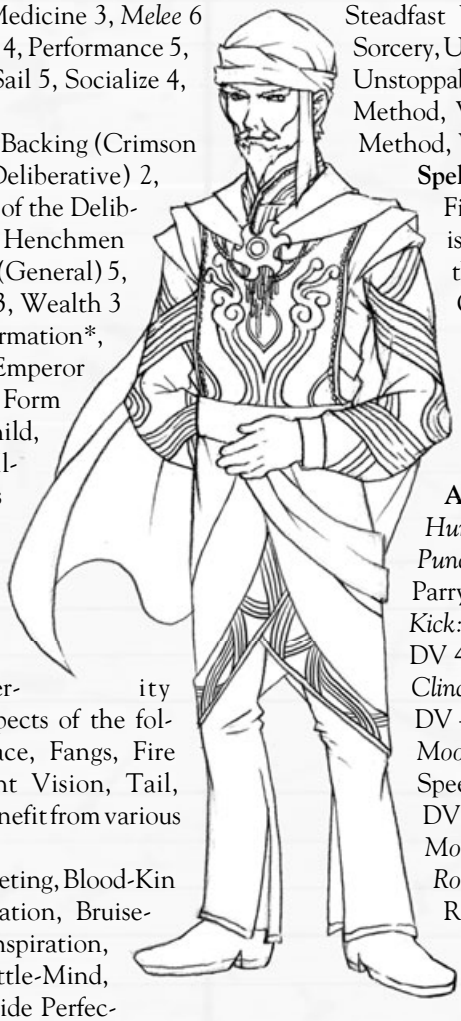
Abilities: Archery 5 (Sniping +2), Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Bureaucracy 4, Craft (Earth) 4, Craft (Fire) 4, Dodge 5, Integrity 3, Investigation 1, Linguistics (Native: Flametongue; Others: Earthtongue, Forest-tongue, Old Realm, River-speak) 4, Lore 4, Martial Arts 3, Medicine 3, *Melee* 6 *(Disarming +2, Swords +1)*, Occult 4, Performance 5, Presence 3, Resistance 3, Ride 3, Sail 5, Socialize 4, *Survival 4, War* 6 *(The South +3)*

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Arsenal 3, Backing (Crimson Panoply of Victory) 1, Backing (Deliberative) 2, Command 4, Connections (Army of the Deliberative) 4, Cult 2, Heart's Blood 4, Henchmen 3, Manse 3, Panoply 2, Reputation (General) 5, Retainers 3, Salary 1, Solar Bond 3, Wealth 3

Knacks: Deadly Beastman Transformation*, Devastating Ogre Enhancement, Emperor Ox Expansion, Essential Mirror Form (Green Sun Child), Green Sun Child, Heart-Theft of the Behemoth, Illimitable Beast Declaration, Luna's Hidden Face, Mountainous Spirit Expression, Terrifying Beastman Alteration*, Towering Beast Form

* In his war form, Tamuz benefits from +2 Strength, Dexterity and Stamina and the positive aspects of the following mutations: Cheetah's Pace, Fangs, Fire Adaptation, Inexhaustible, Night Vision, Tail, Talons, Thick Skin. He may also benefit from various Gift Charms.

Charms: Bird Falls from Flock Targeting, Blood-Kin Sense, Boundary-Marking Meditation, Bruise-Relief Method, Diving Hawk Inspiration, Dog-Tongue Method, Durable Battle-Mind, Eagle Eye Advantage, External Hide Perfection, Eye of the Cat, First Charisma Excellency, First Dexterity Excellency, First Intelligence Excellency, First Manipulation Excellency, First Wits Excellency, Flawless Charisma Focus, Flight of the Sparrow, Flowing Body Evasion, Frenzied Bear Fortification, Furious Hound Pursuit, God-Cutting Essence, Golden Tiger Stance, Halting the Scarlet Flow, Hide-Toughening Essence, Instinct-Driven Beast Movement, Instinctive Charisma Unity, Leaf-Falling Scrutiny, Lesson of the Winter Wolf, Lessons in the Blood, Loyal Beast-Friend Enlightenment, Maintaining the Pack, Meerkat Alertness Practice, Mist-Walking Prana, Moonlight Curtain Drawn, Native Son's Grace, Nature-Reinforcing Allocation, North Mastery Technique, Ox-Body Technique (x3), Pack and Flock Guidance, Pack Instinct Affirmation, Predator and Prey Recognition, Predator's Insight, Ranging Wolf Marking, Relentless Lunar Fury, Relentless Lunar Horde, Righteous Lion Defense, School Becomes Shark Formation, Second Appearance Excellency, Second Intelligence Excellency, Second Perception Excellency, Second Stamina Excellency, Secure Cat Stepping, Sense-Borrowing Method, Shadowlands Circle Necromancy, Sharing the Gifts of Luna, Silver Lunar Resolution (x3), South Mastery Technique, Steadfast Yeddim Meditation, Terrestrial Circle Sorcery, Unstoppable Beast-Warrior Indoctrination, Unstoppable Juggernaut Incarnation, Wary Swallow Method, Watchful Spider Stance, Wind-Dancing Method, Wolf Pack Training Technique



Spells: Coin of Distant Vision, Demon of the First Circle, Dusk Eyes, Emerald Circle Banishment, Emerald Countermagic, Hound of the Five Winds, Infallible Messenger, Iron Countermagic, Personal Tempest, Raise the Skeletal Horde, Raising the Earth's Bones, Stormwind Rider, Summoning of the Harvest, The Violent Opening of Closed Portals, Water from Stone

Join Battle: 7

Attacks:

Human:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 10, Damage 3B, Parry DV 6, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 6B, Parry DV 4, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 9, Damage 3B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Moonsilver Reaver Daiklave (Bull's Horns): Speed 5, Accuracy 18, Damage 12L/3, Parry DV 8, Rate 2

Moonsilver Long Powerbow (Parliament of Rooks): Speed 6, Accuracy 13, Damage 8L, Range 450, Rate 3

War Form:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 12, Damage 5B, Parry DV 7, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 11, Damage 8B, Parry DV 5, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 11, Damage 5B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Fangs: Speed 5, Accuracy 9, Damage 4L, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Talons: Speed 5, Accuracy 12, Damage 7L, Parry DV 7, Rate 3

Moonsilver Reaver Daiklave (Bull's Horns): Speed 5, Accuracy 20, Damage 14L/3, Parry DV 9, Rate 2

Moonsilver Long Powerbow (Parliament of Rooks): Speed 6, Accuracy 15, Damage 8L, Range 450, Rate 3

Soak: 15L/14B; 16L/16B in war form (hearthstone bracers, +2L/0B, and moonsilver reinforced breastplate, +10L/9B, +1 fatigue value)
Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap
Dodge DV: 12 (13 in war form) **Willpower:** 9
Essence: 7
Personal Essence: 25 **Peripheral Essence:** 96 (76)
Committed Essence: 20
Other Notes: Tamuz is an intelligent warrior and one of the most-recognized (and least-utilized) generals of the Age. He believes Mars to favor the best prepared army in a conflict, so he devotes great effort to possessing as much information as possible. Sense-Borrowing Method is a friend to him. Most of his spells are devoted to aiding his army, from gathering info and transportation to tactics and provisioning.

As one would expect of so mighty a warrior, Tamuz's weaponry is as impressive as he is. The Half Moon's reaver daiklave Bull's Horns is a double-edged moonsilver weapon with a gap down the middle. Its recognizable profile adds four dice to rolls to control a unit when unsheathed in combat, and wielding it eliminates targets' bonuses to close combat defense due to formation. In it is set a Jewel of Fire Sense. His right hearthstone bracer bears the One Will Gem. It communicates his will instantly to all soldiers in a unit he commands, negating the need for relays, adding two to their Drill and increasing Might by one. Parliament of Rooks is a moonsilver long powerbow with a Sentinel's Stone set in its grip. In mass combat, the bow's arrows multiply rapidly into flocks of dark projectiles, eliminating targets' bonuses to defense against ranged attacks due to formation. Damage rating assumes broadhead arrows, but Tamuz equips target arrows when advantageous. The Deliberative awarded Tamuz with his moonsilver reinforced breastplate, Honor of Meru's Guardian, before Chiara forced him into obscurity. By committing 10 motes at the start of a battle, Tamuz guarantees that most of his unit's soldiers survive—battle incapacitates them rather than kills them. This subtracts an amount equal to his Essence from the number of days necessary to recover each point of Magnitude after a battle (see **Exalted**, p. 169).

Chosen of the Maidens

Trusted advisors to the Solar Exalted and liaisons between the Lawgivers and the gods of Yu-Shan, the Sidereals of the Five-Score Fellowship exercise tremendous influence over the affairs of Creation, even though they seldom hold the actual reins of power.

Chejop Kejak

Chejop Kejak believes in knowledge. With it, Chejop makes the right decisions for the future. It is more certain than guesswork, and it risks less than idealism. He is the driving member of a group that comprises a third of the Five-Score Fellowship, the Fallen Tears Society, which advocates operating the Bureau of Destiny aggressively based on solid trends (past and future) and their prophecies. More than a few gods feel threatened by the idea of the Maidens' Chosen claiming more influence over the Bureau. The most insecure exercise their influence to demote Chejop Kejak's allies or send them on long-term missions. Some take the hint, others pronounce their political views with renewed fervor, and yet others come to Chejop's side in reaction. All in all, the Fallen Tears Society's numbers fluctuate gently around a solid core membership.

Kejak is known for his mediation, his ability to find a common ground between two people and convince both to agree to it. That he uses secrets of both or all parties concerns few; he is a discreet soul who wields the secrets as context rather than as blackmail. To him, it is all a matter of acting on complete information for the collective good. And the few who resent his knowledge of their secrets fail to ruin his reputation, as their complaints inevitably humiliate them. Revenge festers in some hearts, but that does not concern Chejop, who is well protected.
Limit Break: Oracles' Flawed Fate
Motivation: Protect Creation and its future through knowledge.
Caste: Chosen of Secrets
Anima Banner: A rich, soothing green.
Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5; Charisma 7, Manipulation 7, Appearance 7; Perception 7, Intelligence 6, Wits 5
Virtues: Compassion 3, Conviction 4, Temperance 4, Valor 3
Abilities: Athletics 5, *Awareness* 7, Bureaucracy 6, *Craft (Air)* 5, *Craft (Earth)* 5, *Craft (Fate)* 6, *Craft (Fire)* 5, *Craft (Genesis)* 5, *Craft (Magitech)* 5, *Craft (Water)* 5, *Craft (Wood)* 5, Dodge 6, Integrity 6, *Investigation* 6, *Larceny* 5, Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Others: Deliberative Army Code, Dragontongue, Earthtongue, Fallen Tears Crystalline Codex Cipher, Forbidden Manse of Ivy Cipher, Pelagial, Riverspeak) 7, *Lore* 6, Martial Arts 6, Medicine 5, Melee 5, *Occult* 6, Performance 6, *Presence* 6, Resistance 6, Ride 5, Sail 4, *Socialize* 6, *Stealth* 7, Survival 2, Thrown 4, War 4
Backgrounds: Acquaintances 5, Allies 5 (Legendary Ally), Artifact 4, Backing (Forbidding Manse of Ivy) 5, Connections (Bureau of Destiny) 4, Connections (Deliberative) 4, Connections (Five-Score Fellowship) 3, Cult 1, Manse 4, Panoply 3, Reputation (Mediator) 4, Retainers 5, Salary 5, Savant 3, Wealth 4
Charms: Absence, Air Aspect Terrestrial Exalt Ways, Astrology Interruption Method, Auspicious Prospects for Battles, Auspicious Prospects for Secrets, Auspicious Prospects for Serenity, Avoidance Kata, Avoiding the Truth Technique, Blade of the Battle Maiden, Blinding the Boar, Breaking the Wild Mortal, Cannibalistic Heritage Technique, Cash and Murder Games, Celestial Circle Sorcery, Charcoal March of Spiders Form, Charm Redirection

Technique, Compassionate Essence Replenishment, Conclusion-Pursuing Approach, Crimson Palm Counterstrike, Dance of the Hungry Spider, Deadly Starmetal Offensive, Death-Parrying Stroke, Defense of Shining Joy, Demesne and Manse Form, Demesne Emulation Practice, Destiny-Knitting Entanglement, Duck Fate, Easily Accepted Proposition Stance, Efficient Secretary Technique, Expected Pain, Fateful Awareness Excellency, Fateful Craft Excellency, Fateful Dodge Excellency, Fateful Lore Excellency, Fateful Martial Arts Excellency, Fateful Performance Excellency, Fateful Presence Excellency, Fateful Resistance Excellency, Fateful Socialize Excellency, Faultless Ceremony, Favorable Inflection Procedure, First Awareness Excellency, First Craft Excellency, First Dodge Excellency, First Lore Excellency, First Martial Arts Excellency, First Performance Excellency, First Presence Excellency, First Resistance Excellency, First Socialize Excellency, Five Jade Fury, Flickering Moonsilver Approach, Flight of Mercury, Force Decision, Fortuitous Fellowship, Four Magical Materials Form, Full Moon Lunar Exalt Ways, Games of Divinity Form, Glory Path, God Ways, Grandmother Spider Mastery, Harmonic Completion, Harmony of Blows, Heart-Brightening Presentation Style, Horrific Wreath, Ice and Fire Binding, Icy Hand, Impeding the Flow, Impose Motivation, Joy in Adversity Stance, Jumping Spider Strike, Life-Severing Blow, Life Without Compunction, Loyalty-Sacrificing Sidestep, Mark of Exaltation, Maw of Dripping Venom, Metal Storm, Methodology of Secrets, Mirror-Shattering Method, Name-Pilfering Practice, Nest of Living Strands, Night Solar Exalt Ways, Of Secrets Yet Untold, Of the Shape of the World, Of Truths Best Unspoken, Ordained Bridle of Mercury, Orichalcum Sheathing Stance, Ox-Body Technique, Pattern Spider Touch, Perfection in Life, Predestined Delivery Shaping, Presence in Absence Technique, Preservation of Resolve, Prior Warning, Prismatic Arrangement of Creation Form, Rain of Unseen Threads, Research Assistant Invocation, Salt into Ash Sleight, Secrets of Future Strife, Sequential Charm Disruption, Serendipitous Voyage, Shield of Destiny, Shun the Smiling Lady, Sidereal Shell Games, Soft Presence Practice, Someone Else's Destiny, Song of Spirit Persuasion, Soul Fire Shaper Form, Spell-Shattering Palm, Spirit-Shape Companion, Stern Essence Replenishment, Stone Skipping Spirit, Supernal Awareness, Terrestrial Circle Sorcery, Thought-Swiping Distraction, Thumbnail Spider March, Unhearing Dedication, Unnatural Many-Step Stride, Unobstructed Blow, Violet Bier of Sorrows Form, Walls of Salt and Ash, Wanting and Fearing Prayer, Water and Fire Legion, Water and Fire Treaty, Water Spider Bite, Wise Choice, World-Shaping Artistic Vision (Knowledge +2), Yellow Path, You and Yours Stance

Spells: Coin of Distant Vision, Corrupted Words, Demon of the First Circle, Demon of the Second Circle, Empathic Wind, The Faithful Ally, Hidden Judges of the Secret Flame, Incantation of Spiritual Discretion, Infallible Messenger, Lightning Spider, Mercury's Deliverance, Open the Spirit Door, Paralyzing Contradiction, Raise the Puissant Sanctum, The Sacred Tongue, Sapphire Circle Banishment, Sapphire Countermagic, Shadowy Simulacrums of Smoke, Stormwind Rider, Summon Elemental, Summon Ghost, Summon Spirit Boat, Summoning of the Harvest, Threefold Binding of the Heart, Thunder Wolf's Howl, Travel Without Distance, Virtuous Guardian of Flame, Voices of Distant Regard, Whirlwind of Fate

Colleges: The Banner 2, The Captain 3, The Corpse 2, The Crow 2, The Ewer 2, The Gauntlet 2, *The Guardians 2*, The Gull 1, The Haywain 3, *The Key 3*, The Lovers 2, *The Mask 3*, The Mast 2, The Messenger 3, The Musician 2, The Peacock 3, The Pillar 2, The Quiver 3, The Rising Smoke 2, The Shield 1, The Ship's Wheel 3, *The Sorcerer 3*, The Spear 2, The Sword 3, *The Treasure Trove 3*

Join Battle: 12

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 12, Damage 5B, Parry DV 7, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 11, Damage 8B, Parry DV 5, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 11, Damage 5B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Starmetal Wrackstaff (Fair Lesson): Speed 4, Accuracy 15, Damage 12L or 20B, Parry DV 7, Rate 3
Soak: 3L/5B
Health Levels: -0/-0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap
Dodge DV: 12 **Willpower:** 10
Essence: 7
Personal Essence: 24 **Peripheral Essence:** 66 (60)
Committed Essence: 6
Other Notes: The Chosen of Secret's starmetal-laced wrackstaff, Fair Lesson, allows Kejak to levy astrological penalties on those he touches with it. It raises the victim's target number for one Ability of Kejak's choice and remains for the rest of the scene. When the Ability activates, pattern spiders tie the malign destiny to the easiest of all targets touching Fair Lesson; i.e., the person with the lowest Essence, including Chejop. It has a Dream-Stone mounted it, as well.

Kejak typically wears a set of starmetal hearthstone bracers, as well as a starmetal hearthstone amulet. A Jewel of the Celestial Mandarin is set in the amulet, while the right bracer possesses an inset Gemstone of Surface Thoughts.

Hadeon

Hadeon appreciates the finer things in life: the arts of bonsai, origami, calligraphy, conversation and appreciation of wine and tea. Surprising to all but his close friends is his mastery of low skills: farming, weaving, cooking, circus acrobatics, mortal astrology, thaumaturgy, mundane disguises and other things. He treats such things as larks, things to study because it is amusing to think that they exist. Hadeon considers various other skills beneath the Exalted, and this attitude abrades the pride of his peers and superiors. The arts of war and lovemaking, which many Exalted pursue with expert vigor, are among those that strike Hadeon as uncouth. His amusement when other Celestial Exalted practice them is inoffensive enough that no one has challenged him over it, but few count him as a dear friend, and he attends few parties.

The studies of sorcery and supernatural martial arts are both dear to Hadeon, and he lectures regularly at Sperimin's relevant academies. Critics call him hypocrite, a title he does not challenge, but such knowledge is for Hadeon spiritualism and mastery of Essence, not a tool for conflict or base use. To Hadeon, the only noble application for his mastery is art, something he wishes to one day apply to the world on a grand scale through unmatched synthesis of sorcery and ideal martial prowess.

As one of the few Chosen of the Maidens who still survive from the Primordial War, few question Hadeon. His renown is such that he could lead the entire Five-Score Fellowship (as much as any Sidereal can), but he avoids positions of leadership and influence. He offers counsel when asked, as he did in the War, but he avoids getting his hands dirty. And he never, ever speaks of any time before the War's conclusion.

Limit Break: Joybringers' Flawed Fate
Motivation: Trim Creation as a bonsai or fold it as paper until it is the perfect pleasing shape.
Caste: Chosen of Serenity
Anima Banner: A lilac radiance that dims the room.
Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 8, Stamina 4; Charisma 5, Manipulation 7, Appearance 5; Perception 8, Intelligence 8, Wits 6
Virtues: Compassion 5, Conviction 5, Temperance 5, Valor 5
Abilities: Archery 4, Athletics 7 (Acrobatics +2), *Awareness* 8, Bureaucracy 6, *Craft (Air) 5 (Glassblowing +1)*, *Craft (Fate)* 8, Craft (Fire) 5 (Ceramics +2, Smithing +1), *Craft (Water) 5 (Cooking +2)*, *Craft (Wood) 5 (Bonsai +3)*, *Dodge* 8, *Integrity* 8, Investigation 5, Larceny 3 (Disguise +1), *Linguistics (Native: Earthtongue; Others: Deceptive Verdant Bonsai Artisan's Cipher, Dragontongue, Flametongue, Foresttongue, Old Realm, Riverspeak, Seatongue, Skytongue)* 8, *Lore 8 (Primordials +3)*, Martial Arts 8 (Non-Combat +3), Medicine 5, Melee 3, *Occult* 8, *Performance* 5, Presence 6, Resistance 7, Ride 4, Sail 4, *Socialize* 6, Stealth 5, Survival 4, Thrown 4, War 1
Backgrounds: Allies 5 (Legendary Ally), Artifact 5, Backing (Bound by Senses Artistry Association) 5, Backing (Cerulean Lute) 5, Connections (Artists) 5, Connections (Black Bandana) 5, Connections (Deliberative) 2, Cult 1, Manse 3, Panoply 4, Reputation (Wise Elder) 5, Retainers 5, Salary 5, Wealth 3
Charms: Abandoned Words Curse, Absence, Adopting the Untamed Face, Astrology Interruption Method, Auspicious Prospects for Serenity, Avoidance Kata, Avoiding the Truth Technique, Battles Sidereal Exalt Ways, Becoming the Wilderness, Blade of the Battle Maiden, Blinding the Boar, Blue Vervain Binding, Breaking the Wild Mortal, Cannibalistic Heritage Technique, Cash and Murder Games, Celestial Circle Sorcery, Charcoal March of Spiders Form, Charm Redirection Technique, Compassionate Essence Replenishment, Conclusion-Pursuing Approach, Conclusive Wisdom, Creation-Preserving Will, Crimson Palm Counterstrike, Dance of the Hungry Spider, Dawn Solar Exalt Ways, Deadly Starmetal Offensive, Death-of-Self Meditation, Death-Parrying Stroke, Defense of Shining Joy, Demesne and Manse Form, Demesne Emulation Practice, Demure Carp Feint, Destiny-Knitting Entanglement, Dreaming Pearl Courtesan Form, Dreaming the Wild Lands, Duck Fate, Easily Accepted Proposition Stance, Eclipse Solar Exalt Ways, Efficient Secretary Technique, Elemental Vision (Air, Wood), Embracing Life Method, The Empress Lives for All, End Debate, Excellent Implementation of Objectives, Expected Pain, Fallen Ivory Defense, Fateful Awareness Excellency, Fateful Craft Excellency, Fateful Dodge Excellency, Fateful Integrity Excellency, Fateful Linguistics Excellency, Fateful Lore Excellency, Fateful Martial Arts Excellency, Fateful Occult Excellency, Faultless Ceremony, Favorable Inflection Procedure, First Awareness

Excellency, First Craft Excellency, First Dodge Excellency, First Integrity Excellency, First Linguistics Excellency, First Lore Excellency, First Martial Arts Excellency, First Occult Excellency, Five Jade Fury, Flickering Moonsilver Approach, Flight of Mercury, Flurry of August Leaves Concentration, Force Decision, Forgotten Earth, Fortuitous Fellowship, Four Magical Materials Form, Fragrant Petal Fascination Kata, Games of Divinity Form, Generalized Ammunition Technique, Glance and Stride, God Ways, Godly Companion, Grandmother Spider Mastery, Great Thinker's Defense Maneuver, Harmonic Completion, Harmony of Blows, Heart-Brightening Presentation Style, Heroic Essence Replenishment, Horrific Wreath, Ice and Fire Binding, Icy Hand, Impeccable Patterned Deployment, Impeding the Flow, Implicit Construction Methodology, Impose Motivation, Incite Decorum, Inevitable Pursuit, Invoking the Chimera's Coils, Joy in Adversity Stance, Jumping Spider Strike, Lethal Paper Fan Attack, Life-Severing Blow, Life Without Compunction, Loyalty-Sacrificing Sidestep, Mark of Exaltation, Maw of Dripping Venom, Mending Warped Designs, Metal Storm, Methodology of Secrets, Neighborhood Relocation Scheme, Nest of Living Strands, Of Horrors Best Unknown, Of Secrets Yet Untold, Of the Shape of the World, Of Things Desired and Feared, Of Truths Best Unspoken, Ordained Bridle of Mercury, Orichalcum Sheathing Stance, Ox-Body Technique, Paralyzed Mandarin Infliction, Pattern Spider Touch, Peaceable Conclusion, Pearlescent Filigree Defense, Perfection in Life, Predestined Delivery Shaping, Presence in Absence Technique, Preservation of Resolve, Prior Warning, Prismatic Arrangement of Creation Form, Propitious Awareness Alignment, Propitious Craft Alignment, Propitious Dodge Alignment, Propitious Integrity Alignment, Propitious Linguistics Alignment, Propitious Lore Alignment, Propitious Martial Arts Alignment, Propitious Occult Alignment, Rain of Unseen Threads, Research Assistant Invocation, Resplendent Sash Grapple Technique, Salt into Ash Sleight, Scarlet Patterned Battlefield Form, Second Awareness Excellency, Second Craft Excellency, Second Dodge Excellency, Second Integrity Excellency, Second Linguistics Excellency, Second Lore Excellency, Second Martial Arts Excellency, Second Occult Excellency, Secrets of Future Strife, Secrets Sidereal Exalt Ways, Sequential Charm Disruption, Serenity in Blood, Seven Storms Escape Prana, Shun the Smiling Lady, Singular Escape Stratagem, Sky and Rain Mantra, Slick Essence Replenishment, Smooth Transition, Soft Presence Practice, Someone Else's Destiny, Song of Spirit Persuasion, Soul Fire Shaper Form, Spell-Shattering Palm, Spirit Shape Companion, Stern Essence Replenishment, Supernal Awareness, Telltale Symphony, Terminal Sanction, Terminate Illness, Terrestrial Circle Sorcery, Thought-Swiping Distraction, Thumbnail Spider March, Transcendent Hatchet of Fate, Trouble-Reduction Strategy, Twilight Solar Exalt Ways, Unassailable Rebuff Position, Underling Invisibility Practice, Unhearing Dedication, Unnatural Many-Step Stride, Unobstructed Blow, Unwavering Well-Being Meditation, Unweaving Method, Victory of the Cheat, Vindictive Concubine's Pillow Book Understanding, Violet Bier of Sorrows Form, Walls of Salt and Ash (Fair Folk and the Wyld, Gods and Elementals, Demons and Things of Malfeas), Wanting and Fearing Prayer, Water and Fire Treaty, Water Spider Bite, Willing Assumption of Chains, Wise Choice, Without Strategy Arrangement, World-Shaping Artistic Vision (Regarding Artistry x3), You and Yours Stance

Spells: Demon of the First Circle, Demon of the Second Circle, Disguise of the New Face, Dolorous Reflection, Emerald Countermagic, The Faithful Ally, Flight of Separation, Fugue of Truth, Hidden Judges of the Secret Flame, Incantation of Effective Restoration, Incantation of Spiritual Discretion, Infallible Messenger, Mercury's Deliverance, Mists of Eventide, Open the Spirit Door, Outside Worlds Within, Raise the Puissant Sanctum, Sapphire Countermagic, Servant of Infallible Location, Summon Elemental, Summoning the Greater Minions of the Eyeless Face, Summoning the Lesser Minions of the Eyeless Face, Travel Without Distance, Unconquerable Self, Wheel of the Turning Heavens, Whirlwind of Fate, Wood Dragon's Claw

Colleges: *The Ewer 3*, The Guardians 6, The Haywain 4, The Key 5, *The Musician 4*, *The Peacock 7*, *The Pillar 7*, The Rising Smoke 2, The Sorcerer 7, The Sword 8, The Treasure Trove 7

Join Battle: 14

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 17, Damage 3B, Parry DV 9, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 16, Damage 6B, Parry DV 7, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 16, Damage 3B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Starmetal Daiklave (Discordant Virtue): Speed 5, Accuracy 20, Damage 12L, Parry DV 9, Rate 3

Soak: 2L/4B

Health Levels: -0/-0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 13

Willpower: 10

Essence: 9

Personal Essence: 28

Peripheral Essence: 84 (78)
Committed Essence: 6
Other Notes: Despite his incredible masteries of supernatural martial arts and sorcery, Hadeon uses neither for combat. His goal is elegant harmony in all things, and armed conflict is a distasteful flaw in the grand design he foretells. Only defending his life or his life's work drives him to fight.

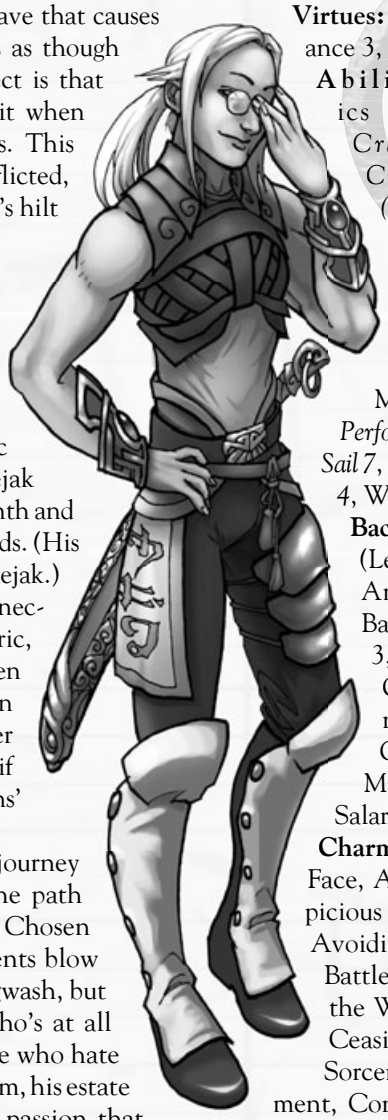
Discordant Virtue is a starmetal daiklave that causes those it touches to treat all their Virtues as though they were five dots. Incidental to its effect is that *all* Virtues count as primary, adding Limit when Willpower is spent to subdue their urges. This condition lasts one day per health level inflicted, or one hour with just a touch. In the sword's hilt is set a Guardian Gem.

Tammiz Ushun

Tammiz Ushun is Chejop Kejak's counterpart, longtime rival and clandestine confidant. Both were reborn on the same date, and their Exaltations were simultaneous. This latter fact is not a matter of public record, as Ain Leaning Pike concealed Kejak from the Five-Score Fellowship for one month and altered notes of the event in Heaven's records. (His reasons remain unknown to all but perhaps Kejak.) Only Ushun and Kejak know of their connection. Although their politics are diametric, their mutual respect is true and their hidden friendship is unbreakable. It endures even the occasional assassin Chejop sends after Tammiz to maintain appearances, though if someone learned their secret, the assassins' target would soon change.

Ushun believes that Creation is on a journey into glorious eternity and that, when the path becomes obscured, it is up to Mercury's Chosen to clear the way. His unshakable opponents blow off his rhetoric as Chosen of Journeys hogwash, but he is a convincing speaker to anyone who's at all uncertain—convincing enough that those who hate his ideals take refuge in violence against him, his estate and his allies. Threats dim none of the passion that fills his words, inspiring others to see his visions, but he is not above manipulating conditions to his advantage from the shadows.

Tammiz stands as de facto leader of one third of the Five-Score Fellowship. He is the titular head of three conventions, a dozen committees and over a hundred societies. Solar and Lunar Exalted respect his advice, and Terrestrials covet the chance to be seen with the Glorious Vizier. Getting a private word from him launches anyone lesser than a Celestial into 15 minutes of fame, maybe for better, maybe for worse, but no one doubts for some purpose.
Limit Break: Harbingers' Flawed Fate



Motivation: Lead Creation along the path to eternal brightness.
Caste: Chosen of Journeys
Anima Banner: A suffusion of saffron.
Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 7, Stamina 4; Charisma 7, Manipulation 4, Appearance 7; Perception 7, Intelligence 7, Wits 7
Virtues: Compassion 4, Conviction 4, Temperance 3, Valor 3
Abilities: Archery 4, Athletics 6, Awareness 7, Bureaucracy 7, *Craft (Air) 5 (Clockworks +3)*, *Craft (Fate) 7*, *Craft (Wood) 5 (Floral Arrangement +2)*, Dodge 6, Integrity 7, Investigation 6, Larceny 6, Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Others: Earth-tongue, Flametongue, Forest-tongue, Receding Horizon Cipher, Riverspeak, Seatongue, Skytongue) 7, *Lore 7*, Martial Arts 7, Medicine 6, Melee 4, Occult 5, *Performance 7*, *Presence 7*, *Resistance 5*, *Ride 7*, *Sail 7*, Socialize 7, Stealth 7, *Survival 6*, *Thrown 4*, War 5
Backgrounds: Acquaintances 5, Allies 5 (Legendary Ally), Artifact 1, Artifact 2, Artifact 5, Backing (Deliberative) 4, Backing (Golden Barque) 5, Command 3, Connections (Bureau of Destiny) 4, Connections (Deliberative) 4, Connections (Five-Score Fellowship) 5, Cult 2, Familiar 4, Henchmen 3, Manse 3, Panoply 3, Reputation (Politics) 5, Salary 4, Savant 3, Wealth 3
Charms: Absence, Adopting the Untamed Face, Auspicious Prospects for Journeys, Auspicious Recruitment Drive, Avoidance Kata, Avoiding the Truth Technique, Blade of the Battle Maiden, Blinding the Boar, Breaking the Wild Mortal, Cash and Murder Games, Ceasing to Exist Approach, Celestial Circle Sorcery, Compassionate Essence Replenishment, Conclusion-Pursuing Approach, Crimson Palm Counterstrike, Death-Parrying Stroke, Defense of Shining Joy, Demon-Blocking Battle Pattern, Destiny-Knitting Entanglement, Duck Fate, Easily Accepted Proposition Stance, Efficient Secretary Technique, Essence-Draining Battle Pattern, Essence Thorn Practice, Expected Pain, Fateful Awareness Excellency, Fateful Craft Excellency, Fateful Dodge Excellency, Fateful Lore Excellency, Fateful Martial Arts Excellency, Fateful Melee Excellency, Fateful Performance Excellency, Fateful Presence Excellency, Fateful Resistance Excellency, Fateful Ride Excellency, Fateful Socialize Excellency, Fateful Thrown Excellency, Fateful War Excellency, Faultless

Ceremony, Favorable Inflection Procedure, First Awareness Excellency, First Craft Excellency, First Dodge Excellency, First Lore Excellency, First Martial Arts Excellency, First Melee Excellency, First Performance Excellency, First Presence Excellency, First Resistance Excellency, First Ride Excellency, First Socialize Excellency, First Thrown Excellency, First War Excellency, Five Ordeals Odyssey, Flight of Mercury, Force Decision, Fortuitous Fellowship, Generalized Ammunition Technique, Glory Path, Harmonic Completion, Harmony of Blows, Heart-Brightening Presentation Style, Horrific Wreath, Ice and Fire Binding, Icy Hand, Impeding the Flow, Impose Motivation, Joy in Adversity Stance, Life Gets Worse Approach, Life-Severing Blow, Life Without Compunction, Loyalty-Sacrificing Sidestep, Mark of Exaltation, Metal Storm, Methodology of Secrets, Mirror-Shattering Method, Name-Pilfering Practice, Of Secrets Yet Untold, Of the Shape of the World, Of Truths Best Unspoken, Ordained Bridle of Mercury, Ox-Body Technique (x3), Perfection in Life, Predestined Delivery Shaping, Predestined Triumph Practice, Presence in Absence Technique, Preservation of Resolve, Prior Warning, Red Haze, Research Assistant Invocation, Salt into Ash Sleight, Secrets of Future Strife, Serendipitous Voyage, Serenity in Blood, Shadow-Piercing Needle, Shield of Destiny, Shun the Smiling Lady, Sidereal Shell Games, Sky and Rain Mantra, Soft Presence Practice, Someone Else's Destiny, Song of Spirit Persuasion, Spirit-Binding Battle Pattern, Spirit-Shape Companion, Stern Essence Replenishment, Stone Skipping Spirit, Subordinate Inspiration Technique, Supernal Awareness, Terminate Illness, Terrestrial Circle Sorcery, Thought-Swiping Distraction, Training Mandate of Auspicious Battle, Training Mandate of Celestial Empowerment, Unhearing Dedication, Unobstructed Blow, Violet Bier of Sorrows Form, Walking Outside Fate, Walls of Salt and Ash, Wanting and Fearing Prayer, Water and Fire Legion, Water and Fire Treaty, Willful Weapon Method, Wise Choice, Yellow Path, You and Yours Stance

Spells: Cloud Trapeze, Demon of the First Circle, Demon of the Second Circle, Disguise of the New Face, Emerald Circle Banishment, Emerald Countermagic, Floral Ferry, Gift of Knowledge, Infallible Messenger, Ivory Orchid Pavilion, Keel Cleaves the Clouds, Mercury's Deliverance, Open the Spirit Door, Rolling Earth Carpet, Sapphire Circle Banishment, Sapphire Countermagic, Spirit Sword, Stormwind Rider, Summon Elemental, Summon the Heavenly Portal, Swift Spirit of Winged Transportation, Travel Without Distance, Whirlwind of Fate

Colleges: The Banner 2, *The Captain 4*, The Corpse 3, The Crow 3, The Ewer 3, The Gauntlet 2, The Guardians 2, *The Gull 4*, The Key 3, The Lovers 3, The Mask 2, *The Mast 4*, *The Messenger 4*, The Musician 3, The Pillar 3, The Quiver 2, The Rising Smoke 3, The Shield 2, *The Ship's Wheel 4*, The Sorcerer 3, The Spear 2, The Sword 3, The Treasure Trove 3

Join Battle: 14

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 15, Damage 4B, Parry DV 8, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 14, Damage 7B, Parry DV 6, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 14, Damage 4B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Starmetal Daiklave (Deliberator's Tongue): Speed 5, Accuracy 16, Damage 13L, Parry DV 7, Rate 3

Soak: 5L/7B (Starmetal chain shirt, +3L/3B)

Health Levels: -0/-0/-0/-0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 13 **Willpower:** 9

Essence: 7

Personal Essence: 23 **Peripheral Essence:** 65 (53)

Committed Essence: 12

Other Notes: Tammiz wears the Clasp of the Fellowship, a pair of starmetal hearthstone bracers. Inset is the Naming Stone, which makes Tammiz aware of the names of every person he sees, as well as the names and positions of their near family members, which enables him to foster goodwill in even the lowliest rickshaw god of Yu-Shan or Dragon-Blood in Meru. Deliberator's Tongue is Tammiz's starmetal daiklave. As long as Deliberator's Tongue remains unsheathed and Tammiz Ushun has caused no lethal damage in a scene, the weapon adds three dice to all dice rolls associated with Sidereal Charms (including Sidereal Martial Arts), while Sidereal Charms with no associated rolls cost one mote less than normal. The sword features two hearthstone settings in which are placed a Gem of Omens and a Gem of Holiness.

Tammiz is not a warlike person. His skills are those of a statesman and leader, not a warrior, despite his prowess with martial arts. Even though he has distaste for violence, he refuses to waste his talents and willingly leads troops in times of necessity.

While the Ax Falls

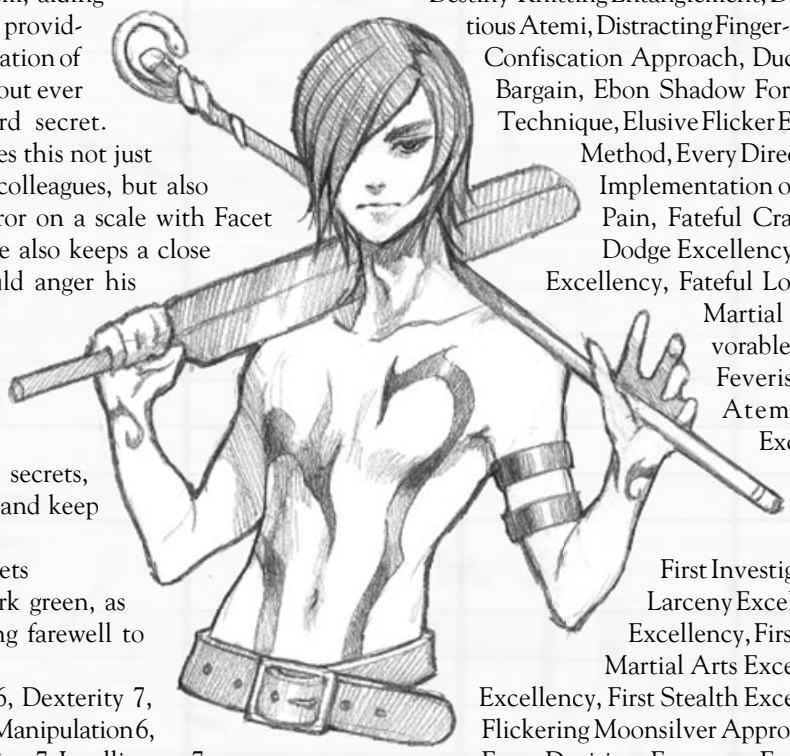
While the Ax Falls takes his name from the constant threat of death that mortals and Dragon-Bloods live under every day—where the Celestial Exalted joined them after Facet Raven's death. That was the day a young Sidereal, seeing what would come, donned the name While the Ax Falls and left his old moniker behind, where it was forgotten. Even now, it sails the Great Western Ocean in a rickety dinghy seeking love and revenge. It gets no more rest than its erstwhile owner, who works long nights protecting forbidden knowledge of peoples' ends.

Others of the Five-Score Fellowship say While the Ax Falls is more amethyst than emerald, as his chosen specialty brings him into Saturn's purview more often than it does that of his fellows. He spends more time in the Violet Bier of Sorrows than some Chosen of Endings, and definitely more than most Sidereals choose. While the Ax Falls believes that

some things should be secret, and that the Bureau of Destiny should have acted to prevent knowledge of the Celestial Exalted's limited life spans from ever becoming public knowledge. While the Seer cannot put that cat back in the bag, his diligence prevents further errors in revelation.

While the Ax Falls is a close friend of Tammiz Ushun. They see like focus in each other despite their divergent interests, and the politics that Tammiz shares with his friend matches While the Ax Falls' ideas of how the future must pass. He, of course, betrays none of his secrets to Tammiz, which each Sidereal understands. Some things cannot be shared.

Actual Chosen of Endings favor While the Ax Falls, contrary to most Sidereals' expectations. The Chosen of Secrets holds Chosen of Endings in the highest regard and works closely with them, aiding them in their tasks and providing them timely information of a sensitive nature without ever revealing an untoward secret. While the Ax Falls does this not just out of respect for his colleagues, but also to prevent another error on a scale with Facet Raven's death. This he also keeps a close secret, because it would anger his allies.



Limit Break: Oracles' Flawed Fate

Motivation: Learn the secret ends of all things, the ends of all secrets, ensure their propriety and keep them secret.

Caste: Chosen of Secrets

Anima Banner: A dark green, as a verdant plain bidding farewell to the sun.

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 7, Stamina 5; Charisma 4, Manipulation 6, Appearance 5; Perception 7, Intelligence 7, Wits 7

Virtues: Compassion 2, Conviction 5, Temperance 4, Valor 3

Abilities: Archery 6, Athletics 5, Awareness 5, Bureaucracy 5, Craft (Air) 5, Craft (Earth) 2, Craft (Fate) 7, Craft (Fire) 3, Craft (Water) 7, (Poisons +3), Craft (Wood) 5, *Dodge 7*, *Integrity 7*, *Investigation 7*, *Larceny 7*, Linguistics (Native: Seatongue; Others: Dragontongue, Earthtongue, Forbidding Manse of Ivy Cipher, Forest-tongue, Old Realm, Riverspeak, Violet Bier of Sorrows Cipher) 7, *Lore 7*, *Martial Arts 7*, *Medicine 7 (Treating Poisonings +3)*, Melee 5, *Occult 4*, Performance 4, Presence 6, Resistance 6, Ride 5, Sail 5, Socialize 4 (Chosen of Endings +2), *Stealth 6 (In Yu-Shan +2)*, Survival 6, Thrown 4, War 4

Backgrounds: Acquaintances 3, Allies 5, Artifact 4, Artifact 4, Backing (Forbidding Manse of Ivy) 5, Connections (Bureau of Destiny) 3, Connections (Violet Bier of Sorrows) 5, Cult 1, Manse 2, Panoply 3, Reputation (Secrets) 3, Salary 4, Savant 1, Wealth 3

Charms: Absence, Any Direction Arrow, Auspicious Prospects for Endings, Auspicious Prospects for Secrets, Auspicious Prospects for Serenity, Avoidance Kata, Avoiding the Truth Technique, Blade of the Battle Maiden, Blinding the Boar, Burn Life, Cash and Murder Games, Ceasing to Exist Approach, Charm Redirection Technique, Conclusion-Pursuing Approach, Conclusive Wisdom, Conning Chaos Technique, Crimson Palm Counterstrike, Deadly Starmetal Offensive, Death-of-Self Meditation, Death-Parrying Stroke, Deferred Wounds, Demesne Emulation Practice, Destiny-Knitting Entanglement, Disjointed Essence Infectious Atemi, Distracting Finger-Gesture Attack, Dream Confiscation Approach, Duck Fate, Earth and Sky Bargain, Ebon Shadow Form, Efficient Secretary Technique, Elusive Flicker Evasion, Embracing Life Method, Every Direction Arrow, Excellent Implementation of Objectives, Expected Pain, Fateful Craft Excellency, Fateful Dodge Excellency, Fateful Investigation Excellency, Fateful Lore Excellency, Fateful Martial Arts Excellency, Favorable Inflection Procedure, Feverish Essence Discharge Atemi, First Awareness Excellency, First Craft Excellency, First Dodge Excellency, First Integrity Excellency, First Investigation Excellency, First Larceny Excellency, First Linguistics Excellency, First Lore Excellency, First Martial Arts Excellency, First Medicine Excellency, First Stealth Excellency, Five Jade Fury, Flickering Moonsilver Approach, Flight of Mercury, Force Decision, Forgotten Earth, Forward-Thinking Technique, Four Magical Materials Form, Generalized Ammunition Technique, God Ways, Harmony of Blows, Heartless Maiden Trance, Horrific Wreath, Icy Hand, Image of Death Technique, Impeding the Flow, Inevitable Pursuit, Inexorable Advance, Invocation of the Storm-Following Silence, Joy in Adversity Stance, Life-Severing Blow, Life Without Compunction, Limb-Immobilizing Method, Masque of the Uncanny (Demon, Ghost, Raksha), Metal Storm, Methodology of Secrets, Name-Pilfering Practice, Of Horrors Best Unknown, Of Secrets Yet Untold, Of the Shape of the World, Of Things Desired and Feared, Of Truths Best Unspoken, Optimistic Security Practice, One Direction Invocation, Orichalcum Sheathing Stance, Ox-Body Technique (x3), Paralyzing Touch Attack, Peaceable

Conclusion, Preservation of Resolve, Prior Warning, Propitious Dodge Alignment, Propitious Martial Arts Alignment, Research Assistant Invocation, Secrets of Future Strife, Seven Points of Weakness Strike, Shield of Destiny, Shun the Smiling Lady, Sidereal Shell Games, Slick Essence Replenishment, Smooth Transition, Soft Presence Practice, Someone Else's Destiny, Stern Essence Replenishment, Subordinate Inspiration Technique, Supernal Awareness, Terminal Sanction, Terminate Illness, Terrestrial Circle Sorcery, Thought-Swiping Distraction, Transcendent Hatchet of Fate, Underling Invisibility Practice, Unhearing Dedication, Unobstructed Blow, Unswerving Juggernaut Principle, Unwavering Well-Being Meditation, Violet Bier of Sorrows Form, Walking Outside Fate, Wall Climbing Technique, Water and Fire Treaty, Wise Choice, World-Shaping Artistic Vision (Secrets +1, Ends +2), Yellow Path, You and Yours Stance

Spells: Assassin's Fatal Touch, Corrupted Words, Demon of the First Circle, Disguise of the New Face, Emerald Circle Banishment, Emerald Countermagic, Flying Guillotine, Fugue of Truth, Hound of the Five Winds, Incantation of Spiritual Discretion, Infallible Messenger, Malediction of the Distorted Compass, Open the Spirit Door, The Ravenous Fire, Shadow Summons, The Spy Who Walks in Darkness, Stormwind Rider, Summon Elemental, Theft of Memory, Unconquerable Self

Colleges: The Banner 3, The Captain 3, The Corpse 5, The Crow 3, The Ewer 2, The Gauntlet 3, *The Guardians 4*, The Gull 1, The Haywain 3, *The Key 2*, The Lovers 2, *The Mask 5*, The Mast 1, The Messenger 2, The Peacock 2, The Pillar 3, The Quiver 3, The Rising Smoke 3, The Shield 3, The Ship's Wheel 2, *The Sorcerer 2*, The Spear 3, The Sword 4, *The Treasure Trove 4*

Join Battle: 12

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 15, Damage 6B, Parry DV 8, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 14, Damage 9B, Parry DV 6, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 14, Damage 6B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Starmetal Serpent-Sting Staff (The That Binds): Speed 5, Accuracy 15, Damage 19B, Parry DV 9, Rate 3

Starmetal Short Powerbow (From Afar): Speed 6, Accuracy 16, Damage 12L, Range 250, Rate 2

Soak: 3L/5B

Health Levels: -0/-0/-0/-0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 11 **Willpower:** 9

Essence: 7

Personal Essence: 23 **Peripheral Essence:** 65 (55)

Committed Essence: 10

Other Notes: While the Ax Falls acts with decision. He knows many endings that have yet to occur and his part in them. Any obstacle between him and those destinies are obviously obstacles he will overcome, and so he does. His tomes of collected secrets are all concealed behind the double veil of the private and official ciphers of the Chosen of Secrets and Endings. Only While the Ax Falls can navigate the catalogues that describe where to find information in his private repository, and the dozen rooms contain esoteric traps to catch, kill or mark intruders. He is friendly only with a few because not many endure his obsession, and he has come to assume that new acquaintances will not.

The That Binds is While the Ax Falls' starmetal serpent-sting staff. When it strikes, the Speed of the target's next action increases by one per level of damage inflicted. This effect does not stack with itself. If While the Ax Falls fills someone's Incapacitated health level with damage inflicted by The That Binds, that person immediately becomes Inactive for two actions, after which time she falls to the ground or continues to fight (depending on her capabilities).

From Afar is the Sidereal's starmetal short powerbow. While the Ax Falls may fire his arrows toward the heavens. He activates Charms and his player rolls the attack at that time, but the arrows strike their target on While the Ax Falls' *next* action, when the target defends. They stack with other attacks on that action for onslaught penalty. Arrows fired in this way also double their raw damage. In it is set a Jewel of the Rabbit's Sword.

While the Ax Falls also wears a Stone of the Spider's Eye set in a starmetal hearthstone amulet.

Chosen of the Elemental Dragons

Subordinates to the Celestial Exalted, the Dragon-Bloods of the High First Age often act as the face of the Exalted to the common folk of Creation, running the day-to-day affairs of their principalities and forming the bulk of Exalted in the Realm's armed forces.

Anjei Marama

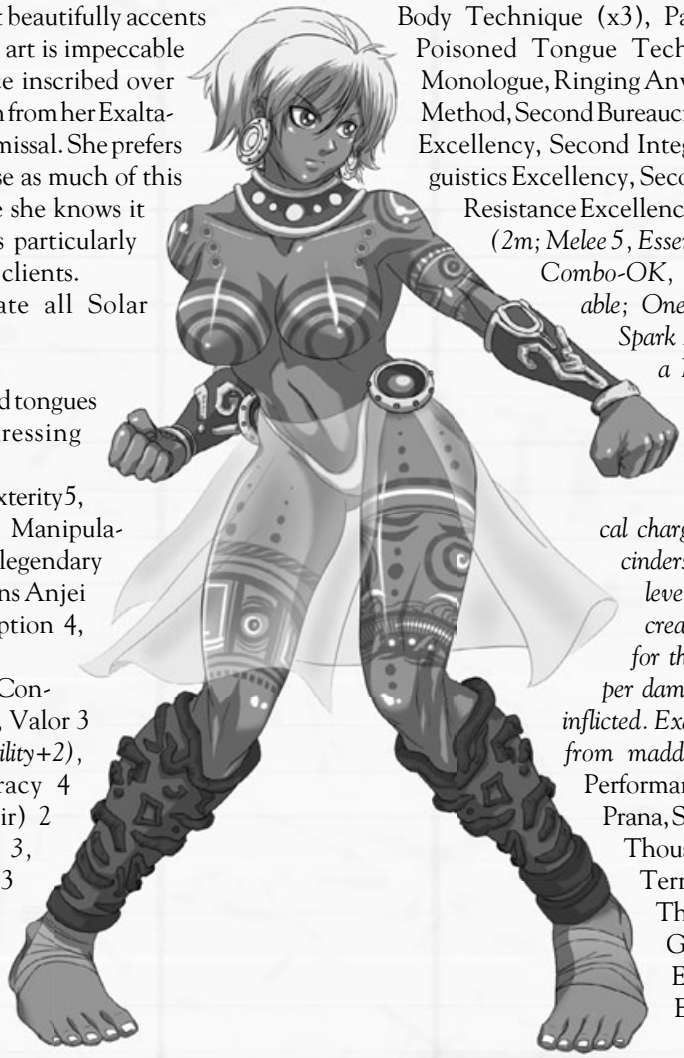
Founded by oath of Kesu Tyr-Marama, the Anjei Gens attended Lord Tyraeth, the Eclipse who manages the exotic brothels outside Ondar Shambal to service Exalted penitents after their ascetic pilgrimages. Four generations of Anjei scions have obeyed Lord Tyraeth faithfully and competently as his majordomos, trained from birth in a rigorous curriculum of practical stewardship and carnal puissance devised by their master. In spite of this devotion, the latest heir has found herself unemployed for nearly a year, ever since being replaced by a unique servitor engineered by Tyraeth's Lunar mate Jormun to commemorate their millennial wedding anniversary.

With growing dismay, Marama has discovered her specialized skills do not lend themselves well to employment in other Solar retinues. Lacking palatable alternatives, she has taken residence in Ondar Shambal as an acolyte,

hoping a display of piety might attract a Celestial patron where her beauty and fetishist education have so far failed. With each promise that turns out to be mere pillow talk, Marama grows more jaded and hateful. She cannot hate the Solars—her long exposure to Tyraeth's Charms prevents that—so she transfers her rage to the Solar servant races whose existence she views as an affront to the honor and pride of the Dragon-Blooded race.

For now, Marama keeps her prejudices mostly to herself, sharing her rants only with other disenfranchised middle-age Terrestrials she has befriended at the temples. The ragtag gang has taken to kidnapping and torturing servitors they catch alone at night. Status in the group is based on body count, with Marama's more than double her nearest competitor. Although the temple police have yet to seriously investigate these disappearances, it is probably only a matter of time until one of the vigilantes slips up and executes a slave belonging to someone important.

Bred for superhuman beauty, Marama exudes sex appeal in every word and action, but astute observers can glimpse the naked hate at the heart of her lust. Her dusky bronzed skin is adorned in an ornate mandala of fine scars like a full body tattoo that beautifully accents her aspect markings. The art is impeccable and perfect, a masterpiece inscribed over the course of her education from her Exaltation at age eight to her dismissal. She prefers to wear outfits that expose as much of this scarring as possible, since she knows it is her best feature and is particularly favored by certain Lunar clients.



Motivation: Exterminate all Solar servant races.

Aspect: Fire

Anima Banner: Peach-red tongues of fire libidinously caressing her flesh.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5; Charisma 3, Manipulation 5, Appearance 6 (legendary Appearance bred into Gens Anjei by Lord Tyraeth); Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

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

Abilities: *Athletics 5 (Flexibility +2)*, Awareness 3, Bureaucracy 4 (Brothels +3), Craft (Air) 2 (Calligraphy +3), *Dodge 3*, *Integrity 5*, Investigation 3 (Interrogation +2), Larceny 4 (Prostitution +1), Linguistics (Native: Skytongue; Others: Earthtongue, Forest-tongue, Old Realm, Riverspeak, Seatongue) 5, Lore 3, Martial Arts 1, Medicine 1 (Postcoital Injuries +3), *Melee 5 (Unnecessary Cruelty +3)*, Occult 1, ***Performance 5 (Sexual Techniques +3),*** *Presence 5 (Seduction +3)*, *Resistance 5 (While Having Sex +3)*, Ride 1, *Socialize 5 (Courtesan Protocol +3)*, Stealth 4 (Moving Silently +1, Not Disturbing Celestial Exalted +2), Survival 1

Backgrounds: Artifact 3, Artifact 2, Allies 4, Breeding 5, Reputation (Exotic Courtesan) 2, Resources 2

Charms: Auspicious First Meeting Attitude, Blinding Spark Distraction, Brother-Against-Brother Insinuation, Confluence of Savant Thought, Dragon-Graced Weapon, Ears of the Snowy Owl, Effortlessly Rising Flame, Falsehood Unearthing Attitude, Feeling-the-Air Technique, Finding the Water's Depth, First Performance Excellency, First Presence Excellency, First Socialize Excellency, First Stealth Excellency, Inflamed Heat of Passion *(Exactly like Sweeten-the-Tap Method, but enhances the bliss of sexual acts in the vicinity rather than alcohol.)*, Inviolate Dragon Spirit, Jade Defense, Oath of the Ten Thousand Dragons (Lord Tyraeth's Household), Observer Awareness Method, Ox-Body Technique (x3), Passion Transmuting Nuance, Poisoned Tongue Technique, Puissant Precursor's Monologue, Ringing Anvil Onslaught, Scent-of-Crime Method, Second Bureaucracy Excellency, Second Dodge Excellency, Second Integrity Excellency, Second Linguistics Excellency, Second Melee Excellency, Second Resistance Excellency, Smoldering Brand Infliction *(2m; Melee 5, Essence 4; Supplemental; Keywords: Combo-OK, Crippling, Elemental, Stackable; One scene; Prerequisites: Blinding Spark Distraction. This Charm causes a Melee attack to inflict piercing damage and converts all inflicted damage levels into an agonizing aspect-defined elemental brand suffused with an electrical charge, jagged crystal or ice shards, cinders or acidic sap. This inflicts one level of aggravated damage and increases the victim's wound penalties for the duration of the Charm by -2 per damage level the injury would have inflicted. Exalted victims gain one Limit point from maddening agony.)*, Soul-Stirring Performance Method, Soundless Action Prana, Sweeten-the-Tap Method, Ten-Thousand Dragons Fight as One, Terrestrial Melee Reinforcement, Thicker Than Stone, Thoughtful Gift Technique, Third Presence Excellency, Third Socialize Excellency, Threshing Floor

Technique, Throes of Bliss Reassessment *(None; Presence 4, Essence 3; Permanent, Keywords: Emotion, Social; Prerequisites: Auspicious First Meeting Attitude. This Charm enhances its prerequisite Charm, allowing the Dragon-Blood to use it on any sexual partner during a scene of passion or the following scene, as if it were first time the two met.)*, Trackless Walk Style, Unbreathing Earth Meditation, Uneating Earth Meditation, Unfeeling Earth Meditation, Unflagging Vengeance Meditation, Unsleeping Earth Meditation, Untiring Earth Meditation, Voice of Mastery, Voices on the Wind, Warm-Faced Seduction Style, Wind-Carried Words Technique, With One Mind, Zone of Silence Stance

Join Battle: 7

Attacks:

Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 3B, Parry DV 4, Rate 3

Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 6B, Parry DV 2, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 6, Damage 3B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Essence Lash (Dripping Blushes of Ardor): Speed 4, Accuracy 13, Damage 10L, Parry DV 7, Rate 3

Soak: 8L/10B (Discreet Essence armor, +5L/5B, Hardness: 2L/2B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 7 **Willpower:** 7

Essence: 5

Personal Essence: 17 **Peripheral Essence:** 44 (33)

Committed Essence: 11

Other Notes: Marama remains conditioned by a Compulsion effect from one of Tyraeth's Charms, forcing her to spend one willpower point per scene to take any action that could logically result in direct harm to a living Solar Exalt, even in self-defense. Kesu Tyr-Marama's final words with Honored Ancestor Exhalation (see p. 98) guide her Gens with an Essence 7 Motivation of "Attend Lord Tyraeth with excellence and diligence" that Marama occasionally taps into for her murders, sincerely rationalizing that it is impossible to properly serve Tyraeth while Solar servant races exist as competition. Marama's Artifact 2 infinite fetish ensemble is a dress with a jade clasp that costs two motes to attune. Besides adding +2 Appearance for the purposes of seduction and +2 Stamina while engaged in sexual activity, the dress can be changed into the ideal risqué outfit for the situation as a reflexive action, adjusting to meet the fantasies of anyone she is attempting to seduce.

Saibok Gauto

Although Saibok Gauto is by no means the most powerful Terrestrial in recorded history, he is certainly the longest lived. A low-ranking officer during the Primordial War, he spent several centuries following the war as an equally low-ranking political aide to the Deliberative. After retiring, Gauto took his pension and bought a small manse in An-Teng where he has endeavored to live in quiet domestic hermitage ever since. To his polite frustration, Celestial doctors regularly visit him to take tissue samples and perform anagathic experiments that may have contributed slightly to his longevity. Far more of his extended life span has to do with his extreme asceticism and the Charms empowered by his simple lifestyle.

Unfortunately, the miracle of his longevity has not preserved Gauto's youth. The elder can only shuffle along with the help of a cane, and even Eternal Mind Meditation cannot reliably delve into many of his earlier memories. His thick, bark-like skin grows a few wispy strands of moss for hair, with thicker growth braided into a long beard that flowers during the month of Ascending Wood. In contrast, his artifact uniform from the Primordial War remains as crisp and clean as ever, adorned only with his rank, a commemorative amulet for bravery and the pentagonal jade medallion given to all Dragon-Blooded veterans of the War. Fitting his ideology, he feels no pride in either decoration and doesn't actually remember why he got the bravery medal, but wears them because it is the correct way to wear the uniform, and because he is still a commissioned soldier in the army of the gods. His attitude is eccentric and blatantly senile, especially with the endless parade of inquisitive doctors. In private moments, however, he reveals a transcendent wisdom that lives entirely in the present and is thus unconcerned with his advancing dementia or decrepitude. Despite his isolation, or perhaps because of it, he intuits that something is terribly wrong with the world, though he cannot articulate or explain these meditations.

Gauto's wisdom won him his dearest friend, the Chosen of Secrets Chejop Kejak (see p. 168). The two meet weekly for tea and discuss a wide range of subjects using a running metaphor of gardening without either party identifying the actual topic of discussion. Of late, much of their dialogue has concerned itself with the art of pruning blossoms to encourage a plant's roots to spread and flourish. Gauto does not know how long he has been friends with Chejop, but that is no impediment to the dialogue. Indeed, the Sidereal finds it most enlightening when Gauto repeats himself by independently arriving at the same wisdom on successive occasions.

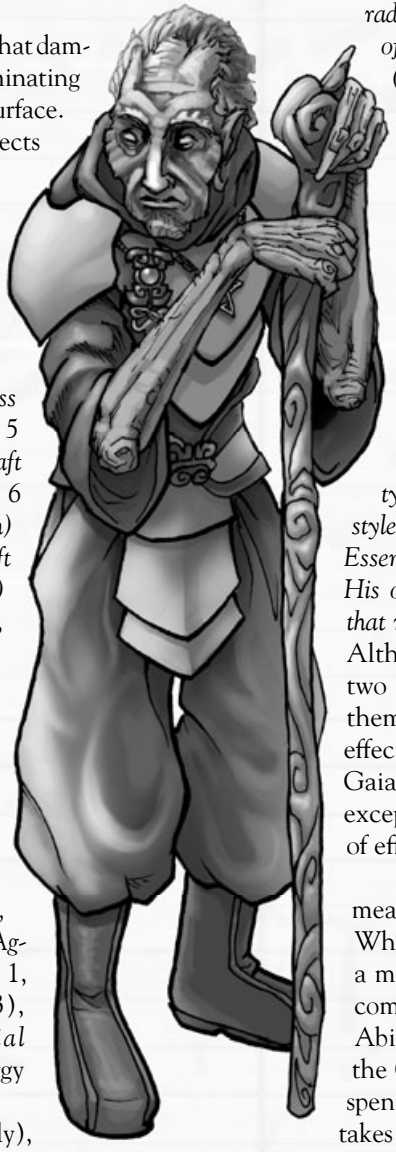
Other than Chejop, the only other individual who has an ongoing personal relationship with Gauto is his Dragon King nurse Scyala, a Raptok noted equally for her prim demeanor and steadfast loyalty to her charge. She personally prepares and blesses each vegetable and pot of tea the ancient Dragon-Blood consumes and helps him keep his exercise schedule when he forgets a stance or kata. During Gauto's many restful meditations, she labors to catalogue the thousands of species of vegetative wonders he has grown in his garden, even knowing she cannot keep pace with the fruits of his ingenuity. She is never far from the Terrestrial's side and would die to protect him, though that doesn't stop her from peering sharply over her adamant spectacles and fluffing her iridescent feathers to lecture him like a child when she thinks he's being foolish.

Gauto accepts this concern for what it is and appreciates the ways Scyala keeps him humble. The fact that Gauto has outlived all of his descendents only deepens this appreciation. In many ways, he treats the Dragon King as a surrogate granddaughter.

Motivation: Be.

Aspect: Wood

Anima Banner: A diffuse green radiation that damages its environment by spontaneously germinating rapid growth of flowering vines on every surface. The color and shape of these blossoms reflects his mood at the time of their genesis.



Attributes: Strength 1 (5), Dexterity 1 (6), Stamina 8, Charisma 4, Manipulation 2, Appearance 1 (2), Perception 8, Intelligence 5, Wits 6

Virtues: Compassion 5, Conviction 5, Temperance 5, Valor 5

Abilities: *Archery 4*, Athletics 5, *Awareness 8 (Patterns In Everything +3)*, Bureaucracy 5 (Solar Deliberative +3), *Craft (Air) 3*, *Craft (Earth) 3*, *Craft (Fire) 3*, *Craft (Genesis) 6 (Vegetative Technology +3)*, *Craft (Magitech) 3*, *Craft (Water) 6 (Cooking +3)*, *Craft (Wood) 8 (Gardening +3)*, *Craft (Fate) 1*, Dodge 5 (Subtle Movements +3), Integrity 8 (Hope +3), Investigation 5 (The Big Picture +3), Larceny 2 (Corruption +3), Linguistics (Native: Old Realm; Others: Earthtongue, Flametongue, Forest-tongue, Riverspeak, Seatongue Skytongue) 6 (Riddles +3), Lore 6, Martial Arts 6 (Walking Stick +3), *Medicine 8 (Herbalism +3)*, Melee 2, Occult 6 (Auspicious Geomancy +3), *Performance 4*, Presence 6 (Inscrutable +3), *Resistance 8 (Aging +3)*, *Ride 2 (Tyrant Lizards +1)*, Sail 1, Socialize 5 (Prehistoric Customs +3), Stealth 1, *Survival 7 (Primordial Weather +2)*, Thrown 6 (Elemental Energy +3), War 7 (Primordials +1),

Backgrounds: Allies 5 (Legendary Ally), Artifact 5 (and reasonable access to anything he expresses an interest in unless the Deliberative determined it would be too dangerous given his psychological state), Breeding 5, Connections (Celestial Medical Community) 5, Manse 3, Reputation (Oldest Living Dragon-Blood) 5, Retainers 5

Charms: Gauto has learned virtually every useful Dragon-Blooded Charm for which his impressive Abilities meet trait minimums, as well as full mastery of Terrestrial Hero Style and numerous custom branches from that style, including Master's Hand Envisioned Anew *(None; Martial Arts 5, Essence 5; Permanent; Keywords: Stackable; Prerequisites: Mastery of a Martial Arts Style. Each purchase of this Charm permanently allows the Exalt to add one form weapon to a style he has mastered. This weapon cannot be used for attacks it is physically incapable of making, so a striking weapon cannot be used to aid in grappling, nor may a close range weapon perform as a ranged weapon or vice versa. This Charm may not be used to add weapons that function on a ranged scale which are radically dissimilar to the default form weapons of the style. For example, adding a crossbow (or Essence cannon) to Wood Dragon style would be valid, but adding such a weapon to Snake style would not. Storytellers are permitted to veto, at their discretion, any weapon addition that would significantly shift the power level of the style to which it is attached, or which seems completely inappropriate to the style's aesthetics. For example, adding the short sword to Crystal Chameleon or Snake style would be fine, while adding a grand goremaul would violate the aesthetics of the former and unbalance the latter. The type of style determines the type of Charm; the Celestial and Sidereal style variants respectively require Martial Arts 6, Essence 6 and Martial Arts 7, Essence 7).* His only Oath of the Ten Thousand Dragons *that really* matters anymore is toward "Life." Although a sorcerer, he only knows about two dozen spells, most of which concern themselves with Wood-aspected energies or effects. His three purchases of Transcendent Gaian Harmony incorporate every element except fire, giving him an even broader range of effects from which to choose.

Unfortunately, Gauto's failing memory means he can't always access his power. Whenever he wishes to use a Charm with a minimum Essence of 3+, roll one die and compare the result to the Charm's minimum Ability rating. If the rolled number is lower, the Charm does not activate and nothing is spent, but the moment of befuddled confusion takes the same action as activating the Charm. On a result of 1, he cannot access that Charm for the rest of the scene. On a result of 10, he remembers that Charm for the rest of the scene. He always has access to his Permanent or Indefinite Charms, as well as Martyr effects.

Of note, Still Spry Approach lets Gauto momentarily restore his former strength *(2m, 1wp; Medicine 5, Essence 3; Reflexive; Keywords: Combo-OK; One action; Prerequisites: Grievous Wound Alteration Energy. This Charm allows a Terrestrial to ignore all internal penalties and all Crippling effects for one action, including deterioration to Physical Attributes from extreme age. Gauto's Attributes in parentheses indicate the values he restores with this Charm).*

Join Battle: 14

Attacks:
Punch: Speed 5, Accuracy 8 (13), Damage 1B (5B), Parry DV 4 (7), Rate 3
Kick: Speed 5, Accuracy 7 (12), Damage 4B (8B), Parry DV 3 (5), Rate 2
Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 7 (12), Damage 1B (5B), Parry DV —, Rate 1
Living Jade Staff (Rooted in Five Directions): Speed 4, Accuracy 13 (18), Damage 19B/10 (23B/10), Parry DV 7 (9), Rate 3.
Soak: 4L/8B (plus indefinite Perfected Scales of the Dragon, see p. 100, and any other protective Charms)
Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap
Dodge DV: 7 (10) **Willpower:** 10
Essence: 8
Personal Essence: 23 **Peripheral Essence:** 61 (60)
Committed Essence: 1
Other Notes: Gauto suffers a -6 internal penalty on all Ability rolls involving memory. He can still think through new tasks without penalty, but he struggles to understand his past with any continuity. This penalty cannot reduce a dice pool below eight dice as normal for his Essence rating. His legendary walking stick Rooted in Five Directions is an artifact of his own design, grown in his own garden. Thanks to Scyala's meticulous notes, other bio-artificers have been able to recreate the design.
Living Jade Staff (Artifact 5): Speed 4, Accuracy +3, Damage +18B/10, Defense +3, Rate 3, Minimums: Str 1, Attune 10, Tags: M, O, P, R. As these vegetative artifacts can only be grown out of monochromatic living jade, that magical material bonus is already factored into their traits. The staff inflicts aggravated damage to creatures of darkness and causes living victims to suffer a -1 internal penalty from poisoned blood unless they make a difficulty 4 (Stamina + Resistance) roll. An attuned bearer can resize the staff at will from a short cane to a tall staff as a reflexive action. He can also manipulate concentrations of the appropriate element for the staff's color with a simple action and spent motes as if he knew the Charm Elemental Expression (see **Exalted**, p. 302). This power permanently resizes the phenomenon, but cannot increase or reduce a phenomenon past the limits of what he could change with a single action and cannot use this power to attack as elementals can. Instead, the staff acts as an elemental lens for energies of its own aspect only, but with two added powers. First, it similarly doubles the health levels of aid provided by Dragon-Blooded Charms that directly heal or convert damage levels to a lesser type. Second, the bearer can direct lens-enhanced effects at any target the bearer can perceive as if he were standing adjacent to that target. Because they are living organisms, these artifacts hibernate if they go more than a month without being attuned, after which their revival is a Repair 6 effort based on Craft (Genesis).

Chuzei Vagyn Zû

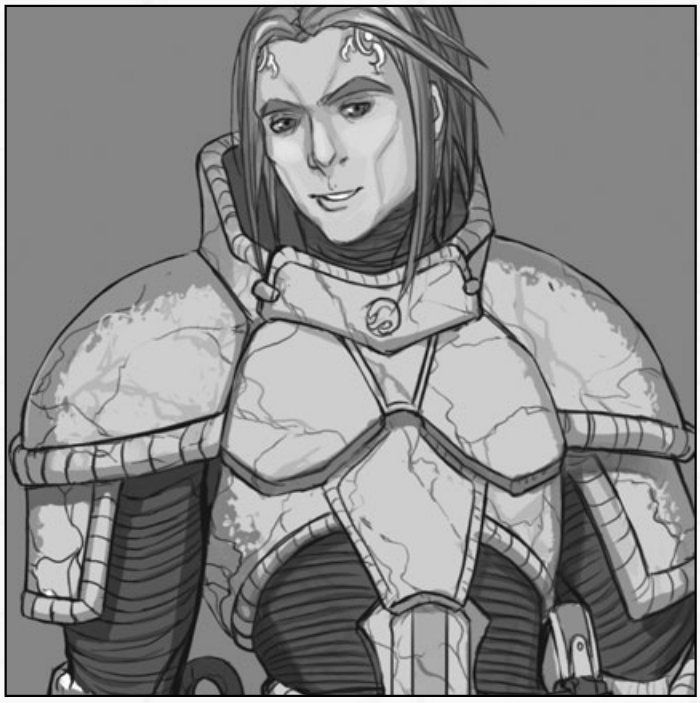
A devoted officer in the Solar Navy, Chuzei Vagyn Zû serves in the fleets of Admiral Leviathan, commanding a *Glorious Dragonfly*-class patrol boat assigned to monitor a sector of the Western border of Creation. His crew includes a perfect sworn brotherhood of young Dragon-Blooded commandos and six hot-bunked gunzosha to provide continuous staffing and support to the Exalted in staggered shifts. Chuzei Zû's vessel, *Dagger at the Throat of the Sea*, is a cutting edge model equipped with two medium Essence cannons for its secondary armament (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**, p. 41), but it relies on its commander's Charms for its submersible capabilities.

Chuzei Zû is a fair officer and cleverly unorthodox tactician who struggles to balance the authority of his rank with camaraderie to the soldiers under his command. More often, he errs on the side of authority, unable to bridge the generation gap he senses between himself and his crew. He is troubled by their vocal contempt of Celestial abuses of power and the bawdy stories they tell of aristocratic debauchery on the Blessed Isle. In Zû's own youth, such stories would have been too shameful to repeat and might have led to charges of high treason against the Exalted mandate if the tale went too far. The world has changed, however, and Zû is no longer certain of his place in it. Although his belief in Exalted righteousness has not faltered, it was sorely tested by Admiral-Artificer Seralin's recent imprisonment of the dragon Isli. Zû has chosen to wait and see how Heaven responds to the kidnapping of its Western Arbiter of Storms before he makes up his own mind on the incident.

Given the relative safety of the borders, the crew of the *Dagger at the Throat of the Sea* spends a lot of time being bored between skirmishes with the Fair Folk and the occasional aquatic behemoth or demon that tries to sneak through one of the benthic rifts to Kimberry. Gossip, gambling and lurid dreamstones only fill so much time, so the crew is all too happy for any bit of shore leave. The men are significantly better behaved at the port of Luthe, since no one can ever be sure whether any of the mortal staff might be Admiral Leviathan in disguise. Earning his wrath is about the last thing his fleet members want, especially since the infamous incident when he ate a junior officer who mouthed off to him in front of his crewmates. All in all, life in the Navy is fairly privileged, and the crew knows that, but service just doesn't have the same luster and moral high ground that it used to. Still, with all the monsters Zû has seen and fought, he knows the world needs the Exalted. Therefore, he remains tight-lipped about his worries, puts on a brave smile and tries his best to make Creation a little safer every day. It's all he knows how to do.

Although Zû is married and has 17 children, he only lives with his family in Luthe for one season a year between deployments. The rest of the year, he visits as often as occasions allow, generally about once a month. This is good,

since he and his sorcerer-technician wife, Inrea, drive each other crazy after more than a week together. She has her concubine, and he has his dalliances among the gratefully defended natives, so no one's needs go unmet, and the couple is very happy with the arrangement. So far, all of their children have Exalted except his youngest, Mia. She's 17, and her parents are beginning to worry. He's hoping for promotion to a larger vessel soon, which won't happen if he sired a mortal. He hasn't decided whether she needs to die in an accident to leave the matter unresolved prior to her 18th birthday, or whether to give her blood the remaining seasons for the hope of a late blossoming. He's just not sure he's up to arranging the accident, for which Inrea occasionally scolds him. He knows she means well to encourage his ruthlessness, but he also thinks she's probably worked too long in Seralin's employ to be fully trusted in matters of the heart.



Zû is tall and imposing, with well-defined aspect features tracing blue whorls over his joints and chakras. He wears dragon armor when he expects serious combat, but he prefers the comfort and style of his Realm uniform the rest of the time, wavecleaver dangling at his belt opposite his holstered Essence cannon. Other than his rakish smile, Zû's most distinctive feature is the coil of splotchy purple circles encircling his left leg and arm, trophies left by a behemoth's envenomed sucker barbs during the Lintha Suppression of 3405. The slight twinges the scars give him ahead of bad weather are nothing compared to the memory of friends lost to the monster's whirlpool gullet, so he is grateful to have walked away with such minor injuries. Part of him hopes he might get the chance to return the favor if the beast ever finishes licking its wounds and crawls out of its hidden grotto, though he's fought enough behemoths to realize it probably won't return in his lifetime. Still, the faint hope of revenge makes him order the *Dagger at the Throat of the Sea* to explore every cave and crevasse it comes across. He knows he'll probably have to call in Admiral Leviathan for backup if he ever stumbles across the beast, but even discovering the lair would lead to an automatic promotion.

Motivation: Defend the Realm.

Aspect: Water

Anima Banner: A surging undertow of currents with tides matched to his heartbeat.

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

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

Abilities: *Archery 5 (Essence Artillery +3)*, Athletics 3 (Swimming +3), Awareness 3, *Bureaucracy 3 (Solar Navy +3)*, Craft (Air) 2, Craft (Fire) 2, Craft (Magitech) 3, Dodge 4 (Superior Opponents +3), Integrity 4 (While Exercising Office +3), *Investigation 3 (Innocuous Questions +1)*, *Larceny* 4, Linguistics 4 (Military Codes +1), Lore 4 (Lintha +1, Naval History +1), *Martial Arts 2*, Melee 3 (Wavecleaver +2), Occult 5 (Behemoths +1), Performance 4 (Calculated Bravado +2, Hostile Audience +1), *Presence 5 (Dashing +3)*, Resistance 3 (Underwater +2), *Sail 5 (Glorious Dragonfly-class Vessel +3)*, Socialize 3 (Shore Leave +2, Terrestrial High Society +1), Stealth 5 (Hiding a Vessel +2), Survival 3 (Marooned +1, Predicting Weather With Scars +1), *War 5 (Naval Tactics +2, No One Is That Stupid +1)*

Backgrounds: Arsenal 4, Artifact 5, Backing (Solar Navy) 2, Breeding 5, Command 1, Connections (Solar Navy) 3, Manse 3, Panoply 2, Reputation 2, Resources 3

Charms: Aura of Invulnerability, Cipher Missive, Confluence of Savant Thought, Dragonfly Finds Mate, Dragon-Graced Arrow, Deck-Striding Technique, Ears of the Snowy Owl, Elemental Concentration Trance, Elemental Empowerment Meditation, Enfolded in the Dragon's Wings, Feeling-the-Air Technique, Finding the Water's Depth, Fine Passage Negotiating Style, First Archery Excellency, First Melee Excellency, First Performance Excellency, Glowing Coal Radiance, Harvest of the Hunter, Hopping Firecracker Evasion, Hurricane-Predicting Glance, Language-Learning Ritual, Moth to the Candle, Oath of the Ten Thousand Dragons (Gens Vagyn, Solar Navy), Observer Awareness Method, Ox-Body Technique, Quarry Revelation Technique, Safety Among Enemies, Scent-of-Crime Method, Second Dodge Excellency, Second Presence Excellency, Second War Excellency, Seven Seas

Wind-Luring Chanty, Seven-Year Swarm Volley, Soul-Stirring Performance Method, Sparrow Dives at Hawk, Spirit-Chaining Strike, Spirit-Detecting Mirror Technique, Spirit-Grounding Shout, Spirit-Shredding Attack, Storm-Outrunning Technique, Sturdy Bulkhead Concentration, Swallows Defend the Nest, Sweeten-the-Tap Method, Terrestrial War Reinforcement, Third Integrity Excellency, Threshold Warding Stance, Unbearable Taunt Technique, Unobstructed Hunter' Aim, Warlord's Convocation, Wary Yellow Dog Attitude, Waves Like Clouds Voyage, Wind-Carried Words Technique

Join Battle: 9

Attacks:

Gauntlet: Speed 5, Accuracy 7, Damage 11B, Parry DV 4, Rate 3

Boot: Speed 5, Accuracy 6, Damage 12B, Parry DV 2, Rate 2

Clinch: Speed 6, Accuracy 6, Damage 6B, Parry DV —, Rate 1

Wavecleaver Daiklave (Alternative Resolution): Speed 4, Accuracy 12, Damage 13L/3, Parry DV 5, Rate 2

Very Small Concussive Essence Cannon (Finer Points of Diplomacy): Speed 4, Accuracy 13, Damage 10B (piercing) or 20B w/ elemental lens (piercing), Range 50, Rate 1

Soak: 18L/18B (Water Dragon armor, +15L/13B, Hardness: 7L/6B, -1 mobility penalty)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-4

Dodge DV: 6 (8 against superior opponents)

Willpower: 8

Essence: 6

Personal Essence: 19 **Peripheral Essence:** 48 (29)

Committed Essence: 19

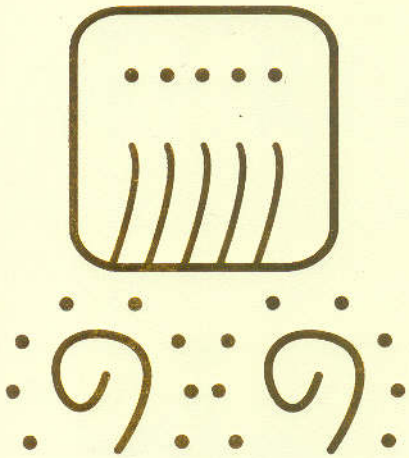
Other Notes: Zû wears an infinite resplendence amulet (see pp. 118-119) to create his uniform. Zû's water jet firing Essence cannon is hearthstone-powered for unlimited ammunition (but requires a one-mote attunement). A Gem of Youth is set into the device's grip. Two hearthstones, a Labyrinthine Eye and a Jewel of Whispers, are set into his dragon armor, the more powerful stone being devoted to powering the armor. Besides his ship, dragon armor and weapons, his other artifacts are all utilitarian items.

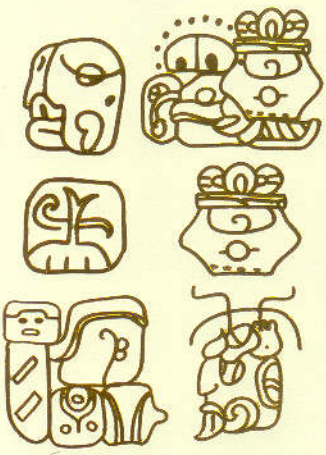
Dreams of the First Age—Lords of Creation is devoted to the First Age Exalted, their Charms, their servants and their panoplies. All the crunch necessary for both players and Storytellers to play series set in the Age of Splendor lies within.

Dare you draw back the veil of Ages to join the ranks of these, the true Princes of the Earth?

Inside you'll find:

- Complete rules for creating First Age **Exalted** characters
- High-Essence Charms and new artifacts for use in any **Exalted** series
- Sample **Exalted** luminaries and the mortals who serve them

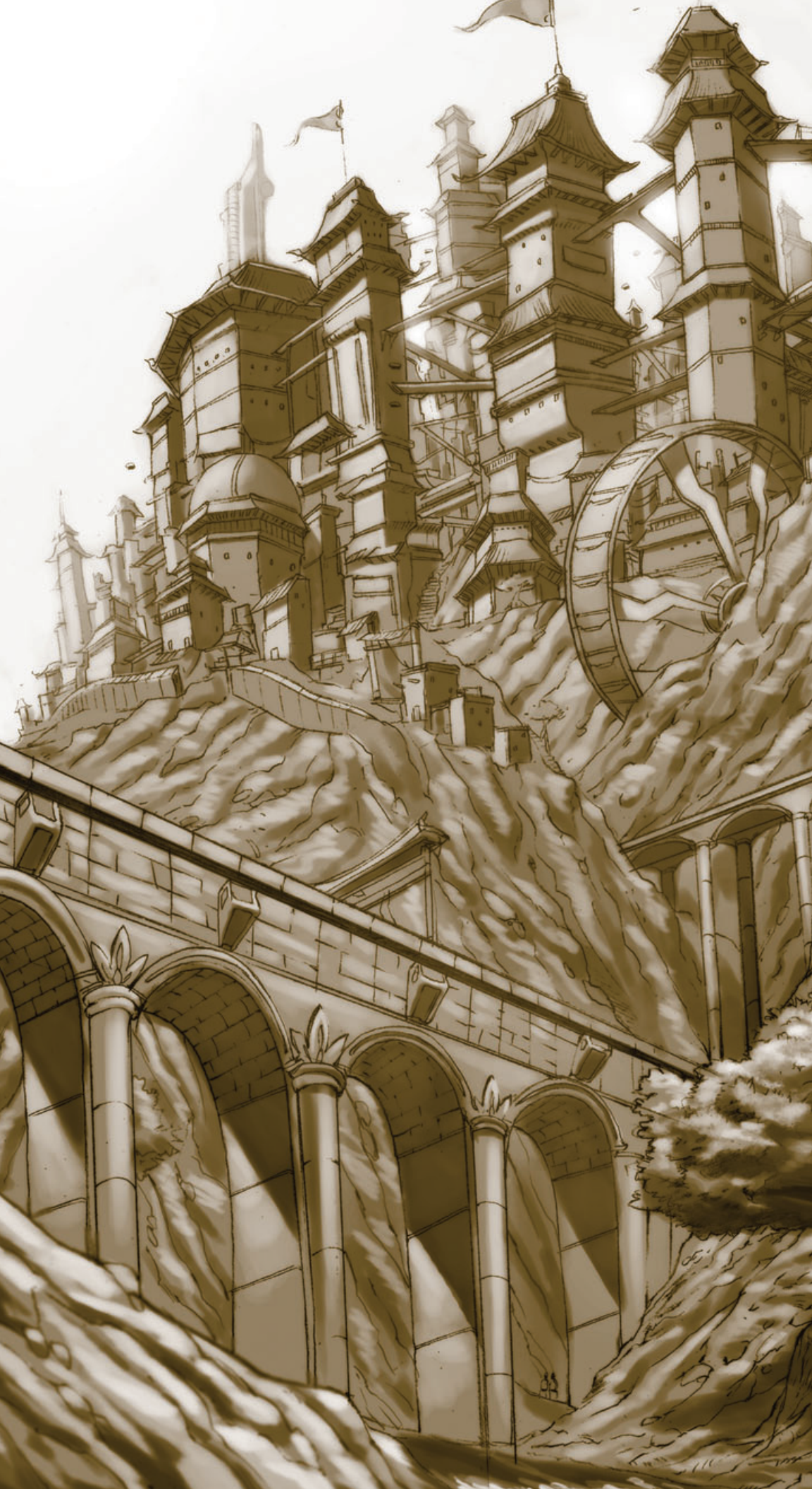


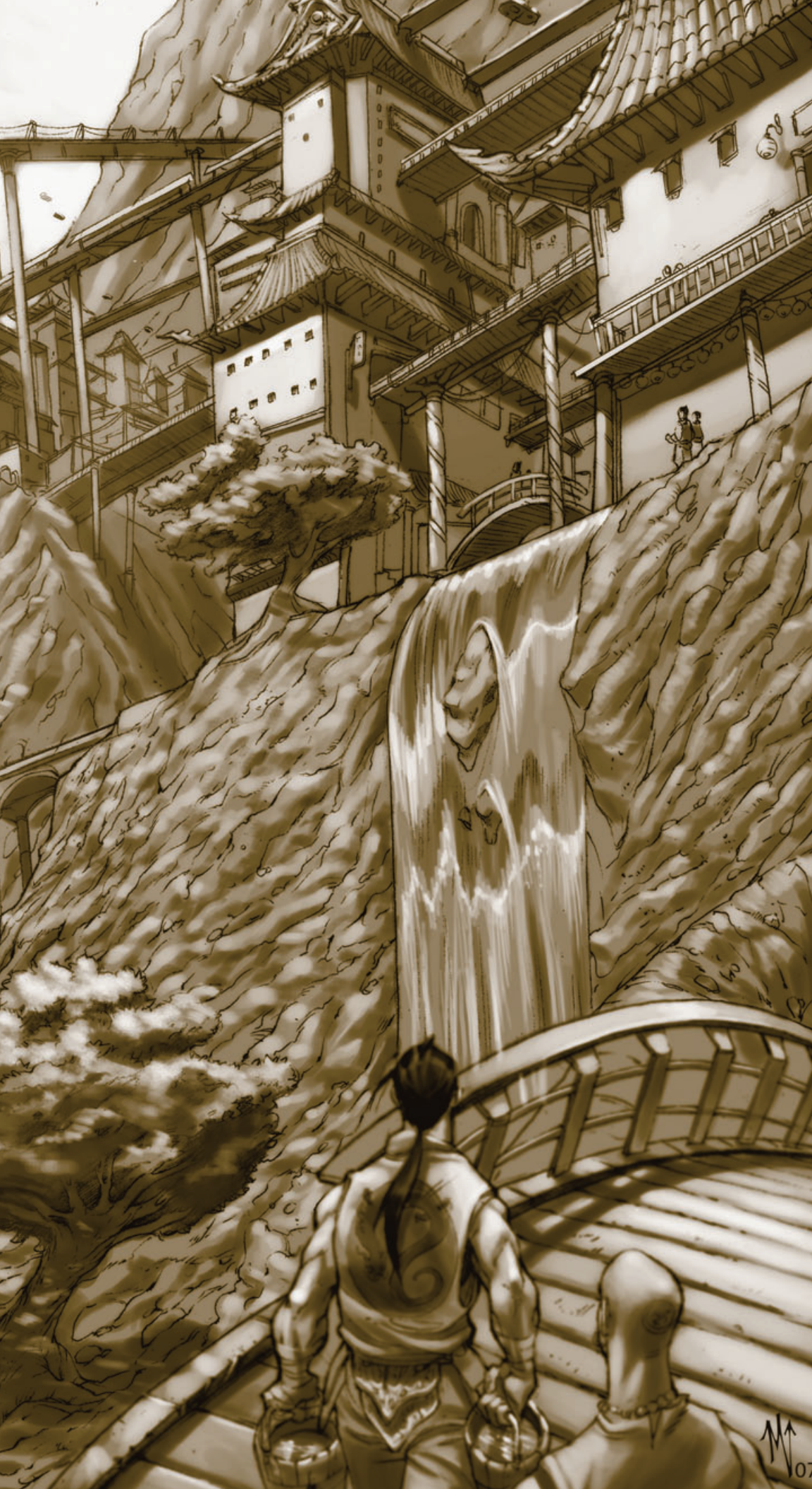


MERU

A Guidebook to the Exalted City

Chosen of the Unconquered Sun Edition, abridged





Welcome, Your Excellency!

By the grace of the Unconquered Sun, Your Excellency has come at last to dwell in Meru, the Exalted City. Your Excellency's presence here uplifts us all. The Ministry of Civic Information and Administrative Necessities humbly presents this guidebook to both welcome Your Excellency to and prepare Your Excellency for a glorious new life at the heart of all Creation.

About this Guidebook

The tradition of the guidebook was established in Year 100 of Our Everlasting Glory, upon the transfer of the seat of the capital of the Realm from Rathess to the Exalted City. The original document is attributed to Her Most Luminous Excellency and Savior of Creation, Her Exalted Highness M–R–L–, may she live forever. That document, penned by Her Exalted Highness's own hand, praised the beauties of the White City, showing how none other was worthy to be the seat of Celestial rule.

Every year since that day, we honor that legacy by dutifully producing a new edition of this guidebook. The complete, unabridged edition of this text is available at the Library of the Deliberative or in the memory of I AM, who would be glad to converse at length with Your Excellency on any subject covered in this text.

About this Edition's Author

The Ministry of Civic Information and Administrative Necessities is humbled and honored that His Excellency Damarasak, the Student of Vows Made in Absentia, Deliberator in Good Standing, Chosen of the Unconquered Sun and member of the Eclipse Caste, has volunteered to pen this year's edition of our unworthy guidebook. By His Excellency's flawless reasoning, the observations and advice of a Chosen Exalt of the Unconquered Sun will prove invaluable as Your Excellency ascends to Your Excellency's rightful station among your Exalted peers.

Greetings, my Exalted peer, and welcome to Meru. I know well that the White City can seem intimidating and the duties of the Chosen can seem an impossible weight from the narrow mortal perspective you haven't yet shaken off. Nonetheless, the Unconquered Sun chose you for a reason. He'll put no burden on you that's too much to bear. In you, Our Lord invests the full power and the authority to expand the borders of Creation and rule it from its heart.

As for making your way in this overwhelming city of marble and adamant... that's where I come in.

I am Damarasak, the Student of Vows Made in Absentia, Chosen of the Unconquered Sun and member of the Eclipse Caste. My friends know me as Damar, an honor I hope you'll share with them someday. I was born, raised and Chosen in Meru. Although a rare few of my Solar peers can claim to know this city better than I do now, none knew it better when they were my age.

Now, in case you're only skimming this guide on your way to the nearest Public Offering Receptacle, I strongly urge you to reconsider. I'll know if you do offer it up, and my feelings will be terribly bruised. Instead, keep it and show it to me once we've been formally introduced. As a gesture of welcome, I'll draw my seal on it for you without a trace of irony. Then, if you return this signed copy to me at some point in the future, I'll gladly vote exactly as you request on a single upcoming Deliberative issue.

But that's enough about me for now. Once again, greetings and welcome to this, our Exalted City.

Damarasak

Student of Vows Made in Absentia

Contents

Living in Meru
- City Life 1
- Our Climate 2
- Communication 3
- Money 4
- Transportation 6
- Housing 10
- Worship 12

The Exalted City
- The City in Brief 18
  - The Zenith Archdiocese 20
    - The Ruling Palace of Meru 21
    - Crown Boulevard 22
    - The Crown Residence of the Solar Queen 22
    - The Eternal Temple of the Golden Bull 23
    - The Order Conferring Trade Nexus 23
    - Sky Mantis Garden 24
    - The Pagoda Skyway of the Ministries of Order 24
    - The Birthplace of Rivers Demesne 25
    - The Holy Peak 25
  - The Twilight Archdiocese 26
    - The Palaces of the Divine Ministers 27
    - The Manufactory Districts 27
    - The Northern Slope 28
      - The Institute of Biological Improvement 28
      - The Academy of Vocational Thaumaturgy 28
      - The Library of the Deliberative 29
      - The Northern Marketplace 29
    - The Southern Slope 30
      - The Southern Marketplace 30
      - The Academy of Divine Enlightenment 30
      - The Menagerie of the Exalted City 31
      - The Conservancy of Unexpected Life Forms 31
  - The Dawn Archdiocese 32
    - The Thousand-Forged Dragon Aerie 33
    - The Sunflower Mirror Maze 33
    - Hero Monuments Park 34
    - The Eye of Meru Balcony 34
    - The Proving Grounds 35
    - The Lotus School 35
    - The Amaranthine Dragon Bathhouse 36
    - The Heavenly Unity Service 36
    - The Victory Pavilion 37
    - The Warstrider Museum 37
  - The Night Archdiocese 38
    - Total Rejuvenation Hospital 39
    - The Broken Gateway 39
    - Solar Queen M-r-l-'s Tomb 40
    - The Dragons' Graveyard 40
    - The Fallen Stars Memorial 41
    - Turning Cycle Hallowed Grounds 41
    - The Dreaming Archer Resort 42
    - The Hanging Gardens of Meru 42
    - The Orrery 43
    - Echoing Glory Arena 43
  - The Eclipse Archdiocese 44
    - The Yu-Shan Embassy 45
    - The Banquet Hall of Responsible Meditation 45
    - The Bank of the Treasury 46
    - The Three Mirrors Chamber 46
    - The Singing Garden 47
    - The Auru-Lai Theater District 47
    - The Little Cities 48
    - Celestial Expeditions 49
  - Other Areas and Attractions in Meru 50
    - Quiet Meru 50
    - The Golden Children Exciting Journey 50
    - Restaurants 51
    - Schools 53
- Further Information 54
  - Updates and Corrections 54
  - Other Editions 54
  - Other Publications 54

City Life

If you had the divine fortune to be born and raised here as I was, you wouldn't need this guidebook. Since you're you, however, there are things you need to know about city life that might not have occurred to you. Yes, your life here will be one of ease undreamed of elsewhere. Yes, you'll have a staff of assistants, valets and other functionaries attending to your every need. Yes, every amenity and laborsaving invention known in Creation is at your beck and call here. Your life here won't be a hard one. But if you don't know the basic systems that make the wonders of city life available to you, you're no better in that respect than the teeming masses living beyond our shores. In fact, if you don't know simple things like where to find a hard mote, how to access I AM or where to park your skysled, you're actually quite worse off than the teeming masses who've lived here all their lives.

And just as a tip, don't think the locals will help you if you need it. They've been trained not to offer information to one of us as if we didn't already know it. If you stop some mortal on the street and ask him something, he's going to assume he's being tested on how well he understands his place in our civilization. If he actually stops groveling long enough to answer you, the best you're going to get is effusively polite directions to the nearest Interaction Kiosk.

Don't let this happen to you. It undermines the mortals' faith in us when they think we need them for anything. Worse, it makes you look like a know–nothing freshman Deliberator in a city where word travels fast.

Our Climate

The locals of the Exalted City have a saying as regards the climate. It goes: "If you don't like the weather, you're on the wrong island." Every day in Meru is always the same dry, cloudless 25–degree perfection from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same. Every night is perfectly chilled, 20–degree stillness beneath an endless sea of stars, where auroras of the Earth Pole's ambient Essence dance with the ever–changing moon and the distant Maidens. Never will a gust of wind disturb your elaborate coiffure. Never will a raindrop darken your robes. Rain, as we say, is for farmers. Our sky mantis infrastructure grid sees to that.

Of course, exceptions prove the rule. The Little Cities replicate the weather systems of their homelands. Nature conservancies established around unclaimed demesnes are not included in the sky mantis grid. Certain resorts and attractions around the city are zoned for different weather conditions and operate within closed, autonomous weather sectors. But perfection reigns everywhere else—even in Quiet Meru.

Weather Changes

If the weather doesn't suit you, you have three options. (Four, if you count getting over it.) First, you can prop up a portable sky mantis tower over your manse and adjust the weather to your heart's content within your personal boundaries. Second, for a broader change, you can apply for an adjustment to the control pylon central to the sky mantis grid sector you frequent. (Such adjustments are costly and time–consuming, though, so the more political pull you have, the more likely your request will be granted.)

Third, you can put forth a motion in front of the Deliberative to have the entire sky mantis grid adjusted to your liking.

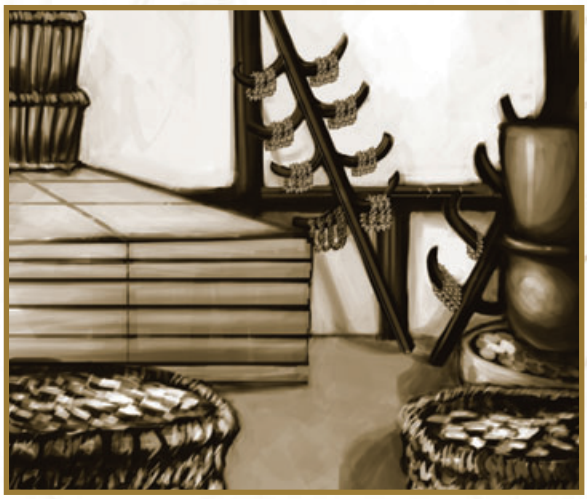
Trust me, though, when I say that if you didn't fight in The War, your motion isn't even going to be seconded. The weather in Meru is just the way the Senior Deliberators like it.

Communication

The wondrous convenience of telecommunication within Meru cannot be overstated. Infallible Messenger crystals are available at most Interaction Kiosks and in most parcel drop boxes, and they're available on order through I AM as well. You can also send messages anywhere in the Realm directly through I AM, though you'll have to wait until your intended recipient actually checks for sent messages. I AM can record voice and/or text at any Interaction Kiosk or from your resplendent personal assistant, or it can transmit information from a recorder of everlasting glories. For private or personal business, you can pick up prayer transceiver modules at any reasonably well-stocked store.

For delivery of packages and written correspondence, Meru offers a wide variety of private couriers. I AM has a listing of registered courier services, ranked by quality, but I prefer the Dexterous Midnight Runners, as they've proven themselves loyal, discreet and extremely punctual on many occasions. The Ministry of the Treasury's own Immaculate Order of Postal Carriers is doggedly reliable as well, despite being much slower than that of most private couriers. The Immaculate Order guarantees that it will get your package or letter to its destination undamaged. What it doesn't guarantee is confidentiality, so it's best not to send anything by post you don't want anyone but its intended recipient to see. Nonetheless, the Immaculate Order's deliveries are all free of charge to Solar Deliberators, as a show of respect to our station.

Money



Any legal currency that pays into the Order Conferring Trade Pattern is valid and accepted in Meru. Whether you used jade, gossamer, silver, gold, salt or what have you back home, it doesn't matter. Unless you were from some forsaken barbarian scrapland that uses seashells, leaves or some other preposterous legal tender, your money is good here.

But none of us carry money.

What I recommend is immediately upon setting foot on the shores of the Blessed Isle proceed to the nearest Ministry of the Treasury currency exchange pagoda. (If you have access to an Infallible Messenger, you can arrange for one to meet you at your port of entry.) Once there, arrange to convert all of your worldly wealth into jade and deposit it in the Bank of the Treasury. Then—I can't stress this enough—get at least one hard mote. Any store that has access to I AM can use a personalized hard mote to verify your wealth and identity with the Bank of the Treasury. Just show it to one of the store's maneki neko spirits, and the transactions will sort themselves out. You won't even have to talk to anyone.

Hard Motes

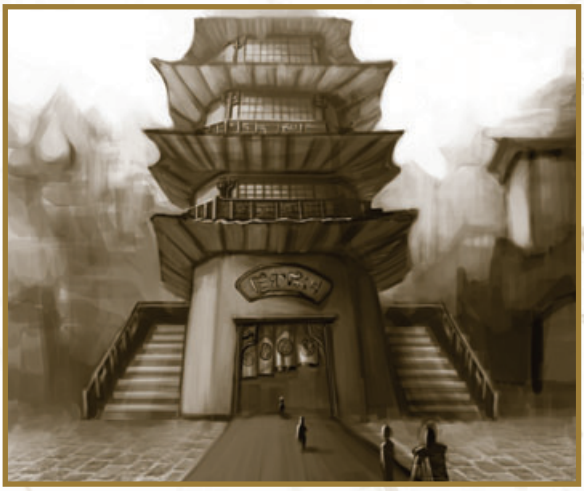
A hard mote is a rectangular sliver of solid Essence available at any Ministry of the Treasury pagoda or at the Bank of the Treasury itself. Simply feed a mote of Essence into a registered motic press, and it crystallizes into a slim, attuned wafer. (This service is free for Celestial Exalted.) You can personalize your hard mote with your name, face, family seal, anima banner icon or any other distinguishing symbol.

Any piece of civic technology that requires a commitment or expenditure of a single mote of Essence works as it should without that expenditure as long as you have your hard mote with you. The mote it cost you to make it isn't even committed into the wafer. The only time you have to commit a mote to a hard mote is if you want to allow someone not attuned to it to use it to access your wealth.

Maneki Neko Spirits

Every merchant in Meru employs one of these pushy, disingenuously obsequious spirits. When you walk into any reputable establishment, the first thing you'll see is a white or golden cat spirit wearing long robes and a coin medallion. (If you don't see him, don't worry. He'll be right with you.) Maneki neko can access bank records via I AM through their medallions for a one-mote tip. They're also discrete personal shoppers and shameless gossips.

The Peer Economy



In time, you'll find that actual money means very little to you. Once you've been around long enough, you'll have more money than you know what to do with. This, I can tell you, has already happened to most of your Exalted peers. Getting what you want from them will require more than money, especially here in Meru where anything they want is theirs for the asking. Therefore, in our rarefied sphere, the coin of the realm (as it were) is service. Doing things for one another that no one else can do, or sharing access to things we alone control forms the foundation of our peer economy. Suitable peer commodities include access to magical materials or useful prodigies, mortal breeding stock, unique favors, voting influence and timely applications of our unique caste abilities.

Do not offer these things to anyone beneath you in station, however. Less refined commodities suffice for them—such as money, blessings or even simple acknowledgement. It's called the peer economy for a reason.

Transportation

Getting Here

Arrangements to get you from your home to the Blessed Isle have already been made, as you've no doubt already been told by the Dragon-Blooded minders who've come to fetch you. (It's possible you're en route already.) But while you're busy signing off on the particulars of your arrival parade and your Banquet of All Peers, do spare some thought for your family, your staff and your belongings. You'll be expected to live at least two years out of every five here on the Blessed Isle from now on, so if you intend to have the trappings of your pre-Exaltation life imported, you'll have to make those arrangements on your own. The Immaculate Order can transport your belongings, but the people are another story. There are three main ways to get here from wherever you came from: by sea, by air and by gate.

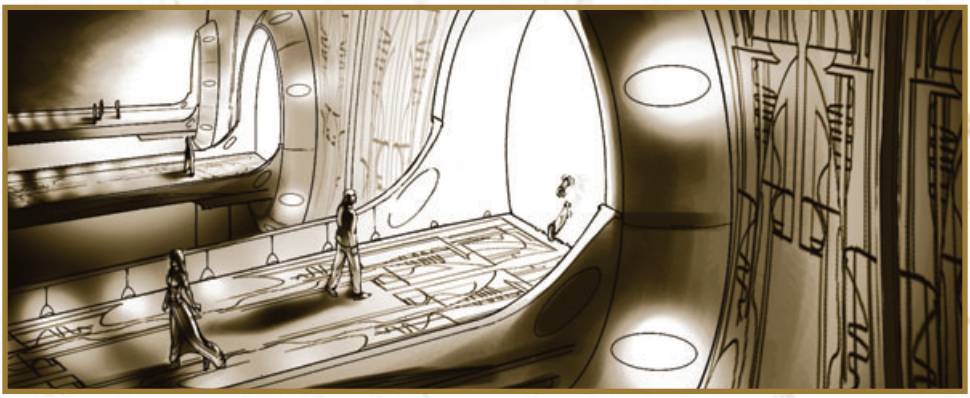
Sea

Water travel is the least expensive way to travel to Meru, though it's also the slowest. The larger the vessel is, the fewer routes it can take from the shore to the city itself. The larger a waterway is, the more traffic it's bound to have and the longer the passengers are going to have to wait to clear customs.

If you're moving your family and staff to an estate on the Blessed Isle, any port and inland waterway will suffice. If you want to bring them into Meru proper by boat, however, you have only three choices: the Caracal River (to the south), the Serpentine River (to the west) and the Dawn River (to the east). Each of those three rivers begins high up on the mountain, and canals connect each of them all throughout the limits of the Exalted City. If your guests don't mind changing vessels several times, they can travel from your home port of call almost to the front gate of your manse without spending more than an hour on dry land in between.

Air

Travel by air is the safest, least exciting means of reaching the White City. Meru is open to traffic of any sort of flying vessel, from scudding passenger skyships to skysleds to personal cloud trapezes to Swift Spirits of Winged Transportation. Do be aware, however, that airspace over the Blessed Isle is restricted. All private aircraft are expected to land at coastal temples of Vanileth and present valid Ministry of Transportation documents. Most air traffic bound for Meru proper will be directed over I AM to the temple of Vanileth nearest the passengers' intended destination. You can also rent or buy a private airfield from the Ministry of Transportation.



Gate

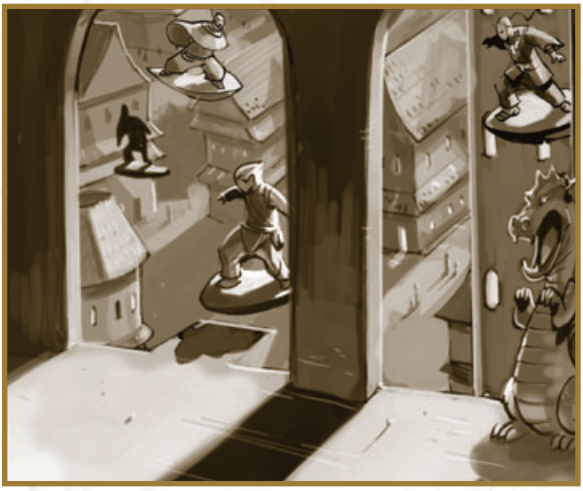
Meru has the largest per-capita distribution of gates of auspicious passage of any city in Creation. In the Little Cities alone, you can barely cast a shadow without darkening one such gate. However, only we Celestial Exalted are allowed to schedule an appointment to use these devices through the Ministry of Transportation, which is a long and frustrating process that greatly favors your elder peers. Travel through a gate of auspicious passage is free, but avoiding the Ministry scheduling headache by taking some other form of transportation is well worth the cost.

Getting Around

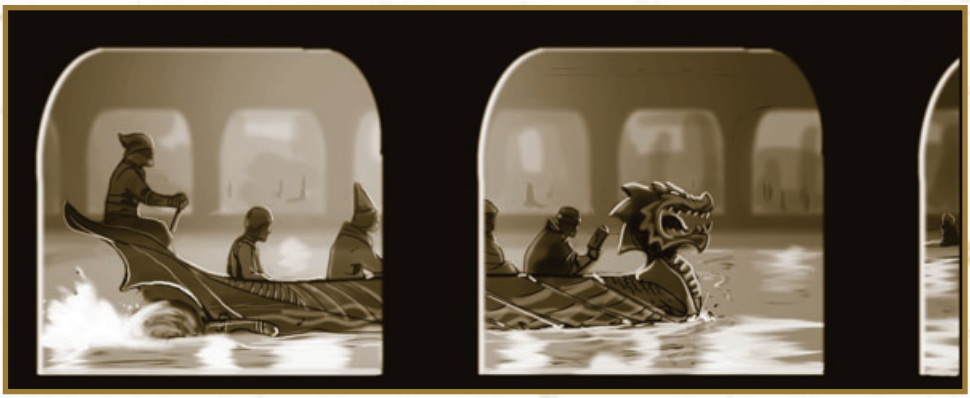
Your options for travel within Meru are many and varied. I won't insult you with the details of how to use the public transportation systems that cover the city's ground and canal routes. If you do choose to use public transportation, keep your hard mote handy and leave your dignity in its small box at home.

At ground level, you can walk or ride a mount anywhere in the city you might want to go. Mortals are restricted to the pebbled gray paths that run alongside all the vehicle paths that branch off the main roads. You can take these gray roads yourself, if you're in a hurry, but it's gauche. In most cases, you should stick to the golden arteries marked on your city map. These wide, clean streets are reserved for Celestial Exalts and their retinues. (If you see unauthorized pedestrians or vehicles on a golden artery, you can report the infraction at the nearest convenient Stone Journeys shrine.) Land mounts and vehicles are available on order from the Ministry of Transportation through I AM or at any Ministry rental pavilion.

If ground travel doesn't appeal to you, you can ascend to the Web instead. The Web is a network of adamant footbridges that spans vast portions of the city 100 feet above street level. (Only Exalted pedestrian traffic is allowed on the Web.) To use it, you can literally walk on the right-hand side or glide on an Essence-powered conveyor on the left. Each strand of the web goes only one way, though, so pay attention to the signs at each nexus before stepping out and making a fool of yourself.



Should even the Web not be high enough above it all for you, most of the tallest buildings in the city sport takeoff and landing balconies for all forms of air travel. All Ministry buildings offer disposable transcendent phoenix pinions, windblades or belts of aerial mobility. More buildings than not have mooring masts for skyships on top. Rare is the building in Meru that doesn't have an aerial rickshaw, skysled or warbird platform on the roof as well. Many even have private balconies for the casting of various air-transportation spells. The Ministry of Transportation does prefer that those of us with access to air vehicles remain above rooftop level in flight—for what that preference is worth.



If you'd like to travel within the city by canal, don't just walk to a pier and get on the first flat-bottomed boat full of mortals you see. (Just because you used to be one of them doesn't mean you have to travel like them anymore.) Also, unless you're trying to impress someone, don't feel obliged to reserve a private gondola either. Simply go to the nearest Water Journeys shrine, show it your hard mote, tell it how many are in your party, and wait. Within a minute, a Ministry of Transportation skiff will materialize with a Pilot of Water Journeys ready to serve you. These skiffs might not be the sleekest, fastest or prettiest boats on the water, but they can travel on any river or canal in the city, and any vessel not carrying one of your Solar peers must yield the right of way to them.

Housing

As I mentioned before, you'll be expected to live at least two out of every five years with us on the Blessed Isle. That rule has been in existence as long as the Deliberative. (In fact, it was one of the Deliberative's concessions to Solar Queen M–r–l– that convinced her to step down as Creation's sole ruler.) But just because you have to live here, that doesn't mean you have to live like a peasant.

Your City Manse

One of the perquisites of coming here as a new member of the Solar Host is that a fully staffed and stocked palatial manse is waiting for you in the Exalted City. You have your choice, in fact, of all the vacant manses on the mountain. Your Sidereal advisor will sort through the numerous listings with you once you've arrived, helping you choose the size, décor and aspect of your new city home. As a word of advice, though, don't expect to simply apply for and be granted a richly appointed Solar–aspected manse in the Zenith Ring of the city. Most of them already belong to your elder peers, and attunement rights to the rest are bound up in endless probate arbitration. As a freshly reincarnated Exaltation, you'll most likely have to settle for one of the many perfectly nice Earth–aspected manses farther down the mountain's slopes.

Granted, you'll still be living in a palace in the White City, but there are palaces and there are palaces.

Your Blessed Isle Estate

In addition to your city manse, you're also entitled to an estate elsewhere on the island with its own RPCs to govern. Manses outside our city limits tend to be slightly less powerful, but the selection of décor, location, aspect and community culture is broader. Competition for choice real estate is not so fierce on the rest of the Blessed Isle as it is on the mountaintop.

Meru Inheritance Laws

Although you carry the Exaltation of a Lawgiver who was granted and accumulated property in his or her long life, your new incarnation has no legitimate claim to any of that property. Things were different just three short centuries ago, but alas how times do change. Now, what the Deliberative grants upon Exaltation, the Deliberative will appropriate upon your death and either reassign to a new Exaltation or fold into some public works sorcery or technical project. If you want to leave a manse to your family, your Lunar or even your next incarnation, you'll have to buy a demesne of your own and build one on it.

Your Home Abroad

Your previous incarnation was in charge of a large principality in Creation that extends well beyond the Blessed Isle's shores. Now that you've Exalted, a similar burden of governance falls on you (and through you, on your chosen Dragon-Blooded daimyos). It might be the same region or one farther from the Blessed Isle, depending on how choice a position the remote principality is where you're expected to be. You're allowed to have as many grand palaces throughout that principality as you wish, but the Treasury isn't going to just give them to you. You'll have to raise domestic revenue to fund construction of homes abroad.

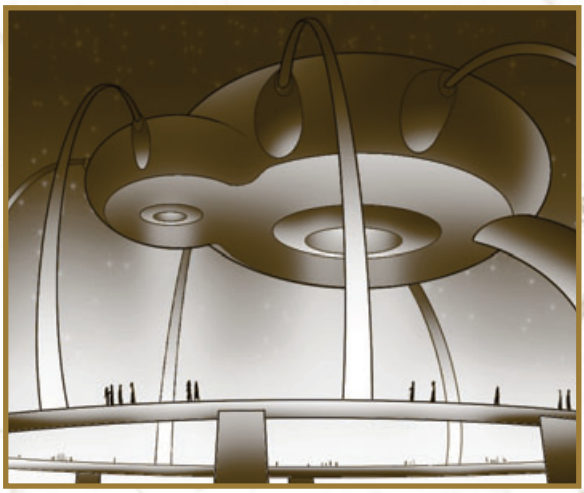
Worship

Every neighborhood in Meru has at least one all-purpose temple in it where Exalted and mortal alike may offer their respects to the gods of Yu-Shan whose devotion to their proper duty upholds the foundation of this world we rule. (The schedule of official holy days and recognition ceremonies at these shrines is determined every Calibration for the year to follow.) Every diocese has at least one temple dedicated to each of the Five Maidens, to Luna and to the unified Elemental Dragons. Most importantly, each of the five major archdioceses of Meru is home to one of Creation's preeminent temples to the Unconquered Sun.

The Radiant Temple of the Bronze Tigers

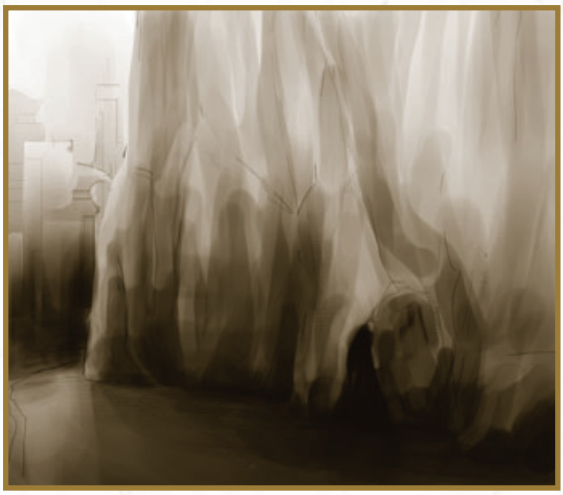
Located in the Evening Shadow Archdiocese, this temple stands astride the Dawn River. Its eastern wall and its roof are made entirely of Chiaroscuro glass, allowing the glory of the rising sun to illuminate its worshipers all morning. When viewed from the Dawn River delta, the bronze tiger statues that stand to either side of this temple appear to support the summit of Mount Meru between them. When the Year's Dawning parade begins after every Calibration, these bronze tiger statues descend from their place and lead the festivities.

The Ingenious Temples of the Copper Spiders



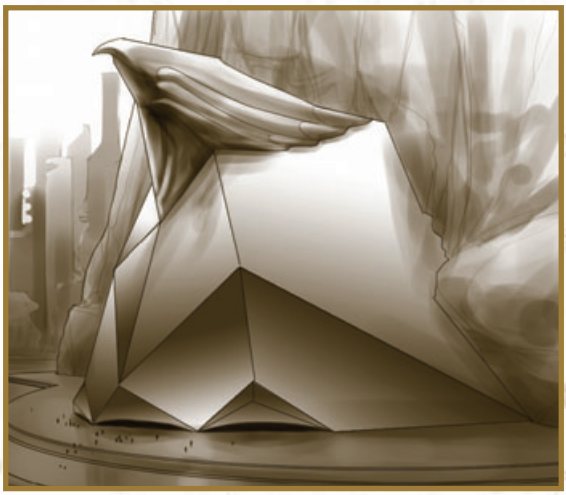
This name refers to two identical temples—one in each half of the Twilight Archdiocese—built in the shape of enormous pattern spiders. Each temple is located at the north and south nexus of the Web footbridge network. During the Autumn Dirge Reminiscence, these temples descend from the Web on filaments of Essence and lead the march to Hero Monuments Park.

The Exclusive Temple of the Iron Wolf



The entrance to this temple is hidden near the western base of Mount Meru in the deepest black heart of the Morning Shadow Archdiocese, well away from the imposing, featureless temple itself. Only members of the Night Caste are allowed past the gates of this forbidding violet-and-gray edifice, and they do not speak of what rites are conducted there.

The Silent Temple of the Quicksilver Falcon



This temple is located within the black crown of the Eclipse Archdiocese, at the pinnacle of Quiet Meru. Our worship services are often silent meditations on the rotating solar corona that hovers above our altar. On an unrelated note, our temple resonates with our caste ability to bind a speaker to any oath he makes aloud while he stands within its confines, and the solar corona flares whenever an oath is spoken in the temple.

The Eternal Temple of the Golden Bull

The Eternal Temple of the Golden Bull, built at one of the highest stable points in the city proper, is the central seat of our worship of the Unconquered Sun. This vast edifice of gold, amber glass and white marble reflects Our Lord's glory to all points of Creation from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same. With the right equipment, every point in Creation is visible from the top of this temple's highest spire.

Religious Observances in Meru

The most ardent God-Tending Itinerants spend every day traveling from temple to shrine to shrine to temple, celebrating some noteworthy god's holy day. This guidebook is no place to try to list every minor religious event in our city. I AM can provide you this year's comprehensive list. You can, however, count on the following ceremonies and services taking place regularly:

Solar Mass

Every temple of the Unconquered Sun, from your parish temple to the Eternal Temple of the Golden Bull itself, holds mass four times daily: at dawn, at midday, at sunset and at midnight.

Ascendancy

Ascendancy is the year-long festival that occurs every 25 years in celebration of our victory over the Primordials. Each Ascendancy celebrates the contributions of one of the Solar castes to the war effort, lionizing survivors of that caste from that era and venerating those who fell in the conflict or have fallen since. The Victory Parade—consisting of enslaved demons, paradestriders, captured behemoths, visiting gods, available Solar heroes and more—winds its way from the Eternal Temple of the Golden Bull, down around the Mountain to the base over the course of that year.

Founders' Day

This holiday celebrates the founding of the Solar Deliberative in Year 109 of our Everlasting Glory, as well as the grace of Solar Queen M–r–l– who stepped down to make way for it.

Autumn Dirge Reminiscence

This somber march commemorates Celestial Exalted heroes who have fallen in service to or defense of Creation. The march begins from two separate points (beneath each of the Ingenious Temples of the Copper Spiders) and converges on Hero Monuments Park in the MorningShadow Archdiocese. It takes place on the night of the first crescent moon in the month of Ascending Water.

Reincarnation Festival

You'll see this going on when you arrive. Whenever a destined Celestial Exalt awakens to his power, a week-long welcoming festival is held, culminating in the Banquet of All Peers at the Victory Pavilion.

Calibration

During this ill-omened period of the year, it's traditional for every Solar Exalt in Meru to withdraw to the Eclipse Archdiocese for a period of reflection and meditation. A feast is held every night in the Banquet Hall of Responsible Meditation. Meanwhile, Calibration is the only time during which mortals are allowed to set foot on the golden pathways normally reserved for us.

Year's Dawning

After Calibration when we emerge from the Eclipse Archdiocese, we hold a parade around the outer perimeter of the Zenith Ring. Year's Dawning lacks the pageantry of an Ascendancy parade, but it's still a nice gesture. It reassures the rest of Meru (and Creation) that we are still strong and everlasting.

The City in Brief

The Exalted City is divided into five archdioceses, each subdivided into dioceses and parishes and neighborhoods. The archdioceses are as follows, corresponding to the diagram at right:

The Zenith Archdiocese

Also known as the Zenith Ring, this archdiocese is the crown of our holy mountain, and the seat of our rule over all Creation.

The Twilight Archdiocese

This archdiocese is split in twain, corresponding to the north and south slopes of Mount Meru. Within this divided district are our foremost academies and temples of divine manufacture.

The Dawn Archdiocese

This archdiocese covers the area of the eastern slope of Mount Meru not already part of the Zenith Ring or either half of the Twilight Archdiocese. This archdiocese is also known as the Evening Shadow Archdiocese.

The Night Archdiocese

This archdiocese covers the area of the western slope of Mount Meru not already part of the Zenith Ring or either half of the Twilight Archdiocese. This archdiocese is also known as the Morning Shadow Archdiocese.

The Eclipse Archdiocese

The center of the Eclipse Archdiocese lies within the crown of Mount Meru beneath the surface of the Zenith Ring. It is separate from the Quiet Meru of mortals and the deeper caves of the Jadeborn. The eastern and western suburban areas covered by the mountain's shadow at its sharpest relief are also part of our district.

<u>Zenith Ring</u>

- The Ruling Palace of Meru
- Crown Boulevard
- The Crown Residence of the Solar Queen
- The Eternal Temple of the Golden Bull
- The Order Conferring Trade Nexus
- Sky Mantis Garden
- The Birthplace of Rivers Demesne
- The Holy Peak

<u>The Twilight Archdiocese</u>

Northern Slope:

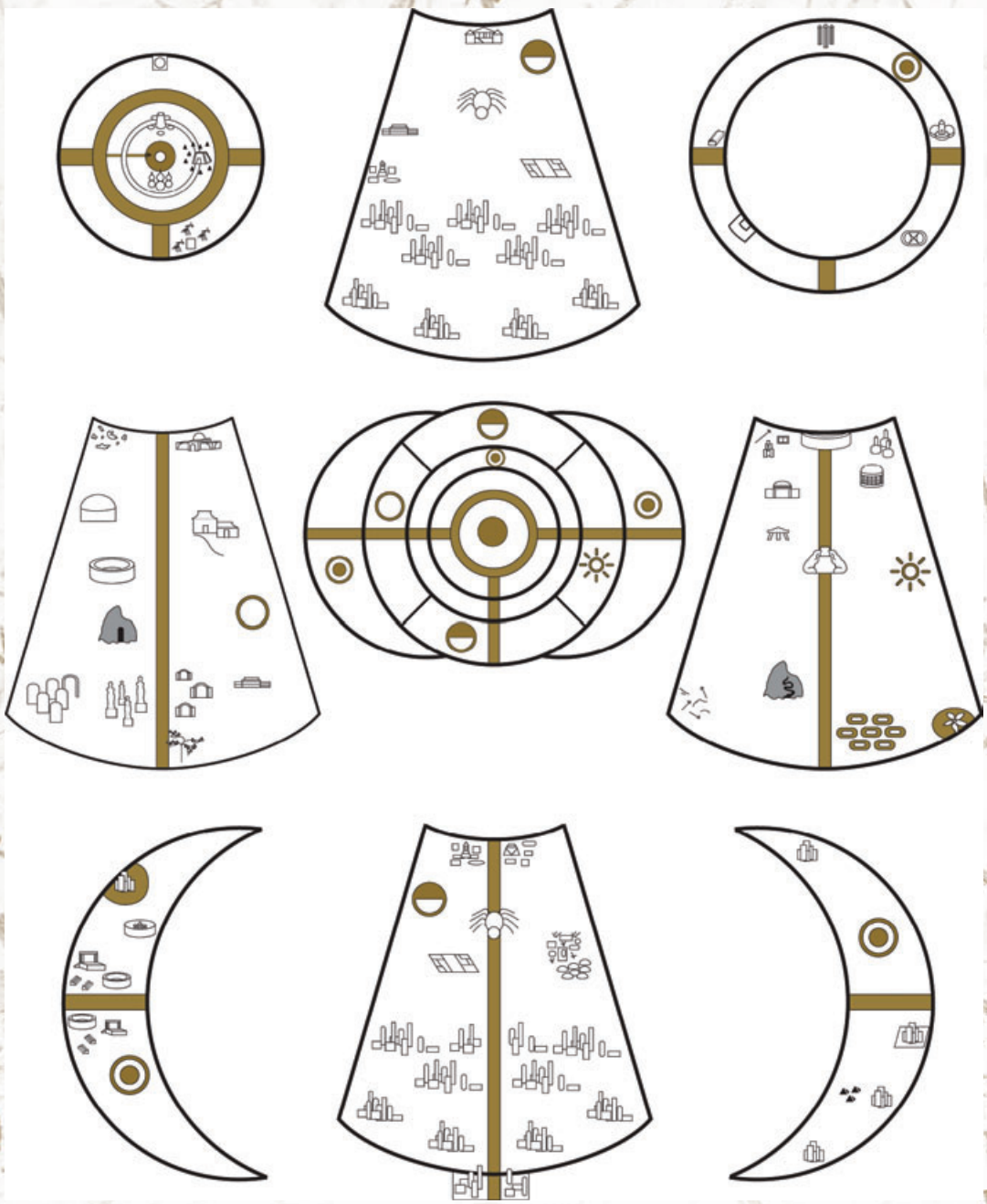
- The Palaces of the Divine Ministers
- The Manufactory Districts
- The Institute of Biological Improvement
- The Academy of Vocational Thaumaturgy
- The Library of the Deliberative
- The Northern Marketplace
- The Ingenious Temple of the Copper Spiders

Southern Slope:

- The Palaces of the Divine Ministers
- The Manufactory Districts
- The Southern Marketplace
- The Academy of Divine Enlightenment
- The Blessed Menagerie of the Exalted City
- The Conservancy of Unexpected Life Forms
- The Ingenious Temple of the Copper Spider

<u>The Dawn Archdiocese</u>

- The Thousand-Forged Dragon Aerie
- The Sunflower Mirror Maze
- Hero Monuments Park
- The Eye of Meru Balcony
- The Proving Grounds



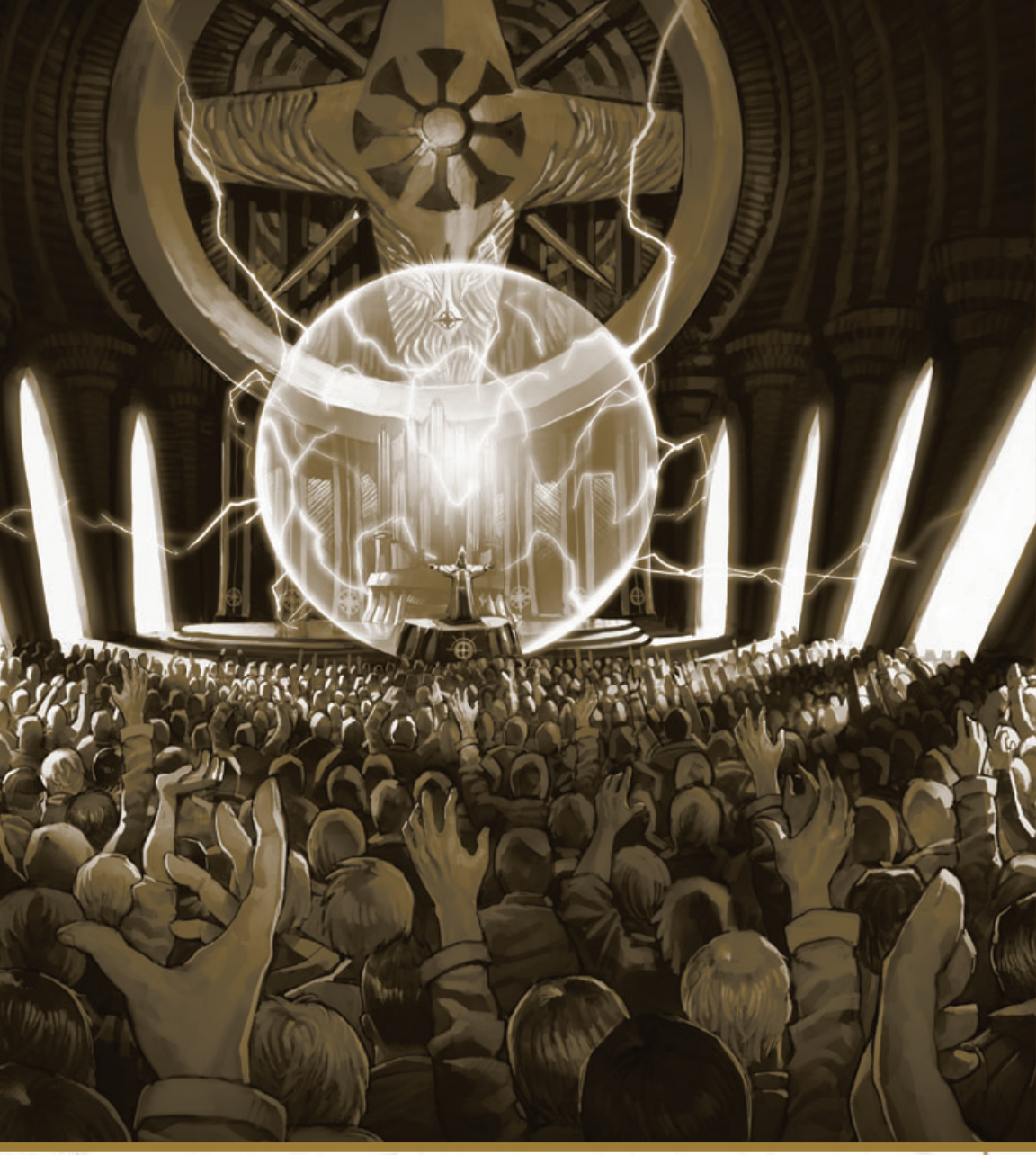
The Lotus School
The Amaranthine Dragon Bathhouse
The Heavenly Unity Service
The Victory Pavilion
The Warstrider Museum
The Radiant Temple of the Bronze Tigers

The Night Archdiocese

Total Rejuvenation Hospital
The Broken Gateway
Solar Queen M–r–l–'s Tomb
The Dragon's Graveyard
The Fallen Stars Memorial
Turning Cycle Hallowed Grounds
The Dreaming Archer Resort
The Hanging Gardens of Meru
The Orrery
Echoing Glory Arena
The Exclusive Temple of the Iron Wolves

The Eclipse Archdiocese

The Yu–Shan Embassy
The Banquet Hall of Responsible Meditation
The Bank of the Treasury
Celestial Expeditions
The Silent Temple of the Quicksilver Falcon
The Singing Garden
The Auru–Lai Theater District
Little Opal Spire
Little Rathess
Little Clepsys
Little Chiaroscuro
Little Malfeas



The Zenith Archdiocese

The Height of Our Civilization

Within the Zenith Ring, no shadow falls at midday. Under the unblinking eye of the Unconquered Sun stands the center of our worship, the Eternal Temple of the Golden Bull. From these lofty heights do we rule Creation in the Senate Chamber of the Deliberative. Our Meru homes are here. It is the highest, most holy heart of this world we rule.

The Ruling Palace of Meru

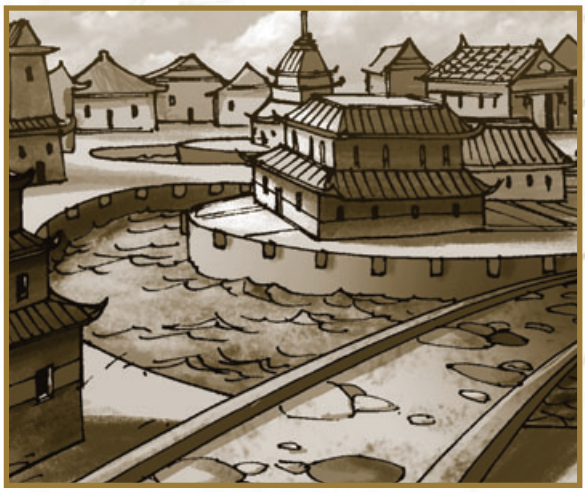
What was once the banquet complex for the Carnival of Meeting is now the capitol of our government. It consists of one tower of ivory, surrounded by five structures with dome ceilings, supported by sturdy arches. The tower houses the Senate Chamber of the Deliberative and has no roof so that we may conduct the business of ruling Creation beneath the approving gaze of the Unconquered Sun. The surrounding domes house the suites and offices of the Deliberators and those whose work supports us. From the northernmost dome in this pentagon, and counting clockwise, they include the Solar Dome, the Lunar Dome, the Sidereal Dome, the Terrestrial Dome and the Banquet Hall. It is in the halls and colonnaded breezeways between these domes that most of the deal-making and power-brokering that informs our judgment in session is done.

The Senate Chamber proper consists of the Senate floor and its surrounding galleries. Those not of Celestial rank are not allowed onto the floor from the galleries, though any recognized speaker may address the assembly from the projector stations in the gallery. The floor is divided by Celestial rank. Our circle of rulership stations takes up the center ring. Arrayed around us is the Great Circle, containing the Crescent of the Lunar Society and the arc of our Sidereal advisors.

Tips for New Deliberators

- Don't sit in anyone else's station of rulership (your Sidereal advisor can show you which station is yours)
- Don't presume to interrupt any of your elder Solar peers
- Don't presume to correct any of your elder Solar peers
- Be aware that your vote is a commodity to be traded by your elders
- Using Charms in session isn't forbidden, but there's no discreet way to do so
- The Lunars, Sidereals, Terrestrials, gods and mortals in attendance can say whatever they wish, but remember that only our votes carry any weight

Crown Boulevard



Crown Boulevard is actually a network of golden streets and private canals that encircles Meru in the center of the Zenith Ring. The land this network incorporates is reserved for our in-city manses. Solar-, Air- and Earth-aspected manses are available here, provided by the Celestial Housing Authority. Uncapped demesnes are available at auction as well, though you must have the design of any future manses on those sites approved by the Housing Authority. Manses built on Crown Boulevard must be not only geomantically sound, but they must harmonize geomantically with the rest of their neighborhood as well.

The Crown Residence of the Solar Queen

If you can imagine the Crown Boulevard as a single manse, this palatial estate is the hearthstone of that manse. This cyclopean fortress and the vast forest conservancy that surrounds it was once the seat of Solar power and home of Solar Queen M-r-l-. Today, it's only the latter, though it's no less impressive. It is the largest single manse in the Zenith Ring, capping a nigh-untamable demesne of Solar-aspected Essence. All Solar Exalted once had private chambers here as well as elsewhere in Crown Boulevard. Only those who are as old as Solar Queen M-r-l- still retain that honor, however. Those who have died and whose Exaltations have been reincarnated are not allowed within the Crown Residence's expansive grounds.

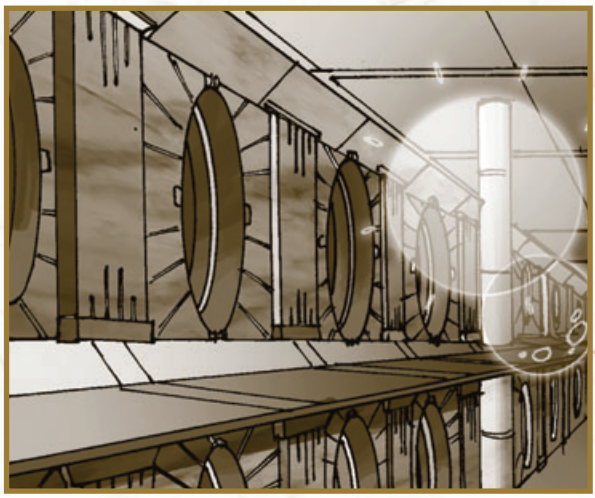
The Eternal Temple of the Golden Bull

Our prime temple honoring Our Lord stands at a slightly higher stable altitude than the Ruling Palace, diametrically opposed to the capitol across Mount Meru's peak on the north side. A private balcony has been reserved for you, accessible from the Web.

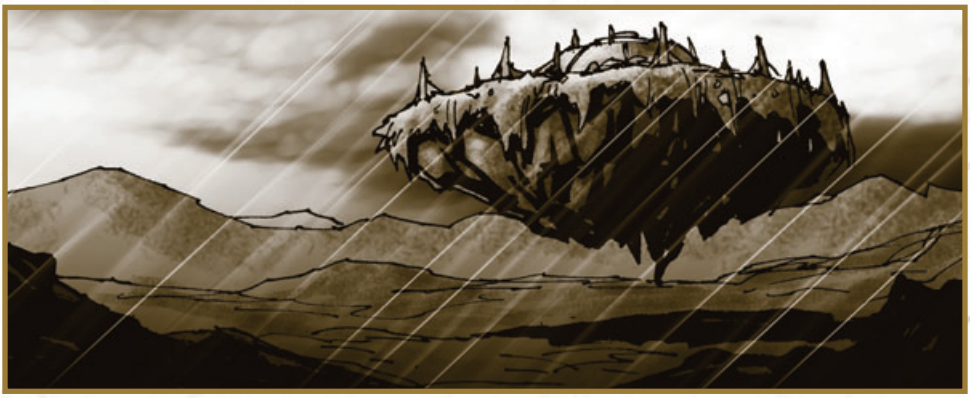
Temple Etiquette

- Do not look in the Hierophant's eyes
- Do not look upon the Unconquered Sun when the Hierophant does so
- Do not expose your anima in the Hierophant's presence
- Do not let your caste mark flare unless the Hierophant does so first and commands you to do so
- Do not speak the Hierophant's name aloud in the presence of mortals

The Order Conferring Trade Nexus

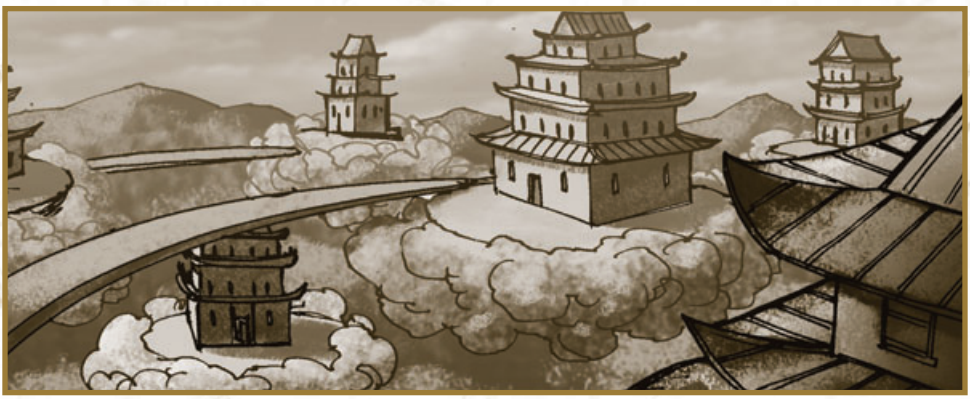


Formerly a parlor where the gods could remotely monitor the progress of the Games of Divinity, this squat complex of white marble serves a more important purpose now. Within is the central control hub and holographic monitoring chamber of the Order Conferring Trade Pattern. The complex offers convenient gates of auspicious passage to Creation's primary trade nexuses and is linked by tunnel to the Bank of the Treasury in the Eclipse Archdiocese.



Sky Mantis Garden

The Sky Mantis Garden is the control center of the sky mantis infrastructure grid. Grounded in the constant temperance of Earth–aspected Essence Mount Meru provides, the sky mantis infrastructure keeps our skies routinely clear and our weather pleasantly balmy. Yet the Garden itself is anything but. A tour of the Garden's towering Essence–accumulators and coordination antennae reveals the fluid chaos of the natural weather patterns it keeps at bay, with pouring rain, leaping lightning, scouring wind and battering hail. Once per season, Saechan the Storm Conductor puts on a performance at the Sky Mantis Garden that is not to be missed.

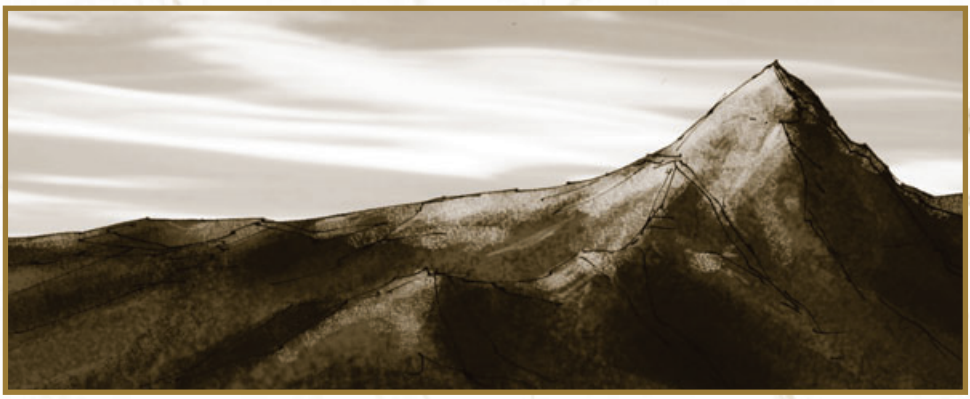


The Pagoda Skyway of the Ministries of Order

Most of the Air–aspected manses of the Zenith Ring are devoted to powering the fleet of multi–story traveling pagodas that make up the office buildings of the Ministries of Order. Since mortals make up the overwhelming majority of our governmental bureaucracy but they aren't allowed access to most of the roads and canals that crisscross this archdiocese, these broad, elevated streets of adamant have become the primary arteries of inter–diocese traffic. These glimmering streets are restricted to Ministry pagoda traffic, though this restriction does not apply to us.

The Birthplace of Rivers Demesne

Unlike those on smaller, less important mountains, the rivers that adorn Mount Meru do not trickle down from snowmelt on high. There never has been snow on the peak of Mount Meru. (Even if there had, the temperature at which we keep the weather would have melted it all off long ago.) In fact, the Serpentine River, the Caracal River and the Dawn River all spring from the same place, the Birthplace of Rivers Demesne. This demesne is, by default, the highest altitude at which a Water-aspected demesne exists in Creation. No attempt has ever been made to cap this demesne, per the dying wish of the last Terrestrial scion of the Takohashi-no-Garaku clan—most of whom fell defending a wounded, recuperating Ré-Kia from Lykkennan, the Cavern That Devours Cities, in the Primordial War.



The Holy Peak

The Holy Peak is the most powerful uncapped demesne in Creation. It is there that the Essence of our entire mountain coalesces into one luminous bead before hurling itself upward to splash against the night sky into the fractal aurora that always glows over Mount Meru. My wife likens this elemental process to water eternally dripping from a stalactite—only viewed upside down. She would not be so poetic, I think, if she had ever visited the gaudy tourist ghetto that has bloomed at the summit of the main approach to the Holy Peak. What once was a sacred place now throngs with mortal God-Tending Itinerants and off-duty Dragon-Bloods who pay more attention to each other than they do to the site they've come to witness.

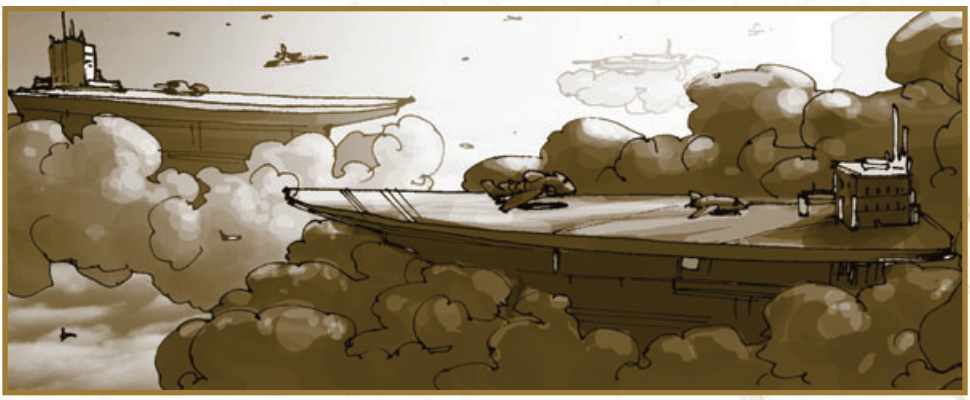
The Twilight Archdiocese

Holding Back the Darkness of Ignorance

The northern and southern slopes of our mountain make up the Twilight Archdiocese. It is here that our most prestigious centers of learning and our most advanced magical and scientific laboratories stand. It was into the Twilight Archdiocese that I AM was installed. It was in the Twilight Archdiocese that the thousand-forged dragons that protect Creation were first constructed. Here it was that the heart of the Sword of Creation was first forged. Ever more esoteric and fantastic wonders are born (or at least conceived) there every day.

The Palaces of the Divine Ministers

In the foothills of the northern and southern slopes of the Twilight Archdiocese stand the former homes of bygone allies—the Divine Ministers of the Primordial Autochthon. Part cathedral, part manufactory, these queer structures of brass and jade and strange carbon alloys are wreathed in captured lightning, glimmering Essence and vented steam. Active at all times of the day and night, these facilities are capable of producing components for everyday wonders in quantities unequalled elsewhere on the Blessed Isle, though they do so through automated mechanisms that mimic biological processes. Automatons, elementals, enslaved demons and apprentice Exalted engineers maintain and upgrade the machinery within the palaces, working to make Creation ever more comfortable. Automatons tour guides are available in the narthex of each palace.



The Manufactory Districts

Much of the ugliest work of modern-day manufacture is handled either off the mountain or deep within Quiet Meru where the unpleasant byproducts and laborers can't bother anyone. The construction of many of the wonders to which we've all grown so accustomed, however, relies on components produced at the Palaces of the Divine Ministers. Since many of those components can be produced only at the palaces and are too delicate or volatile to transport far, other less sophisticated factory cathedrals have been constructed around the palaces. These installations make up a manufactory district that sprawls over the foothills and lower slopes of the Twilight Archdiocese. It is there that mass-produced components are assembled into the everyday wonders that we take for granted—from our city's Interaction Kiosks to your home's thousand comforts lounge to your child's resplendent personal assistant to our navy's cargo preservations spindles. The northern manufactory district is home to the Blessed Isle's largest air wharf; the southern district relies on its Caracal River port to deliver its finished wonders to all Creation.

The Northern Slope

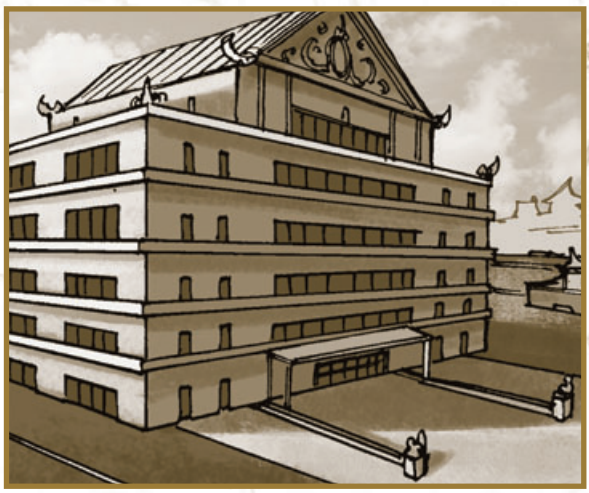
The Institute of Biological Improvement

I list this attraction primarily as a curiosity, as it isn't terribly likely you or I will ever have need of the fruits of the research conducted there. Professors at this institute are pioneering the bizarre field of "biothaumaturgy." Unlike those who practice traditional healing arts or can perform the healing Charms of the Exalted, biothaumaturges study ways to augment damaged or weak tissue with technomagical apparatuses. Their literature suggests that, in time, advancements will allow biothaumaturges to replace organs and appendages entirely—even perfectly healthy ones! Such talk is exactly as frightening as it is exciting, which I suppose is true of the infancy of every inspired field of science.

There is one novelty that this institute has produced thus far that's already won widespread acceptance: the skin mount amulet. These trinkets allow you to socket a hearthstone right into your flesh without having to attune the trinket, and they provide a greater return on your attunement to your manse. Even better, the designers craft them with detachable faceplates that you can change out to better accessorize with your wardrobe. Professionally made ones cost as much as two hearthstone amulets, but they're well worth it in my opinion.

The Academy of Vocational Thaumaturgy

Downslope from the aforementioned institute is the Academy of Vocational Thaumaturgy. It is here that skilled mortals who lack the divine sanction to study the more enlightened arts and sciences eventually wind up, learning such skills as Interaction Kiosk repair, aerial rickshaw maintenance, alchemical brewing and demon-grooming and care.



The Library of the Deliberative

The highest point in the Twilight Archdiocese's northern slope that borders the Zenith Ring is the vast Library of the Deliberative. Here is kept every memory crystal, dreamstone, omniscient literary advisor, scroll, book and stone tablet bearing official Deliberative and Ministries of Order information. In the deepest archives are also stored the written edicts of Solar Queen M–r–l–, the original charter of the Deliberative and even the diary of Brigid. The Library is likewise home to acre upon acre of immaculate warehouses full of copies of works of art in all media. Replicas of the greatest works of literature, music, sculpture, architecture and even academia are at your disposal here, and legions of clockwork efficacy servitors scurry around the endless racks and rows of storage space like pattern spiders over the Loom of Fate.

Gates of auspicious passage connect our library to the even larger Library of Sperimin and the Great Library of Denandsor, though use of those gates is by appointment only. Contact your Sidereal advisor to arrange an appointment.

The Northern Marketplace

The lower half of the northern slope of the Twilight Archdiocese upslope from the manufactory district consists of the insulating layer of the northern marketplace. The marketplace's lowest levels—with the largest access tunnels to Quiet Meru and conveniently within driving distance of the air wharves—see more traffic than anyplace else in Meru. The mortal workforce throngs over this area, visiting the enormous commercial centers that supply the average person's everyday needs. It was thought at one point that by offering supplies in bulk and reducing costs on goods that were so easy to mass produce, we could reduce the frequency with which mortals would need to emerge from Quiet Meru to restock. This was an inaccurate assumption, to say the least.

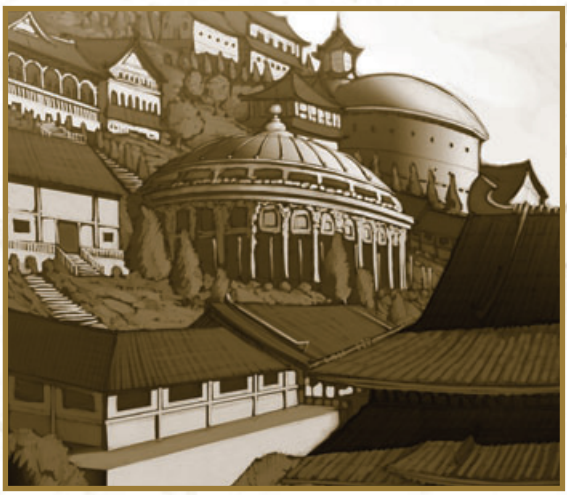
The higher up the slope one travels, the more specialized and pricey the goods on offer become. From Derja's Row—home to the Blessed Isle's premier manse architects—to the Bazaar—a neighborhood of street markets selling esoteric sorcery components—to Vanileth's Pride—the largest air vehicle dealership in Creation—to the studio of Lufong—the madman who gave us not only the Vibrant Storm Hammer, but also the Blue Ong—the establishments of the northern marketplace can satisfy any material (or materiel) need.

The Southern Slope

The Southern Marketplace

Unlike its twin across the mountain, the marketplace on the southern slope of the Twilight Archdiocese specializes in products biological in nature—once you rise above the swarming mortal commercial districts, of course. It too has a Bazaar, but the sorcery components on offer here primarily include living creatures, exotic plants and by-products of both. Above that are exotic and chaomorphic pet stores, servitor-golem auction blocks and designer disease boutiques. Memory-, body-, Essence- and awareness-enhancing drugs are also sold primarily in this area.

The Academy of Divine Enlightenment



The Academy of Divine Enlightenment is located three quarters of the way up the southern slope of Mount Meru. Its campus has grown to the size of a metropolis of its own over several centuries around the Glorious Arch—the first Celestial Gateway to Yu-Shan constructed after the Primordial War. Originally, the first of the Exalted came here to learn about their newfound power at the feet of the gods, and to ask questions about this world that seemed so large and untamable. When they had learned all the gods could teach them, a handful of enlightened Celestial scholars remained in the vicinity of the gateway to educate the next generation of Celestial (and even Terrestrial) seekers of knowledge. In time, their manses grew into dormitories, and their laboratories grew into classrooms and lecture halls. Today, the campus dominates both the physical space of the upper southern slopes and the world of academia. Nowhere in Creation can you find more learned scholars in the fields of Sorcery, Technology, Social Engineering, Geomancy or even Necromancy. Our Twilight Caste peer Silur, known as the Unimpeachable Empiricist, currently holds the university's High Seat of Brigid Far-Strider.

What's often forgotten in the shadows of the Academy's many towers is the Glorious Arch itself. Although this gateway to Yu-Shan is not quite as popular or frequently traveled as the newer one in the Eclipse Archdiocese, it is still fully functional. It's also the site of the Academy's legendary Calibration "festivities" leading up to and coming down from the yearly Carnival of Meeting.

The Blessed Menagerie of the Exalted City

While somewhat calm for many Exalted tastes, the Blessed Menagerie remains a perennial favorite attraction on the Twilight Archdiocese's southern slope. The habitats of the Menagerie are cordoned off by Essence wall generators cunningly hidden within the habitats, and the climate within each is precisely regulated by portable sky mantis towers to match that of the exhibits' true habitats. If you ask an attendant, you can enter the habitats and interact with the animals. Your Lunar companion can enter as well and sample the heart's blood of any creature that catches his or her fancy. For a nominal fee, you can even rent a self-image projection garment that either renders you invisible or wraps you in a sheath of Essence that disguises you as one of the animals so you can interact with them as one of their own.

Beneath the Menagerie in an upper level of Quiet Meru is the Meru Aquarium. Like those in the Menagerie, the Aquarium's habitats are precisely regulated to mimic their inhabitants' homes and are open to exploration for the asking. For some reason, the mollusk exhibit always seems to be packed with Water-aspected Terrestrial adolescents who take great delight in squirting each other with squid ink. The Whale Theater is truly spectacular, however.

The Conservancy of Unexpected Life Forms

The Southern Twilight Slope is home to a plethora of biogenesis laboratories. From this area's many Wyld-containment spheres, womb-sarcophagi and Essence chrysalises have sprung such creatures as the builder bug, the beast of resplendent liquid, the chillikin and the coiffeur spider. But not every creature designed by Exalted hand is equally useful. Those that are too dangerous to release but too beautiful or pitiful to destroy go instead to the Conservancy. Technically a sub-district of the Menagerie, the Conservancy also takes in abandoned chaomorphic animal test subjects that are too hardy to perish but are useless for scientific research. Creatures that failed to meet their creators' expectations also have a place here, as do those that fail to live up to the vaunted promises that earned them the research subsidies that paid for their genesis. For a nominal fee, animals in the Conservancy are available to private collectors and research laboratories who believe they can find a use for these misbegotten beasts. Whether your needs are academic, culinary, predatory or coital, the managers of the Conservancy ask no questions.

The Dawn Archdiocese

The Rising of our Radiant Glory

The eastern slope of Mount Meru is the first thing the Unconquered Sun saw when the sun first rose over Creation. Therefore it's only fitting that our proudest monuments and testaments to our achievements—all made possible by Our Lord's power—stand on that slope to catch the sun's first rays every day.

The Thousand-Forged Dragon Aerie

At this highest northeastern corner of the Dawn Archdiocese, Terrestrials in dragon armor led by their captains in jade warstriders and their Dawn Caste general, Alosha Who Broke the Charge, patrol an installation of imperishable adamant. Within is our prime repository of thousand-forged dragons. Other silos dot Creation, but our proudest line of defense—beneath the Sword of Creation, of course—is here on Mount Meru. The manse compound of towering minarets that fronts the dragons' aerie houses the primary control center, from which any functional thousand-forged dragon can be activated and even remotely controlled. The Aerie also puts on a spectacular changing of the aerial guard every sunset, and the parade that brings a new thousand-forged dragon from its factory cathedral in the Twilight Archdiocese to the Aerie is likewise grand.

The Sunflower Mirror Maze

Much of the central eastern slope of Meru is dotted with towering Essence-mills and Solar Essence collectors. These arrays take in the Essence of the sun as its glory rises above and converts it into the energy that powers our modern conveniences and appliances. The lowermost of those is the Sunflower Maze. Its collection dishes move on ball-and-socket hinges to follow the sun from dawn to well past midday. While the sight of this several-acre array is a breathtaking marvel of modern magitechnology in itself, it also boasts a more lowbrow attraction beneath. In the shadows of the collection dishes, rising up the array's support stalks hangs a multi-level entertainment complex. The ground level is devoted to the sprawling mirror maze for which the park is named. Above that is a vast casino and resort, topped by an amusement park like none other on the Blessed Isle. Admission is by appointment for any mortals who can afford it, but Exalted are welcomed any time of the day or night. Admission is free to Celestial Exalted, but the park's proprietors make more than enough profit from the gaming tables.

Hero Monuments Park

Diametrically opposing the Broken Doorway that lies in the Night Archdiocese is Hero Monuments Park. Here are constructed monuments of all shapes and sizes, which lionize heroic acts performed in service to Creation. As these monuments are paid for by proud Celestial Exalted patrons, it should come as no surprise that most of the monuments recognize the achievements of Solar, Lunar and Sidereal heroes. Of particular note are the following:

- The Spear—a 100-foot-tall spear with a haft of marble and a head of gold. It commemorates the heroism of Ardent Dawn, who captured Cecylene, the Endless Desert.
- Argentum—a palace made entirely of silver filigree with a radiant, house-sized crown of gold in the center. It stands to thank the Lunar Exalted for their services and remind them of their never-ending duty to us.
- Noscio—a library of blank scrolls populated by thoughtless automatons. It praises Kuhane the Blind Astrologer, whose ignorance defeated the Seven Forbidden Wisdoms.

The Eye of Meru Balcony

The Eye of Meru is the tremendous orb of orichalcum, starmetal and moonsilver that floats above Mount Meru some thousand yards higher than the summit, traveling an orbital path parallel to the perimeter of the Zenith Ring. During the Year's Dawning parade, we of the Zenith Caste march directly beneath this floating orb. The Eye of Meru is the primary targeting mechanism of the Sword of Creation, as well as the broadcasting aerial for I AM, the linchpin of the Order Conferring Trade Pattern and the flight-control monitor for the Blessed Isle's many temples of Vanileth. Originally, use of the Eye was restricted to those with Deliberative authorization carrying out official business. In recent years, however, that restriction has eased and the Balcony has opened on the highest and easternmost point of the Dawn Archdiocese. On this elevated platform are many telescopes that allow breathtaking views over 180 degrees of the horizon. Any visitor can use these telescopes for a nominal pittance. Exalted visitors can also activate one of the Balcony's many Interaction Kiosks and access the Eye of Meru directly. Anything the Eye can see, the viewer can see as well, with a few restrictions by Exalted station. Naturally, none of those restrictions apply to us.

The Proving Grounds

The best artifact and Essence–based weaponry is designed and produced in the Twilight Archdiocese, and those opposing slopes even offer small open ranges at which to test new technology. The Proving Grounds on the eastern slope, however, are much larger and offer a much better sense of the scale of what our modern weaponry is capable. Located at the lowest southeastern corner of the Dawn Archdiocese, the Proving Grounds extend one mile up the slope of the mountain and an equal distance out into the foothills. This area is not zoned for construction, which allows it to retain its ruggedness. Portable sky mantis towers dot the area as well, allowing for a variety of weather conditions to really put one's experimental or redesigned hardware through its paces. On–site crews maintain the firing ranges and other testing facilities. They can rapidly assemble pre–fabricated houses or other buildings against which to test larger weaponry. They also maintain an on–site prison facility that provides ample human resources against which to test smaller weapons or Charms.

The Lotus School

Located near the base of the mountain in crystal–clear Lake Peleps, the Lotus School is the premier martial arts academy in the Exalted City. The school itself is built in the shape of a tremendous water lily that seems to float on the surface of the lake but actually reaches all the way to the lakebed many fathoms down in darkness. Classes are segregated by martial arts potential, with the most skilled Exalted students studying in the blossom of the lotus and the least skilled mortals in the outbuildings in the mud around the roots. Students of every status and social class are welcome at this school, but be aware if you attend that all students start out as equals and progress to the next higher level only at their teachers' sufferance.

The Amaranthine Dragon Bathhouse

Bathhouses of all shapes and sizes stand all over Creation and cluster on our mountain where leisure time is most in abundance. Chief among them, in my opinion, is the Amaranthine Dragon Bathhouse. It stands some short distance up the eastern slope convenient to the Dawn stretch of the Victory Parade route. The entrance is built into the mountain itself, carved to resemble the open claws of a dragon coiled in repose on the slopes. Within are 10 vast anonymous public baths and numerous private baths available by reservation. Menus that include everything from breakfast to bright morning are available in the private baths. The personnel menu has a picture and profile of every mortal, Terrestrial, demon and god on staff. Access to preferred personnel is by appointment or available to the highest bidder for their services.

The bathhouse backs up to the Dragon Belly Family Water Park and Public Pools Complex built for the entertainment of the denizens of Quiet Meru. Visitors of appropriate rank and station may pass from bathhouse to park and back, but denizens of Quiet Meru are not allowed into the bathhouse from the park side.

The Heavenly Unity Service

Headquartered in an adorable marketplace of steelsilk tents, "romantic" bungalows and "topiary wonderlands" known as Heavenly Unity Plaza is this absolutely precious organization. Its motto is, "Even destiny needs a helping hand from time to time." The organization's ostensible goal is to help mortals (and even the Exalted!) find their perfect matches and mates. Boasting an 85 percent success rate—a statistic likely created from whole cloth—the service claims it can find the perfect mortal partner for any Exalt, the perfect Terrestrial breeding match for any Dragon-Blood, the most compatible Lunar for every Solar and the best Sidereal advisor for a Celestial Exalt. All of the service's work in the latter categories is purely theoretical, but mortals and Dragon-Bloods flock to Heavenly Unity Plaza as if they had no hope of companionship without it. Ever since the Deliberative eased the breeding restriction on the Terrestrials, the Heavenly Unity Service has been freshly infused with new money that shows no sign of ever drying up.

The Victory Pavilion

This breathtaking site, one hour east downslope from the capitol is where our public banquets are held. Its village-sized lapis lazuli dome rises above golden pillars embossed with animate bas-relief sculptures that reenact our earliest glories over the Primordials. On-staff people of the air shepherd living lanterns beneath the dome, and the rotating stage in the center of the Pavilion has seen history's finest performances. Your Banquet of All Peers will be only the first of many celebrations you'll attend here.

The Warstrider Museum

This museum is extremely popular with Exalted and mortals alike, not least because it's cheap enough for mortals to get in. The entrance leads to a moving walkway that whisks visitors through a brief but quite entertaining tour. Thereupon, visitors learn the basics of warstrider design, construction and pilot training. They are then shown a full-motion simulation mockup of a warstrider factory-cathedral and finally a full-scale Essence-image simulation of a warstrider battling a tyrant lizard cavalry. (That simulation is a bit graphic for my tastes, I admit.) At tour's end, the walkway deposits visitors in a gallery of replica warstriders that have served with particular distinction in history. The First is a particular standout, as it looks especially primitive next to its modern cousins. A replica of Solar Queen M-r-l-'s towering orichalcum Titan-class warstrider, Everlasting, dominates the others on display, its golden exterior beaming with the sun's reflected radiance beneath the open sky.

What visitors truly come for, though, is the simulation plaza. Mortals are not allowed past the antechamber, but even that area is full of Essence-image warstrider pilot-training simulators as well as The Arm—a fully functional scout-class warstrider arm that visitors line up to learn how to manipulate. The plaza itself is the real attraction, though. There, Exalted visitors and their Half-Caste children can try out the real thing for an hour after a brief orientation exercise. Only paradestriders (i.e., decommissioned warstriders with no weapons) are available, but even they are exhilarating once you get the hang of piloting them.

The Night Archdiocese

Pausing to Remember What has Passed

Taking up the western slope of our mountain, the Night Archdiocese remains cloaked in shadow well after sunrise. Some parts of it along its westernmost radius don't see natural light until midday. But this slope is what the sun last sees during its final descent into darkness every evening. Therefore, in somber reverence, we have built our monuments to those things that have been taken from us. Not all is dreary bleakness in the Morning Shadow district, though. On these slopes, you can also find the premier leisure resorts on the Blessed Isle.

Total Rejuvenation Hospital

With medical franchises located throughout Creation, the Total Rejuvenation Hospital is our world's most successful provider of health care. Its skilled doctors can cure any mortal frailty from infertility to REDS to Broken-Tile Organ Condition. Its professional acupuncturists can correct any naturally occurring disarrayed Essence condition and most known imposed ones. Its thaumaturges of internal chirurgery can regrow and reattach organs or body structures from the essential elements of damaged parts. On-staff Dragon-Bloods can even cast healing Charms against the most severe ailments. The Total Rejuvenation Hospital's services might seem crude or inefficient compared to the powers at our command, but payment for those services is less costly than what favors our peers tend to ask in return for healing Charms. Also, emergency medical teams from the Hospital can be dispatched at a moment's notice, and remote-care physicians can be hired out for extended service contracts.

The Broken Gateway

Lying at the border of the Zenith Ring and the Night Archdiocese is ancient wreckage that covers an area of several city blocks. This wreckage is all that remains of the first and largest gateway that originally led from Creation to Yu-Shan. At the height of the Primordial War, the gods managed to disrupt their masters' enjoyment of the Games of Divinity from the viewing parlor in the center of what is now the Order Conferring Trade Nexus. When the enraged Primordials flooded into Creation from all directions to discipline the gods, the gods destroyed this gateway behind them, cutting off a major line of supply and retreat.

Most of the debris from that act of heroism has since been quarried and refashioned into the newer Celestial Gates, but enough has been left in the blasted crater to remind us what sacrifices are sometimes necessary to ensure the safety of Creation.

Solar Queen M–r–l–'s Tomb

Unlike most of our peers and Lunar consorts, who traditionally prefer to be entombed in their mortal homelands or in Sijan, Solar Queen M–r–l– has openly stated that she intends to be buried on Meru itself. In accordance with her wishes, construction began in Year 3000 of Our Everlasting Glory on her city–sized final resting place. Construction has stopped and started many times in the centuries since, and the design changes with Solar Queen M–r–l–'s whim, but it appears to be near–ing completion. Towering golden automatons patrol its white–marble walls day and night. The members of Solar Queen M–r–l–'s mortal dynasty have all transferred their residences therein. The bulk of Solar Queen M–r–l–'s expected grave goods have been shipped in from the far points of Creation. Applications are even available at long last for mortals and Dragon–Bloods who wish to be preserved and entombed with the Solar Queen upon the advent of her death.

The Dragons' Graveyard

While the Terrestrial fallen are too numerous to be praised individually, the Dragon–Blooded who serve us best understand their worth when they visit this holy memorial on the low slopes of the Night Archdiocese. There stand the tombs of those Terrestrials whose heroic actions and sacrifices during the Primordial War and since exemplify the loyal service for which the Dragon–Blooded were Exalted. Who can look upon the tombs and memorial statues of these Immaculate Dragons and not be reminded of how their power magnifies our own?

The Fallen Stars Memorial

In the time of the Primordial War, the gods were prevented from raising arms directly against their Primordial creators. Instead, they granted us our power so that we would cast down their wicked progenitors for them. For this act, the enraged Primordials slew as many of the rebellious gods as they could, littering the earth with fallen starmetal. Those the fallen gods had Exalted turned against each other and destroyed themselves. All knowledge of these gods who made the ultimate sacrifice would have been forgotten after their passing, were it not for the renegade Primordials Autochthon and Gaia. They preserved the fallen gods' memories and designed this memorial to thank them posthumously for giving their lives for Creation. It is forbidden to write the names of these gods—which Autochthon took with him when he left Creation in Year 121 of Our Everlasting Glory—but monuments of jade-steel alloys carved in their image stand proud and imperishable in this somber place.

Turning Cycle Hallowed Grounds

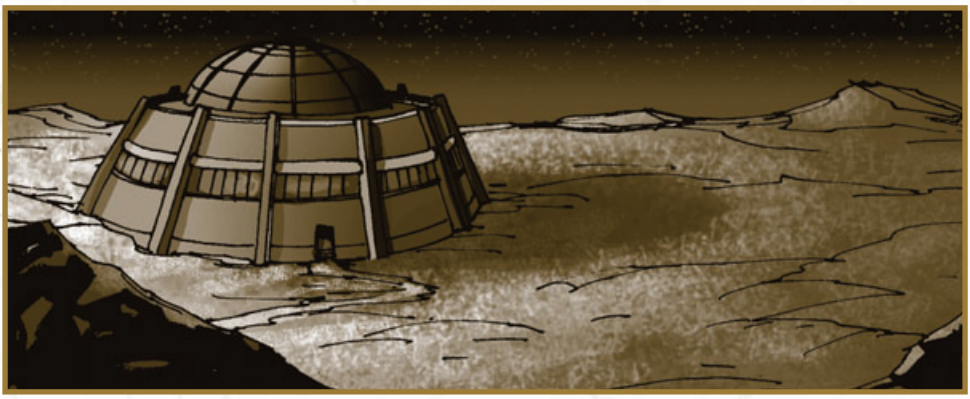
Across the Serpentine River from the Fallen Stars Memorial lies the memorial garden of Creation's most noteworthy mortals. Thousands of marble mausoleums cover this grim, sprawling expanse, each storing hundreds of memory crystals and a single crystal viewer. On these crystals are stored the names and deeds of countless mortals who performed valued services for their Exalted lords. Wealthy mortal families can even rent niches to store the ashes of deceased honored ancestors there, though shelf space doesn't come cheap. Any mortals you favor in life can be included here after their passing, but the application paperwork is more of a hassle than the memorial is worth.

The Dreaming Archer Resort

The Dreaming Archer Resort is one of the only places in Meru where you can regularly find snow. Several miles of slope here are covered in deep drifts, dense snowpack and frozen lakes. Thanks to the tireless advocacy of Lunar General Faro-Shan, the Dreaming Archer, the Deliberative zoned this area for faux-Northern climate, strictly regulated by the local sector of the sky mantis grid. The Dreaming Archer's manse stands at the top of the slopes, surrounded by an elite, luxurious ski resort. The terrain downhill offers ski slopes, windblade valleys, ice-skating plazas and breathtaking scenery unlike any outside the frozen North. Celestial Exalted are the resort's preferred clientele, but extremely wealthy lower-class citizens can apply for a spot on the resort's waiting list.

The Hanging Gardens of Meru

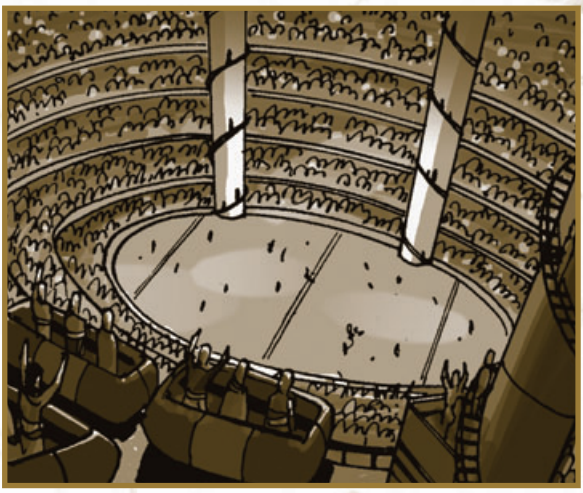
Between the main channel of the Serpentine River and the southernmost border of the Night Archdiocese is this fantastical arboretum tended by a veritable army of Wood-aspected Dragon-Bloods. The Hanging Gardens boast flora from Creation's disparate corners and everywhere in between, artfully grown among the beams of a support structure designed by graduates of the Academy of Divine Enlightenment's College of Geomancy. Our more jaded peers find this place stale and somewhat boring, but there is no more peaceful and romantic environment than the garden's transparent walkways and floating observation decks.



The Orrery

The Orrery is a timeless, thoughtful gift from the Sidereal Exalted to the Golden Children of the Solar Host. It resides in a mirrored dome that superficially resembles the Jade Pleasure Dome in Yu-Shan. Within, the Orrery appears to be just that: a vast, mechanical wonder that simulates the movements of every celestial body in the night sky from season to season. That's true only when the Orrery is empty, though. By design, however, the Orrery is actually a delightful playground and childcare facility. Golden children (and other Exalted Half-Castes) can run and climb and swing and play together from any armature or celestial body of the display they can reach. A dedicated staff of obedient clockwork efficacy servitors and mortal caretakers mind, monitor and feed the children, keeping them entertained and out of your way while you carry out your duties elsewhere. The Orrery is open every hour of the day and night, and no reservations are required.

Echoing Glory Arena



The Echoing Glory Arena is one of the most versatile and well-attended attractions of its kind. This marble coliseum seats 100,000 spectators in the floor and mezzanine levels alone, and supports a fleet of hovering suites. It rises some five stories in the air on marble pillars enwrapped by spiral staircases and offers ample air- and ground-vehicle parking. The central pit of the arena can be modified to accommodate any event from singular duels of honor to sorcery competitions to yeddim rodeos to mock naval engagements to agata polo matches. The arena also hosts educational reenactments of historical military engagements once a week during Ascendancy.

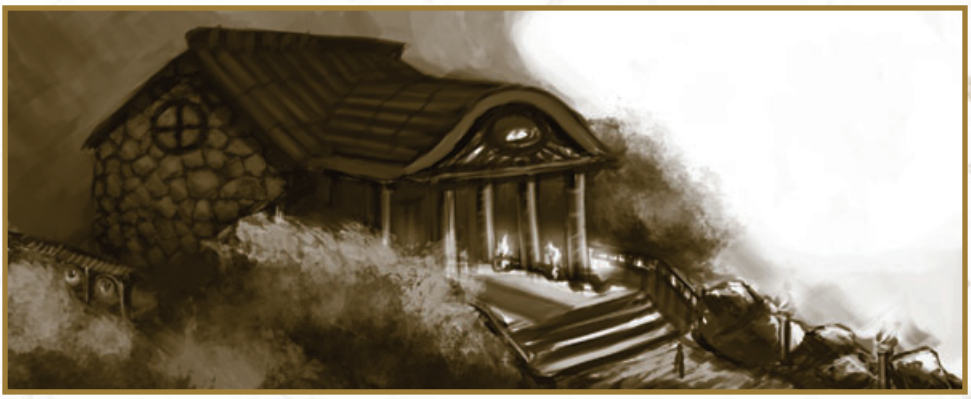
The Eclipse Archdiocese

The Shrouded Crown

Our archdiocese is unlike the others. It has no symbolic resonance like the others do, and most of it exists off the surface of the mountain itself. To be honest, I suspect it was named as it was to maintain an illusion of parity between the castes in the city. Nonetheless, we have made it our own, populating it with wonders and worshipers from around Creation. And it is within the suburban borders of Meru's opposing shadow districts that the safest and best points of travel into and away from Meru can be found.

The Yu-Shan Embassy

The gods once tended Creation from homes on Mount Meru, while the Primordials ruled in Yu-Shan. Today, the gods have taken the Primordials' heavenly homes and ceded their former Creation homes to us. Of course, the august divinities are still welcome in Creation, and when they come, we attempt to make them as comfortable as possible. To that end, the area around the central Eclipse Archdiocese gate (beneath the surface of the Zenith Ring) is set aside for those gods who most frequently travel into Creation. We lease to them office and sanctum space, as well as mortal servants to tend to the minutia that lesser spirits handle for them in Heaven. It is here that the gods deliver to us the wishes and approval of our Celestial patrons, and many Sidereal advisors meet their divine supervisors here rather than traveling all the way to the Celestial City. The embassy surrounds a celestial gate to Yu-Shan, and it is this gate rather than the Glorious Arch that sees the most traffic between realms.



The Banquet Hall of Responsible Meditation

In the deepest shadows beneath the Zenith Ring stands this stone and mortar banquet hall large enough to seat and serve every member of the Solar Host. It was constructed entirely by mortal means, and only mundane means of lighting the space and regulating the climate are in evidence. No Essence-powered or otherwise magical amenity exists here. We don't even allow demon slaves, elemental servants or divine workers on the premises. Mortals do all the work, and it is as mortals that one comes into the hall. It is in this reserved and humble state that traditionally minded Exalted observe the five-day period of Calibration at year's end. It saddens me, however, that few of us observe Calibration here anymore. The lavish feast in the Banquet Hall of the Ruling Palace of Meru gains in popularity and attendance every year.

The Bank of the Treasury

The vaults of the Bank of the Treasury lie deep beneath the Zenith Ring, connected by tunnels to the surface. These tunnels extend upward into tall towers of marble that terminate in broad skyship mooring sites. There, flying Ministry barges surrounded by squadrons of warbirds and platoons of guards in Air Dragon armor dock to unload or pick up the invaluable cargo they ferry across all points of the Order Conferring Trade Pattern. Legions of clerks from the Ministry of the Treasury work diligently with dedicated animating intelligences to maintain the stability of the Realm economy from this, its central hub. Likewise, legions of Dragon-Bloods, gunzosha, bound demons and automated security mechanisms stand tireless vigil safeguarding the physical wealth lying in the cubic acreage of the vaults. It's against the law to write much more about the Bank's security, but suffice it to say that any wealth deposited there is as safe as it can be.

The Three Mirrors Chamber

This attraction is located just inside the primary passageway that leads from the Zenith Ring into the Eclipse Archdiocese. It admits only one person at a time, and that person enters an empty circular chamber some 100 yards across. When the visitor stands in the exact center, a control apparatus rises from a recess in the floor and an enormous mechanism descends from the ceiling, humming with Essence running through starmetal wiring. The center of this mechanism is a triangle of conjoined mirrors that surround the visitor. At first, only the visitor's image is reflected into infinity around him. At a command from the control apparatus, however, those images are replaced by discrete images of the visitor's past lives or previous Exalted incarnations, who surround him and look at him in the center. The control apparatus allows a visitor to highlight an individual incarnation and isolate it in the mirror before him. He can then access I AM for any historical information on that incarnation in the database.

The Singing Garden

The Singing Garden is a strange new attraction that owes its construction to the patronage of our Solar peer, Elegant Sonah—who teaches sorcery and design at the Academy of Divine Enlightenment. It takes up an amphitheater unto itself, with seating for approximately 10,000 guests. At its center is an enormous construction of crystal, orichalcum and green jade that consists of a circular organ console surrounded by crystal cylinders of varying heights. Within each cylinder is a mortal of exquisite beauty attached to a green jade frame that fits in the base of the cylinder. Each cylinder is connected to a key on the circular organ console. When a key is pressed, the corresponding cylinder's mortal projects a single precise note that the crystal amplifies to stage volume. Each key likewise controls the movement of the cylinder's base through the labyrinthine patterns that line the stage. When Sonah plays the organ console, the crystal cylinders seem to sing and dance in a most intricate and ingenious way.

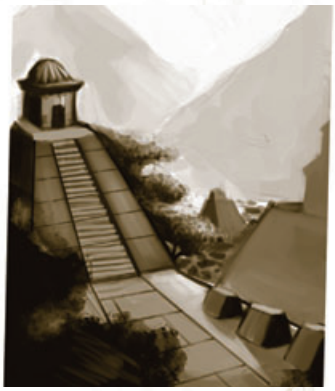
The Auru-Lai Theater District

The most popular theaters of drama, opera, symphony, dance, Essence-image projection and more can be found in the Auru-Lai Theater District at the western base of Mount Meru, where the rising sun casts its shadow. From the Elaborate Proscenium in the foothills to the Apex at the very border of the western Eclipse Archdiocese, this district is the home of the largest, most expensive and most exclusive theaters in the White City. I AM can supply extensive programming information for each theater and help you book reservations. Most theaters keep a private balcony suite set aside for Solar walk-ins and will be happy to hold or restart performances for you if you arrive after the curtain parts. They do this in honor of the eponymous Eclipse Caste founder of the district, who was notoriously late for every performance.

The Little Cities

Much of the eastern portion of the Eclipse Archdiocese at Mount Meru's base consists of miniature regions we call the Little Cities. Each is bounded by gated Essence wall generators that contain discrete climate systems from elsewhere in Creation. Arid desert districts abut temperate forest districts, frigid tundra districts and stranger weather systems still. At the border of each district is a gate of auspicious passage that leads back to the real city from which each "little" version is named. These gates all feed into a spiraling central boulevard that connects to several major arteries that lead into and away from the Exalted City. The inhabitants of the Little Cities are either those immigrants to Meru from abroad who prefer the company of their own kind or Ministries of Order officials whose job responsibilities require frequent travel between Meru and its outposts of civilization elsewhere. Little Cities of particular note include:

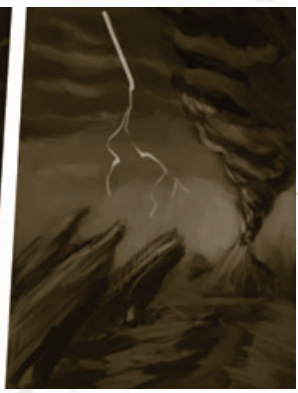
- Little Opal Spire — This Little City of eponymous construction is home to the children and other relatives of many of the soldiers who are stationed in the Opal Spire Protectorate. They trade in fascinating Wyld prodigies brought back by their more adventurous family members.
- Little Rathess — This proud community of our most fearsome non-human allies connects to the jungle city of pyramids that was once the capital of the Realm. Few of the savage Dragon Kings deign to live in this Little City, but such convenient access to the storied wonders of their home makes this one of the most popular Little Cities.
- Little Clepsys — This region occupies what was once Lake Hano. That freshwater body is now a saltwater body with a community of Clepsys' pearled buildings floating in the center.
- Little Chiaroscuro — The oppressive heat of this community is not for the weak of constitution, but the beauty of the shimmering glass towers is well worth at least a tour. I personally find the artificial tang of salt in the air to be too much for someone born and raised at the Elemental Pole of Earth.
- Little Malfeas — This hellish ghetto is the only one that has no gate of auspicious passage, and for good reason. It is less an immigrant community or trading center and more an internment reservation for the Demon-Blooded offspring of irresponsible sorcerers, as well as a holding area for captured or bound demons awaiting deportation.

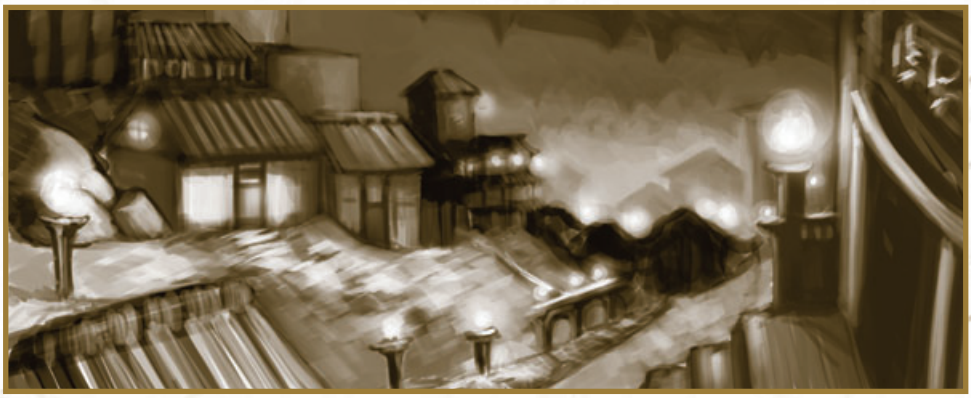


Celestial Expeditions

From its headquarters beneath the Zenith Ring, the travel service known simply as Celestial Expeditions organizes trips to the most interesting places beyond and the most dangerous places in all of Creation. The waiting lists for these vacation expeditions are long, and passage is prohibitively expensive for all but the Celestial Exalted. Nonetheless, short of leading crusades beyond Creation's borders with the military, Celestial Expeditions offers the best and safest chance to explore what lies past the limits of the world we rule. The greater Celestial Expeditions service is divided up into the following four branches:

- Dirge Safaris—These expeditions launch into the bleak depths of the Underworld from a small Blessed Isle shadowland strictly maintained by Dragon-Blooded monks. Each expedition's clients set the itinerary, whether they want to tour the Obsidian City of Stygia, mine soulsteel for experimental devices or taunt the souls of fallen rivals who haven't reincarnated.
- Hell Safaris—These dangerous expeditions lead small groups into the Demon City of Malfeas, where our defeated foes languish within the body of their leader. Sorcerers can interview prospective demon slaves or collect mystical materials that are unavailable anywhere else. Solar cardinals and archbishops can bring groups of bishops and priests here to show them an example of what Creation could have become if not for the Solar Exalted. It's been my experience that no one else tends to bother.
- Wyld Safaris—Trips into the unformed Wyld are the most popular expeditions this service offers. Tourists sail in a bubble of stable Creation into the currents of inexplicability in which the raksha dwell. Eclipse Caste passengers are even allowed to debark and speak with the locals. No two Wyld Safaris are ever the same, but they are always wondrous, terrifying and exhilarating.
- Behemoth Expeditions—This new service was added recently to Celestial Expeditions' repertoire at the behest of some of our more powerful Solar peers, and it gains in popularity rapidly. The service's founders allow popular behemoths to range freely in unpopulated expanses of Creation. Passengers on these expeditions can go simply to look at these creatures, to fight them hand to claw, to ride them or to do whatever else they please with them. New behemoths in the service's "stable" include the Peerless Mantis, Tahamoku the Island, Arad the Hunter and Karbydis With No End. The Maker of Rubble is no longer available on the roster.





Other Areas and Attractions in Meru

Quiet Meru

Quiet Meru is the name of the city beneath the surface of the White City. It's there that Meru's least wealthy mortal families and the legions of service personnel live. Mortals aren't forbidden life on the surface of our city, of course, but not every mortal who can afford to live in our city can afford to live among us beneath the light of the Unconquered Sun.

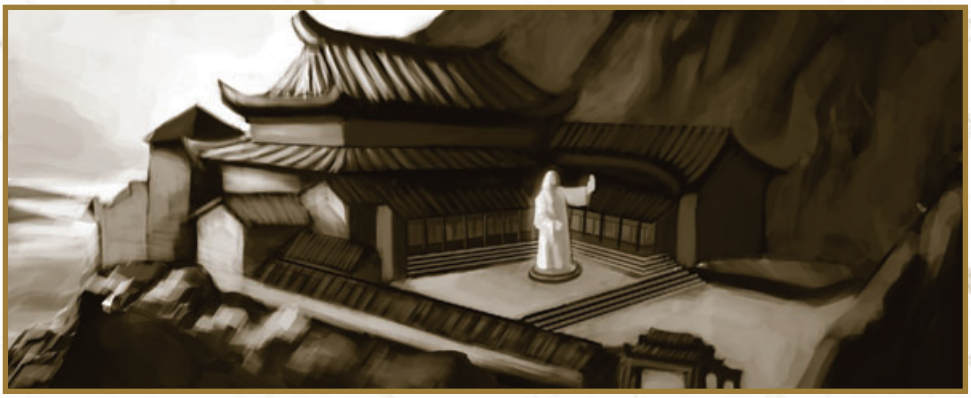
Quiet Meru is lit by Essence–powered lanterns, and its water–purification and waste–management systems are equal in quality to those on the surface. For some trips between archdioceses, Quiet Meru provides the most efficient and expedient pathways. Do be discreet when using them yourself, though. Mortals live in that place to remain out of our sight: Going out of your way to travel among them only confuses and upsets them.

The Golden Children Exciting Journey

Once per year, the Ministry of Education and Proper Childcare hosts this delightful event that acquaints the children of our Solar peers with the city their Exalted parents' efforts won for them. Every year, participating children from ages 5 to 15 gather at the Dawn Archdiocese's Victory Pavilion and climb on the backs of the Desirable Prayer Dragons provided by the Journey's Sidereal guides and enjoy a whirlwind tour of some of Meru's most significant and educational sites. The itinerary changes every year, but it always begins at the Victory Pavilion and ends at the Orrery where the children can be picked up. Reservations for this tour can be made through I AM.

Restaurants

Every archdiocese has its own selection of exotic restaurants offering cuisine from all over Creation. You can find a decent Varajtul barbecue, Clepsys sushi bar, Aquaine café or even a Chiaroscuran diner anywhere in Meru you'd care to look. Personally, I prefer to seek out exotic cuisine in the Little Cities. Others of our peers simply travel abroad when their cravings demand it or hire foreign chefs to join their cooking staff and travel with them from manse to crusade and back again.



Schools

The Ministry of Education and Proper Childcare has built countless schools in Meru, both in its many archdioceses and down in Quiet Meru. Meru schools offer the most complete and progressive primary and secondary schools for mortal children, as well as the most competitive and rewarding apprenticeship and vocational education programs. Meru is also the home of Creation's best Golden Children Academies and Terrestrial Pre-Exaltation Cultural-Inculcation Centers. It is also the only place in Creation the Sidereals chose to build their own pre-Exaltation learning centers for their own kind. If you have any school-aged children who predate your Exaltation (or if you are school-aged yourself), your Sidereal advisor will help you choose the school most suited to their (or your) academic needs.

Further Information

I AM is fully conversant in expanded articles on all of the locations and events described in this guidebook. You need only query I AM at a convenient Interaction Kiosk. The complete expanded edition—including all original text dating back to the first edition, as well as all contributor-cited corrections and updates—is also available at the Library of the Deliberative.

Updates and Corrections

If Your Excellency is interested in updating or correcting information that makes up the expanded edition of this guidebook, I AM would be pleased to receive and incorporate Your Excellency's observations. Corrections and updates will also be accepted at the Library of the Deliberative or the offices of the Ministry of Civic Information and Administrative Necessities.

Upon our receipt of Your Excellency's corrections and updates, a corrected abridged bound edition of the guidebook will be delivered to Your Excellency's preferred receiving address before sunset of the following day.

Other Editions

The Ministry of Civic Information and Administrative Necessities has produced an expanded series of guidebooks with alternative members of Your Excellency's retinue and personal staff in mind. Alternative-focus guidebooks are available on request through I AM, the Library of the Deliberative or the Ministry offices for the Chosen of Luna, the Chosen of the Maidens and the Children of the Elemental Dragons.

Other Publications

The Ministry of Civic Information and Administrative Necessities also offers the following materials on request:

Golden Children Exciting Journey Travelogue

A book of educational puzzles for Your Excellency's children to complete during the Golden Children Exciting Journey.

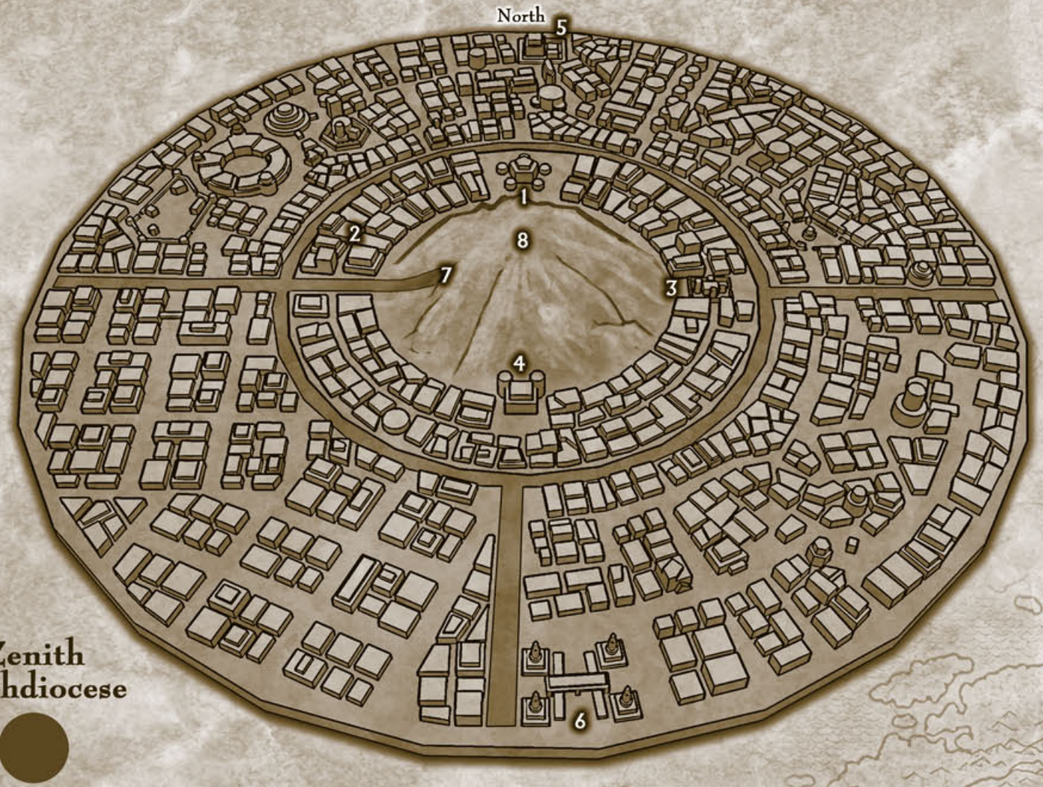
The Role of Glorious Divinity

A modern treatise on the rights and responsibilities of the Exalted vis-à-vis the gods of the Celestial and Terrestrial Bureaucracies, as dictated by His Most Luminous Excellency, Ur-Dai-Ken, the former Supreme Hierophant of Meru.

Instructions for Mortals

A complete list of the religious expectations and codes of acceptable conduct by which any mortals for whom you are responsible must abide, as well as maps that clearly define areas restricted to ones of their station.

Meru



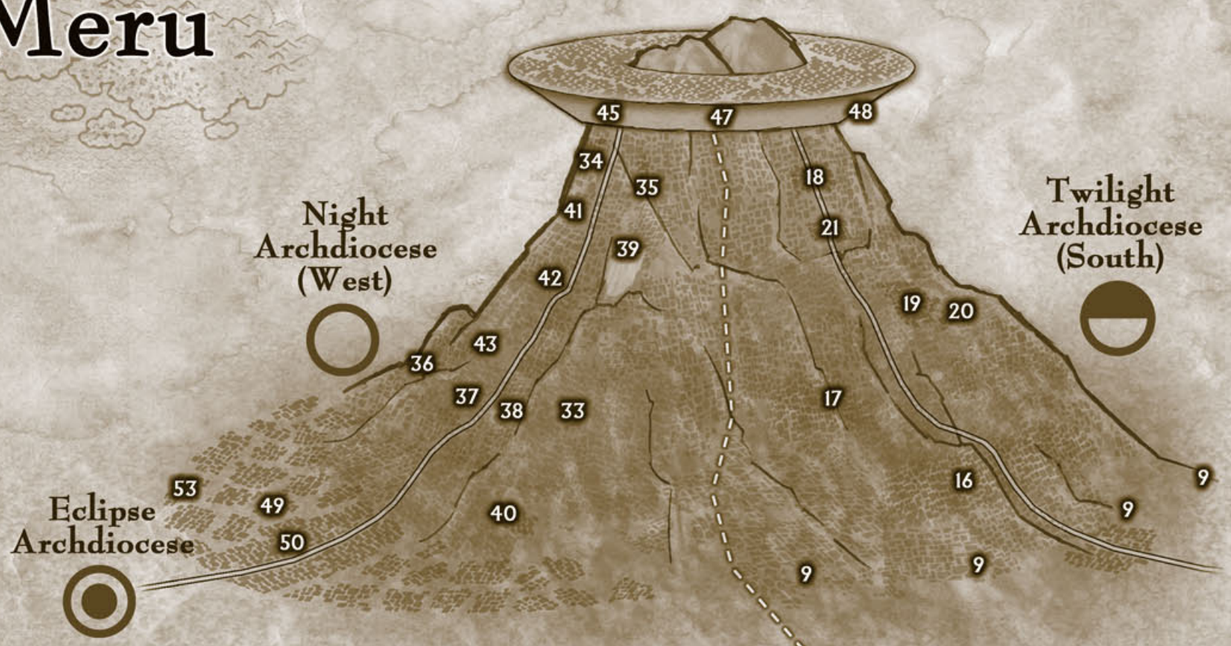
Zenith
Archdiocese

Eclipse
Archdiocese

Dawn
Archdiocese
(East)

Twilight
Archdiocese
(North)

Eclipse
Archdiocese



Night
Archdiocese
(West)

Twilight
Archdiocese
(South)

Eclipse
Archdiocese

Zenith Ring

1. The Ruling Palace of Meru
2. Crown Boulevard
3. The Crown Residence of the Solar Queen
4. The Eternal Temple of the Golden Bull
5. The Order Conferring Trade Nexus
6. Sky Mantis Garden
7. The Birthplace of Rivers Demesne
8. The Holy Peak

The Twilight Archdiocese

Northern Slope:

9. The Palaces of the Divine Ministers
10. The Manufactory Districts
11. The Institute of Biological Improvement
12. The Academy of Vocational Thaumaturgy
13. The Library of the Deliberative
14. The Northern Marketplace
15. The Ingenious Temple of the Copper Spiders

Southern Slope:

16. The Manufactory Districts
17. The Southern Marketplace
18. The Academy of Divine Enlightenment
19. The Blessed Menagerie of the Exalted City
20. The Conservancy of Unexpected Life Forms
21. The Ingenious Temple of the Copper Spider

The Dawn Archdiocese

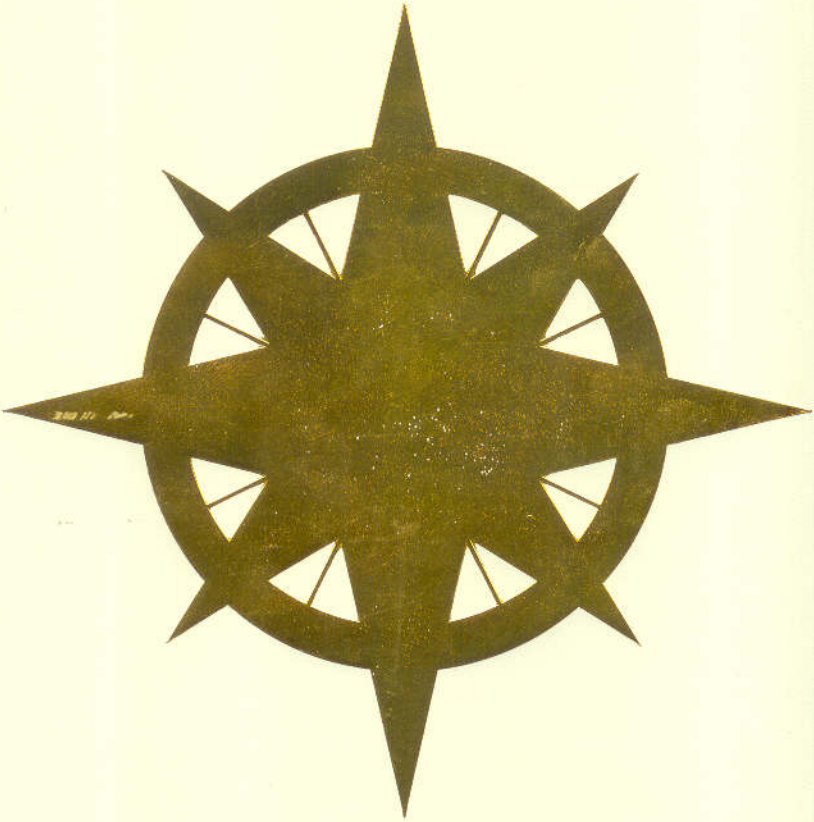
22. The Thousand-Forged Dragon Aerie
23. The Sunflower Mirror Maze
24. Hero Monuments Park
25. The Eye of Meru Balcony
26. The Proving Grounds
27. The Lotus School
28. The Amaranthine Dragon Bathhouse
29. The Heavenly Unity Service
30. The Victory Pavilion
31. The Warstrider Museum
32. The Radiant Temple of the Bronze Tigers

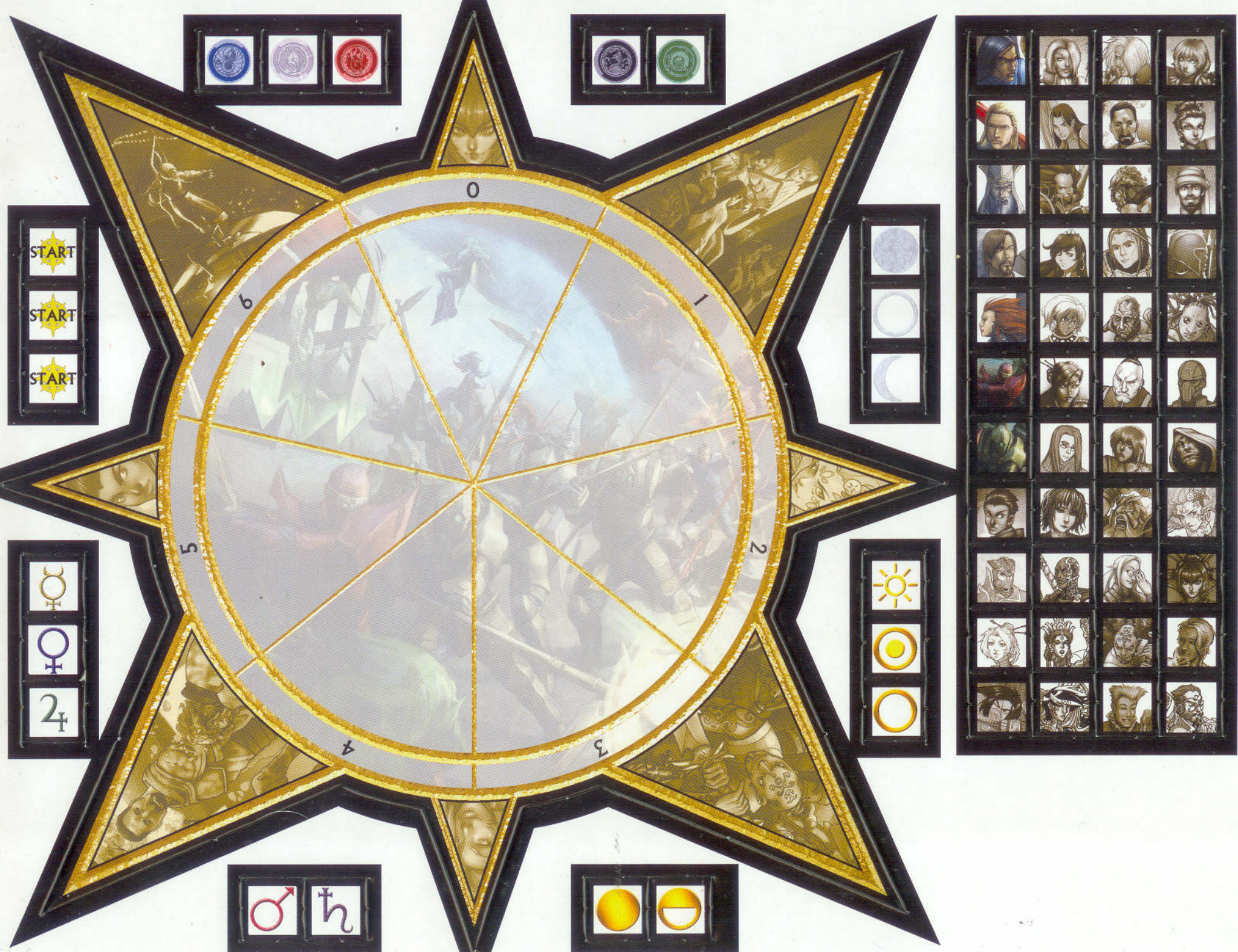
The Night Archdiocese

33. Total Rejuvenation Hospital
34. The Broken Gateway
35. Solar Queen M-r-l-'s Tomb
36. The Dragon's Graveyard
37. The Fallen Stars Memorial
38. Turning Cycle Hallowed Grounds
39. The Dreaming Archer Resort
40. The Hanging Gardens of Meru
41. The Orrery
42. Echoing Glory Arena
43. The Exclusive Temple of the Iron Wolves

The Eclipse Archdiocese

44. The Yu-Shan Embassy
45. The Banquet Hall of Responsible Meditation
46. The Bank of the Treasury
47. Celestial Expeditions
48. The Silent Temple of the Quicksilver Falcon
49. The Singing Garden
50. The Auru-Lai Theater District
51. Little Opal Spire
52. Little Rathess
53. Little Clepsys
54. Little Chiaroscuro
55. Little Malfeas

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Large City
Small City
Urban Sprawl
Contaminated Zone
Military Base
Harbor
Manse
North
800 miles
The Grotto of Light
Vajkaimal
Jalarin
Darkmist Isle
The Coral Archipelago
The Indigo Chain
Petraya
Kerkeis
Okirho
Cormorant
Amphiro
Suadela
The Archipelago of Xur
Isle of Shadows
Wavecrest
Cleptys
The Outback
Saigoth
Hope
Mercy
Lethe
The City of the Shining Reefs
Tfoor Na
Heartwind Isle
Sixth Season Reef
The Sea Fingers
Sezakan
Opal Spire
Crystal
Tzath
Sepporil
Frost Lake
Varlustu
White Valley
White River
Spidersilk Dam
The City of the Mountain Gateway
Opal Crag Mountains
Varaithel
Pear Isle
Plum Isle
Apple Isle
The Isle of Berries
Filaska
Ondar Shamral
Golden River
Brahm's Bridge
Wallport
Meteor's Eye
Everliving Grove
Three Force Mesa
Landward Cherak
Cherak-on-the-Sea
White River Gorge
River of Tears
Bell Garden
The Black Chase
Glorymane
Sjan
Avarice River
Silver River
Blackwater River
Golden Leaf Canal
Yagan
Sal-Maneth
Samiaren
Malessa
Lesser Rock River
Rock River
Meander River
Yellow River
Yanaze River
Rolling River
Amber Shores Port
Deheleshen
Hollow
Lodros
Ollafor
Denandsor
Marlito River
Mount Kahkitea
Sperimin
Shattered of Brilliant Embassy
Gray River
Rathess
Khryal
Tamar-Kas
Satsuma Township
Ilio Stara
Xela-Cas
The Summer Mountains
Fire Mountains
The Last Supplicant of Endless Power
Chiaroscuro
High Nyunda
Dail of the Mists
Saaneth
Pinnacle of Mercy
The City of Flowers
Blueheaven
Refuge
Shimmering Pearls Beneath the Sapphire Waves
Coral Bells
Meru
Mount Meru
The Fortress of Hungry Birds
Dawn River
Grand Bay
Crane Bay
The Isle of Silence
The Bay of Teeth
Serpentine River
The Blessed Isle
Fairport
Caracal River
The City of Silken Flowers
The Inland Sea

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