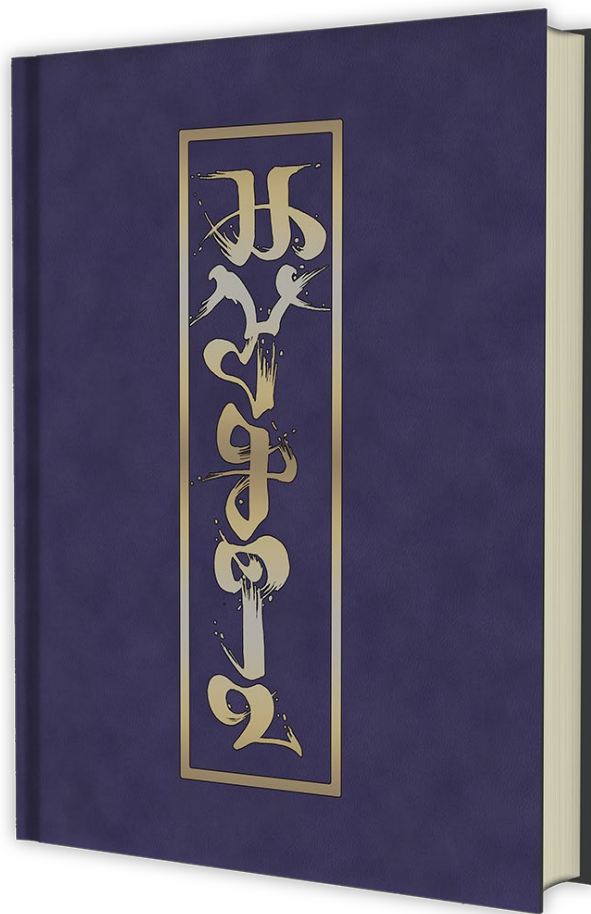


Sidereals

CHARTING FATE'S COURSE

Kickstarter Manuscript Preview



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If you are reading this pdf and you haven't paid for the manuscript you can find it at Kickstarter for or Backer Kit \$5! Please go purchase it. I made this for my players to make it easier to use the material between the time the official book is released.

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Introduction

"I foresee that man will resign himself each day to new abominations, that soon only soldiers and bandits will be left. To them I offer this advice: Whosoever would undertake some atrocious enterprise should act as if it were already accomplished, should impose upon himself a future as irrevocable as the past."

— *Jorge Luis Borges, "The Garden of Forking Paths"*

The Sidereal Exalted are many things: Starry-eyed seers gifted with insight into the nature of fate. Elite agents of Heaven, troubleshooting threats to destiny in Creation and beyond. Legendary martial artists, whose secret techniques strike the soul and shatter reality. Celestial powerbrokers and intriguers who treat with gods as equals. Puppetmasters who steer the course of nations with a word in a queen's ear.

And yet it is their their curse to be forgotten by the world.

Burdened by their arcane fate, the Sidereal Exalted are heroes unremembered, serving Creation and bending the arc of history from behind the scenes. Now, with Creation fallen into a Time of Tumult, all that the Sidereals have worked for stands on the brink of annihilation once more. Their choices and deeds will shape the future, whether it be one of glory or tragedy.

This Book at a Glance

Chapter One: The Sidereal Exalted introduces the Sidereals, detailing their secret history, their fated Exaltations, and their enigmatic patrons — the Maidens of Destiny.

Chapter Two: The Celestial Bureaucracy explores the Celestial Bureaucracy of the gods and the Bureau of Fate to which the Sidereals belong, along with Storytelling advice for Sidereal chronicles.

Chapter Three: Yu-Shan surveys the city of Heaven itself, a realm of countless intrigues and adventures for Sidereal chronicles to explore, and the myriad gods and other spirits who inhabit it.

Chapter Four: Character Creation provides rules for creating Sidereal player characters.

Chapter Five: Traits details the Sidereals' Castes and provides rules for arcane fate, resplendent destinies, and Sidereal prophecy.

Chapter Six: Charms unleashes the strange and wondrous Charms of the Sidereal Exalted, drawing on Creation's constellations and the secret wisdom of the Maidens.

Chapter Seven: Martial Arts and Sorcery presents new martial arts styles and spells, including the transcendent secrets of Sidereal Martial Arts.

Chapter Eight: Artifacts uncovers a trove of starmetal artifacts suitable for requisition or discovery by Sidereal agents.

Chapter Nine: The Roll of Heavenly Personages offers an array of characters to battle, bewilder, or befriend, including Sidereal martial artists, cunning gods, and draconic censors.

Lexicon

ambrosia: The currency of *Heaven*, made from prayer itself.

arcane fate: The curse that dooms the Sidereals to be forgotten, erasing memories and records of

Maiden's Chosen. It came to be in aftermath of *the Solar Purge*, when the nascent *Bronze Faction* broke the stars themselves to seal away the Solar Exalted.

audit: A formal investigation of a spirit or Sidereal conducted by a *censor* before imposing punishment.

Bronze Faction, the: An informal coalition of Sidereals dedicated to maintaining the safety and stability of Creation's status quo by supporting *the Realm*. Political rival to *the Gold Faction*.

bureau: One of the five bureaucratic sub-units to which the *celestial gods* belong.

Bureau of Destiny, the: The *bureau* to which the Sidereals belong, tasked with ensuring that destiny is fulfilled.

Bureau of Heaven, the: The *bureau* that oversees abstract concepts and *Heaven's* governance.

Bureau of Humanity, the: The *bureau* that oversees human creations and affairs.

Bureau of Nature, the: The bureau that oversees animals, plants, and other natural phenomena — except for those that it lost when *the Bureau of Seasons* splintered off from it.

Bureau of Seasons, the: The bureau that oversees weather, climate, and the changing seasons. *Heaven's* military, the Aerial Legion, is also part of this bureau.

censor: Enforcers of *Heaven's* justice, censors are *elemental* dragons invested with plenipotentiary authority to punish heavenly crimes and conduct *audits*.

convention: A Sidereal working group within the *Bureau of Destiny*.

division: A sub-unit within a *bureau*.

Celestial Bureaucracy, the: The great bureaucracy of Heaven, encompassing both the *bureaus* of *celestial gods* and the countless *terrestrial gods* who dwell in Creation.

Cult of the Illuminated, the: A cult whose teachings and followers were scattered across Creation in the mass migrations following the Great Contagion. *The Gold Faction* supports it in secret to help protect young Solar Exalted from *the Bronze Faction* and *The Realm*.

Creation-Ruling Mandate: The Unconquered Sun's edict at the end of the Divine Revolution, granting dominion over Creation to the Exalted rather than the gods.

destiny: *The Celestial Bureaucracy's* plan for the future of a person, place, or thing, mystically woven into *the Loom of Fate*. Planning destinies and ensuring they come to pass strengthens Creation, reinforcing its reality against the chaos of the Wyld and other threats.

fate: The causal laws of Creation and Heaven. Fate dictates what futures — and *destinies* — are possible, defining the world's natural order.

Fivescore Fellowship, the: A colloquial term for the Sidereal Exalted as a whole.

elemental: Spirits that arise naturally from Creation's Essence, who occasionally join the *Celestial Bureaucracy*.

god: A type of spirit, typically serving as the divine steward of a place, thing, or concept as part of the *Celestial Bureaucracy*.

god, celestial: A higher-ranking *god* of *the Celestial Bureaucracy* whose status warrants them a place in *Heaven*. Celestial gods typically oversee a category of things or phenomena, like "rivers," or serve as attendants, retainers, and staff to such gods.

god, terrestrial: A lower-ranking *god of the Celestial Bureaucracy* that dwells in Creation. Terrestrial gods typically oversee specific things or phenomena, like “the Meander River.”

Gold Faction, the: An informal coalition of Sidereals, whose diverse goals and agendas share a willingness to risk Creation’s safety for the sake of a better tomorrow. The secret backer of *the Cult of the Illuminated*. Political rival to *the Bronze Faction*.

Heaven: The celestial city of the gods, connected to Creation by ancient gateways. Also known as Yu-Shan.

Loom of Fate, the: A wonder from the dawn of time that allows *the Celestial Bureaucracy* to glimpse the weave of possibilities that *fate* will allow and choose which potential futures will be woven into *destinies*.

prayerwright: A *god* or *elemental* skilled in the shaping of *ambrosia*.

Realm, the: Creation’s most powerful empire, dominated by the Great Houses of the Scarlet Dynasty, its Dragon-Blooded aristocracy. Secretly backed by *the Bronze Faction*.

resplendent destiny: Archetypal identities donned by Sidereals to interact with others free from the curse of *arcane fate*.

Shadow City, the: A colloquial term for the criminal underworld of *Heaven*.

Solar Purge, the: The mass assassination of the First Age’s Solars, orchestrated by a Sidereal conspiracy that eventually become *the Bronze Faction*. Also known as the Usurpation.

spirit court: A social or political association of *gods* or other spirits.

Suggested Resources

The Sidereal Exalted draw from classical mythology, pulp fantasy, and spy thrillers. The following media offer inspiration for players and Storytellers interested in the Maiden’s Chosen, the Celestial Bureaucracy, or Yu-Shan.

Classics

***Journey to the West*, by Wu Cheng’en:** This classic’s depiction of the heavens is the primary inspiration for Yu-Shan.

Fiction

***The Compleat Traveller in Black*, by John Brunner:** The titular Traveller in Black was one of the original inspirations for the Sidereal Exalted and the strange magic of their Charms.

***The Gods of Pegāna*, by Lord Dunsany:** The gods of Dunsany’s invented mythology were one of the original inspirations of the Maidens of Destiny, and for many other aspects of **Exalted**.

***The Great Work of Time*, by John Crowley:** The Bronze Faction was originally inspired by this novella’s antagonists, the Otherhood — a secret society of time travelers bent on ensuring the British Empire never falls.

Movies

***The 36th Chamber of Shaolin*, directed by Lau Kar-leung:** A classic of Hong Kong’s cinema, this film makes its protagonist’s training in the martial arts as exciting as any fight scene, providing excellent inspiration for storytelling Sidereals’ training regimens and those of other Chosen.

***The Adjustment Bureau*, directed by George Nolfi:** The titular bureau is the closest thing to the Bureau of Destiny you'll find in popular culture.

***Ink*, directed by Jamin Winans:** This dark urban fantasy's most spectacular scene is a visually stunning example of Sidereal magic in action, courtesy of the blind seer Jacob.

Television

***Doctor Who*:** The Doctor is stand-out inspiration for rogue Sidereals, a time-traveling immortal who wanders the cosmos and safeguards the course of history despite having cut ties with the rigidly bureaucratic Time Lords of Gallifrey.

***Heaven Official's Blessing*, directed by Chen Jialin:** This modern-day take on the celestial bureaucracy follows the misadventures of a down-on-his-luck god, providing ample inspiration for both Sidereals in particular and **Exalted** in general.

***Person of Interest*, created by Jonathan Nolan:** A former CIA agent and an eccentric software genius follow the enigmatic guidance of the Machine, a mass surveillance system capable of predicting the future. The sci-fi intrigues that unfold around the Machine provide inspiration both for Sidereal missions and for what the shadowy Bureau of Destiny's machinations might look like from the outside.

Manga and Comics

***Kill Six Billion Demons*, by Tom Parkinson-Morgan:** The spectacular supernatural martial arts on display in this beautifully illustrated webcomic are second to none as inspiration for Sidereal Martial Arts and other mighty powers of the Exalted, while the city-world of Throne has much in common with the slums of Heaven.

A Sidereal Story

“I’m always surprised,” said Easy-Come Dozan to the silver spider on their shoulder, “that Heaven itself still has traffic jams.” Gilded carts, gem-crusted wagons, and peachwood palanquins filled the street from one side to the other. Here and there, spirits tried pressing through small openings between them, succeeding only in worsening the congestion.

“I also would have thought,” continued Dozan, craning their neck, “that my dear friend, who knows the warp and weft of the Loom like second nature, might have warned me before we left home.”

The spider gave them a long-suffering look, one that suggested this was a frequent line of conversation, and chittered something reproachful with a buzzing voice.

Dozan laughed. “I know, I know. Not your job, anyway.”

Shouts echoed from farther up, accompanied by the sound of splintering wood. Dozan plucked at the sleeve of a crane-necked god. “What’s going on?”

The god sighed, vexed. “Tarelyn of the Fretful Hours is transporting a new pet to her menagerie, and it’s not pleased with the relocation.”

“When you say pet...” More shouts went up. Dozan winced.

“Tarelyn’s caught herself a behemoth.” The beast’s roar set teahouse awnings aflutter. “Well. ‘Caught’ is debatable.”

“Hmm,” said Dozan. “I wish her luck with it.” Surely the Department of Celestial Concerns had dispatched a team to clear this up, but with every passing second Dozan, as one of Mercury’s Chosen, fretted they might be tapped to help. Ordinarily, the Harbinger wouldn’t mind corralling a runaway behemoth, but there was no time for it today. Second-Look Essel had lodged a formal grievance against the entire Division of Journeys, one that risked burying everyone from the lowliest clerks to the division’s head in paperwork. Dozan had been tasked with leading a charm offensive to mollify the god of hidden paths, but now, they were already running late.

Fortunately, Dozan had a way around the traffic jam, one that would make up for lost time. They beamed down at the pattern spider, who grumbled with inflated exasperation before abseiling to the ground. Dozan climbed astride the spider, boggling bystanders — The Sidereal was ten times their familiar’s size, and yet the spider bore their weight effortlessly.

The spider skittered toward the street’s edge, hauling itself and Dozan up a tenement wall. It was excellent timing — from the roaring, shrieking, and billowing dust cloud coming from below, it seemed that Tarelyn’s new pet had broken free at last. Dozan and their spider neatly avoided the commotion, descending to the streets only as Essel’s manse came into view. As Dozan dismounted, they patted their robes to smooth them down.

A letter was tucked into the fabric, one that certainly hadn’t been there this morning.

•••••

“This violence is pointless,” said Adhim, as he dodged yet another blow. Helavarin, god of whispered bargains, had not been pleased with Adhim’s visit to her teahouse. Perhaps this had

something to do with the bars of stolen ambrosia piled up in the basement, although it could have been the cask of Yozi venom. Before Adhim could even give his reason for stopping by, Helavarin had launched herself at him, forcing him out the door with a barrage of blows. They'd been at this for ten minutes, and gathered quite the crowd.

Adhim, for his part, let her do it. There wasn't anything he needed to say to her inside that he couldn't also say on the street. If assembled crowd took a lesson from it, so much the better. He kept his hands at his sides, save to block what he couldn't dodge, and let her Helavarin exhaust herself with futile exertion. Honestly, divine gangsters did half his job for him, just by getting riled up so easily.

The god came at Adhim again, her fist looping toward his midsection. The Joybringer sidestepped smoothly, as though he and Helavarin were partners in an intricate dance. His starmetal walking stick tapped out the rhythm. "I understand. You think defeating me will help your image," he said. "But look at yourself. You're winded and disheveled, and you still haven't landed a punch. I haven't even had to throw one.. What does that do to your image?"

A murmur traveled through the audience. A pair of Helavarin's heavies, hulking magma-gods with fists of molten lava, moved to step in, but their employer waved them off. If she couldn't win without help, the damage to her reputation would still be done

"Spare yourself the humiliation," Adhim said, a tone of irritation creeping into his voice. "All I want to do is talk."

Instead, the god's fist whirled at the Joybringer's head in a blow that could have knocked his teeth out.

Adhim didn't move.

Perhaps she was exhausted. Perhaps she didn't want to give the Bureau more reason to investigate her. Perhaps it was the best way she could think of to save face. But whatever her reasons, at the last second,

Helavarin's fist stopped. Had Adhim so desired, he could have daintily kissed her knuckles (he did not so desire). The god hung her head and stepped back. Her fist unclenched, she offered him her hand. "Will you come in for some tea?"

"I'd be delighted." He followed her inside, inwardly grumbling as he noticed a small rip the fight had left his shirt. I'll have to visit my tailor, he thought. Beneath his fingers, paper crinkled. The corner of an envelope poked out through the tear.

.....

Koraia walked at Hiparkes' side, watching herds of horses run along the rolling green hills of heavenly pasture below. The Stallion Lord wore his human form, his skin silvery and his hair a mane of smoke. Though the horse-god towered over her, he wasn't quite as tall as he'd seemed when she was growing up in Marukan. She enjoyed the power and the confidence of being Mars' Chosen, the respect shown to her even by the gods — but this was different. Hiparkes wasn't just any god; he was the god of her people.

She'd ridden on his back when she was but a child, back when she had a different name. She'd spent sleepless hours praying to him the night before she first sipped tea with the Sisterhood of the

Night Ride and joined their sisterhood. Now she was making small talk within him to suss out his opinions on heavenly politics.

“Koraia?”

Hiparkes had asked a question. “I’m sorry, would you repeat that, please?”

“I asked whether you had thoughts on Thorns.”

She had many, as a daughter of Marukan and a Shieldbearer both. Which did wish to hear? Was he merely seeking her personal opinion, or was asking for insight on the Division of Battles’ plans? Did he want her to give destiny a nudge in the Marukani Alliance’s favor? She’d handled borderline improper requests from gods before. Some you shut down; others were worth hearing out. But those gods weren’t Hiparkes.

Suddenly, Koraia felt small again, awkward and unworthy. Who was she, to call herself Hiparkes’ peer? What daughter of Marukan would flinch away from serving him? His hoofbeats, it was said, had created all the roads of Marukan, thousands of years before Koraia was born.

I’m not ready for this. “I’m sorry,” she said, pulling fate around herself like a cloak, “but I was never here.” And it was so.

Koraia reappeared on the road leading back from Hiparkes’ stables. She drew a handkerchief from her pocket to wipe away the sheen of nervous sweat, only to find a piece of paper neatly tucked into its folds.

•••••

Nayalu cradled the ancient igil close to her chest, careful not to put too much pressure on the fiddle’s starmetal-fretted neck or brush the exquisitely carved tiger head at its top against the tomb’s rough stone walls. The crawlspace had barely enough room for her to move through it. Thieves had discovered it before her, a gap in the tomb’s construction, but they’d never found a way past.

Lesser thieves, with unworthy ends.

From the other side of the bricks came the thudding footsteps of the tomb’s guardian-servitors — orichalcum automata who’d stood vigil the ages, protecting the First Age crypt’s treasures sealed. The skeletal remains of would-be interlopers littered the way in, but Nayalu had slipped past the servitors. The trick would be getting out.

Either battle or subsidence had caused this part of the crawlspace wall to settle. Through the cracks in the stones, Nayalu heard sand shifting underfoot as a guardian passed close by. It didn’t breathe, but Nayalu could make out the sound of mechanisms whirring, trying to find her. Hemmed in like this, it would only be a matter of time.

Options wheeled through her mind. No escape routes. No back-up. If there was a spell for a sorcerer stuck in a crawlspace, she’d never learned it. The odds would favor her in a fight, at least until the reinforcements came, but she discarded that thought out of hand. Not only would it risk damaging the igil, but the thought of destroying these guardians felt shameful. The secret of their making had long been lost. A subtler approach was called for.

Turning to face a direction that does not exist, Nayalu stepped outside of fate's weave, outside the reach of eyes and ears. The automaton's inhuman senses pierced through the stone wall as it turned its head in her direction, but registered only empty space. She sometimes missed the challenge such escapes would have posed before her Exaltation, the terror of certain death and the euphoria of finding the way out. But the headstrong scavenger prince she'd once been could never have dreamed of daring a Solar's tomb for the sake of an unwisely wagered fiddle, nor the countless other adventures that had become her life. It balanced out.

When she was safely out of the ruins, Nayalu paused to rest beneath an ironwood tree. The warm sand felt good on her tired muscles as she sat to take off her boots and shake out the pebbles. As the last of them tumbled out, a piece of parchment fell out with them.

•••••

The young Lunar had eluded Silent Moth for hours. He'd taken to the trees as a mountain cat, and run fleet-footed as a deer across the tall grass. He was no warrior; escape was his only hope of survival. Such hope was fleeting. He was far from the first Anathema that Moth had hunted, nor the first Lunar to employ such tricks against her. She'd learned to track as a child in Fortitude, pursuing those who fled from her gang into the city's underground depths. What chance did the Lunar have?

Now, cornered, he turned to Silent Moth with pleading eyes. "I'm not your enemy," he said. "I have no quarrel with the Realm." He gestured to his coat, far too thin for the cold. His too-big boots were stuffed with rags to keep them from falling off. "You think I'm an Anathema? I can barely clothe myself." He laughed, bitterly, through the tears streaming down his face. "Please. I'll swear whatever oath you ask of me."

He almost swayed Moth. It was true — the meek youth posed no threat to her, no threat to the Realm. The status quo could survive an act of mercy, and she wished so badly to be merciful. But she'd been meek once, too. A gang leader's momentary mercy had let her live another day. It was a dangerous way to think; Moth's hand slashed down, forming the Lesser Sign of the Sword. With that extra day, I became the person who would someday take her place. She'd seen the projections for what would happen if this Anathema lived; meek as she seemed now, someday her actions — and that of the army she'd lead — would spell disaster for Creation. No.

She didn't respond, merely moved into a Ninth Direction Slash. Her blade opened the Lunar's throat, and ended the girl's fate, at least for now.

As she peeled off her gloves and tucked them into her belt, Silent Moth discovered a note tucked into it as well.

•••••

Adhim arrived early, as was his style. Fates deviate in the city of Turutan, the letter read. Discover the cause. Repair what's broken. It told him nothing else beyond the names of the others assigned to the task, and when and where they were to gather.

He sat on a small stone bench, placed there centuries ago by some other Chosen who, presumably, spent a lot of time waiting for her peers. Golden afternoon light played on the tall grass around him. After a few moments, three of his four companions stepped through the heavenly gate: Koraia, called the Iron Thistle; the staunch Reckoner Silent Moth; the sorcerer and Oracle Nayalu Eika.

They knew one another through reputation, or brief meetings in Yu-Shan's halls, but little more. "We're only missing one," Adhim said, rising to greet them. "Perhaps we should—"

A sudden snore interrupted him, as of someone startling awake. It came from behind the bench where he'd been resting. A moment later, Easy-Come Dozan stood, brushing bits of grass from their shoulders. A pattern spider trundled out onto the road, stretching its legs like a contented cat.

"Ah," said Dozan, beaming. "You're all here. Welcome!"

Adhim stared, his introductory speech dying on his lips. It wasn't so much that he hadn't noticed Dozan's presence — Adhim's horoscope hadn't warned of any danger, and he could defend himself easily even if it had changed. It was the oddness of Dozan's approach: napping in the tall grass when such an important assignment was imminent. It was time they could have spent preparing for what lay ahead.

If Dozan noticed Adhim's agitation, they ignored it. "I hope this assignment will be easier than cleaning up after the Tarelyn's beast," they said. Without further explanation, they strode off in the direction of Turutan. Adhim frowned after them, then let out a sigh and followed.

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The Katabasis was, by all accounts, one of Turutan's most dangerous quarters. While the others in the Circle had ventured off on their own to gather information on the city and its residents, Silent Moth and Koraia explored the Katabasis together. Either could have held her own alone, but each knew how valuable it was when someone else was watching out for you, just in case.

It was Koraia who turned the conversation toward the manners of their Exaltations, as much to pass the time as to get to know her companion.

"I was lost in the tunnels," Silent Moth said. "For days I followed the sound of a big cat padding around, even though such things are rare that deep underground. Now and then I'd see it at a junction, with one of the gang leaders astride. Some sat tall. Others were bloody. The cat was a massive snow leopard, its fur the pale gray of a winter sky. No matter how fast I ran, I couldn't catch more than a handful of its tail. Until, that last day, when it stopped and let me get so close I could touch the rider's boot. Do you know who was in the saddle?"

"Who?" Koraia shook her head slightly at a man lurking up ahead. You didn't need to understand fate's intricacies to know when someone was gearing up to cut your purse strings. The man thought better of it, and found somewhere else to be.

"Me. Swathed in purple and with a pair of crows wheeling above my head."

"What did you do?"

"I fell on my ass in the dirt." Koraia's laugh, full-throated and unrestrained, made something warm bloom in Moth's belly. "When I finally spoke to our gang's priest, he said I was destined for more. If only he knew. What about you?"

"I kept hearing swords ringing," said Koraia. "It wasn't the raiding season, and Lookshy hadn't sent word of any concerns. Then one night, I woke up smelling blood and hearing shouts, even though the village was quiet. I got everyone up anyway; no one was happy about it. Turned out

there was a bandit gang riding for our gates. We survived; most of them didn't." She pulled up short, at the entrance to a teahouse that had seen better days. "Here, you think?"

"I trust your instincts," said Moth, enjoying the blush that crept into Koraia's cheeks. She adjusted her grip on her grimcleaver. Hopefully, their entrance wouldn't immediately spark a fight, but it was always best to be ready. "Let's go find out who's in charge."

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Later, the five gathered around a table in a rented suite of rooms, distilling their day's reconnaissance into a brief. Adhim wrote while the others talked, separating fact from speculation, and ensuring Heaven heard what it needed to, when it needed to:

"Our explorations have yet to uncover the root of the anomaly, though our preliminary work points us in three directions:

Obsidian Saber, who advises Prince Dalir, exhibits the qualities of an Exigent. Which god he represents and what his goals are remain unknown. The prince is little more than a figurehead, though once he was well-respected.

Many weak gods make Turutan their home. The circumstances behind this phenomena remain unclear, whether due to historical events or the draw of a charismatic figure.

Lastly, merchants, criminals, and politicians alike complained of the machinations of the Ship's Wheel Fellowship, a society that, while newly-formed, has gained significant power in their short investiture. I assure you, its invocation of the constellation has not gone unnoticed among us.

We will report our findings faithfully."

—Adhim Kassar

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At the heart of Turutan lay the House of Bellicose Skies, an Earth manse whose outer chambers the Obsidian Saber called home. Its smooth samarskite walls reminded Nayalu of lava flows, frozen in shape after they cooled.

Saber received them in the great hall, looking down on them from a marble throne. The room was staged to impress. Behind him, a carved relief depicted a long-forgotten battle. Refreshments were piled high on a sumptuously laid table, accompanied by wine of a rare and coveted vintage. Nayalu recognized a grifter's patter the moment he began speaking. She let her mind drift, listening for the Telltale Symphony underlying his words.

The threads of fate resonated around her like plucked strings. Saber's song was different than her companions': two notes at once, separate but in harmony. She cut him off mid-sentence. "He's no Exigent. A god speaks to us through mortal lips."

Obsidian Saber blanched. Gone, instantly, was the charming prince's advisor. "Who sent you?"

"Does it matter?" Adhim asked. "Heaven frowns on gods meddling in mortal affairs, and here you're advising a prince. You're in trouble no matter what."

“Wait, please.” Obsidian Saber stepped down from the throne and claimed one of the smaller chairs, which had been placed out for his guests. “I’m Imnys-En, of the Broken Peony Court. Heaven appointed me here centuries ago. The Contagion took my predecessor, and I’ve guarded the manse since. I’m where I’m supposed to be.”

“Possessing a mortal was part of your writ, was it?” Adhim asked blandly.

“No.” The story spilled from Saber’s lips, of an explorer named Ydor Tal who came seeking the manse’s secrets. Tal composed poems as he searched for a way into the inner chambers, and the god fell in love with his words and his voice. “Sometimes I whispered back,” he said, “and he came to love me, too.”

Chair legs scraped across the floor as Dozan dragged one closer. “Oh,” they said, “Adhim, we should listen.”

Saber didn’t quite seem to know what to make of the Harbinger hanging on his every word, but he continued. “I thought it wouldn’t hurt to show Tal one secret, since he came here with no malice in mind. But the manse’s builders left many traps, and Tal was poisoned. I couldn’t bear losing him. So, I asked if he’d let me care for him, until we can find a cure.”

“Possessing him staves off the poison?” asked Dozan.

“Yes. And as Obsidian Saber, we guard the manse against those who come seeking the myriad artifacts sealed at its center.” He spread his hands. “What lies within once required a dozen guardians standing watch. Now it’s only me, and I’m fulfilling my duties to the Celestial Bureaucracy, even though it stretches me thin.”

Dozan smiled gently. “One bad choice shouldn’t doom you both forever. Should it, Adhim?”

The Joybringer’s lips became a thin, mean line, but Nayalu wasn’t sure whether it was because of the god’s crimes, or because Dozan had a point. “I think,” said Nayalu, “that we can keep this quiet if you’re willing to help us out.” She knew the value of a good informant.

“Of course,” said Saber. “Tell me how.”

“What do you know of the Ship’s Wheel Fellowship?” Now she dragged her own chair over. She sat on it backwards-to, folding her arms on its backrest and leaning in to hear him speak.

We will report our findings faithfully. —Adhim Kassar. Noravu, god of impractical puzzles and Minister of Labyrinthine Rules, read the agents’ report with interest as he hurried to meet Sings-the-Morning. On any other day, he’d have mulled over their findings while he enjoyed a cup of tea on his terrace and pondered what their investigation so far might yield. Today he had to set his interests aside and show the god of hot springs the best Yu-Shan had to offer.

It irked him a bit, having to win Sings-the-Morning’s favor. What did a god of hot springs know about Zephyr and its Sky Princes? But the point was moot: he not only had a seat on the destiny planning committee, he was also its swing vote. If Noravu and his peers wanted their proposal to go through, they needed Sings-the-Morning in their corner.

Sings-the-Morning arrived fashionably late, in a simhata-drawn rickshaw. Diamonds bedecked both the cart and the god within. The gems caught the early light and reflected it in fanciful patterns

on buildings and passers-by. The lateness and ostentatiousness of his arrival sent a clear message to Noravu: this is your baseline. Can you top it?

Noravu smiled and hustled to help Sings-the-Morning down. “I have the most entertaining day planned for us,” he said, “beginning with breakfast.”

Sings-the-Morning took in the building they stood outside with a measure of disdain. The neighborhood bordered on one of Heaven’s slums, and everything felt just a little dingy. “Here?” he asked.

“Here,” Noravu promised. “The location helps maintain the chef’s exclusivity... and helps keep her identity secret.” He leaned up to whisper a name in Sings-the-Morning’s ear, and was pleased when his companion’s eyebrows raised in delight.

“I haven’t eaten her food since Merela ruled,” said the god.

Noravu knew this, but feigned surprise. “Let’s get you reacquainted,” he said, and ushered Sings-the-Morning inside.

After breakfast, they visited Noravu’s tailor, who piled bolts of painted silk in their arms and spun tales of each artisan and their craft. A bored Vanehan Sword-Prince made this fabric. A Fair Folk noble trapped a thunderstorm in her paintbrush for that. Here was a peasant’s field song made manifest. Sings-the-Morning wanted robes made from each. Noravu didn’t bat an eye as he told the tailor to add them to his tab.

They ate a late lunch during a private performance of an upcoming play. The water elemental players depicted the dreams of flowers on the vine and horses, flowing from shape to shape as colorful lights shone through them. At the end, Sings-the-Morning stood and clapped, tears flowing down his face.

They still had not spoken of Zephyr or its princes. Whenever Noravu nudged the conversation in that direction, Sings-the-Morning deftly deflected. Conversations in his hot springs were slow and meandering, never staying on one topic too long, getting to concrete business matters only when it was nearly time to emerge, wrinkled and refreshed, from the waters.

Noravu knew this, too, but couldn’t help but keep a running tally of the day’s costs. He’d paid ahead on most things, but when Sings-the-Morning asked for extras, he indulged. It was as though Noravu were leaking ambrosia.

As the Golden Barque of Heaven docked and twilight settled in, Noravu played his most extravagant gambit. A feast waited for them in the private aerial yacht: delicacies from across Creation, desserts crafted by a confectionary god, and of course, enough celestial wine to get them through the night. Crystals sat in a nest of spun gold, their chiming vibrations playing songs that were popular in Meru. The vehicle carried them high above Yu-Shan, setting the city sparkling beneath them. They sat on the deck and circled the Jade Pleasure Dome, watching the colors change.

“Do you know,” said Sings-the-Morning as he poured another glass of wine, “I’ve heard these are the colors of a Zephyrite sunrise?”

Noravu smiled. It was time to talk business at last.

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Turutan was an old city, one that had withstood (or fallen to) invasions and regime changes over its history. Not all of its battle-pocked places had been restored. Tonight, the Ship's Wheel Fellowship met in one such abandoned venue. What had once been an art museum was now little more than four walls surrounding an open space, its roof lost to some long-ago siege. A few statues — too big to cart away — remained; those that still had heads watched over the proceedings like alabaster wraiths.

The Circle had, that morning, learned the identity of the Fellowship's leader, and come to see him in action. Silent Moth led the way through the crowd of masked and cloaked members. Dozan followed; as they passed certain people, they waved a slender hand, their Thought Swiping Distraction stealing away suspicions about the three newcomers in their midst. Adhim brought up the rear, making note of certain attendees. Here was the powerbroker he'd met two days ago in a caravanserai, the scent of his strong cologne giving him away. Here, the god of distant bells, who couldn't resist wearing at least one of her jingling bracelets beneath her cloak. From all around them came the talk of rebellion — not the Fellowship taking up arms, but instead how they might guide the peasants to rise up against the order in the city.

"It's manipulation," said Adhim when the trio found a clear space. "They see the peasants as firewood and themselves the spark. What's left of the wood after the fire burns down? Nothing but ash."

The crowd cheered as Cymelos of Ond stepped up onto an empty pedestal. The society's leader was the only one unmasked. His skin was warm and golden in the lantern light, and he wore his beard trimmed close. Though his robes were simple, they were clean and pressed, and his bearing made even their simple cotton appear regal. The Circle's sources said he'd arrived in Turutan only a few months ago, and begun calling for the overthrow of the corrupt gods who ruled the city and the figureheads who carried out their wishes.

"When the gods enact policies that harm the people," said Cymelos, "it's up to the people to end them." It wasn't clear whether he meant the people should end the policies or the gods. Adhim knew this was intentional. From around them came murmurs of agreement. Those masked figures he'd marked as gods shifted uneasily, but didn't contradict their leader.

He spoke of greed — both that of the gods, hungry for control, and the politicians who did their bidding, hungry for wealth and power. With each point he made, the crowd rumbled. "They'll take and take. They live in comfort and ease while the city starves." His voice dropped low, and the people leaned in to hear. "You have to be ready. You have to take back what they so happily stole." This time, the cheers had a ragged, angry edge to them.

"We should go." Adhim pitched his voice so only his companions could hear. "He has too many allies here, and soon they'll be riled up. I want to talk to him, not fight."

Dozan frowned. Perhaps they were about to make the case for staying and listening, but then they caught the subtle movement of Adhim's fingers on his walking stick's handle, gesturing toward the powerbroker. The man gripped the handle of his dagger so tightly his knuckles were white. Others around him were red-faced, shouting their agreement with Cymelos' every statement. Someone jostled him, and he shoved them away with a snarl.

“You’re right,” Dozan said. “Perhaps the others are back by now. We should see what they’ve found.”

Silent Moth made no argument, once again making a path for them through the crowd and out, but she was as quiet as her name suggested all the way home.

Nayalu dismissed the Cirrus Skiff as she stepped off behind Koraiia. Crumbled ruins dominated the small rocky island, hiding the ancient archive buried beneath. “Enestidel, the sorcerer who claimed this place, was infamous even when I was a girl.”

“How long ago was that?”

Nayalu grinned. “Old enough that my bones should be aching in the morning. How’s that?”

Koraiia knew better than to ask for a number. “And the sorcerer?”

“Older still. With luck, he’ll never know we were here.” Nayalu picked her way over the debris to a large obsidian slab. She pricked her finger and drew a sigil in the sand atop it, then spoke in a forgotten tongue. With a shudder, the slab sank into the sand, revealing a twisting stair that led to the underground archive. “After you.”

Belowground, the archive was intact, unlike the ruins above. Brass plaques described specimens in dead languages. Grand archways led to galleries whose configurations were geometrically impossible. Without help, they’d be searching for a lifetime.

A delicate emerald spider emerged from Koraiia’s sleeve. “Where is Whispering Lily’s Treatise on the Great Southern Manses?” The spider considered, then directed them through several rooms, to the bookcase where it was stored. No dust had gathered on the tome — the archive preserved its materials.

Nayalu opened it carefully anyway. “‘Steelfang’s Maw. Undaunted Warrior’s Fists,’” she read, trailing a finger down the page. “She really did catalogue everything in the arsenal. ‘Seven Dooms Crown.’ Something called a sprawl-seed. ‘Midnight’s Cruel Kiss.’ Look, she even sketched—”

“I don’t recall inviting guests.” The sorcerer was white-haired and gaunt, his hands gnarled with age. But that didn’t mean he was weak. At his gesture, the air shimmered. Poisonous green tendrils of mist billowed toward them.

Nayalu spoke words that made Koraiia’s skin crawl, but the mist lightened. Koraiia tried to keep her breathing shallow, but while the stench turned her stomach, her throat didn’t close.

It was the blood apes’ roar that stopped her breath. Six flanked the sorcerer.

Koraiia planted her feet and readied her bow. Four arrows flew, the string thrumming with each shot. The first ape stumbled as they pierced its front and sides. The last punched into its back.

From his heart, Enestidel drew forth a flaming sword. Koraiia loosed an arrow toward him, but the old man parried it nimbly. The arrow burned to ash.

“Keep the demons off me.” Nayalu traced a burning sigil in the air. “I’ll handle him.”

The next few heartbeats were a blur of thrumming bowstrings and slashing demon claws. The apes' stench mingled with the smell of blood and ancient vellum. Koraia slapped the bookshelf beside her, weaving a ripple of weakness into its fate.

As Koraia advanced, Nayalu kept pace with her. Emerald light blazed from the Oracle's eyes; the thunderous din of turning pages nearly drowned out the apes' growls. Mandalas whirled around her hands as she reached for Enestidel's sword.

He swung as she completed her spell. Nayalu caught the blade in her hands and tore it from his grip. Her blood sizzled as the edge bit into her hands. Nayalu switched her grip and, before Enestidel could chant another word, struck him with the hilt. The sorcerer staggered back, then sank down in a heap.

Koraia's kick knocked a demon back into the shelves. Wood creaked ominously. Stack after stack toppled, burying the demons in a pile of ancient texts.

Nayalu grabbed her sleeve. "Let's go."

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The sound of rustling pages drew Enestidel from his stupor. His head hurt, his muscles ached, and he couldn't remember how he'd fallen. He wailed with despair when he saw the demons emerging from beneath a pile of books. I must have been hit when those shelves collapsed. The archive was showing its age, as was he.

The erymanthoi rushed to him, yattering on about intruders. Enestidel hushed them; no one had come here for years. His wards would have told him if anyone stepped foot on the island. "To work," he said to the demons. "Let's set this right."

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Prince Dalir's gala was well underway by the time the Circle arrived. That morning, Nayalu had summoned a sepulcher containing knowledge buried by the Heptarchs of Tragedy and declared their future held two things. First, that Cymelos of Ond would be in attendance at the gala, and second, that she was going to the bath house for a long soak, to wash away the smell of misery and the grave.

Adhim had instructed them in the latest Turutan fashions, providing accessories and finery to meet the expectations of the city's elite. Silent Moth wasn't accustomed to such luxury. Oh, her heavenly duties required some degree of formal clothing, but she still preferred function over form. Fortitude garb kept you warm and protected your soft bits. That was enough for her.

Only, then Koraia stepped out from behind the dressing screen in an exquisite silk gown, and Silent Moth understood what Adhim had been on about.

Just as at the Fellowship gathering, admirers surrounded Cymelos. Not once did the crowd part long enough for any of them to slip in and draw him away. Adherents brought him food and drink, and deftly but firmly rotated guests into and out of the conversation, ensuring that no one claimed too much of Cymelos' time, and that influential figures had a chance to speak with him.

The best they could do without causing a scene was to stay close and listen. Moth found an optimal spot and stayed there, steady and tall as The Mast. Other guests skirted around their cluster. Those

who attempted to cut through were deterred by Moth's unmoving stance and, if that wasn't enough, Koraia's warning frown moved them along.

At least they didn't need to strain to overhear. Cymelos pitched his voice to be heard by anyone who cared to listen. "In Ond," he was saying, "we overcame the harm the despots caused. The people overthrew them, and ushered in an age of peace and prosperity. No one goes hungry there. Our scholar-priests feed minds as well as bodies, and every day, artists and engineers invent new wonders. We could have that here in Turutan as well."

Dozan frowned. "I've never heard of such a place. I sailed on a trading ship for a long time after I left Randan, and no one ever spoke of such a city, or wished they could sample any of those wonders. But one ship isn't every ship. Perhaps one of you...?"

The others shook their heads.

A tiny emerald spider rode atop the curve of Koraia's ear like an ornament, and whispered to the Shieldbearer. Koraia tilted her head to listen, and said, "Ond is nothing like he says. The same despots and their successors have ruled for a hundred years, and no uprisings have been recorded, let alone successful.

"He's selling lies," said Adhim, "even if they're pretty ones. It's time we learn what his game is." No longer content to stand on the periphery, Adhim strode past Silent Moth. But if he thought he'd need to dodge around Cymelos' attendants, he was wrong. The way was clear, a path open.

"Ah," said Cymelos. "Here they are, then. Heaven's agents, come to put me in my place."

Something in Cymelos' tone or Adhim's sudden halt gave the other gala attendees the signal to move out of the way — far enough that they'd be out of the fray, but not so far they'd miss a single exciting moment.

What point was there in continuing the pretense? "We need to speak with you," said Adhim. "Alone would be best."

"No." Cymelos flung his hand wide, encompassing the other guests. "Whatever you have to say to me, I think they should hear."

"Too bad you don't get to decide the terms," said Silent Moth. Though Adhim had urged caution and patience before they left for the gala, she'd argued that too much of those things got people killed where she grew up. Whatever Moth saw in Cymelos, she found it too dangerous to let him keep talking. She swept her grimcleaver in a graceful arc as she advanced, closing the distance between them with Mercury's swiftness.

Koraia took a step and disappeared from Adhim's side, reappearing several strides beyond him as she drew a dagger from her gown's fluttering folds. Easy-Come Dozan followed her, their hand outstretched and waiting. They'd hefted and contemplated any number of objects since they'd arrived: utensils and goblets, a carving knife — the prince had even let them test the weight of his ceremonial dagger when Dozan complimented it. At the time, their patter about Randan's Smiths' Lodge had frustrated Adhim. Now, Dozan winked at him as the prince's dagger appeared in their palm. A length of razor-sharp silver chain clanked in Nayalu's grasp, where a moment before she'd held nothing. Adhim waited, his hands folded on his walking stick's handle.

The air shimmered as Koraia and Moth moved in. It was hardly more than a few long strides, but the tiled marble floor stretched to an impossible distance.

Then Cymelos stepped closer, and space was as it should be again. But he was different. He'd been as well-dressed as anyone else, but suddenly a pale, pink-tinged aura surrounded him. His clothing became richer. Jewels dripped from his fingers, and atop his head rested a delicate golden crown. The illusion lasted only a moment, but it was enough.

"He's our anomaly," said Adhim. "A Getimian." He'd heard of them — some kind of new Exalts who were behind the attacks on Heaven — but he'd only half-believed in them before now.

"Tell me," said Cymelos, addressing the audience. "Is this what a good and just society looks like to you? I advocate for change, and here come Heaven's dupes to keep me quiet."

The crowd booed. Adhim waved to his companions, signaling for them to stand down. If Cymelos wanted a debate, he could have one. "Can a just society be built on a lie?" he asked, raising his voice to match Cymelos'. "If your leaders would lie to you to gain power, they'll lie to you so they can keep it."

Murmuring from those gathered.

"Power belongs in the peoples' hands," said Cymelos. "Not the gods." He gestured at Adhim and the others. "Or their lackeys."

Adhim let the insult slide. None of the guests would remember the Circle later. But they would remember Cymelos. "Isn't it better to know the whole truth from the start, and make decisions with trust and goodwill already in place? This man speaks of the wonders of Ond, but I tell you, its people are still oppressed. Their despots rule as they have for hundreds of years. He's freed no one. He won't free you."

An agitated murmur rippled through the crowd.

Cymelos dipped his head in acknowledgement. "The tide turns. I'd rather no one here came to harm, and I suspect you'd prefer the same, Adhim Kassar." He smiled when Adhim nodded, but it was tinged with regret. "I'm sure our paths will cross again."

Then he was gone.

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The innkeeper had lit the fire, though none of Dozan's other companions seemed to appreciate it. They sat around Adhim's table, debating what to do about Cymelos of Ond. Dozan sprawled on the divan, their pattern spider curled atop their chest, dozing.

Dozan half-listened to the conversation, but their mind was troubled. They were missing something, all of them. But what?

Sometimes, the best answers came from within, from the truths you'd grasped without realizing it. You just had to find them. Dozan's eyes slipped closed even as their thoughts continued to whirl. The walls of a labyrinth grew up around them, a tangle of flowers like those in Turutan's parks.

They wandered awhile, enjoying the warm sunlight and the pleasant scents. Beside them walked a dream-Adhim, nearly twice as tall as the true one. Dozan had to scurry to keep up with his steps.

“Cymelos of Ond claims he was a king,” Adhim said. “He likes being surrounded by the wealthy and powerful. We could present ourselves as such, befriend him, and attempt to turn him to our side. I don’t know that he’s a lost cause.”

Dozan pondered this. They had to crane their neck to see Adhim’s face. “Your last point is true; he isn’t lost, not yet. But tonight, you said it’s bad to build a society based on a lie. I think you’d be disappointed if I suggested building a friendship on them, too.”

With his next step, Adhim was his normal height. He smiled and said, “Just so.” Then he turned a corner and disappeared.

Dozan followed the sound of a hacking blade next, and came upon Koraia, attempting to cut her way through the labyrinth’s wall. Petals flew around her in a flurry. “Can I help?” asked Dozan.

“Show me what you’ve got.” She handed them a blade.

Dozan tried, but the knife’s edge was dull.

“It’s not,” said Koraia when they pointed this out. “It’s the twin of mine. Your arm simply isn’t as strong.”

Dozan set the blade down and began twining the vines together, weaving them into pleasing patterns and guiding them gently apart.

“We could spread rumors,” Koraia said. “Something that would discredit him among his allies.”

“It’s as hard to control rumors once they leave your lips as it is to contain a wildfire. We might begin the rebellion Adhim fears.”

“That’s true,” said Koraia. “And look, you’ve made an opening for me without harming the flowers. Brute force isn’t always the answer, but I’ll be at your side whenever it is.”

At the next turn, Silent Moth’s swinging grimcleaver nearly cut off Dozan’s nose. “Oh,” she said. “Stay there. I need to practice my stances.”

Dozan trusted Moth, but had to admit they were a little afraid of her. Her temper could flare, though its heat hadn’t ever been directed at Dozan or the others. Still, whenever she pivoted and swung, they felt the wind of the blade as it passed within inches of their throat.

“Cymelos has plenty of lieutenants,” she said. “I say we send them back with bloody noses and missing teeth until he comes to talk to us.”

“He’ll come ready to fight,” said Dozan. “We need to catch him off guard.”

“Then I’m out of ideas,” said Moth. She pulled Dozan into a hug, then sauntered away.

As Dozan walked, the labyrinth’s flowery walls transitioned to smooth samarskite. Up ahead, Nayalu cupped her hands around something.

“Come see,” she said, holding it out like Dozan’s big sister used to do when she’d caught a toad. “This is what we forgot.”

Dozan drew close and peered at the tiny silver seed cradled in her palms.

“We have to get in that vault,” she said.

Dozan awoke with a gasp.

Chapter One: The Sidereal Exalted

Few outside the heavenly city of Yu-Shan know of the Sidereals. The Chosen of the Maidens shape the course of history from the shadows, the power behind Creation's thrones. As prophets, teachers, and advisors, the Fivescore Fellowship of Sidereals has counseled the likes of Solar god-kings and the Scarlet Empress. As weavers of destiny's threads, they decree not only what the future shall be, but what it should be.

Sidereals are the heavenly Bureau of Destiny's foremost agents. They ensure that destinies planned by the Bureau are fulfilled, sustaining Creation's stability against the Wyld, thwarting enemies of fate, and overcoming crises when no other power in Heaven can. But theirs is not a path of easy choices. Destiny is tragic as often as kind, and the Sidereal must fulfill both.

But no matter how great a Sidereal's feats or how atrocious the deeds she commits in Creation's name, they will not be remembered. The Sidereal are doomed to be forgotten, strangers even to their closest friends. None will ever thank them for their actions, nor curse them for destiny's cruelty.

History

Few traces of the Sidereals' long history remain in Creation. The Silver Pact teaches young Lunars of their ancient foes, and the Immaculate Texts allude to the Maiden's Chosen, but little else remains. This is the secret history young Sidereals are taught by their mentors, found within the vast archives of Yu-Shan.

The Divine Revolution

The Sidereals' oracular foresight guided the Exalted host in battle against the enemies of the gods, and their blessings conferred fate's favor on the Chosen and their legions. Much of their work took place far from the battlefield, but when the Sidereals entered the fray, reality itself trembled. The Maidens' Chosen fought against the Ancients and their soul pantheons with powerful sorceries, strange star-magics, and reality-warping martial arts beyond even the old ones' ken.

The First Age

The victorious Sidereals found much to be done in both Heaven and Creation. With the Maidens having retired from the Loom of Fate to play the Games of Divinity, their duties fell to their Chosen and to the newly-established Celestial Bureaucracy. Creation had not yet forgotten them, so Sidereals counseled Exalted god-kings, mentored young Chosen, and guided their peers' ambitions into alignment with destiny. Others turned to worldly matters rather than destiny's service, whether forging empires, amassing vast riches, or studying the secrets of the cosmos.

The Solar Purge

The First Age was a time of unimaginable splendor, but it also saw horrors such as Creation had never seen. Cities were annihilated over petty insults. Sorcerers called upon great and baleful powers to slake their ambition and lust. Tyrannical god-kings forged impossible engines to erase free will itself. In time, it grew clear that if nothing were done, the First Age would fall to its own masters.

First in hypotheticals, then gradually in earnest, a group Sidereals that would come to be known as the Bronze Faction planned what would come to be known as both the Solar Purge and the Usurpation. While they could not stop every atrocity perpetrated by the Exalted, they could remove the Lawgivers who brought the greatest of Exalted power to bear in their hubris. With the aid of Dragon-Blooded gentes and

other allies, the Solars would be assassinated in a single fell swoop, and their power sealed away. The Sidereals would rule for a time until Creation settled back into order, but the First Age would continue, freed from the worst of its horrors. The collateral damage would be unimaginable, but a necessary sacrifice for the sake of Creation.

The Solar Purge did not go as planned.

While many Lawgivers fell in a single stroke, too many survived. Legendary Solar warriors slew the assassins sent against them, while others escaped their pursuers. Some had uncovered the conspirators' schemes and prepared against them, or been warned by Sidereal opposed to the Purge. Some were vigilant or paranoid enough to have already planned for just such a contingency. What was meant to be a surgical strike became a years-long war — a war that the nascent Bronze Faction and its allies won.

The slain Solars' Exaltations were sealed within the Jade Prison, a singular wonder that prevented their reincarnation. The Bronze Faction hid it away within the constellation of the Mask, the sign of secret wisdom, but they misjudged the Prison's power. The Mask shattered under its weight, cursing the Sidereal with the arcane fate that leaves Creation unable to remember them. This was the deathblow to the Bronze Faction's plans, ending any prospect of Sidereal rule or a return to the First Age's status quo. Instead, the Sidereals entrusted rulership to their Dragon-Blooded allies, marking the Shogunate's dawn and the First Age's end.

The Shogunate

As the Dragon-Blooded gentes took up rule of Creation, the Sidereals struggled against both the challenges of a new world and each other. Destiny had suffered greatly as a cost of the Solar Purge, and establishing a new status quo under Exalted rule would be key to mending it. As Dragon-Blooded kingdoms arose, flourished, and went to war, the Sidereals watched from Heaven, bestowing the stars' blessing on daimyos and gentes they believed would best serve destiny's interests. While they could never hope to control the Shogunate's Dragon-Blooded rulers, they could still offer guidance and counsel despite the curse of arcane fate.

Throughout the Shogunate, the Bureau of Destiny's Sidereals intervened to defend it from within and without. The Silver Pact proved greatest among these, and the Bronze Faction lent substantial aid to the Wyld Hunts prosecuted by the Shogunate against them, offering both intelligence and the support of Sidereal shikari. If there was any rival to the Pact's threat, it was the Dragon-Blooded themselves, whose ambition bred strife and treachery. Sidereals moved in secret to quash conspiracies against rulers blessed by Heaven, while backing conspiracies, coups, and wars against those who obstructed destiny.

Not all the Shogunate's perils were born of humanity. Aehemai the Second Death, woken from its slumber in the Underworld by a mysterious necromancer-king, would have devoured every soul in Malishen had the Joybringer Volant Stone not relocated the entire city to a sunlit mountain peak. The Thing-in-Mirrors could not be slain by any daiklave, but fell to Ei Zou's Obsidian Shards of Infinity style. The faerie hosts of the Shape-Faced King might have bested Gens Kamaya in the Siege of the Burning River were it not for the Sidereal Circle that assassinated their raksha warleader.

But the kingdoms of the Shogunate were not the only ones divided against themselves. The Solar Purge had pitted Sidereals against each other in battle, creating a schism among the Fivescore Fellowship that could not be mended. The Bronze Faction predominated within the Bureau of Destiny, but faced opposition from the Gold Faction, a political bloc of Sidereals who had fought against the Solar Purge or opposed the Bronze Faction's support of the Shogunate for their own reasons. While factional disputes never rose to the level of bloodshed seen in the Dragon-Blooded's internecine warfare, it marked the end

of a unified Fivescore Fellowship.

Then came the Great Contagion, unforeseen by destiny, and cast the Shogunate and Heaven alike into chaos. Sidereals struggled in vain to find a cure or halt the disease's spread, but ultimately proved powerless against it. Mass death cut short the threads of countless destinies, and Creation itself began to fray and dissolve into the Wyld. By the time the Fair Folk invaded, all hope was lost. The Sidereals made a desperate stand against the conquest, fighting not to win, nor even to survive, only to save as much as they could. When the Sword of Creation annihilated the faerie incursion, the surviving Sidereals found themselves tasked with forging a new world out of the ashes.

The Rise of the Realm

The Bronze Faction has guided the Realm since its birth, advising the Scarlet Empress and lending the Immaculate Order's support to her regime. Disguised as monks, functionaries, and soldiers, Sidereals have cultivated influence among the Great Houses and the Realm's mechanisms of governance, subtly guiding them into alignment with destiny when they diverge. The Realm's expansion, colonization, and centralization of power has made it an invaluable asset to destiny's servants, the keystone of a carefully planned status quo.

Sidereal foresight warned the Empress of threats to her reign and her life, from Lunar assassins to the scheming of her treacherous progeny. The Wyld Hunt has continued unabated, eliminating enemies shared by the Bronze Faction and the Realm. But the Bureau of Destiny serves Creation as a whole, and not just the Realm, and many threats have fallen beyond the empire's borders. Across the world, Sidereals have served destiny by any means necessary: securing peace or sparking war between distant Threshold kingdoms, preserving far-flung trade routes against faerie raiders or outcaste bandits, and besting the likes of the Father of Serpents and the Carrion Stavrophores.

But as the Second Age passed under Sidereal guidance, a new threat to destiny emerged. In the Shogunate's early days, the ancient Sidereal Rakan Thulio defected from the Bureau, believing himself betrayed by his peers. After seemingly vanishing for centuries, he has reemerged with strange and terrible allies, the fate-blighting Getimian Exalted. Enemies of Heaven and destiny, Getimians pursue Sidereal operatives in the field to thwart their missions, and launch lightning raids against the hallowed spires of Yu-Shan.

The Time of Tumult

The disappearance of the Scarlet Empress gave the Bronze Faction little pause at first. It wasn't the first time she'd vanished without warning. Instead, vague concern grew into dread over months and years. The search is still on, but other matters have since captured the bureau's attention. Something horrible has risen from the grave and sacked the city of Thorns. Malfeas has terrifying new agents, Exalted by Hell itself. Strange, fate-blighted Exalted calling themselves Getimians are deliberately sabotaging the bureau's work, led by one of their own turned against them. There simply aren't enough Sidereals in Creation to give every threat the attention it deserves, and every division is stretched to its limits.

Sidereal Exaltation

Sidereals are Chosen at birth, though they seldom Exalt before reaching adulthood. A Sidereal's early life is touched by their Maiden in subtle ways. A Chosen of Journeys might be constantly uprooted, literally or metaphorically, throughout childhood, while a Chosen of Serenity's life will involve powerful relationships, moving interactions with art, or intense emotional choices. These brushes with fate are seldom clear except in retrospect.

This synchronicity between Chosen and Maiden heightens dramatically in the days preceding Exaltation. Omens and portents surround her, and the line between dreams and reality blurs. Coincidence becomes commonplace, especially surrounding her Maiden's purview. The not-yet-Exalted Sidereal might feel like she's going mad, reaching enlightenment, or just having the strangest week of her life, but the signs are always disruptive enough to be noticed by the Sidereal and often by the people around her.

This was it? The old map had led her halfway to Nexus and back, following riddles out of moldering codices and piecing together clues from strangers on the road. In a moment of desperation, she'd even taken her direction from the albatross that had been her constant companion — it had worked in her dreams the night before, and worked again then. Now, at her journey's end, she'd found nothing more than a ruined pagoda, its meditative pool filled with last week's rainwater. No treasure, no wonders, not even a sight worth seeing. She looked into the pool of still water and saw only her own reflection. Behind her rippling face, a small yellow star shone in the midday sky, and when she touched the water, she finally understood.

The fated nature of Sidereal Exaltation makes them uniquely possible to predict. Most aren't located until they've Exalted, but occasionally someone is identified long before they come into their power. In those cases, the Bureau of Destiny assigns a Sidereal to watch over their future colleague, taking the role of a mentor, friend, or confidant. Officially, they're meant only to watch and advise, but a few have interpreted that role liberally when their charge's life seems unbearable, or when a gentle nudge might teach them an important lesson.

Many injured strangers passed through her door, but he was the first to arrive with a demon's still-living fangs buried in his flesh. She could only hold a cloth to his forehead and soothe him as he died. "Do not mourn me," he said, faintly. "Saturn's call is sweet, and you will serve her well." Fevered and delusional, she thought, but still his words gripped her heart. As the light faded from his eyes, she felt it flowing into hers, and when she opened them, the world sang with star-music.

Days or weeks of confusion finally culminate in a surge of unexplained power, imbuing the new Sidereal with her gift. Although the moment of Sidereal Exaltation comes with a flash of pure understanding and connection to fate, the Maidens themselves almost never appear, and the quickly fading moment leaves no directive. New Sidereals are frequently confused and alone, cut off from their previous life with no clear path forward.

They'd been through so much for this wedding day. A fine Dynastic lady and a humble peasant girl, together despite the Scarlet Dynasty's outrage. Her beloved had fought so hard for this union. She had not been there, yet she'd seen nonetheless in her feverish delirium these last few days — just nerves, she was sure. Now she and her bride were both visions in crimson and white, standing before three Imperial judges. She lifted her veil, but in the eyes of her betrothed there was only confusion. "Who are you?" asked the Dynast, and the farmgirl's world shattered.

Arcane Fate

At the moment of Exaltation, the arcane fate that curses every one of the Maiden's Chosen takes hold. Now tied to the stars, the Sidereal's identity is obscured by the broken constellation of the Mask, causing her to be forgotten by friends and enemies alike. Her closest friends, her wife, her children — they could forget her at any time, and one day, they inevitably will. Spirits, the Exalted, and other powerful beings are more resilient, but even the mightiest are not immune.

Arcane fate takes its toll on every Sidereal. Elders help young Chosen of the Maidens cope with this burden, encouraging them to meet Sidereals of similar age or inclination. While most gods are susceptible

to arcane fate, those in the Bureau of Destiny are immune, allowing Sidereals to nurture working relationships into genuine friendship. Beyond this, a Sidereal can have no relationship that isn't overshadowed by arcane fate's inevitability.

Sidereals shield themselves from arcane fate by donning illusory cover identities called resplendent destinies. The Sidereal herself is still forgotten, but her resplendent destiny isn't. Resplendent destinies don't have the complexity, depth, or history of a true identity — they're archetypal personas, loose sketches that let onlookers fill in details. They don't conceal the Sidereal's appearance, but give her the seeming of that archetype in other's eyes. Under a soldier's destiny, her posture seems more imposing, her movements bespeak training in battle, and her swears would be at home in any mess hall.

Many Sidereals see their resplendent destinies as nothing more than a necessary tool, just part of the job. Any relationship they establish under its auspices are not genuine, merely assets in their service to destiny. This is not always an easy matter — a relationship might begin in service to the mission, but blossom into genuine friendship, love, or hatred. Other Sidereals draw little distinction between themselves and their cover identities, using resplendent destinies to establish relationships free from arcane fate. Those who walk this path face many heartbreaks: the pain of having to deceive your closest friends, of never truly being understood, of falling in love with someone who can never know your name.

In Destiny's Service

The Bureau of Destiny seeks out Sidereals soon after their Exaltation, offering them a position as an elite agent of fate. Most accept, for the Bureau has much to offer: a purpose in life, the otherworldly splendor of Yu-Shan, and the camaraderie of fellow Sidereals free from arcane fate. The Bureau works to ensure that the destinies planned by Heaven come to pass, and Sidereals handle the most challenging and dangerous threats to destiny: stopping a war one week, bringing rogue fire elementals in line to stymie a volcanic eruption the next, and sabotaging a political marriage the week after.

While the Bureau's intelligence is second to none, it's not omniscient. Sometimes, a Sidereal might be dispatched to the general location of a major snag in fate and told to fix whatever's causing it. While some missions may seem bizarre or pointless, the Sidereals assigned to them aren't kept in the dark. They're briefed on their role in the bigger picture, both to provide important background information and to ensure they understand the mission's importance.

While the Bureau expects diligence and devotion from its agents, there's more to life as a Sidereal than their missions. They have time to indulge in heavenly decadence or pursue personal agendas. Even on assignment, they have discretion to pursue their own interests and goals, so long as it doesn't threaten the mission.

The Sidereal host is sometimes known as the Fivescore Fellowship, for there are never more than a hundred at once, and work more closely than any other kind of Exalted. A new Sidereal will quickly meet almost every Sidereal working for the Bureau, and know the rest by reputation. Arcane fate makes relationships with other Sidereals invaluable; even staunch political rivals may meet in a heavenly teahouse and make civil conversation for the sake of companionship.

Independent Sidereals who turn down the Bureau's recruitment efforts are free to pursue their own goals in Creation, yet they must do so alone. Some endure their solitude using resplendent destinies or by prioritizing their relationships with Exalted Circlemates, worldly spirits, and others with supernatural resilience to arcane fate. The Bureau's offer is a standing one, and many independent Sidereals eventually take them up on it, either when arcane fate's strain grows unbearable or when they find themselves lost and seeking purpose.

On rare occasion, Sidereals in the Bureau's employ have gone rogue. Some find the work of destiny unpalatable, or morally unacceptable. Some are jaded by the Celestial Bureaucracy's corruption. Some find their personal agendas have become incompatible with their service to the Bureau. A single rogue agent represents a massive loss for the Bureau, but it doesn't hunt down rogue Sidereals unless they pose a threat to destiny. Coercion is a poor means of control over the Chosen, and a rogue agent given sufficient time might find their way back to the fold. Bureau Sidereals occasionally join forces with rogue agents on missions that serve both their interests, and some rogues maintain ties with their peers in the Bureau, still willing to aid their closest companions.

Of late, the Bureau has seen the number of rogue agents actively opposed to Heaven increase significantly with the reemergence of Rakan Thulio. Though the number of defectors over the decades can be counted on one hand, the Bureau considers it a grave threat.

Essence Fever

Even those Sidereals who reject the Bureau of Destiny's offer are called to serve Creation. In the throes of Essence fever, they see what destiny's course should — *must* — be, understanding what must be done with perfect clarity and knowing she must do it. They feel an intense connection to their Maiden and to fate.

Some Sidereals see how their lifelong goals and ambitions could be woven into destiny; others are inspired to new visions of how the world should be. A young Sidereal, still in training, rushes to her master's office to tell them exactly how a tricky destiny should be plotted, the words overflowing before she can realize what she's saying. A wandering hero, undiscovered by the Bureau of Destiny, witnesses the bloody aftermath of a tyrant's cruelty and knows who must claim his throne. A junior field agent sees beyond her mission parameters to how she might *truly* serve destiny.

It's no surprise that Essence fever can be disruptive to the Bureau's workings. New Sidereals are taught mantras, breathing exercises, and meditation techniques to help them control it, but it takes many a few years after completing their training to fully tame their fateful Essence. Convention meetings and destiny planning committees are occasionally interrupted by youthful firebrands, and missions occasionally go off-kilter, but so long as a Sidereal takes care of whatever problems she causes, she can expect sympathy rather than sternness from her seniors.

Past Lives

A new Sidereal inherits her predecessors' legacy, recalling memories from her past lives. These memories might rise unbidden to a Sidereal's mind or play out in her dreams. Sidereals who are particularly attuned to their past lives might experience vivid, hallucinatory flashbacks. The more recent a past life, the greater the clarity and detail. Memories of the First Age tend to be hazy and nondescript; the Divine Revolution is nothing more than a fragments of emotion, sensory experiences, and incomprehensible visions.

Sidereals have greater opportunity to study their past lives than most Exalted, reading over their mission reports and personnel file in the Bureau of Destiny's archives or consulting the records kept by Lytek, who is both god and chronicler of the Exalted. The official narratives don't always line up with a Sidereal's past lives — not everything makes it into the mission report. Some Sidereals leave messages for their successors: encrypted letters, sealed missives that can only be opened on a certain date, compendious biographical tomes. New Sidereals may also find themselves the beneficiaries of a predecessor's will, inheriting riches, artifacts, manses, personal libraries, and the occasional heap of disorganized paperwork.

Sidereals may also inherit a predecessor's friends and enemies. Some gods see a new Sidereal as a direct

continuation of their past life, an old colleague under a different name and face. A god might occasionally forget which name belongs to which incarnation, or expect a Sidereal to be intimately familiar with the minutiae of a past life. Most catch on within a few years, though ancient and scatterbrained gods may require prompting even from elder Sidereals. On occasion, a god might call in a past life's debts, refusing to accept death as an excuse.

Each Sidereal grapples with this legacy in their own way. Some identify strongly with their past lives, finding meaning as part of a legacy stretching back to the Divine Revolution. Others see their past lives as something separate from themselves, refusing to be defined by their predecessors or held accountable to their obligations. They also take differing views on whatever guidance a past life might leave for them. One Sidereal might prize her predecessor's guidance, even if she refuses to accept him as part of her identity. Another might discard such messages altogether, unwilling to be micromanaged from beyond the grave.

Longevity

A Sidereal might live for millennia, but not a single day more than the Maidens have allotted her. For most Sidereals, this is between three thousand and five thousand years. No Sidereal is known to have reached their sixth millennium — with one notable exception — nor have any succumbed to old age before their second millennium was nearly up. Anagathic drugs, peaches of immortality, and other methods of extending one's lifespan are of no use to them. The infamous rogue Sidereal Rakan Thulio seems to have somehow transcended the limit of his years, and has offered to share his secret with certain elder Sidereals in hopes of tempting them to his cause.

The Star-Blessed

A Sidereal having children is a recipe for heartbreak. Their Star-Blessed progeny aren't immune to arcane fate, remembering their Exalted parent only by their resplendent destiny, if at all. The Star-Blessed are often strange children: wise beyond their years, with a knack for attracting the attention of spirits.

Some Star-Blessed inherit a touch of their Exalted parent's fateful magic: prophetic dreams, an affinity for spirits, skill in interpreting omens, uncanny good luck, or the power to lay fateful curses or blessings. Star-Blessed with such gifts may rise to prominence as diviners, shamans, exorcists, and wise elders. Others stay behind the scenes: court astrologers, advisers to the wealthy and powerful, or teachers at prestigious academies.

Many Star-Touched are plagued by the mystery of their Sidereal parent. Arcane fate may take their memories, but the Star-Blessed retain traces and fragments that ought to have been erased entirely. Not a name, not a face, but enough to know that they've lost something. Some devote themselves to seeking out their lost parent; others nurse lifelong grudges over their perceived abandonment. Some turn to drink, drugs, or ecstatic spiritual practices to drown out these shreds of recollection.

The Five Maidens

The Five Maidens are goddesses of the stars, of fate, and of destiny. Of all the gods, they may be the least human, enigmatic figures even to other divinities. They see the world not as it is, but as it could be, seeing

every course of events that fate might permit within their purview. They are neither virtuous nor venal, caring only that destiny is fulfilled. Mars cares not for the valor of those who fight under her auspices or the number of casualties, only that the destined victor prevails. Saturn cares not whether it is a tyrant or saint who dies, only that he dies at the appointed hour.

Before the Divine Revolution, they wove the destinies decreed by the Ancients upon the Loom of Fate. With this duty entrusted to their Chosen, the Maidens are free to enjoy their idylls at the Games of Divinity. They seem largely content to leave the work of planning destiny to the Celestial Bureaucracy, though on rare occasions, a Maiden has issued an edict on a particular matter. Few within the Bureaucracy would dare gainsay the Maidens in such matters, but they can only guess at the Maidens' motives in doing so. Do they seek to avert future calamities known only to them, beyond the horizon of the Loom's predictions? Do they care for some aesthetic quality of destiny's pattern, a beauty visible only from their alien perspective? Or, as some Sidereals have debated over after-work drinks, do the Maidens simply have a very strange sense of humor?

Mercury

Swiftest of the Five Sisters, Mercury sees the fates of all things set in motion and knows the destinations that await them. Golden-haired and saffron-robed, she is rarely still and often distracted. Her hair, tied roughly back, gives the impression of haphazardness; the unsettled state of her skirts, messiness. But when her darting eyes do settle on someone, the palpable intensity of her attention and focus is more than most can meet.

Mercury is an obscure figure in Creation, but is worshipped as a guardian of messengers, merchants, those given to wanderlust, and to sailors, who praise her for giving them the stars they sail by. Her cults, small as they are, are largely centered in the West; most sailors can always make room for another god to beseech or curse at sea.

Mercury's also the patron of those who struggle with sitting still or focusing, receiving prayers from young and old alike. Roads, boundary markers, and ship's sails sometimes bear her sign in subtle ways even where she has no cult, lingering as part of a people's traditions or folklore long after they forgot her.

Venus

Venus is the goddess of all human relationships, kind and cruel alike. She stands behind the hand that caresses the lover and the hand that whips the slave. More than any of her sisters, she understands humanity's emotions, their needs, their irrationalities, all the myriad things that make up the mortal mind.

Venus herself exudes a cool, collected serenity, her knowing smile subtle and oft-hidden by her deep-blue tresses. Gods, elementals, and mortals have competed for her affections; to win them is a mark of pride that endures long after the relationship (which never does), and which often buoys a flagging career or lifts it to new heights.

Venus is the most worshipped of the Maidens, venerated widely as a fertility goddess, guardian of those in labor, and divine patron of artists, rakes, and sex workers. Her cerulean blue is the color of the lanterns hung in bawdyhouses across several cultures, of many brides' wedding dresses, and of midwives' kerchiefs in villages scattered across Creation.

Mars

Mars rules war and strife, from the meanest barroom brawl to cunning strategies that determine the course of nations. Red of hair and hand, Mars is rarely seen unarmed. Her preferred dress is simple, unadorned, and unrestrictive; her hair, she keeps short. She is blunt in her language and unhesitating in even the

hardest decisions, though never casual. She does not weep for those who meet their destined end in battle, but neither does she disregard the weight of their deaths. Some see her as more human than her sisters because of this, though this grossly oversimplifies the matter.

The worship of Mars is often overshadowed by that of other martial divinities, be they the Bureau of Humanity's directional war gods or terrestrial gods of strife and conflict. Her cults dot Creation sporadically, with the largest typically incorporating her into a pantheon of war-gods or syncretizing her with a more well-known divinity. But even where her worship is forgotten, her sign is still used by soldiers, armorers, mercenaries, and brawlers, whether as a good luck charm or a symbol of their trade.

Jupiter

Jupiter is the goddess of secrets, and to many as mysterious as her purview. Not given to displays of open emotion, Jupiter is as patient as she is taciturn. She says little and listens much, hiding herself beneath long cloaks of deep green, often shading her face with a loose hood. Careful observers — those with a millennium or more of practice — may discern the subtle signs she gives when she desires to speak without giving voice to her words, a treasure for the observant.

Jupiter is rarely worshipped by mortals, but is sometimes offered a hasty prayer by thieves or spies heartbeats away from capture. Occasionally, mystery cults to Jupiter appear as if from nowhere: the Order of the Forgotten Name, whose adherents seek enlightenment in abnegation, is one such, lurking amid the patrician ranks in the Imperial City as they assemble a conspiracy piece by painstaking piece.

Saturn

Saturn governs the end of all things, and so is most feared of all the Maidens. All things have an ending, and Saturn has never flinched from delivering it; even her sisters expect no hesitance from her when their time comes. With hair as white as funeral cloth and robes of dark violet, Saturn seems somber, even melancholy to observers. Yet, when moved, she will smile, even laugh, and none have ever known her to shed so much as a single tear. It is not sorrow that moves Saturn, nor regret, but a bone-deep knowledge that all things will end, *must* end, and it is hers to be there when they do.

Mourners enjoin Saturn to be kind to their departed relatives, and the ill or ill-fortuned to delay her fateful sign. One woman, a humble mortal grave-tender in Sijan, has apparently thus eluded death for centuries, though none can tell why Saturn so favors her — or, indeed, if she does at all.

Chapter Two: The Celestial Bureaucracy

The Celestial Bureaucracy tends to the orderly procession of Heaven and Creation alike, binding the gods above and below in harmonious cooperation as stewards of the world. It is corrupt in ways both gross and subtle, as all bureaucracies are. Its hierarchy is a twisting, labyrinthine sprawl of redundancy, like no other bureaucracy is. But even in its fallen state, the work of the Celestial Bureaucracy ensures that Creation will endure, bulwarking the world against the chaos of the Wyld and other threats to reality itself.

Organizational Structure

The Celestial Bureaucracy is divided into five *bureaus*, each with a broad remit. A bureau is further divided into *divisions*, smaller organizations covering one element of its purview — the Bureau of Seasons' branches each oversee an individual season, for example, with further subdivisions for important aspects of each season's weather and celebrations. Many divisions are further divided into offices, committees, sub-divisions, units, task forces, and the like, grouping together gods of closely related purviews, with little consistency between divisions.

Divisions run independent of one another, with senior managers reporting back to their bureau, where the divisions' work is collated, cross-division problems are solved, and next steps are planned and handed back down to division workers. Bureau leaders meet to discuss intra-bureau planning — including resolving disputes over precedence between overlapping purviews, coordinating efforts to enact relevant destinies, sharing reports and plans, and enabling transfers of key personnel — and ultimately report to the Celestial Incarnae.

That general structure is almost never followed because each bureau has its own structural quirks. The Bureau of Heaven, for example, is divided into two main departments, while the Bureau of Seasons has both traditional ranks from the Celestial Bureaucracy and military ranks from the Aerial Legion — often held simultaneously. *Conventions* coexist with the Bureau of Destiny's five divisions, serving different but ostensibly compatible purposes. The more closely you study any branch of the bureaucracy, the more idiosyncrasies you find, forged over thousands of years of restructuring.

Terrestrial gods also belong to the Celestial Bureaucracy, but aren't members of any particular bureau. For most of them, Heaven is a distant place they'll never set foot in, full of powerful and aloof gods who occasionally send down orders. They report to terrestrial superiors, who report to their superiors, until the seniormost terrestrial gods — such as the chief god of a forest or river, or of a particular region's birds or battles — report to a minor functionary of a relevant division. Some of topmost terrestrial gods report to multiple celestial gods in different divisions or bureaus, while junior terrestrial gods may likewise report have multiple terrestrial superiors.

To: Singing Maiana, Bearer of Gentle Rains in the East

The Celestial Monitors of Seasons and Weather, Divisions of Spring and Rain

Regarding: Impending Disaster

My revered colleague, as you have no doubt been informed, the price of a bushel of raw wheat in the city of River's Coast has risen from 0.25 dinars to 0.29 dinars over the course of a single year. As this matter falls well outside your particular expertise, I am certain your failure to recognize the severity of this issue is one of ignorance, not malice. The increased price of this food staple has alarmed my city's

inhabitants such that they are now in talks with the Guild to provide additional supplies, something which you must understand could upset the balance of power in the entire region and destabilize the current political structure of River's Coast. This will affect not only my city's destiny, but Heaven's plans for our esteemed neighbors in Great Forks and Nexus.

As spring approaches again, I trust that plans are in place to provide a more generous supply of rain to my city's farms, and I would greatly appreciate a copy of those plans for my records. I've been honored with an invitation to dine with Sanakuwa, god of farm innovation, one week from now, and I look forward to conversing about the bright future of my city and its farmland. It would be a shame to upset the meal by bringing this rain matter to his attention, as he's close friends with Golden Fields, the God of Wheat and Grain, whom I believe works closely with your superior in the Bureau of Seasons. A simple mistake should be no cause for anyone's work ethic to be questioned.

Most respectfully yours,

Tamed Rapids, Patriarch of River Ports

Divine Purviews

All gods employed by the Celestial Bureaucracy receive a *purview* — a thing or concept that's theirs to manage, a sacred responsibility entrusted to them, or a position as an aide or functionary to a more prominent deity. A god's purview is not just their office, but a part of them, reflected in their appearance, temperament, panoply, and miracles. This is unique to the gods; elementals and other spirits aren't affected by their station in the Celestial Bureaucracy.

When a god is promoted, demoted, or otherwise assigned to a new purview, her very Essence is transformed. In most respects, this is a slow, gradual transformation. A god's divine powers are almost always the first to change, though it may take her time to fully master her new capabilities. Some purviews entail significant physical transformations, as with lion-dogs and dream flies; these occur almost instantly.

While many gods experience a change in personality alongside a change in purview, sometimes reinventing themselves to better fit their new station, this is only partially a matter of their divine nature. While a god's purview can influence their temperament, it won't change who they fundamentally are — but the experiences they have as a god of that purview can. The purview of beetles won't instill any great fondness for the insects in the god who bears it, but a thousand years spent watching the lives of beetles might.

Gods sometimes retain traces of a past purview's influence and power if that position held some significant personal importance or meaning to them. This is most common for gods receiving promotions — those demoted to lower stations or stripped of their purview entirely must struggle to cling to whatever scraps of power they can.

A Flawed System

On paper, the Celestial Bureaucracy's organizational chart is a tangled mess. In practice, it's worse. Creation can't be cleanly divided into five categories. Even if it could be, the Celestial Bureaucracy is a sprawling tangle of a hierarchy, having grown almost organically over millennia. The baroque absurdities

of its organizational structure are notorious in Yu-Shan. A drunken night out isn't complete without retelling the anecdote about the junior minister ordered to fire himself, the auditor who finagled a sinecure whose only duty was counting her own fortune, or the twins who ended up as each other's bosses. Such stories are extreme and often embellished, but founded in the unfortunate truth of the Celestial Bureaucracy's labyrinthine complexity.

A common point of contention is when a purview doesn't fit squarely under any particular bureau or division's remit — or at least, when a god with the influence to matter claims it doesn't. These ignite fierce jurisdictional disputes over what department a purview should be assigned to. Such disputes are resolved by political power more often than principled reasoning, resulting in the occasional absurdity, such as the God of Hares' extended stint in the Division of Aquatic Life. The gods who hold such purviews often end up pawns in their superior's political machinations, swapped back and forth willy-nilly between divisions and bureaus or traded like horses to settle other disputes.

Disputes over purviews sometimes result in a proliferation of redundant positions. Often, this results in arms of the bureaucracy addressing the same problems without coordinating — or worse, working at cross-purposes on incompatible solutions. The worst example is the Bureau of Nature, which boasts two completely redundant hierarchies — although after millennia of this arrangement, the bureau's members have grown better at managing this than most.

Rarest of all, some purviews are so minor or insignificant that they fall through the cracks, leaving their gods in the awkward position of not formally belonging to any bureau. While bureaus and divisions may compete for prestigious purviews, few are interested in taking on the expense of taking on the God of Dust Motes or the Lady of Drawers. These forgotten or overlooked gods still belong to the Celestial Bureaucracy, but are barely above the unemployed. They're given no office, staff, or supplies, and requisitioning their salary from the Department of Celestial Concerns takes hours' worth of paperwork. When they die or abandon their post, no one hears about it until things start going wrong.

To: Tamed Rapids, Patriarch of River Ports

The Divine Witnesses of Human Works and Deeds, Division of Urban Affairs,
Eastern Committee

Regarding: Grain Shortages

Most honorable Tamed Rapids, thank you for your very informative memorandum regarding the economic situation in your town. I have consulted my records, and the rainfall allotments to River's Coast have not been significantly altered in 58 years, including the year just passed. The same can be said for this coming spring. If you would like copies of these records and our upcoming plans, please write again addressing my secretary directly. He would happily deliver them to your desk, and ensure that the cost associated with the scribe's efforts is filed with your office's annual expense report.

I wish you a most pleasant meal with my dear uncle Sanakuwa; please give him my regards.

Respectfully,

Singing Maiana, Bearer of Gentle Rains in the East

Things Fall Apart

The greatest blow to divine order came not from corruption or mismanagement, but from the cataclysm of the Great Contagion. Over a thousand years have passed, but the Celestial Bureaucracy may never fully recover from the gods, offices, and institutional knowledge lost in that near-apocalypse. As gods died of the plague en masse, events in Creation unfolded so rapidly that the Celestial Bureaucracy could hardly keep up. The Bureaus of Humanity and Nature saw whole divisions rendered defunct as mortal societies collapsed and countless plants and animals were lost to mass extinctions. Divisions overseeing disease, death, and other related purviews found themselves overloaded with highest-priority tasks far beyond what their staffing and funding could accomplish.

More gods died during the Great Contagion than at any other point since the Divine Revolution. The insidious disease seeped through Heaven's gateways, ravaging Yu-Shan as it did Creation. As resilient as immortal gods may be, those who succumbed to the Great Contagion were destroyed utterly. Others were claimed by the fae legions that invaded in the Contagion's wake. Terrestrial and celestial gods alike took up arms in Creation's defense against the fae, but many fell in battle or were twisted into blasphemous monstrosities by the encroaching Wyld.

The gods lost to the Contagion were largely replaced by undertrained subordinates, beneficiaries of nepotism, and career opportunists, when they were replaced at all, plunging the Bureaucracy into a new era of corruption, incompetence, and mismanagement. Few gods today have more than a millennium of experience. Many gods found themselves without a superior to report to, posing severe complications for celestial gods and almost completely severing communications between the terrestrial gods and Heaven. Inter-bureau coordination fell apart as the interpersonal relationships between gods that had facilitated cooperation died with one or both parties. Perhaps even worse, vital institutional knowledge was lost along with lives: which of Heaven's countless archives holds the answer to a question, the unwritten procedures of various departments, workarounds for broken systems, and similar expertise.

Navigating the Bureaucracy

For all the Celestial Bureaucracy's dysfunction, work still gets done. While young Sidereals may boggle at its inordinate complexity, those who've learned its intricacies maneuver through with grace and finesse. The key to success is both procedural and personal. You won't get anywhere without understanding the Celestial Bureaucracy well enough to know which division, convention, or other bureaucratic sub-unit a request or application should be filed with. But that's only the first step — the challenge is understanding who holds the real power in that department, and what they want that you can give them.

The motives of spirits are as varied as those of mortals. Most spirits fall somewhere between perfect diligence and absolute corruption, performing their duties earnestly but without passion, and not above bending the rules for personal gain if the breach doesn't seem too egregious. Some are driven by ambition, power, prestige, and worship. Others prioritize the well-being of their purview or their worshippers. Some put only in the minimum effort needed to keep their post, whether out of indolence, dissatisfaction, or burnout. A rare handful are dedicated to the Celestial Bureaucracy above all, dutifully following proper procedure and working to repair systemic failures.

But the gods' desires aren't always easy to satisfy. Some gods are entirely forthcoming with what they want, whether it's a promotion, a mighty artifact, a memento of a long-ago lover, or a pile of ambrosia large enough to sleep on. No matter how simple a request may seem, though, it's rarely that easy — otherwise, the god wouldn't have asked. Young Sidereal are often told the story of Shattered River, who learned too late that the precious pet cat he'd been asked to retrieve was currently in a behemoth's gullet.

Other gods play coy with what they want. Often, such gods' concerns are more sensitive than mere avarice or ambition — getting out from under a blackmailer, retrieving contraband luxuries that've been

stolen from them, finding a long-lost child somewhere in Creation, or pursuing a star-crossed courtship. Teasing out the secrets behind a god's motive can be a challenge unto itself, potentially even more difficult than fulfilling the god's request.

Young Sidereal often underestimate one of their greatest advantages in dealing with the gods — their novelty. The mystique of the Maiden's Chosen and value immortals place on witty new conversational partners mean that many spirits are pleased simply to make a Sidereal's acquaintance, if she makes a good first impression. A well-timed visit to a gala, theater, or teahouse may be all it takes to charm a favor from a god in a Sidereal's early days.

Nepotism

The swiftest path to success in the Celestial Bureaucracy is often nepotism. The bureaus are full of gods who achieved their rank through family connections, networking, and bribery. Sometimes a god's child is well-suited by nature to working with their parent, but they're seldom the very best candidate for the position. Other gods secure positions for their children as subordinates to a highly-placed god who owes them a favor or with whom they have a good relationship. Such nepotism hires are of varying degrees of incompetence and can be almost impossible to demote. It would be a gross faux pas to comment on the fact that this applies to a sizable fraction of Heaven's senior leadership.

Spirit Courts

Many gods belong to spirit courts. These aren't part of the Celestial Bureaucracy; rather, they're independent organizations with their own rules and structures, capable of accepting or rejecting members at their discretion. Since most courts form around shared purviews, coworkers in a bureau are also often colleagues in a spirit court, though with no guarantee their ranks and standings in both will align.

The most common and widespread spirit courts are those of the terrestrial gods and worldly elementals, which rose to prominence after the Contagion disrupted the hierarchies of terrestrial gods and in many cases cut off contact and accountability between senior terrestrial gods and their heavenly overseers. Such courts serve as political bodies, establishing their own hierarchies among a region's terrestrial gods and often incorporating other types of spirits. They're often deeply corrupt, with leaders filing false reports to cover up subordinates' laxity and indiscretions in exchange for loyalty and service.

Yu-Shan's spirit courts, on the other hand, are more often a matter of shared interests, political favor-trading, control of a vital resource, and the like. Some are akin to secret societies or social clubs; others are criminal syndicates in all but name.

Each of the Celestial Incarnae heads their own spirit court, made up of their respected subordinates, descendants, friends, lovers, and other favorites. Having retired from the work of Heaven's governance, the Incarnae have delegated much of their power to trusted members of their courts. Gods entrusted with the privileges and responsibilities of the Incarnae are major political players, even if they hold only a middling station.

The Bureau of Destiny

The Bureau of Destiny — formally, **the Most Excellent Designers of Destiny and Sidereal Conjunctions** — ensures that destiny is fulfilled when all else fails. The Bureau's Sidereal agents stand

between Creation and threats to reality itself. The Bureau is made up of five divisions, one for each Maiden, as well as numerous conventions, working groups that span divisional boundaries. The divisions are headed by gods, not Sidereals — just as the Creation-Ruling Mandate forbids spirits to rule in Creation, so too does it forbid Sidereals from heading the Celestial Bureaucracy's divisions and bureaus.

The Great Work of Destiny

Heaven plans destiny and puts it into motion, reinforcing the world's edges against the lapping tides of chaos. The Bureau of Destiny and its Sidereal agents are key figures in Celestial Bureaucracy's great work, seeing that the future unfolds as it ought.

Fate and Destiny

Fate is the causal law of Creation and Heaven, the natural order imposed upon the world by its creators. It's why things fall down instead of up, why a flipped coin has an equal chance of coming down on either side, and why tomorrow can never be yesterday. It's why Creation is something different than the Wyld. Of particular interest to Sidereal seers, fate defines what futures are and aren't possible, an intricate web of possibilities encompassing every path the world might take.

Destiny is Heaven's agenda for the future, woven into the fabric of fate itself to reinforce Creation's reality when it's fulfilled. Destiny isn't a single overarching plan — Heaven plans many destinies, plotting out the next month of an empire's history, a few years for a flock of geese, or the gradual shifting of a river's banks over decades. The specifics of destiny are a matter of intense politicking and favor-trading, as almost everyone involved seeks to write their agenda into Heaven's plans. Not everything is possible, though — no amount of bribery will change the limits of what fate will allow. Destiny doesn't fulfill itself; Heaven must work to ensure that its chosen future comes to pass.

Planning Tomorrow

Potential destinies are proposed, planned, and debated in a series of committees that include gods from every bureau, held before the Loom of Fate. To look upon the Loom is to see the weave of fate's possibilities spun into silken threads, filling the Loom's vastness like a great web. Spirits and Sidereal of the Bureau of Destiny can commune with the Loom to glimpse the fullness of fate's weave, sifting through every possible future to find one to write into destiny. Drafts of potential destinies are spun from threads of fate by the pattern spiders (p. XX), weaver-spirits native to the Loom, allowing the committee to scrutinize them in detail for potential complications or flaws.

Which future is chosen largely comes down to the interests represented in the committee. The God of Shoots and Sprouts might campaign for a drought and forest fire that the God of Ancient Trees would rather avoid. Partisans of the Fivescore Fellowship's Bronze Faction use destiny to ensure the continuing stability of the Realm as best they can, while their Gold Faction opponents would write radical changes into the future. The August Minister of Tempests and the Serene Custodian of Fields can spend hours grandstanding over annual rainfall amounts, though it's not troubled their marriage.

Before a proposed destiny can be submitted, the Bureau of Destiny must assure its feasibility. When a destiny comes to pass, Creation's reality is strengthened, but a failed destiny snarls the weave of fate and risks destabilizing local reality.

Timing is crucial: a destiny planned over too long a timeframe leaves more room for things to go wrong. Not all destinies are equally sensitive to time pressures — weather patterns are far easier to keep on course than cats. Similarly, a single destiny can't account for everything; the more that must go right, the harder it is to keep something from going wrong.

Spirits, the Exalted, and other supernatural beings are another major stumbling block to potential destinies. It's little trouble to nudge a mortal who strays off their destined path back on track, but it's far harder to puppetmaster the likes of the Chosen, even with Sidereal intervention. The Bureau strives to avoid destinies contingent on the acts of the Exalted whenever possible, but that's not always feasible.

Some destinies rest on Exalted whose temperament and history are known to the Heaven following their usual patterns: a Solar defending her beloved Lunar mate, a Dragon-Blood siding with her Sworn Kinship over a hated sibling, and so on. Even then, such destinies are a source of major concern for the Fivescore Fellowship, and are notably more likely to fail.

If predicting a single Exalt's decisions worries the Fivescore Fellowship, the Realm is a nightmare. Lookshy, Prasad, Great Forks, and other major supernatural polities are little better. It's infeasible to simply leave Creation's largest empire or other prominent geopolitical forces out of destiny altogether, but the chances of failure are far beyond the Bureau of Destiny's tolerance. The Bronze Faction's close collaboration with the Scarlet Empress and their influence in the Immaculate Order has kept catastrophic failures to a minimum, but her disappearance and the Realm's imminent descent into civil war mean all bets are off.

Issues of Nomenclature

While this book is consistent in its use of "fate" and "destiny," people in **Exalted** aren't. The distinction is lost on most gods outside the Bureau of Destiny, and even Siderials permit themselves poetic license in speaking of what's "fated" or "destined," or have an occasional slip of the tongue. Players and Storytellers don't need to worry about keeping the terminology straight in play.

Destiny Fulfilled

Once a planned destiny is approved, the pattern spiders weave the threads of its fate into the Loom's tapestry. The pattern spiders are also the first to tend to irregularities in destiny, tweaking a stand here or there in the Loom to make the subtlest of adjustments to probability: a cow bears two calves instead of one, a rotted tree finally falls just in time to block a peddler's route, a lantern gutters at a crucial moment to let a thief slip past in the dark. Errors that the pattern spiders don't catch are usually too minor to meaningfully threaten destiny's outcome.

If the spiders' subtle influence isn't enough to catch a serious problem, or if they let one slip through, the task falls to the gods. The Bureau of Destiny coordinates with both terrestrial gods and any appropriate divisions to intervene. Most significant complications are caught at this level — healing a wounded courier so she can complete her journey, turning a battle's tide with a fortuitous storm, or swaying a truculent mortal with well-chosen words.

When a threat to destiny is beyond even the gods themselves, the Sidereal intervene. They might steer the future of nations by sabotaging a diplomatic summit, hunt a faerie warband and its chaos-graced queen, or save a city from a natural disaster by ensuring it was never there to begin with. Their heroism may go unremembered, but it's still the stuff of legend.

Enemies of Fate

The Bureau of Destiny refers to beings from beyond Creation as "enemies of fate." Demons, the undead, the fae, and others of their ilk aren't subject to fate's laws. Occluded from the Loom of Fate's predictions, their every act has the potential to disrupt planned destinies, while their magic risks disrupting causality

and Creation's stability. Preventing enemies of fate from destabilizing destiny falls under the Bureau's remit, though they prioritize the most dangerous targets — a sorcerer's bound retinue of demons or an ancestor cult's ghostly patrons are unlikely to cause any harm to reality that the pattern spiders can't fix.

The Second Age has seen the emergence of Exalted enemies of fate, empowered by otherworldly forces. The most dangerous of these have been the Getimians (p. XX), but the appearance of the Abyssals and Infernals only makes the Bureau's work harder.

Sidereal and the Bureau

Sidereals stand at the Bureau of Destiny's upper echelons even as young Exalted, heroes of Heaven and troubleshooters of destiny. Each holds high rank in their patron Maiden's division of the Bureau, endowed with the spiritual authority of their fateful Exaltation.

Recruitment

Finding new Sidereals is a top priority for the Bureau of Destiny, with the search beginning the moment that a Sidereal's death is reported. Officially, the search is led by the division of the new Sidereal's Maiden, though this responsibility is often delegated to a deceased Sidereal's Circle out of respect. Sidereals of every division are expected to aid such efforts when possible — a responsibility owed not just to the Bureau of Destiny, but to the Fivescore Fellowship. Some whom the Maidens have Chosen to be Sidereal are discovered even before their Exaltation, observed and sometimes trained by a Bureau agent, though an offer to join the Bureau typically isn't made until they Exalt.

Once the new Exalt is found, a Sidereal agent is sent to make contact, explain the nature of the young Chosen's Exaltation, and extend an offer of employment with the Bureau. Many eagerly accept this offer. Joining the Bureau is an opportunity for power, purpose, and heroism, while the splendors of Yu-Shan are beyond mortal imagination. And as part of the Fivescore Fellowship, Sidereal find a community of others like them, a camaraderie beyond arcane fate's power to unmake. None can sympathize with the pain of losing one's mortal life like those who've endured the same loss. For a lost and frightened young Sidereal, full of power and grief, the offer of belonging can be the most powerful draw of all.

Not every Sidereal leaps at the chance to serve Heaven. The Bureau of Destiny's recruiters gather as much information as possible on new Sidereals' mortal lives, tailoring their approach to the young Chosen's temperament, beliefs, and desires. Those unmoved by offers of prestige and purpose might be swayed by access to Heaven's secret archives, the power to protect their loved ones, or a safe haven from powerful enemies. But perfect information is rare indeed, making quick thinking and improvisation potentially vital to winning over a new Sidereal. Coercion and deception are shunned as recruitment tactics — Sidereals brought in through threats or lies are cataclysmic problems waiting to happen.

Sidereals who reject employment with the Bureau are known formally as "potential assets" and poetically as "prodigal stars." They're left to their own devices, but with the understanding that the offer stands. In time, some seek out the Bureau, changed by what they've experienced. For most, it's arcane fate that brings them to the Bureau's doorstep. Others find solace in connection with Exalted comrades in Creation who can resist arcane fate, like the young Scarlet Cricket, who travels the world alongside her Solar companion, Kael.

The Loom's Limits

The Loom of Fate offers insight into what could be, but its all-encompassing perspective of fate's weave is of little use in determining what is, or what possible futures are most likely to happen in the absence of Heaven's

intervention. The Sidereal rely on their own gifts as seers and diviners for such matters.

Mentorship and Training: The Ten Thousand Paths to Heaven

Upon joining the Bureau, a Sidereal must be trained as an agent of Heaven, learning both the subtleties of fate and destiny and the skills necessary for fieldwork as celestial troubleshooters. She's guided through this process by her mentor — typically an older Sidereal who shares her Caste, skillset, or proclivities, though any Sidereal can fill the role. Some Sidereal are assigned prominent gods as mentors — the Ghost-Blooded Reckoner named Black Ice Shadow trained under Wayang, head of the Division of Endings.

The Bureau's training regimen is known as the Ten Thousand Paths to Heaven. It begins with a rigorous assessment of a Sidereal's strengths and weaknesses by her mentor, which is used to create an educational roadmap for her training. This course of training typically lasts a year and a day, though with a mentors who takes a more relaxed pace, it might last up to three years.

The Ten Thousand Paths tailor a Sidereal's training to build upon the skills she developed in her mortal life while broadening her range of competencies based to complement her existing skillset or fit her division's needs. The paths emphasize unity between body and mind: young Sidereals might compose poetry extemporaneously while enduring grueling physical exercises, or face an ambush by her mentor in the middle of a written examination of her economic acumen.

Some mentors employ sorcery and other strange magics in their tutelage. The late Famine Bird was famed for his heavenly ziggurat-manse, each of its tiered levels devoted to a different test of skill. Raxevi Alzira uses time-warping martial arts to trap her protégés in visions of a single endlessly-repeating day of training. The sorcerer-scoundrel Khal of Splinter conducts their training solely in dreams, conjuring impossible vistas to demonstrate the esoteric prowess of the Maiden's Chosen.

As a Sidereal's training progresses, her mentor's instructions become increasingly open-ended and ambiguous, demanding more and more initiative and independence from her. For the last few months of her training, a Sidereal largely charts her own path, choosing what the finish line looks like for herself.

The Ten Thousand Paths to Heaven formally end with a final test devised for a Sidereal by her mentor, but by this point, her real training is complete. Her final examination serves as an exhibition of her skill, attended by her future peers. Other Sidereals are invited to spectate, commentate, or even participate in the test, taking the opportunity to meet and assess the new recruit.

Equally important is her mentor's final report, providing the Bureau of Destiny's leadership with an unflinchingly candid evaluation of her strengths and weaknesses. It also contains recommendations on her salary, potential convention memberships, and a proposed timeline of promotions. This isn't strictly a matter of merit — just because a Sidereal's formal training has concluded doesn't mean there aren't any lessons left for her mentor to pass on.

Sidereal Status

Sidereals hold a unique position in Yu-Shan. They belong to the Celestial Bureaucracy, but their authority comes from the Maidens of Fate themselves. Their humanity sets them apart from those they work alongside, but it's also a source of novelty and fascination to the gods. Heaven at large regards Sidereals as diligent servants of destiny, mysterious heroes, and occasionally as celestial celebrities.

In Heaven, Sidereals enjoys a quality of life seldom matched in Creation. Even an ill-regarded or disgraced Sidereal agents in good standing can put Creation's princes to shame, with secretarial spirits and other staff to aid in personal affairs and handle administrative tedium.

Sidereals are entitled to take sabbaticals from Bureau work, time off that can spent however they wish they wish. These allow them to deal with unfinished business from their mortal lives, pursue personal projects, lend aid to allies in Creation, carry out factional business, and occasionally, to simply relax. Even the most junior agents can expect a few weeks' sabbatical each year, while most Sidereals can manage a season off every year or two. The Bronze and Gold Factions make a practice of approving extended sabbaticals for their members to carry out the factions' long-term plans. Such corruption rarely comes to light — both factions stand to benefit more from having their own practices go unscrutinized than exposing the other's.

The Celestial Archives

While not every report is read by its recipient, the Celestial Bureaucracy's clerical staff keeps meticulous records of even the most quotidian details from such reports. In Heaven's archives, one might find a tiny Western island's seabird population, the price of various grades of rice wine in Tuchara, or the date and time of every thunderstorm since history began. The sheer volume of reports, censuses, and memoranda seems unnecessary to most new Sidereals, and often is — until knowing the exact age of a prince's cat becomes pivotal to convincing him to reject a demon's temptations. Dull records of the past help gods and Sidereals alike plan for the future, predict outcomes of unusual events, and find patterns that might presage future challenges.

Heaven has no single neat archive, but rather a thousand sprawling depositories of records. In the Bureau of Seasons' palace-sized central archive, gale-force winds ferry heavy scrolls to and from their proper location at the senior librarian's command. Ancient, rarely-accessed reports on paper-thin sheets of luminous crystal are stored in underground catacombs, remembered only by a handful of elder gods. One notoriously disorganized division head just shoves every memo into an ornate cherrywood chest, using sorcery to make it bigger and bigger until he can "find the time" to sort it.

Sidereals rarely trawl these archives themselves, entrusting such tasks to their secretarial staff or employing magic to quickly retrieve data from Heaven's records. On occasion, though, it's necessary for a Sidereal needs to fetch a document herself — say, to surreptitiously alter her disciplinary file. The sheer size of the Celestial Bureaucracy's records is the greatest obstacle to such efforts, demanding a talent for bureaucracy to navigate under pressure. Some archives possess powerful unseen guardians or wards against subterfuge, presenting further complications for those seeking to tamper with Heaven's records — even the Exalted.

Sidereal Generations

The Fivescore Fellowship can be roughly divided into four generations. Most Sidereals form their closest personal relationships with others in their generation, as young Exalted find it easiest to connect to those similarly new to Heaven's service and the tragedies of arcane fate.

Most Sidereals have a few peers who Exalted around the same time they did — when things go wrong enough for a Sidereal to die, it's not uncommon for others to fall as they risk their lives fixing it. A

handful of Sidereals dying within weeks of each other is a tragic calamity, but makes for a new Circle with immediate common ground.

As decades become centuries, a generational cadre's web of relationships and shared experiences bind them together. A Sidereal's friends, lovers, Circlemates, and confidantes among the Maiden's Chosen are most often members of her own generation, though the mentor-student relationship often transcends generational divisions.

The Fourth Generation: Forged in Sorrows

A majority of the Fivescore Fellowship belongs to the fourth generation, those who Exalted in the centuries since the Realm's birth. They often have closer relationships with mortals than other Sidereals, having not yet experienced a thousand years of arcane fate and life among the gods. As a consequence, they feel arcane fate's sting the most sharply. Their elders meet this sympathy and commiseration — few in the Fivescore Fellowship can say they were any different.

This generation's goals and motivations are likewise often still rooted in the old priorities of the mortal lives, with a tendency toward a greater focus on the short term than their elders. The Realm's world-spanning political influence has shaped this generation's perspective on factional politics more than any other's.

The Third Generation: Survivors of the Contagion

The Fivescore Fellowship's third generation is said to have begun with the first Sidereal to fall to the Great Contagion, the single greatest loss of Sidereal life since the Solar Purge. It's by far the smallest generation, having spanned only a few decades, but its ranks are disproportionately large compared to those of the other, century-spanning generations.

The Contagion's survivors are tightly-knit, brought together by collective trauma and separated by only the briefest of intervals. Having experienced the chaos of a world on the brink of collapse, some have a tendency to fixate on the work of destiny and the affairs of Heaven, preferring the timeless and the eternal to the transience of things in Creation. Others endure it through philosophy, hedonism, or mysticism, pursuing these endeavors to epic heights only possible in Yu-Shan.

The Shogunate's collapse is to the Contagion generation's factional politics what the Realm is to the younger generation, though allegiances have shifted over the centuries. Some saw it as a testament to the grave import of the Bronze Faction's work; others took it as a damning condemnation of its methods.

The Second Generation: Stewards of the Shogunate

Few Sidereals born during the Shogunate are alive today, have died en masse during the Great Contagion and the Fair Folk's conquest. Shepherding Creation through Solar Purge's aftermath and the warring of Dragon-Blooded kingdoms taught many in this generation the ways of both war and political intrigue. The lives lost for the sake of feuding warlord's ambitions and vendettas taught another lesson — the value of duty and discipline. Many in this generation hold high rank within the Bureau, having filled the roles of the many First Age elders lost in the Purge.

The Shogunate generation saw the formal beginning of the factional schism. While it came in the Solar Purge's wake, few of this generation still base their politics on it, with equal emphasis given to the events of Shogunate history, the Great Contagion, the Realm's rise.

The First Generation: Elders of the First Age

First Age Sidereals are rare, and grow increasingly so as their allotted lifespans have begun to run out.

These living legends are ancient and revered masters, leaders of the Bureau and the factions, and the most sought-after of mentors. Their ages vary widely, given the five millennia of the First Age and the unpredictability of those who fell in the Solar Purge. The oldest surviving elders were born when the age was only a few years old; the youngest Exalted in the weeks leading up to the Purge — with the exception of the traitor Rakan Thulio, who Exalted as the Divine Revolution drew to a close.

First Age elders prioritize the Solar Purge in their factional politics more often than the Shogunate generation, having experienced the atrocities that led to it and the terrors of war against the Solars firsthand. But a millennium and more is a long time, and many have moved on from the factions' founding conflict.

This generation was born into a world that's now long-dead. While their origins were scattered across Creation's breadth and the First Age's span, they're united by the shared experience of a loss that few others can understand. Even sworn enemies whose enmity traces back to the First Age sometimes take tea together, reminiscing on a time before the Mask broke.

Missions

Junior Sidereals are assigned missions either by one of the Bureau's divisions or a convention. While some missions are suitable for a lone Sidereal, some warrant a full Circle, drawing on the diverse skills of multiple Castes. Sidereals who prove they can work well together — or at least well enough to complete the mission — can expect to be partnered again on subsequent missions, building up the rapport and understanding that turns disparate colleagues into an effective Circle.

The Bureau's mission briefings detail both objectives in the field and the broader picture that the mission fits into, providing Sidereals with the information necessary to improvise a backup plan if things go awry or recognize when their priorities need to be reevaluated. However, between imperfect information, the limits of Sidereal foresight, and the occasional bureaucratic mix-up, some briefings boil down to a map and a directive to "figure it out." The Bureau prefers to reserve such missions for more experienced Circles, but doesn't always have that luxury.

Many missions involve hunting down enemies of fate, investigating their activities, performing reconnaissance in otherworldly realms, or conducting diplomacy. Destiny can't account for those who fall outside the possible futures the Loom reveals, making demons, Fair Folk, Getimians, and others of their ilk unique threats to Heaven's agenda. At other times, powerful denizens of Creation or Heaven stand in destiny's way: Exalted whose ambitions conflict with Yu-Shan's plans, rogue gods, sorcerers, behemoths, and more. Such missions aren't always an even match — against superior foes, Sidereals must take an indirect approach, relying on subterfuge, ingenuity, and superior planning — and sometimes ditching the mission briefing completely to approach the problem from a different angle.

Other missions lack such powerful opposition: arranging for complete strangers to meet and fall in love, ensuring a battle is won by the underdog, assassinating a petty despot. Though they may seem trivial for the Exalted, such missions are assigned only when they have far-reaching consequences that necessitate Sidereal intervention and are likely to face opposition or complications unknown to the Bureau. Sidereals dispatched to intervene in royal succession are briefed on the peasant rebellion projected to occur within the next few years, one that would be quashed by the destined heir but supported by his rival, disrupting Heaven's plans for the entire region.

Such missions often require a ready-for-anything approach: The rebellion might break out ahead of schedule, backed by a rogue forest spirit seeking to expand its cult by force. A Fair Folk prince seduces the destined heir, twisting him into a creature unsuited to Heaven's purposes. The ailing sovereign dies at

the appointed hour, only to rise from her deathbed as one of the Abyssal Exalted.

A Sidereal's Duty

Sidereals in Creation are allowed and expected to act on their own recognizance when fulfilling missions, trusted to make decisions and act independently. They have discretion to pursue personal agendas, factional business, or other goals alongside their mission. This is both privilege and responsibility. A Sidereal who makes poor choices in the field can expect to be relegated to lower-priority missions as remedial training, and to see both her standing in the Bureau and her salary fall until she's demonstrated improvement. That said, she can also expect some sympathy from peers and elders — most have made mistakes of their own.

A Sidereal who willfully jeopardizes a mission's success faces far harsher treatment, with the almost-inevitable audit being the least of her worries compared to the opprobrium of her peers. The reprimand they face is often tailored to their motives. When a factional agenda undermines destiny, the responsible Sidereal's censure is left largely to her own faction. A Sidereal who prioritizes a Circlemate's life over the mission is punished only lightly, sometimes winning respect from the Bureau in the process. A Sidereal who's swayed by Rakan Thulio into actively sabotaging destiny is imprisoned in one of Heaven's securest gaols. They are visited by friends, mentors, and colleagues seeking to win them back to the Bureau's service.

Sidereals are entitled to decline missions, but doing so is uncommon. This is less a result of pressure from the Bureau than it is a testament to the Fivescore Fellowship's sense of duty. But while this privilege is absolute, its exercise isn't without consequence. A Sidereal who does refuse a mission must present a justifiable reason to avoid falling out of favor within the Bureau. Legitimate concerns about risks of Sidereal casualties, conflicting priorities, or absolute necessity are generally acceptable, though this doesn't always hold true for high-priority missions. The Bureau is divided on the justifiability of ethical objections. Some believe that occasionally indulging a Sidereal's conscience is worth their continuing loyalty; others see such moral qualms as a lapse of duty and discipline.

Storytelling Missions

In a Sidereal chronicle, official missions can serve as a framing device for all sorts of adventures. Assignments that go smoothly occur off-screen, while play focuses on when things get interesting. Depending on your playgroup's preferences, each mission can be a stand-alone problem to solve or part of a trail of interconnected breadcrumbs leading to a powerful adversary, secret conspiracy, or other grand finale. Mission-based chronicles are great for playgroups where players drop in and out of the game, with players who can't make it to the session sitting out missions or making a light arrival as reinforcements.

If it suits your group's play style, an "easy" mission could also serve as the backdrop of a character-driven session that lacks traditional challenges. Perhaps a Sidereal is sent back to her hometown to intervene in a festival she once attended as a child, forcing her to face the loss of her family to her arcane fate. A heartfelt conversation between Circlemates as they watch paper lanterns floating across a river can be compelling on its own, even if the dice and character sheets sit untouched.

If you aren't interested in the Bureau of Destiny, missions can show up irregularly or serve as jumping-off points for unrelated stories. Sidereal player characters can uncover unrelated problems while handling simple assignments that end up taking priority over the mission. If you don't want missions from Heaven to be part of your game at all, even young Sidereals are entitled to sabbaticals, and you can handwave the details of how they got all this free time. A long sabbatical arranged off-screen frees up a Sidereal to adventure with other Exalted without having to worry about Heaven's politics at all.

Briefings from the Bureau

Babysitting Duty: A sorcerer-prince is projected to unleash a terror of the ocean depths through a ritual that requires the sacrifice of one of his descendants. Destiny's needs make assassination infeasible. The Sidereals must remove his three children from his household and rehome them as necessary to ensure that the ritual can't be completed. (They need not see to the question of future children — the appropriate fertility gods can handle that.) If they fail in this, it falls to them to slay or recapture the unleashed behemoth before its rampage can disrupt destiny.

The City of Glass: An entire city has been severed from fate without any apparent cause. Preliminary reconnaissance found that all inanimate matter within the city has been transmuted to glass. No life is evident — neither plant nor animal, human nor spirit. The player characters are tasked with further investigation that inevitably leads them into peril. This mystery could have any number of causes — examples include a malfunctioning First Age reality engine reactivated by a scavenger prince, a faerie prince who's imprisoned the city's populace within its glassy walls, or a Circle of Getimians setting a trap for unwary Sidereals.

Lost in the Wyld: After a fae raid on a settlement, a pair of mortals — a foul-mouthed warrior and a gloomy shaman — are pursued the Fair Folk reaver and his hobgoblin retinue into the bordermarches, only to find themselves lost in the Wyld. The Convention on the Wyld projects that their survival will significantly decrease the chances of the village falling to the Wyld. The player characters are tasked with finding and retrieving them, though circumstances — and the mortals themselves — may not make this easy. Potential complications include finding the mortals imprisoned by a faerie court and ensnared in its intrigues, a Wyld parasite that's secretly infested one or both of them, or a living labyrinth that's swallowed them up into its fractal gullet.

The Prodigal Dragon: A strategically located town's destined growth and prosperity have come under threat from a veritable army of bandits led by a powerful Demon-Blooded sorcerer. According to the Division of Serenity's predictions, the best chance for bringing destiny back on course lies in a wandering Dragon-Blooded outcaste born to that village and in a demon-slaying daiklave forged by the outcaste's great-grandmother. The player characters' mission is twofold. First, they must retrieve the daiklave from its current owner — a Guild factor and collector of artifacts, whose vaults are guarded by God-Blooded sentries, sorcerous wards, and traps looted from First Age tombs. Then, they must convince the outcaste to return and defend the village that rejected them. If they can't, it's up to them to defend the village — a task that might be complicated if the bandit's leader has the backing of an unbound Second Circle demon or an Infernal Exalt.

Save the Ship: Destiny requires that a shiphand of the Denzik city-ship court and eventually wed the mortal son of a visiting Realm diplomat. The player characters are tasked with ensuring that a copy of the Immaculate Texts falls into the deckhand's possession in time for him to acquire an understanding of the Immaculate Philosophy prior to the son's arrival. Potential complications include an assassination attempt on the Dragon-Blooded ambassador by a rival Great House or the Silver Pact, an attack by Lintha reavers bearing demonic blessings, or social unrest caused by an unexpectedly rapid spread of Immaculate doctrine.

The Five Divisions of the Bureau of Destiny

Each of the Bureau's division is made up of its Maiden's Chosen and gods who hold related purviews. Each has its own unique institutional culture and maintains a separate headquarters. The divisions liaise frequently, as many events fall within the remit of more than one — bringing a war to an end, for instance, requires involvement from the Divisions of Serenity, Battles, and Endings at bare minimum.

Inter-bureau coordination is equally common. The Bureau's gods coordinate with those whose purviews overlap their own in other bureaus, while Sidereals sometimes serve as liaisons to the heads of divisions or entire bureaus.

The five divisions' headquarters, together with the dome that houses the Loom of Fate, make up the compound known as the Most Perfect Lotus of Heavenly Design, a district unto itself. The land between headquarters is filled with overflow office space, apartments for lower-ranking gods, merchants who cater to Sidereal needs, private parks reserved for Bureau employees, and other amenities.

The Division of Journeys

The Division of Journeys oversees the destinies of travelers as well as the fruits of their voyages: traders and commerce, messengers and communication, envoys and diplomacy, armies on the march and the logistics of warfare. It sees to explorers and itinerants, animal migrations and the movements of the stars. They also watch Creation's boundaries, standing vigil against otherworldly incursions, working to close shadowlands and seal accursed gateways, and reclaiming the expanses of Creation lost to the Wyld. Mercury's Chosen play an important role in coordinating with those special conventions that deal with the Underworld, the Wyld, and other realms of existence.

The division's headquarters, the Golden Barque of the Heavens, is a gleaming skyship said to have been both created and captained by Mercury herself in the Divine Revolution. Heaven demarcates its days by the Barque's ascent from the Quay of Dawn on the Quicksilver Sea's easternmost edge, and its descent to the western Quay of Dusk. The Barque can be boarded either at one of the Quays or by cloud-skiff, aerial rickshaw, or other means of flight. It can also be reached by a mysterious passageway within the Loom's dome, though its entrances on both sides are rarely found in the same place twice.

Institutional Culture

The Division of Journeys is best described as controlled chaos. Work moves at a hurried pace — time-sensitive tasks are assigned just ahead of deadlines, offices are regularly relocated and shuffled between the Barque's many decks, and its corridors are filled with frantic couriers racing to deliver their messages. Not all the division's employees take well to this environment, with some preferring a more meticulous approach that's focused on the long term. This aspect of the division's culture is concentrated at the top — its head, the road-god Ruvia, is an exemplar of adaptability and improvisation, and disproportionately selects gods who share his proclivities to supervisory positions.

The tension between these two work cultures can be exhausting and exasperating at times, but it's also the reason why the Division of Journeys is among the most efficient in the Celestial Bureaucracy. Its hierarchy is streamlined to minimize bureaucratic delays without compromising effectiveness. Resources — materiel, personnel, and more — are reallocated quickly and smoothly to meet crises or seize opportunities. Office space is reassigned or reimagined to suit today's needs, not yesterday's bureaucratic squabbles.

Working Relationships

The Division of Journeys works closely with all four of the other bureaus, on top of frequently liaising with its sister-divisions. In the course of overseeing a Realm legion's march, it might coordinate with the Division of Battles, the Bureau of Heaven's Division of War, and the Bureau of Humanity's Division of Weapons, while consulting the Bureau of Nature on the terrain and the Bureau of Seasons on the weather.

Outside of the Bureau of Destiny, the Division of Journey's working relations are strongest with the Bureau of Seasons. The division was one of its early allies in the labor dispute that led to the bureau

splintering off from the Bureau of Nature, and they work together closely to coordinate travel and weather. The Bureau of Heaven's Department of Celestial Concerns also has a favorable relationship with the division, owing both to their close cooperation in overseeing the celestial gates and the friendship between Ruvia and the department's head, Ryzala — one of the few to recognize the genius of the division's structure.

Matters are frostier between the Division of Journeys and the Bureau of Humanity. Wun Ja, the bureau's head, seeks to promote the direct rule of mortals by gods. Ruvia has no hard evidence, but he suspects something's rotten in the Bureau of Humanity. Working relations have suffered significantly since he first caught wind of this corruption. Division officials are encouraged to circumvent the Bureau of Humanity wherever possible, while destinies proposed by the bureau face fierce opposition from Ruvia's allies — and Wun Ja has returned the favor.

Most in the Celestial Bureaucracy form their opinion of the division based solely on its more outgoing and hectic half of its work culture, seeing it as a demandingly fast-paced and somewhat haphazard institutional partner. Even within the Bureau of Destiny, it's not uncommon for more punctilious members of the Division of Battles and Endings to grumble at its last minute adjustments to schedules and unexpected personnel changes. Its incredible efficiency is unfairly attributed to chance more often than competence, and its more diligent members are viewed as outliers rather than a core part of the division's culture.

Notable Figures

Radiant Sky, Chosen of Mercury

After more than a millennium of diligence spent prioritizing work above all else, Radiant Sky has risen to the chair of the influential Convention on Commerce. Now, it's time for her to kick back and enjoy the fruits of her labor. She indulges in exotic vices and wears her scandals like a crown. Once a notorious micromanager, she's mastered the art of delegation, letting young Sidereals "learn by doing" while she recovers from last night on her office couch. Her galas are the stuff of legend, and open the doors to all manner of backroom dealings. She's always willing to trade favors with young Sidereals seeking an invitation.

When she's not enjoying her debauches, Radiant Sky serves as an unasked-for mentor to young Sidereals she thinks are taking their work too seriously. She assigns them missions that require working together with their more carefree peers, makes social invitations they can't refuse, and drags them on adventures as a forced sabbatical. She doesn't want her protégés to be just like her — she knows full well she's no role model — but seeks to spare them from burnout and self-isolation.

Between her centuries of overwork and her current lifestyle of debauchery, Sky's had little time for factional politics, and proclaims herself an independent when the question's raised. She's long found the Wyld Hunt an odious waste of life that's cost the Bureau potential allies in the Silver Pact, but keeps her reservations to herself out of political expedience. While she's unreservedly convivial with her peers in the Gold Faction, she more often sides with the Bronze Faction in destiny planning committees to keep herself and her convention in its good graces.

Ruvia, Captain of the Golden Barque, Lord of Roads

Ruvia steers the ship of the Division of Journeys both literally and figuratively. Famed for his quiet confidence, good cheer, and skill at logistics, he's the stable center that allows the rest of the division to flex and bend. He seems little more than white-haired old man with a long beard, dressed in simple robes of saffron embroidered with a grid of red thread. His panoply is oddly humble for a god of his station — a

seemingly bottomless sack of useful odds and ends, a great wooden mallet that dispenses both blessings and curses, and a much put-upon donkey who once ate a peach of immortality.

Ruvia's leadership has seen his division grow so efficient that his active management is no longer necessary on a day-to-day basis — something he takes immense pride in. He spends most of his time tending to the duties of his purview, the web of roads through which trade, news, and travelers flow like lifeblood. He's well-liked by terrestrial road-gods, interceding for them with supervisors in exchange for their reports on goings-on in Creation. He also tends to the development of junior Sidereals, offering plum assignments to agents of all divisions that double as tests of their temperament and flexibility. He favors those who pass his tests with his patronage, though he'd never let them know of it. He maintains a cordial but impartial relationship with both the Bronze and Gold Factions, unwilling to be beholden to either of them — though in practice, this favors the Bronze, which has much less need of his political backing than their opposition.

The Division of Journeys' feud with the Bureau of Humanity is largely driven by personal matters between Ruvia and Wun Ja. The God of Roads was once the city father of a metropolis now lost to time, and takes his former superior's corrupt scheming with Creation's city fathers as an insult to his many centuries of duty in her name. He generously rewards anyone who can give him evidence of the Bureau of Humanity's misfeasance, and occasionally recruits trusted Sidereals for off-the-books intelligence operations.

Swooping Heron, Celestial Courier of Mail and Deliveries

Swooping Heron oversees memoranda and correspondence sent between all of Heaven's bureaus and divisions. He's an amiable god who lives in the moment, easily recognized by his long neck and ardeid mien. Should he desire, Heron could snoop on every little secret sent through his office. He prides himself on not doing so, but it's a well-known secret that he might "forget" to lock the door to his office in exchange for a suitable gift (he's particularly fond of candied eels).

Heron's aligned himself loosely with the Bronze Faction. The Realm boasts Creation's largest and most sophisticated mail system, and he'll do anything to preserve that. Most assume this is motivated by ambition, but it's actually the opposite — if the Realm's postal system were to fall, the Bureau of Humanity's Division of Correspondence might be dissolved entirely, putting the responsibility of overseeing mortal communications squarely on *his* office.

Heron frequently visits Creation, and has numerous God-Blooded children. He leaves them make their own way in life, rather than bringing them to Yu-Shan, but were something to happen to any of them, he'd be beside himself. Should one of his descendants face peril beyond the god's power to thwart, he'd offer almost anything to secure the aid of sympathetic Sidereals.

Nysela, Advocate of Righteous Ideals, Charioteer of the Daystar

Bureau of Heaven Liaison to the Division of Journeys

The Bureau of Heaven's liaison to the Golden Barque, Nysela once drove the resplendent war-chariot of her father, Unconquered Sun, against the Ancients' forces. She's among the most prominent members of his spirit court, having been entrusted with his authority over the movement of Creation's sun. The Bureau of Heaven has made her its liaison to the Golden Barque to facilitate this, letting her coordinate the motion of celestial bodies with the Division of Journeys.

Nysela's devotion to her duties and unfailing resourcefulness have rebuked those who once accused her of nepotism. A born rule-follower who's direct to a fault, she's not always well-suited to bureaucratic maneuvering. As outsiders to both the Bureau of Heaven and the Sun's spirit court, Sidereals often prove

useful allies to her in such matters, though the Advocate of Righteous Ideals offers no rewards for such assistance beyond what bureau regulations permit.

Nysela is largely an outsider to the Fivescore Fellowship's factional conflict, with strongly mixed feelings. She sees the Bronze Faction as a den of unprincipled opportunists and sycophantic schemers, but respects those truly committed to its ideology. She extends the same to those committed to the Gold Faction's ideals, though this doesn't translate to direct aid — at least, not yet.

Nysela has great hopes for the return of her father's Chosen, but she hasn't forgotten the atrocities that led to the Solar Purge. Depending on whether the Lawgivers prove themselves worthy of her father's blessing, she may well lend her support to either the Gold Faction's efforts with the Cult of the Illuminated (p. XX) or the Bronze Faction's prosecution of the Wyld Hunt.

The Division of Serenity

The Division of Serenity oversees all aspects of mortal relationships and culture: romance, marriage, family, art, diplomacy, health, vice, and much more. Of late, it's been anything but serene, as its members carry out countless schemes to avert, postpone, or mitigate the Realm's looming civil war: facilitating negotiations between Great Houses; arranging star-crossed matches within the Scarlet Dynasty; and supporting orators, artists, and poets seeking to turn public opinion against the war. Both the Bronze and the Gold Factions increasingly rely on the Joybringers among their ranks, seeking to ensure the Cerulean Lute's plans align with their own.

The Division of Serenity makes its headquarters in the pleasure-manse called the Cerulean Lute of Harmony. A beautiful work of geomancy, its sinuous curves and the turquoise-paved pathways seem to draw one in like an inexorable tide. It's even more splendid from the inside — in addition to the division's offices, the Cerulean Lute also houses theaters, ballrooms, gambling tables, smoking lounges, baths, and galleries of art from Heaven, Creation, and beyond. Even the meanest denizens of Yu-Shan may freely enter to take in these wonders — the Division of Serenity knows the importance of its popularity.

Institutional Culture

The Division of Serenity's culture encourages informality, amicability, and interoffice harmony. There's little formal hierarchy among Sidereals; Yaogin, the bureau's head, has little interest in throwing his weight around, while many senior Joybringers prefer to be their juniors' friends rather than their superiors. Meetings take place in nearby teahouses, eateries, and dens of vice as often as in the Cerulean Lute's offices. It's not uncommon to see the division's employees smoking pipes of cannabis or snorting from heaped-up platters of cocaine while at their desk.

The Cerulean Lute also places much greater emphasis on its employees' personal well-being than any other branch of the Celestial Bureaucracy. It keeps a veritable legion of chefs, masseurs, physicians, jesters, musicians, and attendants on its payroll, ensuring Joybringers need not leave the office to rest body and mind. Sabbaticals are regularly approved for periods much longer than average; Joybringers who push themselves too hard may find themselves assigned the task of taking a sabbatical to relax.

The Cerulean Lute isn't without its flaws, though. In the absence of a formal hierarchy, questions of decision-making may come down to schoolyard popularity contents. Rumors, gossip, and innuendo are an inescapable part of the work culture — while bureaucratic infighting, contentious office politics, and personal vendettas are as common here as anywhere else, it's considered gauche for them to boil out into the open. Sidereals who complain about the worst of the Cerulean Lute's work culture may spur an appropriate response to workplace issues, but at the risk of being labeled naive, out of touch, or a

spoilsport.

Many in Heaven see the Cerulean Lute as a hotbed of interoffice romance and the conflicts and corruption that so often accompany it. In truth, it's no more common here than anywhere else in the Celestial Bureaucracy — the Division of Serenity just doesn't bother trying to keep them secret. At times, it can be difficult to just to reach one's office in the Cerulean Lute without facing a barrage of romantic advice or offers at matchmaking from one's peers. Breakups are little different than any other conflict in the Cerulean Lute: all smiles in public, pure venom in private. Veiled jabs in division-wide memoranda, briefings, and post-mission reports are practically tradition.

Working Relationships

The Division of Serenity's informal work culture often clashes with those of their institutional partners. It has an exaggerated but not entirely unjustified reputation for indolence, inefficiency, and flouting proper procedure, though it's somewhat counterbalanced by fondness with which many in the Celestial Bureaucracy regard the Cerulean Lute's hospitality. The division's well-prepared for confronting such image issues — often, by the time a joint venture is commenced, any potential friction has already been smoothed over.

The division works closely with the Bureau of Humanity on both day-to-day matters and long-term operations involving mortal culture and civilization. It's a celebrated partnership, the subject of many of the toasts given in the Cerulean Lute's alehouses. The division also coordinates with several others within the Bureau of Heaven's of Abstract Matters, most notably the Division of Peace. Navigating the tensions between the Bureaus of Heaven and Humanity is a delicate matter, but there are few places in Yu-Shan where the two bureaus' employees are more likely to set aside their differences to enjoy themselves.

Notable Figures

Fox of Paradise, Chosen of Venus

Fox of Paradise is a celebrated author of Yu-Shan and one of the Cerulean Lute's finest gossips and information brokers. He doesn't look the part, unremarkable in appearance and modest in garb, save the starmetal frames of his eyeglasses. Witty, incisive, and shockingly foul-mouthed, he excels in convincing others to lower their defenses and share their secrets.

Fox of Paradise is the first to know who's up for a promotion, who's dating whom, and who can't stand each other — and his knowledge can be had, for a price. He's amassed political capital beyond his scarce few centuries by supplying intelligence to high-ranking gods and his Sidereal elders, along with occasional blackmail. The choicest morsels, though, he reserves for himself, drawing inspiration for his work from Heaven's juiciest scandals.

Fox plans destinies with an eye for drama, irony, and symbolism — priorities that often conflict with the destiny's feasibility and the various political interests involved. As a mid-ranking member of the Division of Serenity, he has limited options to push through his agenda, though he does call in the occasional political favor from highly-placed gods or Sidereals who've benefitted from his intelligence. He's long aligned himself with the Gold Faction, whose members occasionally support his proposals over Bronze objection, though he has little interest in the faction's larger projects, like the Cult of the Illuminated.

Yaogin, Bearer of the Lapis Ewer, God of Beautiful Dreams

Yaogin guides the Cerulean Lute with a light hand. He seems a beautiful youth, with raven-dark hair, dreamy eyes, and a bright, easy smile. The Lapis Ewer he carries holds heavenly draughts of inspiration, pleasure, and vitality. But he's no guileless innocent — his cheery disposition hides a deep melancholy as

often as not, and while he never grows visibly wrath, neither does he ever forget a grudge. Most of his days are spent half-asleep, lending inspiration to artists, poets, and others whose work is done half in dreams. He's unconcerned if his interventions flout heavenly law — he's too high-ranking, too well-connected, and too beautiful for any real consequences to stick.

Yaogin's current fascination is a burgeoning iconic art movement in the Realm. He's employed his considerable influence to protect the movement from the Immaculate Order, including recruiting Sidereals to aid him. His interference complicates matters for the Bronze Faction, but it's far from the greatest threat to the Realm's stability. Better to indulge him and they clean up the occasional mess than risk rousing the typically apolitical Yaogin's ire against them.

Yaogin was once but mortal, but his beauty captured Venus' heart. She stole him away to Heaven and blessed him with divinity, that his beauty might endure for eternity. Alas, the two are no longer on friendly terms. Whatever ended their legendary romance, neither will speak of it, but the Lute's higher echelons are curiously devoid of art depicting the Maiden of Serenity.

Gentle Pherula, Divine Provisioner of Maiden Tea

Pherula is the goddess of Creation's most common contraceptive and abortifacient. She's caught up in several illegal schemes to promote the use of maiden tea or facilitate its spread throughout Creation, hoping to bolster her purview's importance within the Division of Serenity. If she rises high enough, the Bureau of Humanity or the Bureau of Nature might recruit her to a position as division head. She offers preferential treatment or sizable bribes to Sidereals who aid in her schemes, whether by carrying out her designs in Creation or helping cover her tracks from the censors.

Pherula is not just the goddess of the maiden tea, but the tutelary guardian of those born when the tea proves ineffective. She answers their prayers with blessings of health and succor, symbolically adopting them as her own God-Blooded children. On occasion, she's recruited Sidereals to whisk away unplanned-for children born into truly dire straits, that her wards might dwell with her in Heaven. Some return to Creation once they've come of age; others work alongside the Celestial Provisioner in the Cerulean Lute; yet more blaze a path of their own in Yu-Shan.

Yo-Ping, Celestial Minister of Peace

Bureau to Heaven Liaison to the Division of Serenity

Yo-Ping longs for the First Age, when he could tally up how many days had passed in Creation without a war. He heads the Bureau of Heaven's Division of Peace and is a favorite of Venus' spirit court, but his fortunes has fallen far since his division's heyday. Under his watch, the Division of Peace has lost much of its former standing within the Bureau of Heaven since the Solar Purge plunged Creation into a seemingly ceaseless cavalcade of wars. Meticulous to a fault and often accused of micromanagement, Yo-Ping hasn't let the Age of Sorrows lower his standards.

Yo-Ping works closely with the Cerulean Lute, coordinating efforts to secure Creation's peace and prosperity and currying favor with Venus' Chosen. He seeks to restore the Division of Peace to the prominence it once held, and few are better positioned to intervene in favor of Creation's peace than the Division of Serenity's agents. They're also potential allies in his division's conflict with the Bureau of Heaven's increasingly aggressive Division of War, which sees the Time of Tumult as an opportunity to conquer the Division of Peace and absorb it as a subdivision.

Yo-Ping has never fully let go of his grudge against the Bronze Faction over the Solar Purge, but with the advent of the Realm, he's found common cause with them. Much as the Realm appalls him, he believes it still prevents more conflict than it creates. Much of his time is spent aiding in the faction's efforts to stave

off or prevent the Realm's coming civil war in the Realm, but he still feels no loyalty for the Bronze. In these desperate times, he'll work with almost anyone, and would sacrifice the rest of the Bronze agenda in a heartbeat to advance the cause of peace.

The Division of Battles

The Division of Battles oversees every form of conflict, from the clash of armies to words spoken in anger between lovers. It sees to the destinies of soldiers and generals, of mercenary companies and camp followers. The Time of Tumult has plunged Creation into chaos the likes of which hasn't been seen for centuries, and Mars' Chosen lack the resources to attend to every battle that breaks out. Their work is triage, doing what can be done to see destiny fulfilled and never looking back on the cost.

The division's headquarters, the Crimson Panoply of Victory, resembles an encampment of massive tents. What seems to be cloth is actually jade, carved so delicately as to look wind-rustled. Much of the manse is devoted to war rooms, arsenals, gymnasiums, arenas, and training grounds; the Crimson Panoply's offices are spartan compared to those of its sister divisions. The panoply is ringed with the ambrosia-smithies of divine armorers and weaponsmiths, legendary schools of martial arts, and the workshops of meticulous prayerwrights who sculpt the impossibly detailed miniature statuettes that the division used as models, commendations, and game pieces.

Institutional Culture

The Division of Battles is run with an army's rigid chain of command. Every member knows to whom they're accountable and whom they're responsible for. Orders are promulgated, received, and executed with military efficiency. As they say in the trenches, the shit rolls downhill — while the Crimson Panoply's Sidereals enjoy the same high status as their peers in other divisions, the lower ranks' workload is thankless and grueling. The division's efficiency often comes at the cost of morale among lower-ranking gods, now more than ever.

At its best, this forges bonds of camaraderie among the Crimson Panoply's gods; at its worst, it breeds resentment against the division's higher-ranking spirits and its Sidereal agents. On several occasions in the division's history, such tensions have seen it grind to a halt, often leading to reforms or reorganization within the Crimson Panoply.

Working Relationships

The Crimson Panoply's military chain of command sometimes meshes poorly with the way things are done in other divisions. It's often seen as humorless, inflexible, and rank-obsessed. Others view the Division of Battles as reliable, pragmatic, and goal-oriented, a bastion of discipline amid the corrupt Celestial Bureaucracy. Much as the division's leadership would like to limit their cooperation solely to those divisions with similarly rigid command structures, necessity rarely permits them to pick and choose.

The Division of Battles works closely with the Bureau of Heaven's Division of War and the Bureau of Seasons' Aerial Legion. It orchestrates training drills and heavenly wargames for them and coordinates deployments of martial deities. It conducts security operations in concert with the Department of Celestial Concerns, a duty that's grown increasingly prominent as the Getimians have struck at Heaven itself. It also maintains closing working relationships with a number of gods in both Bureaus of Heaven and Humanity whose purviews concern warfare: war orphans, weaponry, battlefield illnesses, and so on.

Notable Figures

Ashen-Eyed Ludall, Chosen of Mars

Many in the Bureau feel that Ashen-Eyed Ludall chairs the prestigious Convention on Hell solely by nepotism. Son of Verumpira, Heaven's Ambassador to Hell, Ludall's undeniably young for the position at a mere century, and has become a target of for those of his seniors who feel the chair should have rightfully gone to them. With his control over the convention cast into doubt, Ludall prepares for a fierce battle, seeking allies in his peers and juniors.

Ludall is headstrong and eager to prove himself worthy of his chair. He doesn't shy away from challenges, often seeking them out to unwisely. An accomplished master of the glaive and Celestial Circle sorcerer, many demons have fallen before him. While his control of the convention is challenged, none dispute that he deserves a place in the convention

Ludall witnessed the Realm's atrocities firsthand, and has strong political sympathies for the Gold Faction. However, in his current embattled position, he can't afford any more enemies — prudence requires that he toe the Bronze Faction's line more often than not.

Hu Dai Liang, Shogun of the Crimson Banner, God of Decisive Stratagems

Hu Dai Liang is among Heaven's finest warriors and generals. None have ever seen her remove her red-lacquered armor, nor is her hand ever far from her direlance — a spear whose length changes as she wills, adorned with her crimson banner of office. She also sports of a pair of butterflies' wings, rosy red and etched with black. Shogun Hu's leadership is as deliberate and far-seeing as any Gateway master's game. Her severe personality would put the most rigid martinets to shame, but not out of cruelty — her harsh discipline is the flame with which she tempers the division's members into weapons of Heaven.

Hu Dai Liang a great believer in the power of violence to effect change, and often advocates for surgical strikes against enemies of fate. As the Mask of Winters laid siege to Thorns, Hu Dai Liang advocated for deploying the Aerial Legion against his armies and the undead monstrosity Juggernaut, but her wisdom went unheeded. Had the rest of the Bureaucracy listened, she's convinced Thorns would never have fallen. She loathes such indecisiveness — while she continues to coordinate with her counterparts in other bureaus, she no longer relies on them, reserving such trust solely for those in the Division of Battles.

Shogun Hu has long been a staunch ally of the Bronze Faction. She fought alongside it in the Solar Purge, beginning their longstanding political alliance. She goes to great lengths to ensure her impartiality as division head can't be questioned, lest the appearance of corruption compromise the division's discipline and morale. Outside of division business, though, she's a reliable ally for the Bronze, whether backing them in destiny planning committees, bestowing her blessings on Wyld Hunts, or instilling a sense of discipline in a disreputable faction member.

The brewing Realm civil weighs heavily on Hu Dai Liang as she works to delay it until she can seize the advantage. While she has little intention of betraying her old allies, the Bronze Faction would be just as sure to suffer if she were to be ousted as division head by the likes of Siakal or Ahlat. She's begun recruiting Sidereal for off-the-books assignments to sabotage other war-gods' preparations, mount false flag operations in the satrapies, and retrieve ancient weapons stored in the Scarlet Empress' secret arsenal-vaults.

Bahal Hesh, Preceptor of Ten Thousand Styles

The sagacious Bahal Hesh oversees the martial arts and those who practice them. His battle prowess is formidable even among the ranks of war-gods, but his wisdom, insight, and understanding of the martial arts surpass even his legendary skill in them. He's one of the rare few spirits to have ever mastered the reality-warping styles created by the Sidereal Exalted, though he rarely practices them. Many in Heaven remember how Hesh defeated the behemoth Parnassian using the Pattern Spider Touch, but few know of

the grievous spiritual affliction he suffered thereafter, one whose scars he still feels today.

Hesh brings a strong sense of morality to his work, acting as the secret judge of all who study his purview. He prizes those who fight in defense of the weak, oppose unjust authority, and pass down martial traditions, while reviling cruelty, disregard for life, and self-serving pride.

Martial artists whose deeds catch his eye earn the privilege of a duel against him — though it's not until the fight begins that they learn whether this is a reward or a punishment. For the righteous, this is a friendly bout meant to teach them and inspire further greatness. Those he deems wicked face a far different Hesh, one whose lessons are conveyed through career-ending injuries. Calling the Preceptor's attention to the misdeeds of one's enemies can be an effective tactic against superior opposition, so long as one's own motives are impeccable.

Rashan, Divine Arbiter of Trial by Combat

Division of Battles Liaison to the Bureau of Seasons

Rashan is a storied veteran of the Divine Revolution, entrusted with the Division of Battles' authority to deploy the Aerial Legion by Hu Dai Liang. She prioritizes results over proper procedure, at times to Shogun Hu's frustration — but the Crimson Panoply's leader knows the benefits of a trusted subordinate willing to work outside the rules. At times, she's circumvented the Aerial Legion's leadership entirely, authorizing limited deployments of rank-and-file elementals and leading them into skirmishes against the likes of faerie legions. Shogun Hu publicly censures such conduct, but pointedly refrains from any reprimand of Sidereal recruited into Rashan's schemes.

As divine arbiter, Rashan presides over trials by combat from afar when her rites are performed, subtly intervening based on her judgment of the accused. She's also the mother of two other great divinities: Sunipa, the Eastern Goddess of War, and Shield of a Different Day, one of Great Forks' patron gods (**Exigents**, p. XX). While her daughters have at times worked together for purposes legitimate and otherwise, millennia of interpersonal conflict and accusations of nepotism have sorely strained their relationship with their mother. While Rashan has little desire to impinge on her daughters' independence, she shows great favor to Sidereal who've aided them.

The Division of Secrets

Mystery and revelation, truth and lies, knowledge and ignorance — such things are the Division of Secrets' remit. As Heaven's foremost intelligence service, it has hands and eyes *everywhere*: monitoring potential threats, cataloguing assets and resources, compromising Heaven's enemies, and gathering secrets for the division's Infinite Archive. Gods in every branch of the Celestial Bureaucracy rely on the division's savants, records, and intelligence-gathering, passing its arcanelly dense requisition forms onto their secretarial staff. They're also the gaolers of many of Heaven's prisoners, who vanish into the division's midnight cells.

The division is headquartered in the Forbidding Manse of Ivy, an austere manor of white marble whose walls are covered with creeping vines. Its labyrinthine hallways are filled with libraries and archives, heavily-secured vaults and gaols, sorcerous laboratories, and garden courtyards perfect for discreet conversation. Outside the Manse lies a warren of back alleys and shadowy corners, packed tight with bookshops, coffeehouses, darkened salons, and purveyors of scribal supplies. Only the foolish trust in the privacy they find here — the division is always watching from a window or listening at a door.

Institutional Culture

Information security is paramount within the Manse. All of the division's operations are

compartmentalized, even internally, let alone with other branches of the Celestial Bureaucracy. Information is shared on a need-to-know basis, leaving many low-ranking spirits with little idea of what project they're working on. Work takes place behind closed doors and mystical wards, while memoranda and other paper are frequently written in code to further stymie snooping.

Despite this, the division is a surprisingly friendly place. Discourses and debates over tea are a regular fixture of the workday. Documents containing information that's amusing or interesting are often left out in the Manse's tightly-secured offices for anyone with the necessary clearance to see. Colleagues poke and prod at one another's security measures and ciphers to expose potential vulnerabilities, satisfy personal curiosity, and express professional admiration for their peers. Such competitions typically stay friendly, though the division's leadership has had to intervene in cases of sensitive information being leaked and vendetta by blackmail. The upper ranks use this tradition to identify employees in need of further instruction in subtlety and security — and whose clearance should be strictly limited until such training's complete.

Working Relationships

The Division of Secrets plays a key role in supplying intelligence to the entire Celestial Bureaucracy. It takes pains not to be standoffish, inviting official visitors to one of the many coffeehouses, parlors, or salons surrounding the Manse while their paperwork is processed. It welcomes Yu-Shan's wider public into its outbuildings to peruse unrestricted texts and attended lectures by learned sages. Maintaining good relations with the rest of Heaven is essential to the division's role, as is observing those with reason to visit the Manse.

Despite this, the division's reputation isn't as positive as they'd like. They're widely seen as the least cooperative of the five divisions — few remember the routine requests it fulfills, but none can forget when the Manse stonewalls an urgent inquiry without so much as an explanation. Many of the Celestial Bureaucracy's other branches also resent the division's demands for broad access to information and the bureaucratic lengths to which they'll go to obtain it. As a result, those who work most closely with the Manse are both its closest allies and its worst enemies, with little else between.

The closest of the division's contentious working partners are the Bureaus of Heaven and Humanity. It coordinates with the Bureau of Heaven's Department of Celestial Concerns on counterintelligence operations and heavenly security, and works closely with many divisions of the Department of Abstract Matters. The Manse's gods have counterparts in countless divisions of the Bureau of Humanity, working together on issues of scholarship, crime, religion, and many more. The Manse's only uncomplicated working relationships are with its sister divisions, though jokes at the expense of its rigorous security and arcane procedure are common even within the Bureau of Destiny.

Notable Figures

The Green Lady, Chosen of Jupiter

The Green Lady heads the Convention on the Dead and is an expert — perhaps *the* expert — on espionage and infiltration. She's passed herself off as everything from a merchant prince's prodigal child to a sorcerer's bound demon. She vanishes utterly into her resplendent destinies and cover identities, using mind-warping magic to restructure her own personality and memories.

When she's not wearing another's identity, she comes across as cautious but friendly, perpetually exhausted but never ill-humored. In politics, she's staunchly Bronze, often working with them and the Immaculate Order's Wyld Hunts to bring down undead Anathema. None can tell how much of this is just another mask; even her oldest colleagues and closest friends.

An experienced necromancer of the Ivory Circle, the Green Lady has taken interest in affairs of the Underworld since her Exaltation in First Age's final century and swiftly found her way to the chair of the Convention on the Dead. With the Underworld being seen as largely subdued by the Old Realm's exorcists and necromancers, giving the role to a junior Sidereal was barely considered a risk. The First Age's end put the lie to that, leaving an inexperienced Green Lady faced with an Underworld whose horrors had been set free from their fetters. Many expected her to resign, but at her mentor's urging, she persisted, rising to the challenge as she conducted intelligence operations and intrigues throughout the Underworld.

When Thorns fell, more than a millennium later, the now-legendary Green Lady was prepared to head what become one of the Bureau's highest priorities. The convention's vastly expanded budget supports operations to contain and neutralize undead horrors, cultivate alliances among the dead, and follow up on reports of the Abyssal Exalted. She remains active in the field, having spent much of the last five years in deep cover among the courts of Stygia and the inner circles of the major Underworld's power players, though she still directs Heaven's efforts from behind enemy lines, leaving her reports in dead drops and coded missives.

Nara-O, Gatekeeper of the Forbidding Manse, Lord of Secrets Untold

The Forbidding Manse's head, Nara-O of the Hundred Veils, is a living enigma. All traces of their identity and history prior to claiming their purview of secrets yet to be told have been erased. Their appearance is shrouded by a countless layers of blue and gray silks, fluttering in the air as if by gentle wind. Their voice never rises above a whisper. They move silently and unseen through the Forbidding Manse — many of Jupiter's Chosen have had the startling experience of Nara-O appearing behind them to whisper an order or question in their ear. Whether this is a quirk of their inhuman nature or a sign of an all-too-human sense of humor remains a matter of debate.

As far as the Bureau of Destiny can tell, Nara-O's foremost priority is their duty to the Division of Secrets — if they have any selfish motivations, they've kept them well-hidden. On the rare occasions when the taciturn god has discussed the matter, they speak of their work as an almost religious devotion to Jupiter, a purpose far greater than the petty politics of Heaven. Their relationship to the Maiden of Secrets is a fiercely debated topic within the Forbidding Manse — it's been speculated that they're Jupiter's child, her lover, some aspect of her nature that she removed from herself, or simply just a mask worn by the Maiden.

Nara-O has access to every piece of sensitive information the division's gathered, and puts it to use to promote the Division of Secrets' interests. Many in Heaven seek to curry favor with the Lord of Secrets Untold to gain an advantage over a rival or unravel some mystery that touches on their goals. Nara-O's willing to share his secrets to suplicants who could be useful assets for the Forbidding Manse. If their information is incomplete, the division head often recruits junior Sidereals, providing whatever leads they can and turning the young Circle loose to follow them up. But despite their strong sense of purpose, Nara-O isn't entirely above the Celestial Bureaucracy's corruption. For those who can offer the god a secret that they don't already possess, there are few things in the Forbidding Manse's archives that can't be had.

Xaos, Scholar of the Undiscovered

Woe unto Xaos, He Who Peers Beyond the Veil, Scholar of the Undiscovered! As the Fair Folk poured through Creation's borders in the Great Contagion, Xaos ventured into the Wyld's uttermost depths in hopes of uncovering the secret to their defeat. He found nothing, and returned to Heaven irrevocably warped by the touch of chaos. He's tormented by visions of things beyond describing, never knowing whether these are figments of the Wyld or glimpses of some awful truth. He conceals his ever-shifting

flesh behind a curtain of bamboo fabric, for even looking upon his form imperils the mind. He's always delighted by visitors, a garrulous and convivial host. Nara-O encourages young Sidereals to visit him, as Chaos is prone to brooding and great melancholy otherwise.

While Chaos is counted as a hero of Heaven for his sacrifice, most see him as an object of pity, much to his displeasure. He's sought out some of the greatest sorcerers, mystics, and healers of Creation and Heaven alike, yet none have broken his terrible curse. He pays exorbitant bribes to Sidereals willing to follow up on rumors of possible cures, leaving no stone unturned. His hopes have long since died, but his pride as a god of the Division of Secrets won't let him abandon the search.

Despite all he's suffered, Chaos still plays an important role within the Bureau of Destiny. Within the Forbidding Manse, he specializes in missions involving secrets too dangerous to reveal directly, dictating cryptic mission briefings and taking the first glance at perilous texts. He's also a trusted advisor of the Convention on the Wyld. Field work assigned by these cells is often inexplicable; one team was sent simply to ensure that no one pronounced a particular phoneme around a random stablehand on a particular day.

Ydia, Sub-Director of Looted Tombs

Bureau of Humanity Liaison to the Division of Secrets

Ydia's position as god of grave robbery understates her true importance. Once a minor functionary of the Bureau of Humanity, she's risen to great prominence as the divine patron of the Second Age's countless scavenger princes and the bureau's liaison to the Division of Secrets. She's a brash, irrepressible trickster who cares little for proper procedure and the wishes of her superiors. Not content with the prominence that the Second Age has brought to her office, she seeks to rise ever higher.

Ydia's current aim is the position now held by Amoth City-Smiter, God of Tumbled Ruins (p. XX). Such an ambition greatly exceeds her political capital for now, but Ydia's cultivated a network of relationships with low-ranking gods slighted by Amoth, divine criminals, and a handful of Sidereals and Heaven's Dragons willing to aid her. Secrecy is paramount to her success — if Amoth catches wind of her schemes before she's ready, she's likely to wind up imprisoned beneath a mountain for the next few centuries at least.

Since the Solars' return, many of Ydia's assignments have involved monitoring the tombs of the First Age's Lawgivers and reporting on those young Chosen who delve them. She'd find this terribly boring if the Unconquered Sun's Chosen weren't such fascinating figures. Impressed by the revitalized Gold Faction's audacity, she seeks to curry favor with them, sending copies of her reports to her Sideréal contacts long before they're submitted them to the Bureau of Humanity. She also provides them to Lytek (p. XX), having found a fast friend in him over their shared passion for stories of the Chosen. He's made overtures at recruiting her to the Division of Exaltation, though she's yet to give up on her ambitions within the Bureau of Humanity for now.

The Division of Endings

The Division of Endings oversees the conclusion of all things: lives, ideas, nations, eras, and all other transient things. Most in Heaven think only of the grim work of bringing matters to their appointed ends when they think of the division, but this overlooks its many other duties. Much of the division's day-to-day work involves recording the details of endings and ensuring that they're marked with the proper rites and ceremonies. For every undead abomination brought low by the blades of Saturn's Chosen, countless more never get the chance to rise from their graves thanks to the funeral rites the division promulgates.

The division's headquarters, the Violet Bier of Sorrows, rises high above its nearby outbuildings like a towering cenotaph, its long shadow plunging its surroundings into perpetual twilight. The Violet Bier is a somber place, its dark draped halls and silent chambers lit dimly by lanterns of purple flame or not at all. Within its walls can be found memorials to fallen gods, poison gardens, meditation chambers, and archives of the Bureau's most perilous texts. Outside the Violet Bier, the atmosphere is far less somber — alehouses, gambling dens, and dance halls cater to off-duty employees. While their exteriors are drab and colorless, a riot of color and noise lies just behind their sound-proofed doors, offering a reprieve from the division's solemnity.

Institutional Culture

The Division of Endings' culture is as solemn as its purpose. While all the Bureau's divisions expect professionalism from their members, none go so far as the Violet Bier. Personal agendas, romance, and frivolous diversions are left at the door; the work of Saturn demands the undivided attention of those in the division. Those who struggle against such strictures receive no formal punishment, but the cold disregard of their peers and superiors is often worse. In the Bureau's less severe divisions, one often hears jokes about young Reckoners disciplined for speaking too loudly (that is, above a whisper) or inappropriate facial expressions in public (i.e., smiling).

The grim work of Saturn's Chosen takes a toll on them, but it's easier to bear together than alone. After-work drinks or entertainment are a nearly daily affair, giving the division's Sidereals a chance to fraternize, unwind, and cut loose after a long shift spent in somber silence. Others find joy in pursuing esoteric hobbies: crafting miniature daiklaves, collecting insects, or courtly card games long forgotten to Creation. When a spirit or Sidereal has need of an expert in niche fields of study and bizarre minutiae, the Violet Bier is the first place that those in the know look.

Working Relationships

The Division of Endings works more closely with other bureaus than any of its sister divisions — with a rare few exceptions, every branch of the Celestial Bureaucracy oversees at least some things that must eventually come to an end. Few enjoy the experience, even under the best of circumstances; the cold professionalism and stifling formality of the Violet Bier rarely make for genial working relationships. They're well-respected, with a reputation for diligence and selfless duty, but that doesn't endear them to their colleagues in the Bureaucracy's less morbid branches.

The Violet Bier works closely with both the Bureau of Humanity and the Bureau of Nature in matters of life and death, as well as the offices of Taru-Han, Lady of Souls (p. XX). The Second Age has seen such collaboration become far more frequent, much to the distress of these institutional partners. The Department of Celestial Concerns refers high-priority internal affairs matters to the Division of Endings, letting Saturn's Chosen take point — and take the heat from those with a bone to pick with their investigators.

Notable Figures

Iselsi Dogara, Chosen of Saturn

A legendary physician and a grandmaster of Citrine Poxes of Contagion style, Iselsi Dogara is sought out by gods and Exalted suffering from maladies beyond mortal ken. When a Sidereal returns from a mission infested with parasitic demons or with a sapling growing from the stump of a severed limb, Dogara is the man to turn to. He enjoys the challenge, to be sure, but enjoys the favors he extracts from his patients all the more.

Dogara was born into House Iselsi in its halcyon days, and his Dynastic upbringing still shows in his haughty manner and decadent tastes. A Bronze Faction devotee in his early days, he was a natural choice for assignments involving the Immaculate Order or the All-Seeing Eye, providing opportunities to stay in touch with his Dragon-Blooded kin that few other Sidereals could enjoy.

The fall of House Iselsi dealt Dogara a shattering blow, breaking his faith in the Bronze Faction. They didn't give the order, but neither did they try to intercede with the Scarlet Empress or stop the other Great Houses from picking Iselsi's bones clean. He supports his family from Heaven's shadows, spending the bulk of his amassed favors to supply them with information, resources, and materiel. He relies greatly on his fellow Sidereals for this, but brings few into his confidences. Secrecy is as crucial to him as to his kin — were the Bronze Faction to learn of the Vendetta's full extent and the part that Dogara's played in it, his life may well come crashing down.

The Realm's impending collapse has become an obsession for Dogara. There's never been a greater opportunity for the Vendetta, but that's cold comfort if it leaves him as the last Iselsi. He's surprised even himself by returning to the Bronze fold, hoping against hope that the faction actually can avert civil war, or at least delay it. Few among the faction's elders remember him fondly, but he's gone to great lengths to curry favor among its younger members.

Wayang, Mourner of the Violet Bier, Lord of Silence

Wayang leads the Division of Endings with a light but firm touch. Order is his watchword, but the centuries have taught him the limits of micromanagement — the independence and initiative of the division's Sidereal agents is an asset he's come to appreciate. His appearance is that of a living shadow clad in midnight silks and ornaments of onyx and black jade, featureless save for his glowing yellow eyes. He cannot speak, employing sign language for day-to-day conversation and elaborate shadow plays for speeches and other formal occasions. He learns sign languages as a hobby — doing so is one of the few reasons he ever visits Creation.

The Lord of Silence is a solitary figure, counting none as his friend. He's neither cruel nor merciful, a remorselessly efficient leader who expects the same from his subordinates. Much of his time is spent in the Violet Bier's darkest chambers, planning the division's operations and poring over reports, but his life doesn't stop at the division's doors. He enjoys Yu-Shan's theaters, galleries, and museums, so long as he can enjoy them alone. On at least three occasions, he's been convinced to join its Sidereal for drinks, though he pointedly ignores any mention of this.

Wayang's purview as god of silence affords him a unique understanding of death. He hears the whispers of the Neverborn within the Violet Bier's darkened chambers, occasionally gleaning cryptic insights into the Underworld. If this has corrupted him, he hides it well — but with the Deathlords now near the top of the Bureau's priorities, it's brought him under close scrutiny from the both Department of Celestial Concerns and the Convention on the Dead.

Zenesh, Executor of Royal Succession

Zenesh, Executor of Royal Succession, is there whenever a hereditary monarch breathes their last — in spirit, if not in fact. In the First Age, she was little more than a jumped-up clerk, but the Age of Sorrows is a graveyard of kings. Zenesh has seized every opportunity to promote her purview's significance, granting her blessing to palace coups, assassination attempts, and bloody peasant uprisings. Far-seeing and methodical, she takes great pains to ensure she avoids the censors' scrutiny. She never dirties her own hands, relying on agents and intermediaries: her priesthood of assassins and revolutionaries, her God-Blooded children, terrestrial gods on the take, and outcastes and Exigents of mercenary inclination.

Savvy as Zenesh is, she can't keep it up forever. She's yet to come under investigation, but her name's come up in more than one audit. She's lying low for now, unable to make use of any intermediaries who could be traced back to her. She's made overtures to a handful of Sidereals and Heaven's Dragons whom she suspects are willing to work outside the law, offering the assistance of her network of contacts in Creation to those who carry out her will.

Izaros the Final Reckoner, God of Bankruptcy

Division of Endings Liaison to the Bureau of Heaven

In many places in Creation, merchants keep the first coin they earn as a talisman, piercing it through the middle and hanging it on a string in their shop or stall. While this is simply tradition for some, others understand its true meaning: a prayer to Izaros, God of Bankruptcy, that he might turn away his ever-calculating eye.

Alas, the Final Reckoner is not one for bribes. Humorless, severe, and incorruptible, he's perfectly suited for internal affairs, acting as the Division of Endings' liaison to the Department of Celestial Concerns in such matters. Not even the slightest accounting discrepancy escapes his sight, and his knowledge of Yu-Shan's laws concerning business and finance is comprehensive. He's far from an imposing figure — a reedy, soft-spoken god in a drab but well-tailored suit — but he commands the fear of many in the Celestial Bureaucracy nonetheless.

There's one small mercy for those who come under Izaros's investigation: he's a true believer in the letter — not the spirit! — of the law. As far as he's concerned, innocence on a technicality is innocence, full stop. This occasionally leaves him at loggerheads with the Department of Celestial Concerns, but he's yet to back down. If Celestial Concerns isn't happy with him, they should write better laws. Nonetheless, the technically innocent should take care not to anger him in the process: making an enemy of the god of bankruptcy is rarely a sound financial decision.

Conventions

While each division wields enormous skill and insight for planning, enacting, and troubleshooting destinies within their fields, the messy realities of Creation often demand an interdisciplinary approach. To collaborate on such matters, Sidereals participate in working groups called *conventions* — the primary means by which Heaven identifies issues with destiny, devises solutions, and takes action. Most Sidereals belong to at least one convention. The newly Exalted attend their mentor's convention meetings as part of their training, often joining one of them once they're ready to take part in convention business. While a Sidereal's division is a permanent assignment, conventions are less restrictive — transfers between conventions aren't uncommon over the course of a Sidereal's career, and most eventually hold seats on multiple conventions.

Directional Conventions

Largest and most influential are the five directional conventions, each tasked with high-level oversight of one of Creation's cardinal Directions. In addition to enormous institutional expertise regarding its Direction's states, cultures, and geopolitics, each directional convention maintains numerous safehouses and bases of operation scattered across the Direction, along with networks of contacts and agents available to members on assignment throughout the region. On paper, their membership makes up a majority of the Fivescore Fellowship, though this is somewhat inflated — every other convention sends liaisons to the directional conventions, which are counted among their ranks.

The Convention on the Center has always been the most well-funded and prestigious, overseeing the

affairs of the Blessed Isle throughout the First Age, Shogunate, and Realm. Since the Solar Purge, it has also been the stronghold of the Bronze Faction and their attempt to stabilize Creation. Chejop Kejak is the convention's unquestioned chairperson, but he more and more often delegates his duties to allies and promising juniors, testing their judgment and leadership.

The Convention on the West is led by the painstaking hand of Jha-ma-Etum, whose economic acumen has shaped the convention's culture over the centuries, backing trade companies and other mercantile ventures in the West to cultivate them as Bureau assets. The convention's culture is meticulous, sometimes to the point of distraction — members are occasionally buried under intelligence briefings and exhaustive reports, while the convention's leadership investigates unexplained events more often and more carefully than any other directional convention. Most of these investigations come to nothing, frustrating junior Sidereals assigned to them — but once they've had such an investigation bear fruit, the value of diligence becomes clear.

Under the leadership of Midnight Tiger Killer, **the Convention on the North** takes a reactive posture, devoting its resources to operational readiness over long-term planning. The convention's leadership triages threats to fate and deploys its limited resources in response to unscheduled pestilence, rogue spirit courts, Fair Folk invaders, and the indescribable horrors that stalk the Northwest. The convention also works closely with the Bureau of Seasons, to manage the timing and impact of the Direction's most perilous weather.

The Convention on the East is well-funded for a reason. Between the Dragon-Blooded polities of Lookshy and Prasad, the petty wars and ancient magics of the Scavenger Lands, and the wonders of the Dreaming Sea, it has a monstrous workload. Its meetings are hectic but well-ordered, moving through proposed destinies and requests for Sidereal intervention in a brisk, no-nonsense fashion. Its chair, the First Age elder Howl of the Mountain, is a staunch Gold Faction partisan, but their personal ties to many of the Bronze Faction's most prominent members smooth the convention's dealings with them.

The Convention on the South is often seen as a plum assignment: not as prestigious as the Center, but not nearly as demanding, thanks to the Convention on the East taking oversight of the Dreaming Sea. The South still poses abundant challenges to the convention's members, but they're rarely shorthanded. Its chair rotates frequently compared to other conventions, and younger members often receive opportunities for leadership roles early in their time with the convention. The current chair, the affable Shepherd of the North Star, is well-suited to the convention's laissez faire culture, letting consensus drive its agenda and giving members ample leeway to include personal flourishes in the destinies proposed by the convention.

Special Conventions

Special conventions are organized to handle specific issues of great importance to Creation, coordinating with directional conventions to address threats and crises. Some minor conventions exist only for a specific purpose — wrangling out the details of a politically complicated destiny, usually — but most are standing organizations with specific remits. While many conventions deal with supernatural issues, others help plan more mundane destinies: natural disasters, cultural diffusion, diseases, and especially trade. Wherever ledgers are involved, destiny must ensure that figures sum as they are expected.

The Convention on Hell is among the oldest and most influential special conventions, the nerve center for the Bureau's demon-hunting efforts. It also sees oversees intelligence-gathering on infernalist cults and their plots, like An-Teng's Seven-Stranded Vine, the Sunless Chapel in the Northwest, and the strange occurrences surrounding the city of Dajaz. The Infernals are an unresolved question for the convention — some members argue that the self-proclaimed Chosen of the Yozis fall clearly within its remit, while others believe such a decision is unsupported by the intelligence available. Further

complicating matters, the convention's chair, Ashen-Eyed Ludall (p. XX), is seen by many within the convention as a weak and inexperienced leader. The convention has become a den of vipers, with prominent members scheming to take Ludall's place or wrestle him under their thumb.

While **the Convention on Rogue Assets** was established to monitor and liaise with Sidereals who've left Bureau's employ, it's become increasingly dominated with the matter of Rakan Thulio and his Getimian allies (p. XX). Its chair, the intrepid warrior-exorcist Strike the Heart, has capitalized on Getimian attacks against Yu-Shan to reallocate Bureau resources to the once-minor convention's operational budget. Under this new remit, its members coordinate with the Department of Celestial Concerns on matters of heavenly security, surveil Yu-Shan for signs of Getimian subversion, and conduct operations against Rakan Thulio in Creation.

The Convention on the Wyld coordinates missions to monitor or halt fae incursions, track Wyld storms, and map the chimerical geography of chaos. While it's among the oldest conventions, the lion's share of its elders fell in battle against the Fair Folk invasion, leaving today's convention a bastion of (comparatively) new blood. Its chair, the sorcerer Drowning Opal, has risen to the occasion with distinction, but since the Scarlet Empress' disappearance, they've grown increasingly obsessed with the Realm Defense Grid's secrets at the expense of their duties as leader. Much of the convention's business is now handled by the monkey-god Enja, a scholarly spirit who was once Opal's familiar.

A number of other special conventions exist. **The Convention on Natural Disasters** works with the Bureau of Seasons on hurricanes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, and other cataclysms, and oversees the containment of elemental dragons who've grown apocalyptically powerful (p. XX). **The Convention on Disease** has fallen from the prominence it held during the Great Contagion and its immediate aftermath, though the Age of Sorrows still teems with other plagues.

The War in Heaven

Every Sidereal has heard the story of Rakan Thulio the Sleepwalker, eldest of the Fivescore Fellowship and Heaven's greatest traitor. His rebellion against Heaven began when he discovered that a long-ago heartbreak was destined to be, caused by his fellow Sidereals' intervention rather than his beloved's own decision. For this betrayal, he declared war against Heaven itself. Throughout the Shogunate's early days, he was a persistent thorn in the Fivescore Fellowship's side, thwarting destinies and recruiting rogue Sidereal to his vendetta. Then, a few centuries ago, he seemed to vanish. Many assumed him dead, having finally lived out his allotted span.

Roughly fifty years ago, Rakan Thulio returned to take his revenge, accompanied by a cadre of impossible Chosen, the Getimian Exalted. Between his knowledge of Heaven's vulnerabilities and the fate-warping might of the Getimians, his war against Heaven has become the greatest threat to the Celestial Bureaucracy since the Great Contagion. Getimians have launched dozens of attacks against Heaven and the Bureau of Destiny, striking quickly or in secret before withdrawing to safety. Not every strike has been successful; much of what the Bureau of Destiny knows of the Getimians comes from attackers subdued by Sidereal, celestial censors, or powerful martial deities.

Reports from a War in Heaven

"A temporarily unoccupied manse in the Five Auspicious Angles District suffered a catastrophic geomantic imbalance, causing a cascade failure that destroyed the manse and damaged multiple other manses and buildings along the same dragon line. Lion-dogs dispatched to search for survivors encountered sorcerous traps in many of the damaged structures, leaving four permanently dead and sixteen

injured.”

“During a meeting of the Tearful Foxglove Society, the countermeasures put in place for the assembly of venom-gods inexplicably failed. Unshielded exposure to the presence of gods such as Mistress Nerium, goddess of poisonous plants, left multiple spirits in attendance incapacitated for weeks and others with severe spiritual maladies. An investigation by the Division of Endings discovered that none of the Tearful Foxglove Society’s members had called the meeting, and that the invitations were elaborate forgeries.”

“Pattern spiders from the College of the Key reported an attempt by an unknown pattern spider to access the Loom of Fate. The College’s pattern spiders succeeded in killing the intruder, but the Bureau of Destiny has received unconfirmed reports of multiple sightings of other such spiders within the Most Perfect Lotus.”

Getimians

Heaven knows little of Getimians. They’re clearly Exalted, with power to match that of the Sidereals — including a mastery of reality-warping Sidereal Martial Arts. They claim to come from different Creations, only to wake into a world in which they were never born. Those who’ve joined Rakan Thulio blame the Celestial Bureaucracy for this, believing that their memories of another world reveal a destiny that could have come to pass, had Heaven not chosen otherwise. Though many in the Bureau of Destiny are skeptical, it’s a disquieting thought — destiny shouldn’t work that way, but what if it does?

There is much more that Heaven doesn’t know.

The Getimians truly are born of destinies that could have been, but the other Creations they claim to hail from — their Origins — never existed. The strange Chosen come into being at the moment of their Exaltation, though they remember a lifetime’s worth of experiences. They were created by two of the Ancients during the Divine Revolution, now known as the demon princes Oramus, the Dragon Beyond the World, who sees all things that are not, and the eternally slumbering Sacheverell, the Lidless Eye Who Sees, who would know all that is if he ever woke.

Getimian Charms snarl and tear at the threads of fate, infecting Creation with the false reality of their Origins. Their Essence is of twofold nature, both flowing and still, and they can align themselves with one of these aspects through spiritual alchemy. By aligning their Essence’s nature with Sidereal Martial Arts styles, they’re able to access the Enlightenment keyword (p. XX), a power that no one else but the Sidereals can wield.

Other Pieces on the Board

The Bureau of Destiny has assets, allies, and enemies in Creation and beyond.

Rogue Agents

Prodigal stars, those Sidereals who turn down the Bureau’s recruitment efforts, are seen as potential assets who may yet join destiny’s service (p. XX). Rogue Sidereals — those who once served the Bureau of Destiny but have left its service — are a different story. Depending on their motivations for quitting the Bureau, they can be useful allies or dangerous enemies. Those who leave to pursue their own agendas may still maintain close ties with some peers, occasionally lending aid to Bureau agents whose missions bring them into contact. Even if they cut ties with the Fivescore Fellowship entirely, they remain attuned

to destiny, and may resolve snarls and anomalies before the Bureau even finds them. By the same rationale, Sidereals who break from the Bureau on bad terms are still largely left to their own devices, so long as they don't work against Heaven or destiny. Unfortunately, since Rakan Thulio defected from the Bureau, several rogue agents have done exactly that over the centuries, joining him in his War on Heaven.

Dragon-Blooded

The Realm's Scarlet Dynasty is the Bronze Faction's most important ally in Creation (p. XX), but even those who oppose the Bronze stand to benefit from the networks of communication and travel established by the Realm.

Other Dragon-Blooded polities, like Lookshy and Prasad, are much greater liabilities than assets. Without any institutional ties between the Bronze Faction and the likes of the Seventh Legion's Immaculate Faith and the Pure Way to exert a stabilizing influence, planning destinies involving these polities is an often an overwhelming ordeal.

Heaven's Dragons lack official ties to the Bureau, but many have connections with individual Sidereals: allies and enemies, friends and lovers, hired troubleshooters and deniable assets.

Lunars

Lunars have been a thorn in the Bureau's side since the Solar Purge. Although their enmity is reserved for the Bronze Faction, not all Lunars are versed in the Sidereals' internal politics — and with the Bronze having made up a majority of the Fivescore Fellowship throughout its history, not all Lunar elders see a need to correct them. Encounters between such Lunars and independent or Gold Faction Sidereals don't always end in violence, but several Sidereals have fallen to Lunars who mistakenly believed them to be Bronze Faction agents.

There have been instances of cooperation between the Bureau and the Silver Pact in the face of major threats to Creation, often arranged between elders with relationships going back to the First Age. However, the Gold Faction's occasional efforts to establish diplomatic relations with the Pact over the centuries have been unsuccessful. Much of this is the result of a long history of hardliners within the Bronze Faction and the Pact sabotaging attempts at negotiation, but even Lunars who hope to achieve the same goal fear that the Bronze Faction might use it as an opportunity to strike at their old foe.

Solars

Since the Purge, the Solars have been low on the Bureau's list of priorities. While there have been Solars who posed significant complications to Heaven's plans, like the Bull of the North, their rarity has made them a footnote compared to the likes of the Lunar Exalted.

The Gold Faction has supported the few Solars who escaped the Jade Prison as assets against the Realm, doing so under the auspices of the Cult of the Illuminated (p. XX). The Cult has taken on newfound importance within the Gold Faction with the Solars' return, now one of the faction's most important projects.

Exigents

Centuries ago, the Bureau of Heaven succeeded in foisting responsibility for oversight of Exigents onto the Bureau of Destiny, arguing that the Exalted should deal with the Exalted. On paper, the Sidereals are responsible for investigating gods for illicit exchanges of the Exigence and dealing with Exigents who aid their patron gods in violating Heaven's laws. In practice, the Bureau lacks the staffing, resources, and political will to fully care out this function on top of the work of destiny. As long as an Exigent isn't threatening destiny, many Sidereals are willing to overlook a great deal. The Bureau occasionally recruits

Exigents, making use of their unique talents, as well as the connections of those whose patrons are prominent figures in Heaven.

Abyssals and Deathlords

The Deathlords have long been a blind spot for the Bureau, and the Abyssal Exalted are the consequence of this oversight. Despite the Convention on the Dead's best efforts, it wasn't until the Mask of Winters conquered Thorns that the Bureau realized the nature and extent of the threat he represented, a threat now made all the more dire by the honor guard of deathknights that cut through Thorns' defenders. In the years since, the Bureau has gone to great lengths to obtain information on the Abyssals, seeking to understand how these seemingly corrupted Solars have come to serve the Deathlords and how they relate to the breaking of the Jade Prison.

The Convention on the Dead's intelligence operations have confirmed the identities of two other Deathlords — the Black Heron, an assassin-queen of Stygia, and the Walker in Darkness, warrior-priest of the Neverborn and tempter of the living. Others are suspected, with the convention's search focused on the other Signatories of the Stygian Pact who rule that sunless necropolis, as well as a number of other powerful necromancer-kings, ghostly power players, and specters warped by the Neverborn.

Infernals and Demons

The Sidereals have specialized in demon hunting since the First Age, tracking down and neutralizing those who slip the bars of Hell and intervening when sorcerers' demonic retinues threaten to disrupt fate. With the emergence of the Green Sun Princes, this already-high priority has become all the more urgent. Attempts at performing reconnaissance in Malfeas have largely been fruitless this far, owing both to the Demon City's impossibly vast scale and the ancient enmity many demons hold for the Maidens' Chosen.

Mixed Circles

While Sidereals are well-suited for games in which every player plays one of them, they're flexible. Rogue Sidereals and those who never joined the Bureau can easily fit into a Circle with any kind of Exalted, but there are also a number of ways to include Bureau Sidereals in mixed Circles.

Exigents of appropriate power can always fit into a primarily Sidereal Circle as agents or troubleshooters recruited by the Bureau of Destiny. Gold Faction Sidereals could easily work alongside a Circle of **Solars** or **Lunars**. **Getimians**, **Abyssals**, and **Infernals** are enemies far more often than they are allies, but it's possible that one might have been offered a chance to serve the Bureau rather than facing imprisonment or death.

Dragon-Blooded are significantly less powerful than Sidereals, which can be an obstacle to mixed Circle play, but your playgroup may be comfortable with this asymmetry. Heaven's Dragons can always fit into a primarily Sidereal Circle, while Bronze Faction Sidereals might work alongside the Realm's Dragon-Blooded. For more information on mixed Circle games with disparate power levels, see **Crucible of Legends**, p. XX.

Missions for the Bureau of Destiny typically take a backseat in mixed Circle games where a majority of player characters aren't Sidereals. This might be explained by Sidereal player characters being on sabbatical, or it may be that missions simply take place off-screen.

The Sidereal Factions

The Sidereal Exalted are far from unified. Its history is one of debate and shifting alliances, of schism and turbulence hidden behind collegiality and decorum. Such tensions largely center on conflicts between the *Bronze Faction* and the *Gold Faction*, informal but influential political blocs within the Fivescore Fellowship.

The Bronze, born from the conspiracy behind the overthrow of the First Age's Solar Exalted, supports the status quo left in the Solar Purge's wake, safeguarding Creation's stability by maintaining the systems of power that have defined its new age. The Realm is foremost among these, but the Bronze Faction is also involved with other key social and political institutions across Creation.

The Gold Faction have been staunch political opponents of the Bronze Faction throughout its history, but have never had its numbers or a unifying ideology. The Time of Tumult has revitalized the Gold Faction, which now offers a place for any Sidereal whose political agenda opposes the Bronze's status quo, willing to accept greater risks and uncertain outcomes in pursuit of a better world.

The factions aren't political entities, but a web of cliques, alliances, and individual relationships centered on common causes and charismatic leaders. They have no formal membership — joining a faction is a matter of aligning one's self with its leaders, goals, and ideology. While neither faction can officially assign missions, direct destiny planning, or allocate Bureau resources, both have highly-placed members within the Bureau's divisions and conventions willing to do so on their faction's behalf.

Some Sidereals join a faction for reasons unrelated to ideology and philosophy. The Bronze Faction offers unmatched influence and political backing to its adherents: their promotions are fast-tracked, their destiny planning proposals are supported by other Bronze partisans, and the Bronze's vast network of connections is made available to them. The Gold Faction can't offer the same support, but it's willing to aid members in pursuing personal agendas unrelated to factional goals.

For all their differences, the factions have maintained a largely civil — if sometimes frigid — relationship throughout their history. Both see violent conflict as an ugly and unwanted business, unbefitting the Fivescore Fellowship's self-image as selfless servants of destiny, impartial stewards of Creation, and lofty philosopher-sages. Beyond this, many Sidereals see the Fivescore Fellowship as family, brought together by their responsibilities to the Bureau, the shared pain of arcane fate, and centuries of collaboration. In time, even the most acrimonious rivals may grow closer than most people are to their friends.

As a result, the factions largely view their opposite numbers as distinguished opposition, rather than hated adversaries. While their conflicts may be heated, it rarely leaves the Bureau's halls — both factions see value in presenting a unified front to the rest of Heaven. Outright violence is rare in the extreme, and death is all but unheard of. Killing a fellow Sidereal would offend both the entire Fivescore Fellowship and destiny itself, and neither faction's leadership is willing to sanction it.

The Time of Tumult has upset this balance of power as the Gold Faction increases in both size and prominence and fair-weather members of the Bronze Faction have quietly stepped back. The Bronze Faction's leaders have been forced to reevaluate the threat the Gold Faction poses, while many in the Gold see a chance to strike a blow against the Bronze. Ceremonial duels have ceased to be friendly affairs as faction members face off with unrestrained hostility. Convention meetings devolve into heated arguments or sink into icy silence. None know what the future holds for the factions, but it's clear that there's no going back. A time of reckoning is coming for the Fivescore Fellowship, one that will either see them unite as never before, or else descend into petty sniping and back-biting even as the world burns.

The Solar Purge

The First Age was a time of unimaginable wonders and unthinkable atrocities. Having conquered the enemies of the gods, the Exalted turned to their own ambitions: carving out empires, amassing allies and riches, or uncovering the secrets of the cosmos. In time, they attained untold heights of power, mastering mighty sorceries, pacting with great demons and the courts of chaos, forging world-shaking wonders of artifice, and seizing whatever they could grasp. But power is indiscriminate, magnifying both the greatness of the Exalted's deeds and the horrific consequences of their mistakes. Kingdoms were toppled by a moment's indiscretion; mountains leveled in fits of passion. The insidious Great Curse coiled unseen around the Chosen's hearts, spurring many of the age's worst atrocities, but even without it, the Exalted had become a threat to the world they ruled. In time, even the Unconquered Sun turned his face from Creation, looking no more upon his legacy.

Many in the Old Realm came to realize the danger posed by the Exalted, themselves included, and sought an answer to this dilemma. Within the Bureau of Destiny, Sidereals debated many plans and proposals, but none secured sufficient support to mobilize the Fivescore Fellowship as a whole. Ultimately, a proposal was put forward that none could ignore: the Solar Purge. While any of the Exalted could pose a threat to Creation, the Solars' supreme might and their mastery of sorcery and artifice made them the greatest danger. If they could be removed from the equation, Creation might be able to endure.

This plan appalled many: It was one thing to make sacrifices in destiny's name, but premeditated mass murder, without regard for culpability or innocence, was unthinkable to many. Even those willing to pay so high a price didn't believe it was possible. Even if every Solar could be slain — a feat to rival the Divine Revolution — new Lawgivers would still arise, reincarnating as their predecessors fell. The plan died in committee before ever coming before the Bureau as a whole, and was largely forgotten as the Fivescore Fellowship continued to debate its options, seemingly abandoned by its supporters.

But in truth, the plan was never forgotten. A conspiracy of Sidereals — those who'd eventually be called the Bronze Faction — continued to secretly explore the possibility. They envisioned a single coordinated strike against the Solar Exalted, felling the lion's share in one decisive swoop and hunting down those who survived. The cost to Creation would be great, but once the Purge had been completed, an interregnum government of Sidereals would shepherd the Old Realm and bring a new equilibrium to the First Age — lesser, but safe.

The greatest of the many obstacles to the Solar Purge remained the question of the Lawgivers' reincarnation. The nascent Bronze explored many possibilities, ultimately discovering a way to cage the power of Solar Exaltation. Drawing on secrets older than Creation and forbidden magics, the conspiracy's greatest sorcerers and artificers created the Jade Prison, a vast casket of jade inlaid with impossibly fine starmetal inscriptions of binding and concealment. Countless irreplaceable wonders were used in its creation, but the greatest of these was the tear of molten gold shed by the Unconquered Sun when he turned his face from Creation. The tear was made to serve as a beacon, drawing the power of fallen Solars into the Jade Prison before they could reincarnate. With the Prison completed, their real work began.

As they prepared to set the Solar Purge in motion, the nascent Bronze Faction recruited allies and co-conspirators to their cause. The Dragon-Blooded backed the Purge in the greatest numbers, as those who supported the Purge's cause rallied entire lineages and gentes. Lunar radicals, Exigent heroes, and gods of every rank joined in the conspiracy for reasons both noble and selfish. Some among the Old Realm's oldest foes fought alongside their ancient enemies: Lintha armadas, Niobraran wraiths, sapient plagues created by the fallen Genesis Lords of Heartwind, and more. Even a scant handful of Lawgivers joined in, fearing what they and their fellow Solars might become.

But for all the preparation that had been put into it, the Purge went far differently than planned. Solar warriors overpowered the assassins sent against them, while masters of stealth and subterfuge evaded and outwitted their pursuers. Some Solars had uncovered enough evidence of the conspiracy to grow suspicious, or been warned by Sidereals opposed to it, giving them a chance to prepare their defenses. Others were so paranoid that they needed no further preparations. Such Lawgivers met their assailants with countermeasures boasting the full power of the Solar Exalted. Starmetal hunter-killer automata battled Sidereal assassins, predicting alterations to fate to neutralize their most potent techniques. Sorcerous traps ensnared Dragon-Blooded battalions in nightmare worlds and beguiling paradises. Mighty skyships scythed down armies with barrages of implosion bows and lightning ballistae, before hastening away from the usurpers' forces.

In a single night, Creation was plunged into total war, marking the beginning of a blood-soaked decade that would leave the world forever changed. Gruesome battles erupted throughout Meru, Ankiluke, Myion, and other bastions of Solar might throughout Creation. The closest of friends became fierce enemies as the war drew in Exalted from across Old Realm. Islands and mountains were shattered by terrible war-sorceries; kingdoms and cultures were blighted by the curses of Solar sorcerers. All the while, casualties continued to mount under the weight of increasingly desperate escalation, rising into the hundreds of millions.

The Purge ended one silent morning, as the sorceries and astrological magics that held open the Jade Prison's doors finally sputtered out and died. Only a scant handful of Solars escaped this imprisonment — not enough to continue their war against the surviving usurpers. They fled to Creation's far corners, sought protection from old allies, or continued the fight alone, but the age of Solar god-kings had come to a close. The Bronze Faction had won, though few in their ranks could call it victory. Even the Purge's most ardent supporters grieved the cost of their success, even as they accepted its necessity.

As the surviving conspirators surveyed what remained of the Old Realm, their first move was to ensure that the Jade Prison could never be found and opened. They sought the furthest West, where the constellation of the Mask shines bright on still waters. Invoking the sign of secret knowledge, the Sidereal conspirators sealed the Jade Prison behind the stars, using the Mask's reflection as a gateway to the outer darkness. Overhead, the sky groaned at the weight of this working, like iron beams straining against rupture. After a terrible moment of waiting, the Mask shattered beneath the Jade Prison's weight, twisting in the firmament as its brightest stars winked out like candles.

The breaking of the Mask reverberated throughout fate, and the consequences fell upon the Fivescore Fellowship as a whole, cursing them with the arcane fate that plagues them to this day. After all that the Bronze Faction had sacrificed in the Solar Purge's name, this was the final price of their victory: to be forevermore forgotten by history. The Bronze Faction's plans of guiding Creation through a brief interregnum of Sidereal rule already faced serious setbacks from the massive casualties they'd suffered and the devastating toll the Solar Purge had taken on the Old Realm. Arcane fate dealt the deathblow, ending any chance of Sidereal rulership.

After a fierce but swift debate, the Bronze Faction chose to entrust rule of Creation to a coalition of Dragon-Blooded gentes, those that had best weathered the Purge. Thus began the Shogunate. Rather than governing Creation outright, the Bronze Faction offered its guidance and counsel to Dragon-Blooded leaders, granting secret knowledge, powerful blessings, and Heaven's aid. As Creation came under the reign of its new masters, the Sidereals receded into legend and apocrypha, the shadows behind the world's thrones.

The Bronze Faction

The machinations of the Bronze Faction ended one age and helped to shape another, embracing a lesser future to ensure that there was any future at all. It advocates for planning destinies and devoting Heaven's efforts to ensure the world's safety and stability, even if it means Creation falls short of what it could be. This is the price they pay to defend Creation, and they pay it willingly. The Bronze Faction's elders witnessed countless destinies cut short by the First Age's end and the Great Contagion. They know the sacrifices they make today spare Creation from even greater tragedies they may come.

Bronze Faction luminaries impress upon young Sidereals just how precarious existence is. Creation is an island in a sea of churning chaos. Fate's enemies test its boundaries from without, while princes, spirits, and the Exalted plot from within. Even for all their resolute conviction, most in the faction count their peers and themselves as potential threats, should their dedication waver. Creation's status quo is far from what the Bronze Faction's elders wish it was, but it's the reality they're faced with. Should it fall apart, Creation may well follow.

The preservation of the status quo defines the Bronze Faction's political agenda. Every destiny, every intervention must be weighed against the risk of destabilizing the world's order. Its members' political agendas may not always align, but they share a pragmatic assessment of today's opportunities and tomorrow's risks. The Bronze Faction isn't unwilling to countenance change, but it must be measured and gradual. It stands unified in opposing proposals that call for radical transformation or upheaval of the status quo, no matter how noble their goals may be.

Over the centuries, the Bronze Faction has guided the course of Creation's history with a firm hand and a light touch. In the Shogunate, much of their efforts were devoted to maintaining a balance of power between Dragon-Blooded warlords — though they couldn't stop the Exalted from going to war, they worked to ensure Creation would survive such strife. Bronze Faction sages and Dragon-Blooded theologians worked closely to compile the Immaculate Texts and spread them throughout Creation to legitimize Dragon-Blooded rule.

The Great Contagion and the Shogunate's collapse dealt a devastating blow to the Bronze agenda, causing many within the faction to question their commitment. The faction as a whole may well have collapsed had Chejop Kejak not succeeded in winning the Scarlet Empress's favor. Working together with the Realm's indomitable ruler, the Bronze Faction once again shepherded Creation back from the edge of ruin, shaping the world as it is today.

Many in the faction see the Empress' disappearance and its consequences as a dire failure, endlessly ruminating on how it could have been avoided. Old arguments are revived as the members point fingers at each other, calling into question decisions made decades or centuries ago. Resentment seethes beneath the surface of many Bronze dinners and salons as old friendships are tested and long-standing alliances begin to crumble. The faction's elders have taken responsibility for failing to foresee this, smoothing over the worst of this — but it remains a wedge issue for political enemies to exploit.

The Bronze and the Order

For more details on the Bronze Faction's involvement in the Immaculate Order, see **The Realm**, pp. 89-90.

Priorities

Foremost among the Bronze Faction's many concerns is the Realm's imminent collapse into civil war. Its elders seek to avert this, but most have come to accept that this is impossible, at least privately. At best, it can be delayed, and not for long. The best chance for the Realm's continued existence lies in ensuring the

best possible candidate takes the throne — though it remains an open question who that is. The faction's leadership has avoided taking a formal stance, backing several potential candidates to hedge their bets until a clearer picture emerges. Faction operatives embedded within each candidate's camp observe and gather information on them, preparing dossiers. Those favored by the faction receive guidance from Sidereal agents, counseling them in matters of strategy and governance. Most do so in the guise of resplendent destinies, appearing as lieutenants, advisors, monks, or agents of the All-Seeing Eye. A few have been approached openly by the Bronze Faction, laying groundwork for further negotiations should those contenders prevail.

The Bronze Faction has also redoubled its efforts to prevent outside influences from tipping the Realm into chaos. A well-placed agent can sabotage an uprising in a satrapy or prefecture, allowing resources that might have been spent bringing it back in line to go towards more productive ends. Others carry out counterintelligence operations to uncover Lunar infiltrators, root out enemies of fate seeking to interfere, and coordinate Wyld Hunts against powerful Anathema. Such enemies are well-matched against the Sidereal Exalted — for every victory the Bronze Faction achieves, another is won by their foes.

While the Realm is the heart of the Bronze Faction's plans, its satrapies and neighboring cultures have always been vital assets as well, letting the Bronze project control deeper into the Threshold and surveil external threats like Lookshy and the Guild. The machinery of the Realm has afforded them many powerful assets in doing — satrapial governance, the Imperial legions, the All-Seeing Eye — but the Empress' disappearance has greatly diminished the faction's ability to influence these organs of empire. The Immaculate Order still remains aligned with Bronze interests, and has become a bastion for such efforts.

Chejop Kejak

Chejop Kejak would never claim to be the leader of the Bronze Faction. He doesn't need to.

He's sometimes called "the man with no secrets," for he lives a life of austere duty, giving opponents no scandal to leverage against him. His few entanglements are a matter of open record, and he scrupulously avoids favoritism for lovers, children, or friends. Famously patient and stern-faced, he's also sharp-witted, with a love of dry humor and wistful self-deprecation. Chejop is a man focused on reality; he's done his best to choose wisely and well, but isn't without regrets.

Kejak is a skilled martial artist and a master sorcerer, but his true genius lies in intrigue and influence. He's spent his Exalted lifespan as a scrupulous collector of intelligence and favors both great and small — he knows that sometimes a matter is best served by a puissant god's direct intervention, and other times by a few words with that god's lowest clerk. He also wields considerable authority within the Bureau as the Division of Secrets' eldest Sidereal member and the chair of the Convention on the Center. He doles out duties and assignments both to advance the Bronze Faction's agenda and to demonstrate its necessity to those opposed or uncommitted to it. Gold Faction idealists might receive orders that send them delving into First Age ruins lost to Solar caprice. Young Siderials unaligned with either faction are given a chance to see the value of the Bronze's methods as a well-timed Wyld Hunt comes to their aid against a demon they've been tasked with slaying.

Chejop permits himself little time to enjoy his prestige and status. His domicile is dusty with disuse, overflowing with records, memoranda, and his personal library; his office in the Forbidden Manse of Ivy is the same one he was assigned when he first joined. Most of his days are spent in the role of secretary to the Mouth of Peace, offering her guidance not just as a Sidereal puppetmaster, but as a friend and confidant. He suspects that the current Mouth may have seen past his arcane fate, which has been both boon and bane to him with different Mouths throughout the Order's history.

Chejop is renowned for pragmatism and prudence. He was chosen to prosecute Heaven's case against the Sidereal traitor Ruin-of-Nations. He brokered the Truce of Ivy that saw a five-year peace amid the Shogunate's darkest days. He played a key role in the Jade Prison's creation, bargaining with demonic potentates for secret knowledge and impossible reagents necessary to gainsay the Unconquered Sun's will. He's paid dearly for his victories, his dreams haunted by the sacrifices he's made until finally he chose to sleep no longer, dedicating every hour to tireless work.

Chejop is nearing the end of his life. As he approaches the day of his fated death, he grows wistful, reflecting on his long career and the Bronze Faction's future. He has no successor — while he trusts and respects his fellow elders, he doubts their willingness to sacrifice their deepest desires upon the altar of necessity as he has. He's devoted more and more time to mentoring young Sidereals and guiding those yet to Exalt, seeking to instill some spark of his philosophy in the youngest generation and to perhaps find one final, worthy apprentice before his end arrives.

The Gold Faction

The Gold Faction has been many things since the Solar Purge: the Bronze Faction's distinguished opposition, a political bloc of idealists and iconoclasts, a school of philosophy concerned with the ethics of destiny, and more. For much of its history, the Gold Faction had no unifying ideology beyond its opposition to what it's seen as the Bronze Faction's worst excesses, but it's grown beyond these origins into a coalition representing a wide range of radical agendas.

The Gold Faction emerged in the Shogunate's early days, a political alliance brokered between Sidereals who'd fought against the Solar Purge and those who'd come to regret their part in it. Many of its first recruits were the reincarnated Circlemates of these founding members. The Purge — or as the Gold Faction knows it, the Usurpation — was their rallying cry in those days, their opposition to the Bronze agenda founded as much on personal enmity as principle. At a time when the Fivescore Fellowship was still raw from bloodshed, there were moments when it seemed like the factions' political conflict might boil over into open violence, but elders on both sides worked to maintain the peace, establishing the traditions of civility that the factions still observe.

As centuries passed, the Gold Faction slowly waned. As its elders reached the end of their allotted spans, the intense and personal commitment they'd brought to the faction was lost. Without any unifying ideology, few young Sidereals saw reason to align themselves with the Gold. Those who did join did so for a hodgepodge of different reasons — outrage at the state of the Shogunate, past life memories of betrayal in the Usurpation, or frustration with Bronze Faction elders blocking proposed destinies.

The Great Contagion marked a turning point for the Gold Faction's understanding of itself. Many of its oldest members died in the Contagion or fell in battle against the Fair Folk, while the perceived failure of the Bronze Faction drove some independents and former Bronze devotees to the Gold. Though they were still far smaller than the Bronze Faction, this influx was the Gold's largest in centuries, bringing new perspectives, ideas, and agendas into the *mélange* of the faction's politics.

No longer led by older generations, the Gold Faction reevaluated what it was and what it should be. Though it had no common ideology, its members shared two things in common. All of them sought to change the world in a way that the Bronze Faction's status quo wouldn't allow and, perhaps even more importantly, all had chosen to join the Gold Faction, to stand by each other even without a shared goal or creed.

The Gold Faction still remained a minority party, especially after the Realm's ascendancy saw the Bronze rise back to its pre-Contagion prominence. Many of its members saw notable success in their personal

agendas, but these largely failed to unite the faction as a whole or draw new members to it. Some sparked conflicts between opposing cliques within the faction, sometimes leading to members cutting ties with the Gold entirely. And in the face of a seemingly unstoppable Bronze Faction, a persistent pessimism permeated the Gold Faction's dealings.

The Time of Tumult has breathed new life into the Gold Faction again. With the Bronze Faction facing the collapse of all they've worked for and the return of their ancient enemies in the Solars, the Gold Faction's never had greater reason for hope. Lapsed members, former independents, and young Sidereals alike have joined the fold, swelling the Gold Faction's ranks to their largest in memory. This growth has proven something of a double-edged sword — every recruit brings a new agenda into the faction, and potentially a new dissenting voice.

The modern Gold Faction conducts its affairs much differently than either the Bronze Faction or its own Shogunate-era incarnation. Without a unified upper echelon of elders, the faction's younger members have more opportunities to take a firsthand role in shaping policy and carry out high-priority missions. There's much more tolerance for expressing dissent and challenging the agendas of one's seniors. At its best, this fosters productive debates that bring the faction together; at its worst, it devolves into a circular firing squad of Sidereals sniping at one another from the moral high ground.

The Gold Faction has yet to unanimously recognize a single leader, de facto or otherwise. While Ayesha Ura is perhaps the strongest candidate, she's far from the only serious contender. Her great political opponents are the relentlessly brilliant Sing in Tongues of Steel, who would put accelerating the Realm's collapse before all other goals, and so-called Empty Thrones, a coalition within the faction that's staunchly opposed to any unified leadership or agenda.

Priorities

The Gold Faction's projects are as numerous and diverse as its members. Some cultivate and promote Immaculate heresies that threaten the religious hegemony of Realm's state religion. Others are patrons to dissidents and revolutionaries within the Realm's satrapies, providing them with information, resources, and the stars' blessing. Still others have made a project of a single kingdom or city-state, striving to realize their vision of a brighter tomorrow within it.

Some of the Gold Faction's projects have seen long-lasting success. The Seven-Rivers Treaty united the river-towns of the Lanternhold and the spirit courts of the neighboring wilderness into a polity powerful enough to push back against the Realm's expansion. Others have had only fleeting success, some little more than proofs-of-concept. The fabled kingdom of Isqadeen, ruled by the three Sidereals who reclaimed it from the Wyld, was a safe haven for enemies of the Shogunate gentes until the reality engines sustaining it failed. Others remain purely hypothetical, like Sauvon Hak's plan for direct Sidereal governance by delegating their authority under the Creation-Ruling Mandate to trusted terrestrial gods (and subject to Terminal Sanction, as Hak reminds all who listen).

With the Realm on the edge of civil war, some Gold luminaries back contenders for the throne whose interests are opposed to the Bronze Faction's or the Scarlet Dynasty's. These include the likes of Bal Keraz (**The Realm**, p. 50), whose loyalties lie with the Realm's patriciate against the Great Houses, or Nellens Ikona (**Dragon-Blooded**, p. 51), whose popularity with the Realm's peasantry could make her the perfect leader for a popular uprising.

Other Sidereals propose plans to ensure no one candidate can win, splintering the Realm into multiple, weaker states — though those old enough to remember the bloody infighting of the Shogunate counsel against this. The faction's more radical members call for the total destruction of the Realm, though

they're much less unified in their plans for what should replace it.

Ayesha Ura

Ayesha has risen far to reach her position. Early in life, she lost her home to the Shogunate's wars, saved from starvation only by an Immaculate monk's compassion. Under her tutelage, young Ayesha came to be a renowned preacher and theologian, her fiery tongue feared by priests and monks of other sects. After her Exaltation, the new Harbinger so impressed Chejop Kejak that he sought her out as a protégé, already thinking of training her as his successor. But in time, she grew disillusioned with the Bronze agenda and the Immaculate Faith as she witnessed her peers' willingness to accept the bloodshed and atrocities of a war-ravaged Creation in the name of the greater good. The Shogunate's collapse dealt the deathblow to her commitment — every sacrifice, every acceptable loss, every drop of blood on her hands had all been for nothing.

Chejop Kejak's most favored disciple defecting to the Gold Faction was among the greatest scandals of that century, but Ayesha wasn't met with a warm welcome by her peers. Understanding their mistrust, much as she resented it, she kept to the margins, cultivating personal relationships with like-minded peers and pursuing comparatively modest projects. It was she and her inner circle who first recognized the potential of the Cult of the Illuminated, even before the Jade Prison was broken, seeing how its traditions and theology could be used to make it a support network for the few Solars who'd escaped the Jade Prison and a shelter from the Wyld Hunt.

What Ayesha hadn't planned on was rediscovering her own faith. As she spoke with Illuminated faithful across Creation and debated theology with Illuminated priests and philosophers, she came to see the world through their eyes, experiencing the same spiritual fulfillment they found in their traditions, beliefs, and rites. After that, using the Cult as a mere tool was out of the question. Ayesha became a patron to the Illuminated across Creation, and insisted that the Gold Faction treat them as allies, not assets. Kejak would have condemned such soft-heartedness, which only strengthened Ayesha's conviction.

But Ayesha's idealism won her little acclaim within the Gold Faction — some of her peers had already questioned the wisdom of allocating resources to the small handful of Solars left in Creation, and the Harbinger's newly espoused spirituality drew derision from some of her peers. For centuries, she remained on the faction's fringes, embracing her reputation as a headstrong idealist. But when the Jade Prison was broken and the Solar host returned in full, Ayesha and her allies stood ready to capitalize on the opportunity, while the rest of the faction scrambled to react.

The success of the Cult of the Illuminated in the last five years has ensured Ayesha's meteoric rise to prominence. Many consider her the Gold's de facto leader, even those who were once among her greatest detractors. But declaring success would be premature — Ayesha's leadership still faces challenges from the likes of Sing-in-Tongues-of-Steel and the Empty Thrones. She's positioned herself as seeking to strengthen unity within the faction by harmonizing its members' many agendas and mediating disputes when faction member's goals come into conflict.

Ayesha is passionate, gregarious, and kind-hearted. She's always glad to speak with any Sidereal willing to listen, from those who've just Exalted to senior luminaries of the Bronze Faction, offering a sympathetic ear and a word of advice. She's also exceedingly skilled in manipulation, though prefers not to, particularly with her fellow Sidereals.

The Harbinger's service to destiny is storied. When the rogue tide-spirits of the Great Western Ocean imprisoned its god, Ocean Father, she sailed the entire West to bind them in fetters of jade and free their hostage from his benthic gaol. She traversed the Labyrinthine Horizon on a dragon's back to reach the

impossible isle of Forever and ransom back a daughter of Mercury from its faerie princes. Across Creation, cultures venerate a nameless saint in yellow robes.

Ayesha's experience as a one-time true believer in the Bronze ideology has made her exceedingly persuasive in turning young or tenuously committed members of the Bronze Faction to the Gold, and she advocates on their behalf in the face of the same suspicion she was once faced. She has no illusions that she and Chejop Kejak might ever rebuild their friendship, but she's glad for their cordial relations. Their mutual respect and courtesy extends to even their most contentious debates in destiny planning committees — an event guaranteed to draw a crowd of spectators from both factions.

The Cult of the Illuminated

The Cult of the Illuminated has changed greatly over the years, even before the Gold Faction's intervention. It originated in the Shogunate's latter days as a mystery cult of the Court of the Shining Ones, a coterie of garda birds devoted to the pursuit of poetry, philosophy, and ethics. The Shining Ones and many of their followers died in the Great Contagion, and the survivors were scattered across Creation in the mass migrations that followed.

Over the centuries, the scattered Cults of the Illuminated have diverged greatly, through interaction with local cultures and changing interpretations of the Cult's texts and traditions. In Chiaroscuro, the Shining Ones are seen as avatars of Iosis, a transcendent being of light from pre-Delzhan traditions. In Palanquin, the Cult's religious aspects have largely been subsumed by its political opposition to the city's Ysyri conquerors. Adherents gather in the Five Candles Memorial to contemplate their responsibilities to their descendants and weigh the moral imperative of revolution.

But for all their differences a belief in the Shining Ones and their promised return is still shared by many of these scattered traditions — even if they disagree on who the Shining Ones are. The Cult's original patrons may have been forgotten, but its rituals, texts, and teachings are still rooted in a faith of flame and radiance. With this advantage, the Gold Faction has been able to delicately sway many of the Cult's branches across Creation, recasting the Shining Ones as the Solar Exalted or incorporating the Lawgivers into existing beliefs through well-considered theological arguments. Across Creation, Solars are welcomed into Illuminated temples with open arms, offered sanctuary and succor from the Time of Tumult.

The Gold Faction ensures the cultists' faith doesn't go unrewarded, offering guidance, resources, and protection to those branches under their secret patronage. Many in the Gold Faction follow Ayesha's example, studying the tenets of the Cult's various branches and seeking theological insight from its priests and philosophers in theological discourse. On one memorable occasion, a Gold Faction meeting was derailed by a debate over the respective merits of Shen Aru's contemplations on forgiveness and Thousand Righteous Whispers' treatise on ethical governance, to Ayesha Ura's considerable delight.

Solars who seek out the Cult of Illuminated soon encounter Gold Faction benefactors, garbed in the resplendent destinies of Illumined priests, enigmatic sages, and pious mendicants. They're trained in statecraft, strategy, martial arts, sorcery, or philosophy, as befits their talents — the skills they'll need to aid the Gold Faction in making a better future. All the while, their Sidereal mentors test their character and temperament, offering moral guidance and lessons in discipline to those receptive to them. Solars who ultimately prove unsuitable as allies of the Gold Faction are guided toward paths where they might indirectly advance the Gold Faction's cause through the pursuit of their own agendas, often by pitting them against the Realm.

As Solars train under their Sidereal mentors, they also learn the secret history of Creation. The Old

Realm's rise and fall and the Solar Purge are presented not as a matter of Sidereal against Solar, but of choices made by individuals and the cost of hubris. The goal of this is not indoctrination or propaganda — the Gold Faction is not so foolish to think it can make allies of the Lawgivers by manipulating them. Instead, they seek to arm the Solars with the knowledge necessary to understand the conflicts between the Chosen and an ethical framework that might let them avoid the hubris of their predecessors.

Adherents of the Cult

Red-Handed Kijamano, Chosen of Mars

Red-Handed Kijamano oversees Kether Rock, an Illuminated fortress-temple carved into a mountain in the badlands of the South. Kijamano is one of Ayesha Ura's Circlemates, and accompanied her on her initial foray to infiltrate the Cult of the Illuminated. She cuts an imposing figure: nearly seven feet tall, face covered with scars, and with a monstrous right arm taken from a demon after she lost her own in battle. She'll gladly tell you the story behind each of her injuries, though they're never the same twice.

Kijamano is among the Gold Faction's finest warriors, practicing a combination of Crane style and several Sidereal Martial Arts. Solars who've made contact with the Cult of the Illuminated come from across the South to train under her, studying martial arts, the ethics of violence, and allegorical tales of the Maidens.

Rising Wren, Chosen of the Unconquered Sun

The young Zenith Caste Rising Wren was found not by the Gold Faction, but by the Cult of the Illuminated itself, drawn by her flaring anima. Since she took refuge with them at the House of the Crimson Feather in the hinterlands of the Northern Threshold, she's immersed herself in the cultists' faith and lives, finding both purpose and community. While naturally reserved, she comes alive when wrestling over the finer points of ethics and theology.

By the time the Gold Faction made contact with Wren, she'd gained far more influence over the cult than she realized. Humble, righteous, and radiant, she's everything they expected the Illuminated Ones to be, and has vitalized both their belief in the Cult's teachings and their faith in her. The Gold Faction members involved with the House of the Crimson Feather are divided on this — some fear that Wren may reforge it into a cult of personality or create a schism within it, perhaps without even meaning to, but her mentor urges them to wait and see. The Sidereal is confident that between her instruction and Wren's strong sense of righteousness, the Solar will be able to weather such a challenge with grace.

Eigan Broken-Bough, Illuminated Hierophant

Eigan Broken-Bough is the newest of the Blazing Sky Pavilion's priestly lineage, and he can't understand why. Despite having been raised from childhood for the priesthood, he's never felt the spark that burns at the core of the Cult's philosophy, no matter how desperately he wants to. Unsurprisingly, he makes for a poor spiritual leader, but has a keen mind for administration and accounting. Working with the Pavilion's Gold Faction backers, he plays a key role in directing deliveries of resources materiel to nearby branches of the Cult and coordinating networks of safehouses for Solars on the run.

While he's taken on a prominent role in the Gold Faction's support of the Solar Exalted, Eigan doesn't know how to feel about these supposed Illuminated Ones or what they mean for the cult that he's done his best to lead. He desperately wants to believe — in the Cult's teachings, in the Solars, in *something* — waiting only for whatever it is that will set his heart aflame.

Independents

A considerable number of Sidereals align themselves with neither faction. Many do so out of disinterest with political infighting or to play peacemaker. Others see both faction's efforts as wasteful and self-serving, funneling resources and personnel away from the actual work of the Bureau of Destiny. For some, it's a matter of principle, disdaining what they see as Bronze heartlessness and Gold temerity. Many once belonged to a faction who've grown disillusioned or jaded; others have remained unaligned throughout their entire careers.

Unlike the Bronze and the Gold, the independents aren't a political bloc. Some may cultivate personal or professional relationships with other independents, but they have little in common and no leadership to unite them. Independents aren't wholly apolitical, though as they still have the interests of their divisions and conventions to advance in destiny planning committees. Some do occasionally involve themselves in matters of factional politics, whether trading favors or taking bribes — independent doesn't mean incorruptible.

The Bronze Faction is glad to have a healthy population of independent Sidereals — by refusing to choose sides in a debate over the future, they support the status quo by their silence. The imbalance of power between factions tips the matter further in the Bronze's favor. They have more resources and influence to offer to independent colleagues in exchange for support on specific proposals, and their vast institutional power within the Bureau often forces independents to side with the Bronze agenda for the sake of political expediency.

Spirits and the Factions

Factional politics are internal matter to the Fivescore Fellowship, but many spirits in the Celestial Bureaucracy count themselves as allies and adherents of the Bronze or the Gold. Some genuinely believe in a faction's ideology, while others have interests in common in them. Many do so purely for personal gain, whether to advance their political careers, network with prominent Sidereals, or simply to line their pockets.

The Celestial Bureaucracy has no formal policy on the matter, but many higher-ups vocally discourage their subordinates from entangling themselves in Sidereal affairs. That many of those same higher-ups are themselves staunch factional partisans is an open secret. In practice, it's tolerated so long as such spirits keep their support discreet and deniable.

Spirits from outside the Bureau of Destiny suffer an additional obstacle — arcane fate. Spirits' memories are more resilient than those of mortals, but even powerful gods have succumbed to it on occasion. While they can still remember the existence of Sidereals and the factions, they might still forget the identities of their allies and enemies. This is particularly cumbersome for those who factional allegiance is rooted in their relationships with individual Sidereals, as they risk forgetting why they joined a faction. For instance, the easily-befuddled Azelentine, Esteemed Minister of Rubies, has aligned herself with the Bronze Faction a dozen times in the past decade alone, to the extent that her friend Shepherd of the North Star has refined his pitch to a tight ten minutes.

Other Bureaus of the Celestial Bureaucracy

The Bureau of Destiny is but one of the Celestial Bureaucracy's five great bureaus. Though relative power shifts over time — due both to emergent changes in Creation and campaigns among the gods of lobbying, corruption, and outright fraud — the five bureaus ostensibly work together as equals for the good of Heaven and Creation. As brutal and cutthroat as competition can be in the Bureaucracy, everyone is, at least in theory, on the same side.

Thousands of office complexes lie scattered across the continent-sized heavenly city. Individual departments vary widely in scale; sometimes a department occupies a vast estate ringed in walls and gardens, while others comprise three gods at two desks in one basement room. Each division or subdivision typically has its own headquarters as well, though multiple departments may be jammed together inside the same structure on occasion for bureaucratic reasons.

The Bureau of Heaven

Currently preeminent among the five bureaus is the Bureau of Heaven — formally, *the Commission on Abstract Matters and Celestial Concerns*. Its current status as the largest, most prominent bureau is the result of centuries spent pillaging offices and purviews from the Bureau of Humanity, seizing on the struggles it's faced in the wake of the First Age's collapse and the Great Contagion.

The bureau employs a plurality of the entire Celestial Bureaucracy, so large and labyrinthine that it requires full-time liaisons not only to other bureaus, but between its own divisions and subdivisions. The vast majority of these myriad employees are clerks, responsible for the truly incalculable amount of paperwork the bureau generates. It isn't notably more corrupt than the others, but as the most powerful bureau, its high-ranking gods are the most insulated from the consequences of their own actions.

The bureau consists of two departments — once separate bureaus, folded together during a First Age bureaucratic restructuring. In theory, *the Department of Abstract Matters* oversees concepts like color, space, and love, but as more and more offices have been wrested away from the Bureau of Humanity, the Department's definition of abstract concepts has grown increasingly loose, expanding to encompass the likes of games, weaving, and currency. Gods shuffled from the Bureau of Humanity into Abstract Matters are largely unhappy with this. Many fell in rank or suffered salary cuts as a result of the transfer, often leaving them much lower in the Department's hierarchy than gods who should rightfully be there peers. This resentment frequently boils over into bureaucratic disputes, accusations of corruption, and sometimes actual fisticuffs — the Department of Celestial Concerns maintains an office used exclusively for the arbitration of such disputes.

The Department of Celestial Concerns, on the other hand, is responsible for the governance of Heaven: maintaining infrastructure and public works, collecting tithes of ambrosia, licensing businesses, and countless other municipal tasks. Heaven's legal system makes up a major portion of Celestial Concerns' responsibilities. It drafts and promulgates legal regulations and enforces them through the many lion-dogs and celestial lions that patrol the celestial city. Their remit also includes the Celestial Bureaucracy itself. Orders affecting multiple bureaus must be countersigned by Celestial Concerns, giving the Department an effective veto over all inter-bureau matters. They also review promotions, demotions, and reassignments within bureaus, though unilaterally reversing them is a politically risk and rarely-exercised power. They also mediate inter-bureau disputes that have grown severe enough to disrupt the Celestial Bureaucracy's functioning.

Agenda

The Bureau of Heaven has amassed considerable power within the Celestial Bureaucracy over the millennia, and its foremost concern is holding onto it, preserving Heaven's current political status quo. Much of the bureau's scheming can be carried out legitimately through the Department of Celestial Concerns' law enforcement powers — any designs that the other bureaus may have on the Bureau of Heaven are almost certainly illegal in some way. Bribery, blackmail, frame-ups, and favor-trading take care of much what the lion-dogs can't handle.

That doesn't mean the Bureau of Heaven's gods don't care about getting the job done — many see the

bureau's amassed power as the means to accomplishing precisely that end. Much is made of all that Celestial Concerns does for Yu-Shan and the weighty responsibilities of Abstract Matters, and many in the bureau's upper echelons believe their own justifications.

Working Relationships

The Department of Abstract Matters' closest working partner is the Bureau of Humanity, an arrangement that pleases no one. Having stolen so many of the bureau's offices, Abstract Matters depends on its institutional knowledge, pre-existing working relationships, and the expertise of whatever gods they weren't able to take. The Bureau of Humanity has little interest in facilitating this; often their counterparts in Abstract Matters to employ heavy-handed tactics. Even when they do work together, efforts are complicated by contentious rivalries and old grudges between divisions or individual gods, which have on occasion risen to the level of full-on vendettas. Celestial Concerns sides with its sister department against the Bureau of Humanity, making its arbitration of such disputes a one-sided affair.

All bureaus coordinate extensively the Bureau of Destiny on areas where their remits align, and Abstract Matters has the most overlap with it, at least in matters of actual abstract concepts. Almost all of its divisions have liaisons to one or more of the five divisions: The Division of Peace works with the Division of Serenity, the Division of War with the Division of Battles, and so on.

The Bureau of Seasons is a perennial political target of the other four bureaus, owing to its origins in a labor movement among the Bureau of Nature's low-ranking elementals. The Bureau of Heaven is often its fiercest adversary — of all the bureaus, it's the one most likely to disrupt the status quo. The Department of Celestial Concerns lacks the authority to deploy the bureau's Aerial Legion, but they do have oversight powers as part of the compromise that resulted in the Bureau of Seasons' formation. It frequently reviews its operations, particularly when it looks like it might be gaining more power in Heaven. There are limits to this, though. The Bureau of Heaven has no desire to anger the Aerial Legion — it serves them far better as a potential wedge within the Bureau of Seasons.

Notable Figures

Ryzala, Supreme Minister of Celestial Concerns, Lady of Bureaucracy and Paperwork

Ryzala is among Heaven's most politically powerful deities. She heads the Department of Celestial Concerns, but is the de facto leader of the entire Bureau of Heaven, owing to the head of Abstract Matters' disinterest in running her department. Ryzala is a large, mantis-like spirit, her many limbs constantly in motion as she reviews reports and fills out paperwork. Rising to the Bureaucracy's highest echelons hasn't diminished her work ethic, rarely leaving the towering Spire of Virtuous Insight where her offices are housed. She's a stern, inflexible figure who rarely reconsiders her decisions once she's made them. She's serious to a fault — her lack of humor and inability to detect sarcasm are legendary within the bureau.

Ryzala enjoys the power her high office affords her, and uses it freely to aid political allies and undermine her enemies. She's careful to stay within the bounds of heavenly law, though that's easy to do when you're the one who writes it. She is troubled by what she deems "actual" corruption, both within her own bureau and the Bureaucracy at large. An ardent institutionalist, she believes that the Celestial Bureaucracy's own enforcement mechanisms are the best solution to it. She ensures that Celestial Concerns' law enforcement branch, the Division of Inevitable Reckoning, receives funding beyond what it might strictly need, and shares her department's resources with Heaven's censors and the Division of Endings' internal affairs operations. Her lengthy essays on the importance of the Bureaucracy's institutional culture and values are circulated throughout it, and are mandatory reading in the Bureau of

Heaven.

Taru-Han, Supreme Minister of Abstract Matters, Psychopomp of the Final Moment

Taru-Han is the goddess of both souls and the act of dying the head of the Department of Abstract Matters, and a daughter of Saturn. Appointed to the position after the department's previous head succumbed to the Great Contagion, she owes the office largely to the influence of her elder siblings in her mother's spirit court and Ryzala's desire to curry favor with the Maiden of Endings. The Lady of Souls appears as a swirling vortex of smoke, using tendrils of charcoal-gray vapor in place of hands. Her retinue is made up of soul collectors, strange attendant gods who take the form of detached arms with a pair of raiton's wings growing where shoulder should be.

Taru-Han has no interest in the responsibilities of her office, delegating the vast majority of her work to various division heads — she sought position for the nigh-immunity to audits and other scrutiny that its political power affords her. Her true interest is in souls. Heaven doesn't control Creation's cycle of reincarnation, but it can influence it to a limited extent. After centuries spent working with souls, she's developed both a fascination with her purview and a discerning eye.

Thanks to her newfound position, she's been able to realize a long-held passion: collecting mortal souls. Her attendants fly throughout Creation, seeking souls suitable to their lady's interest. She struggles to explain her tastes to those not intimately versed in the soul's nature — the lingering traces of certain passions and experiences in life contribute to a soul's beauty, and unusual or exotic souls always catch her interest. She takes great pleasure in handling her stolen souls, imagining herself in her mother's place, presiding over life and death. She keeps her most prized souls in a heavily-warded cabinet in her offices, each sealed within a crystalline urn.

Removing souls from the cycle of reincarnation is highly illegal. Taru-Han's gone to great lengths to ensure she isn't caught: paying off censors and the Division of Inevitable Reckoning, dispatching soul collectors to spy on her rivals, and calling in favors with Saturn's spirit court. She's currently most concerned by Varsoi of the Mournful Thurible, the Division of Endings' god of funereal incense. Once a direct subordinate of Taru-Han's, she derailed his political career by foisting him off on the Violet Bier after one thoughtful follow-up question too many. He's familiar enough with the nature of her work to have pieced together clues lost on others, and Tara-Han's worried that he may have already brought his suspicions to his superiors. She's begun cultivating contacts within the Bureau of Destiny, hoping to quash this before it grows into a threat to even her nigh-unassailable position.

Lytek, Scribe of the Chosen, God of Exaltation

Lytek has the perfect job — Exaltation and the Exalted fascinate him, and his work and life are virtually indistinguishable. As god of Exaltation, he regularly submits memos on candidates for Exaltation to the Celestial Incarnae. He's never known if the Most High give his suggestions any heed, but he takes immense pride when one of his candidates is Chosen.

Lytek also records the deeds of the Exalted in Heaven's archives, sifting through reports from countless terrestrial gods and his subordinates in the Division of Exaltation to compile accurate narratives and histories. He'll do virtually anything to for tales of the Chosen, especially if he's getting it directly from the Exalt in question. His passion, interest, and empathy for the Exalted trumps his official duties and Heaven's law.

Once the Supreme Minister of Abstract Matters, Lytek lost the post in the wake of the Solar Purge. He still has many allies within the department, and is owed a number of favors by many senior members. Perhaps more important is his understanding of the department's history and operations, which have led

Taru-Han to delegate her most complicated responsibilities to him. He maintained good relations with Taru-Han's predecessor, but loathes the Lady of Souls' indolence and disinterest in the department's vital work. She's overcome this burden by providing him memories gleaned from the souls of the Exalted before they pass unto Lethe. He keeps these in a large starmetal cabinet in his office, and will eagerly offer any Exalt who visits him a glimpse at whatever memories of their past lives he may have.

Ak-Lanir of the Diamond Mace, Commissioner of Lawful Justice

Ak-Lanir is a prominent figure within the Division of Inevitable Reckoning, serving as the law enforcement branch's liaison to Heaven's censors (p. XX). They've risen through the division's ranks in the centuries since the Great Contagion, having spent much of their life as a lion-dog, and then as a celestial lion, before being promoted to their current post as a god of justice and ethics. They're diligent in their duties and share Ryzala's belief in Celestial Concerns' institutional importance, to the extent that they'll overlook wrongdoing by its members if it's in the department's best interests. They're complicit in numerous cover ups, ranging from petty bribe-taking to Heaven-wide conspiracies. Many of the department's highest-ranking officers owe their careers to Ak-Lanir's intervention, placing the commissioner at the center of a tremendous web of favors and debts.

Ak-Lanir wields the political power they've accrued in the Bureau of Heaven's interests — they may be deeply corrupt, but they aren't self-interested. If a threat to the bureau or to Yu-Shan's balance of political power can't be dealt with by lion-dogs, Ak-Lanir's almost certainly owed a favor by someone who can. This makes them far less pliable than many outside the bureau would suspect from the commissioner's reputation — unless it serves the department, they have no interest in taking bribes or abusing their authority.

The Bureau of Humanity

The Bureau of Humanity — formally, *the Divine Witnesses of Human Works and Deeds* oversees the activities, creations, and societies of humankind, at least in theory. In the First Age, it worked hand-in-hand with the Exalted to maintain a peaceful and prosperous Creation. It monitored human civilization, ensuring that it thrived or fell as destiny demanded, and maintained a steady and voluminous stream of prayers unto the gods. As the Exalted reshaped the world, the bureau's divisions and offices expanded to encompass the likes of thinking machines, artificial flight, and anagathic medicines. Throughout the First Age, it remained among the most influential bureaus, and often predominated in Heaven's politics.

This ended with the Solar Purge. With the loss of the First Age's wonders and its working relationship with the Old Realm's Chosen, the Bureau of Humanity fell greatly in power and prominence, leaving it vulnerable to plots and machinations of the Bureau of Heaven. Under the pretext of bureaucratic restructuring to improve efficiency, the Department of Abstract Matters has raided the Bureau of Humanity's offices for prime purviews, subsuming the most important and prestigious positions. This only intensified after the near-collapse of human society in the Great Contagion, leaving many of the bureau's low-ranking gods without purviews to oversee. The Bureau of Heaven's largely ceased such acquisitions, mostly because there are so few desirable purviews remaining for the taking.

Today's Bureau of Humanity is on its back foot, but still fighting. The Department of Abstract Matters' predation has left gaping holes in the bureau's hierarchy and institutional knowledge and decimated its staffing, causing widespread inefficiency, miscommunication, and delay. It's adapted to this with a series of spot fixes, workarounds, and bureaucratic kludges over the centuries, creating organizational snarl that's all but unnavigable. Some gods report to as many as five direct superiors, none of whom are talking to each other. Several interdivisional working groups have functionally become divisions in their own right, with their own parallel hierarchies.

Agenda

The bureau's foremost concern is building back from the Department of Abstract Matters' bureaucratic raiding. With the Bureau of Heaven predominant in Yu-Shan, the Bureau of Humanity seeks to cultivate influence within Creation. Its current agenda involves currying favor with terrestrial gods by supporting divine rule over mortals, in violation of the Creation-Ruling Mandate. It backs city fathers and other loyal terrestrial gods, providing them with necessary resources and contacts and covering up their crimes. In exchange, these terrestrial spirits promote the worship of their patrons in the bureau, providing an outpouring of ambrosia into the bureau's coffers and the pockets of its senior members. It launders this prayer through "ghost cities," long-abandoned human settlements that exist only on paper, a scheme that's managed to deter the Department of Celestial Concerns thus far. It doesn't hurt that much of this ambrosia goes toward paying off highly-placed gods within Celestial Concerns.

Working Relationships

The Bureau of Humanity has no choice but to work with the Bureau of Heaven, loath as they are to do so. While few care if the department flounders, so many of the Bureau of Humanity's essential offices were stolen that refusing to cooperate would hamstring its own operations. Even then, it's a contentious relationship, and some in the Bureau of Humanity are willing to compromise their own divisions to spite the department. Many of the gods whose purviews were folded into the department support the Bureau of Humanity in this. Even the lowest-ranking clerk can strike a blow for their colleagues by delaying messages, drawing out meetings with incessant questions, and "misinterpreting" their superior's commands.

The Bureau of Humanity also works closely with the Bureau of Destiny. There are few destinies that don't involve humanity in at least some capacity, making joint operations between them fairly common. Sidereals are frequently solicited as experts on human nature and society, even on matters far outside their experience — not all gods understand why a freshly Exalted Sidereal from Chiaroscuro can't provide a detailed account of the city's First Age history. The Bureau of Destiny has remained neutral in the Bureau of Humanity's conflicts with the Department of Abstract Matters, giving rise to more than a little tension between the two bureaus.

Notable Figures

Wun Ja, Director of Humanity, Goddess of the Shining Metropolis

Goddess of Creation's greatest cities, She Who Hath Laid Ten Thousand Bricks, Wun Ja has headed the bureau since its glory days in the First Age. She's seen the depths it's sunk to, and while the Department of Abstract Matters' predations have largely ceased, she fears for her bureau's future. She most often appears as a tall, slender woman of glass and metal, clad in elaborate garments that resemble architecture more than clothing. She's a proud, dignified goddess, well-loved by her subordinates for her witty humor and the genuine interest she takes in their well-being.

Steadfastly committed to both the bureau and her purview, she's willing to break any law and make any sacrifice in their name. She's the mastermind of the bureau's covert involvement with terrestrial gods, and receives the lion's share of the prayer that it generates. She's also drawn upon the Exigence many times to create Architects, champions of Creation's cities (**Exigents**, p. XX), sharing the burden of diminishment with city fathers seeking an Exigent champion's aid. She makes much of the fact that the Unconquered Sun has never denied one of her petitions, taking this as proof of her agenda's righteousness.

Wun Ja has long remained independent from the Fivescore Fellowship's factional intrigues, but the Gold Faction's revitalization and the Solars' return has brought her into the fray. A return to the First Age's

glories seems a distant hope, but the Bureau of Humanity isn't in a position to turn down the opportunity — though it's far from her first priority. This involvement has complicated her personal life. She's long been romantically entangled with Jagalza, Satrap of the Realm, who oversees the Blessed Isle's city fathers. Jagalza has long had dealings with the Bronze Faction, but the Realm's mounting instability has driven her further into their camp in hopes of preserving her office. Their relationship's grown increasingly strained as they dance around the matter, a tension that's spilled out into those branches of the Bureau of Humanity that regularly interact with the two goddesses.

Amoth City-Smiter, Sub-Director of Tumbled Ruins

Amoth City-Smiter is among the few in the Bureau of Humanity to have benefitted from the Age of Sorrows. As god of cities fallen to destruction and a son of Mars, he's worshipped by those who dwell amid ruins or scavenge from them. Siege warfare drives much of his worship: besieging armies beg his aid, while cities under siege plead for his mercy. For Amoth, this worship's just a bonus. Devoted to his purview to an exceptional degree, all he really wants is for cities to fall. He's made many allies of convenience in Creation, lending his support to rogue gods, Silver Pact radicals, and even the Fair Folk when their agendas threaten the destruction of cities. He no longer bothers attending destiny planning committees — his single-issue vote is so predictable that it's taken for granted by his peers.

Amoth takes the form of a tall, powerfully muscled man with the lower body of a great serpent. Despite his imposing appearance, brute strength isn't his forte — he's a master of deception and political intrigues, applying his mother's strategic genius to the battlefield of politics. While his interests often directly oppose Wun Ja's, she's been forced to rely on his talents in orchestrating the bureau's support of divine rulership.

Not content with the power he's amassed, Amoth has designs on the bureau's directorship. He's watched Wun Ja carefully throughout his dealings with her, and has seen through her efforts to conceal just how much power she's lost to the crumbling of civilization and the fires of the Exigence. A single well-placed blow could provide the opportunity he needs to oust her, and the Realm's descent into chaos has presented the perfect opportunity: destroying the Imperial City. He stirs up feuds between gods within the bureau who support the Realm, and has made overtures to the Gold Faction, offering his support to the Cult of the Illuminated if it can bring the Solar Exalted into the fray.

Burning Feather, Lady of Intoxicants

Burning Feather oversees Creation's many liquors, drugs, and other narcotics, bringing her worship from throughout Creation. She appears as a pale, white-haired woman with featureless eyes, redolent with the aromas of burning hashish and opium smoke. She rose to prominence in her division after the Bureau of Heaven poached her superiors. She takes to her work with gusto, answering the prayers of the intoxicated, ensuring Heaven's demand for narcotics is met, and sampling exotic intoxicants to record their effects in Heaven's archives. Having tasted the forbidden fruit of high office, she's backed the bureau's support of divine rule in Creation, seeking to rise even in further in standing and using the stream of ambrosia it supplies to throw revels to scandalize even the gods.

Burning Feather spends more time in Creation than in Heaven. When she's not tending to matters of her purview or acting as an intermediary between Wun Ja and bureau's allies among the terrestrial gods, she has a fondness for taking mortal lovers. Many of her paramours are forever changed by the experience of her psychedelic embrace. Some have been gifted with second sight, becoming Burning Feather's prophets; others have attained sorcerous enlightenment in her boudoir.

Burning Feather has close ties with the Division of Serenity, a considerable advantage for the Bureau of Humanity. Out of all the Bureau of Destiny's divisions, the Cerulean Lute is often the one to work most

closely in Creation's human societies, affording ample opportunities to uncover the Bureau of Humanity's schemes. Burning Feather cultivates relationships with young Joybringers in expectation of their future discretion, and has convinced some to overlook the matter in exchange for valuable information, much-needed funding, or a hit of something really spectacular. More than one junior Sidereal has been sent on an errand to visit Burning Feather and replenish a senior's stash, occasionally find themselves roped into the Lady of Intoxicants' schemes or revels themselves.

Najalin Szarek, Dragon of Heaven

Born into the Najalin clan of Heaven's Dragons (p. XX), Szarek secured a low-ranking clerkship with Kazneas, Goddess of the Pentatonic Scale, after Exalting as a Dragon-Blooded. His primary duty on her behalf involves acting as a deniable go-between from the Bureau of Humanity to its allies among Creation's terrestrial gods, delivering instructions, intelligence, assets, and funding to deities involved with every aspect of the bureau's plans. He has no loyalty to the bureau, but between his salary and what he skims of the top of his deliveries, he's able to support his entire extended family with more than enough left over.

Since becoming involved with the Bureau of Humanity's schemes, Szarek's developed a taste for the heavenly luxuries he can now afford, exploring every manner of vice. He's smoked drugs made from ground-up Underworld grave goods, lost fortunes on fights between indescribable Wyld-mutated beasts, and spent a truly embarrassing sums on his beetle collection — and he's always happy to bring a new friend along to party. Much of this is of questionable legality at best, but he shows no signs of reining himself in anytime soon, though being caught could potentially compromise the secrecy of the bureau's conspiracy.

The Bureau of Nature

Governance of Creation's wilderness falls to *the Superintendency of Nature Grand and Humble*, a single bureau divided into two sprawling parallel bureaucracies that classify and oversee all things of the natural world. *The Hierarchy of Type* is made up of gods whose purviews concern specific kinds of animals, plants, and geography: birds, trees, sedimentary rocks valleys, and so on. *The Hierarchy of Function's* gods oversee purviews based on the activities, behavior, and purposes of such things: carnivorous plants, carrion-eaters, symbiotic relationships, weeds, and so forth.

The bureau suffered greatly in the mass extinctions of the Great Contagion and the drowning of much of Creation in the Wyld that followed after. Drove of the Bureau's staff lost their purviews as entire divisions became obsolete. Much of Yu-Shan's unemployed underclass consists of discharged Bureau of Nature employees. Even after centuries spent recovering from this decline, the bureau is still far from its former status.

While the Hierarchies' purviews thoroughly overlap each other, the Hierarchy of Function suffered most in the Contagion. With the loss of much of Creation's scholarly knowledge, its more abstract and conceptual classifications of nature have little meaning for most in Creation. While the Hierarchy of Nature's gods receive worship from hunters, farmers, travelers, and many more, few mortals would know who in the Hierarchy of Function to direct their prayers to.

Agenda

The Bureau of Nature prioritizes Creation's well-being out of self-interest, with a particular focus on those aspects of nature that are governed by its highest-ranking gods. A calamity like the Great Contagion can't be allowed to happen again, no matter what the cost. Much of this is done simply by performing the day-to-day duties of one's office — the Bureau of Nature's workforce is much more motivated than many

of their peers. At times, though, it's necessary to violate Heaven's law, whether intervening in mortal affairs or leaking sensitive information on the movements of Fair Folk to Exalted in a position to act on them.

Working Relationships

The Bureau of Nature has a tense, heated relationship with the Bureau of Seasons, dating back to the labor dispute that led to the Division of Seasons breaking away to form its own bureau. Much as they loathe one another, the closely interconnected nature of many purviews requires them to work together — often intimately. It's a mutually beneficial arrangement, but that hasn't stopped intense passions and old grudges from breeding friction and infighting in their joint ventures. Mediating such disputes would normally fall under the Department of Celestial Concerns' remit, but the Bureau of Seasons distrusts Celestial Concerns perhaps just as much as it does the Bureau of Nature. Members of the Bureau of Destiny have been called into to help informally arbitrate disagreements in exchange for favors from high-ranking spirits in both bureaus.

Notable Figures

Flashing Peak, Grand Archon of Type, Goddess of the Imperial Mountain

Flashing Peak heads the Hierarchy of Type, taking the lead in the bureau's efforts at defending creation. Her appearance is as distinctive as her purview's — her skin and flesh are polished basalt, and she towers over many gods and Sidereals at eight feet tall. She's keenly intelligent, though sometimes rigid in her thinking. Known for her unshakeable calm and stern demeanor, some wonder if she ever leaves her office, the sprawling Thousandfold Menagerie.

Flashing Peak has no tolerance for corruption, no matter what the reason behind it, making examples out of subordinates who violate Heaven's laws. First offenses are usually punished with a long, increasingly disappointed lecture, while repeat offenders face cuts to their salary and the funding allocated to their lower-priority projects. This often conflicts with the bureau's actual needs, leaving her subordinates faced with choosing between being derelict in their duties and risking her displeasure. While she lacks formal authority over the Hierarchy of Function, the power and influence of her position sometimes let her pressure its head, Burnished Talon, into doing the same.

Flashing Peak's dedication to Heaven's law and the Celestial Bureaucracy makes her a natural ally of Ryzala. While the branches they head rarely have cause to work together, the two goddesses support each other's proposals in destiny planning agendas and find reasons to work together. They also share a mutual loathing of the Bureau of Seasons, both working undermine it at every turn.

Burnished Talon, Grand Archon of Function, God of Mammalian Predators

Burnished Talon faces an uphill struggle as the Hierarchy of Function's leader, but it's a challenge he's well-suited for. He's on collegial terms with Flashing Peak, but he's unafraid of going toe-to-toe with her if he has to, confident in his position as her co-equal despite her far greater influence and power. His appearance changes frequently — he always sports the head of a predatory mammal; whether it's that of a wolf, a bear, or a shrew can change day to day or hour to hour. Laughter comes easy to him, and he's often seen after hours regaling his subordinates with stories of the bureau's glory days over drinks.

An innovator and lateral thinker, Burnished Talon has spearheaded a number of bold projects to restore the branch's power and prestige. His reputation among his subordinates is mixed — while some admire his tenacity, resourcefulness, and ingenuity in advancing their cause, others would prefer a leader with actual successes to their name, not just big ideas.

His latest project involves the creation of new species through breeding operations conducted in the Wyld's bordermarches. His ultimate goal is the creation of animal species that defy categorization by type, forcing humanity to adapt to the Hierarchy of Function's system of classification. He's seen some early successes, such as the carnivorous tree sloth that's frequently seen clinging to his neck, but the project has caused no end of headaches for the Bureau of Destiny when his creations have broken free of containment. He'd have faced an audit for the project already if not for the unexpected intercession of Flashing Peak — a debt that Talon's none too happy about, though he has no idea what the mountain-goddess could be planning.

Ardis-Iara, Who Paints The Rainbow

Ardis-Iara owes their position in the Hierarchy of Type entirely to their father, the Unconquered Sun — or rather, to his spirit court, which ensured the young godling received a prime purview for their first assignment. They treat the office as a sinecure, delegating its duties out in bits and bobs to their subordinates and those seeking to curry their favor in the Unconquered Sun's court. The only part of their job that Ardis-Iara takes seriously is the actual design of rainbows, an endeavor that's more art than science, and which they've shown a marked talent for. Unfortunately for their secretarial staff, this is only a small part of their superior's duties, and it's not uncommon for them to have to redo weeks' worth of paperwork after Ardis-Iara comes into the office with a new plan for this or that rainbow.

It's outside the Bureau of Nature's offices that Ardis-Iara really comes alive. They spend a great deal of time with their siblings and cousins, keeping in their good graces by nodding along as they recount tales of the Divine Revolution over tea and honey-drizzled cakes. They're still young compared to the rest of the court, and their status within both it and the bureau is contingent on the favor of their elders, for now. When not caught up in the court's intrigues, they indulge in heavenly luxuries, a patron of the arts and bon vivant who'd be buried under scandal if not for their parentage. For them, such delights are the entire purpose of power, and they're far from what satisfied with what they have now. Though many in Heaven long for an office such as theirs, it pales in comparison to those held by the uppermost echelons of the Sun's court.

Obadis, Diligent Tender of Larch Boletes

Before the Contagion decimated the Bureau's ranks, Obadis was a quiet, easily contented deity, more concerned with their hobby of developing new kinds of symbiotic fungus than office politics. Alas, the reorganization moved their office out of the Hierarchy of Function's Division of Symbiosis and into the Hierarchy of Type's Division of Plants. This isn't entirely wrong, since her bolete mushrooms need larch trees to be symbiotic *with*, but it made their job far more difficult than necessary, as most of their close bureaucratic contacts remained in the Division of Symbiosis.

Obadis has proven adept in navigating this disconnect, but the experience has led them to grow jaded with the bureau's dual hierarchies, arguing for a reorganization of the bureau along more sensible lines. The detailed proposals they've submitted to both Flashing Peak and Burnished Talon have gone unread, but it's won them some support elsewhere. Much of it comes from their former colleagues in the Hierarchy of Function, such as Phalaea, Goddess of Poisonous Lookalike Mushrooms, who view it as a way to reset the bureau's imbalanced power dynamic.

They've found less warm of a welcome within the Hierarchy of Type, particularly among its upper ranks. Their seniors see the campaign as well-intentioned, but a threat to both the hierarchies' cooperative efforts and to their own political standing. Their efforts at discouragement might have worked back when Obadis first joined the bureau, but now that they've found their voice and passion for politics, they're not giving up without a fight.

The Bureau of Seasons

In the First Age, Creation's weather and the turning of the seasons was the Bureau of Nature's remit. Much of the actual work of this was foisted off on the bureau's lowest ranks and the terrestrial gods and worldly elementals who reported to them. Like many of such ranks, these spirits — predominantly elementals — faced long hours implementing plans that their superiors had written up in a handful of minutes, receiving neither the recognition nor the pay due to their professional knowledge, experience, and skill. After a particularly egregious season that saw entire weather-workers jerked from one assignment to the next en masse by competing supervisors, a group of elementals in the East, part of the Divisions of Winter and Spring, came to an agreement — they'd usher in winter, and thenceforth do *nothing* until changes were made.

At first, the Bureau of Nature ignored their demands — what could these petty clerks do that couldn't be undone by the gods of the seasons themselves? But when the orders came down, the seasonal divisions' heads balked at such menial assignments and passed them down to their divisions' remaining staff. Between the blatancy of this disrespect and the organizing efforts, many of the bureau's weather-workers, clerks, and low-ranking elementals rallied around their fellow workers. What had been a simple labor dispute escalated into a bureau-wide crisis, dubbed the Seasons Revolt. By midwinter, over half of Heaven's weather-workers had laid down their metaphorical tools, threatening the Celestial Bureaucracy's plans with the prospect of a year without a spring growing season.

As it became clear the Bureau of Nature was over its head, the Department of Celestial Concerns intervened. After token efforts at negotiation failed, Senteus, God of Legal Authority and then-head of the Division of Inevitable Reckoning, ordered a violent end to the work stoppage. Lion-dog strikebreakers prowled the streets where the weather-workers marched and the teahouses were they gathered, carrying out targeted intimidation of leaders and organizers and conducting mass arrests of striking weather-workers.

However, the Seasons Revolt found an unlikely ally in Heaven's military, *the Aerial Legion*. Many of its elemental dragons and other puissant spirits of air and water sympathized with their cousins in the Bureau of Nature. Never before had the bellicose legion refused an opportunity to do what they loved best — but when the order came to target the striking spirits, the Aerial Legion stood down. Its position completely untenable, the Bureau of Heaven negotiated the Treaty of Spring, ending the Seasons Revolt by forming *the Celestial Monitors of the Seasons and Weather*.

Since its contentious early days, the Bureau of Seasons has largely settled down into ordinary bureaucratic operations. Its ranks are primarily made up of elementals and former terrestrial gods, along with a few celestial gods who never rose higher than secretarial positions. Its duties have remained largely unchanged from before the Seasons Revolt, save that the Aerial Legion now belongs to them — the most contentious aspect of the Treaty of Spring, but also the lynchpin to the peaceful resolution of the Seasons Revolt.

Heaven has *not* forgotten the Bureau of Seasons' origins. No one wants another Seasons Revolt on their hands, and the bureau is seen as a hotbed of radical sentiment and rabbleroxing — which isn't an entirely fair view. The bureau faces close scrutiny from the Celestial Bureaucracy's other branches, particularly the Bureaus of Nature and Heaven, lest they attempt a repeat performance or incite spirits within other bureaus to follow their example.

The bureau's funding priorities shift with the turning of the seasons. The Divisions of Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter each enter a flurry of activity just before their respective season begins, hiring temporary workers — almost entirely elementals — in preparation for the work of ringing out the old

season and inaugurating the new. These seasonal positions serve as an entryway into the bureau for elementals lacking political connections. Some are hired on permanently after the current seasons' end, while others are picked up by the division in charge of the season to come, moving smoothly from one temporary job to the next.

Multiple divisions specializing in various forms of weather exist alongside this seasonal administrative structure. Some in the bureau hold an office in both a seasonal division and a weather division — for instance, Singing Maiana, Bearer of Gentle Rains in the East, belongs both to the Division of Spring and the Division of Rain.

The Aerial Legion has been integrated into the bureau, its military ranks running into parallel to the civilian management structure. The bureau's head sits at the top of both of these command structures, and some spirits hold separate positions within each of the two or belong to offices that straddle the boundary between them. Its power to act is strictly delineated by the terms of the Treaty of Spring. While it acts under the Bureau of Seasons' authority, it can only be deployed with authorization from one of a handful of gods outside the bureau. These include both E-Naluna, head of the Bureau of Heaven's Division of War, as well as Rashan, the Bureau of Destiny's liaison to the Aerial Legion under the authority of Hu Dai Liang. Both Mars and the Unconquered Sun do so as well, though they have delegated these privileges to members of their spirit courts: the indomitable Pherydis, Keeper of the Hounds of Parhelion, and Ninth Spear Daughter, the Make-Way General. When these gods disagree on questions of strategy, the Aerial Legion often ends up bogged down in red tape.

Agenda

The Seasons Revolt's goals were largely met by the Treaty of Spring. The bureau is in a position to see to its members' wages and working conditions, and has the resources to staff itself with recruits drawn from the ranks of their elemental cousins and Creation's weather-spirits. While labor organizing remains a prominent part of the bureau's institutional culture, its political priorities today are centered around the Aerial Legion. Its leadership is hawkish and the rank and file even more so, agitating for authorization to act during any crisis of significance in Creation.

It's been centuries since the last full-scale deployment of the Aerial Legion, against the armies of Fair Folk that invaded Creation in the Great Contagion's aftermath. The legion suffered heavy losses, both to faerie enemies and to the lingering Contagion, souring many in Heaven's appetite for further deployments. Since then, they've been limited to a handful of partial deployments against forbidden gods, escaped demons, and renegade devil-stars. Many opportunities for deployment have come and gone unseized: the Nine Garda Rebellion, the fall of Thorns, the reactivation of the malfunctioning war-fortress of Windscour Siege. Each time they are denied, they chafe more and more at their yoke, opining at the losses that could have been mitigated while downplaying the disasters their intervention might have brought.

Working Relationships

The Bureau of Seasons has always existed in a tense bureaucratic standoff with the other four bureaus. The Treaty of Spring was hugely controversial, and many in Heaven remain of the opinion that the Bureau of Seasons should never have been created in the first place. The Bureau of Nature and the Department of Celestial Concerns have never gotten over the Seasons Revolt, and other branches' relationships with the Bureau of Seasons are professional at best. The Aerial Legion has served its intended purpose of maintaining the bureau as part of Heaven's balance, but it's a delicate equilibrium. The Bureau of Seasons' political enemies now seek to upset it by driving a wedge between the bureau and the legion.

The bureau works more closely with the terrestrial gods who report to it than the others, and this relationship extends to its oversight of the Court of Seasons. The terrestrial court's spirits don't actually govern the seasons themselves — its name instead reflects its unique system of leadership, with a different spirit appointed to the court's governance for each month of the year. The most significant of the bureau's joint ventures with the court is the Carnival of Meeting, the Calibration festival wherein Heaven's gates are flung open to mortal visitors (p. XX).

The court's autonomy is slowly being ceded to supervisors in the Bureau of Seasons, a cruel irony given the cause of the Seasons Revolt. Some among the court and the bureau alike fear a second revolt in the making, knowing that it would weaken the Bureau of Seasons' position and offer its many detractors the opportunity to dissolve the bureau. Junior Sidereals who can play peacemaker and emissary find easy allies in both organizations, especially among those seeking to strengthen ties between Heaven and Creation.

Notable Figures

Ghataru, Shogun of the Aerial Legion, God of Seasons and Weather

Ghataru is the most recent in a line of compromise candidates to lead the bureau. Some outside the bureau point out the incongruity of the elemental-dominated branch being led by a god, but that's the point — as a relative outsider without strong ties to either the Aerial Legion or the bureau's civilian ranks, Ghataru is equally dissatisfactory to all sides. Contemplative, conservative, and surprisingly soft-spoken, Ghataru sometimes seems out of place as the leader of a bureau made up of Heaven's finest fighting force and the veterans of a legendary labor battle.

Like many of the bureau's gods, Ghataru's first posting was a terrestrial deity, though it came long after the Seasons Revolts' end. Despite this, he's largely favored the Aerial Legion over the bureau's civilian branches when their priorities come into conflict. He justifies this to the rank and file with appeals to the legion's importance to the bureau's continuing existence, but many suspect an ulterior motive on his part — unwillingness to challenge the legion's ranking generals, corrupt dealings between them, or a misguided desire to seem impartial. Many of the bureau's weather-workers bristle at Ghataru's perceived betrayal, agitating for a true firebrand to replace him. The Aerial Legion has backed him against challenges to his leadership, but this has only further incensed those who see the bureau's head as being under the legion's thumb.

Kanasri, Rain-Bringer General of the Aerial Legion

Kanasri is a storm serpent of terrifying size and power, one of the few to outlive the storm that birthed them (**Hundred Devils Night Parade**, p. 99). As Rain-Bringer General, she commands the wing of the Aerial Legion responsible for martial weather, weaponizing thunderstorms, squalls, and hurricanes against Heaven's enemies. In peacetime, her sole duty is overseeing the Aerial Legion's cooperation with the bureau's weather-workers in managing large storm systems, a task she finds endlessly dreary. She delegates as much of this as she can to her subordinates, preferring battle drills in the Aerial Legion's cloud-borne training grounds or drafting proposals for misfortunes at sea and town-leveling tempests.

Kanasri is one of the loudest agitators for full-scale deployments of the Aerial Legion, even for threats seemingly beneath their notice. She's earned the admiration of many of those who serve beneath her, but has made little headway with those responsible for authorizing the legion to act. She's not naturally given to scheming, but sheer frustration has finally driven her to play at heavenly politics, seeking to make inroads with spirits close to those who hold the legions' reins. The battle-hardened veteran is still callow in matters of intrigue, used to speaking bluntly and solving problems with force and bluster. She's

disinterested in the agendas and politics of those she deals with — she'll side with whoever will send the Aerial Legion into the field, even if it means working with the Bureau of Seasons' greatest political enemies.

The Wind Masters

The Wind Masters are bear-headed elemental dragons of air (p. XX), each entrusted with one of Creation's five cardinal winds. They hold high rank in the Bureau of Seasons, working directly under Kanasri, but their duties so often demand their presence in Creation that they've made it their permanent abode. The ill-tempered Blue Skulking Bear rules the North Wind from an inhospitable fortress of ice. Green Frowning Bear is the East Wind's vainglorious master, his forest lodge's gates of gem-encrusted silver guarded by colossal bees. Black Grinning Bear, arrogant lord of the Western Wind, is a ferocious hunter of the Great Western Ocean's many exotic quarries. The prideful Red Stalking Bear despises his fellow Wind Masters, denying them the South Wind's cooperation. White Venerable Bear is keeper of the Blessed Isle's Omphalos Wind, sagacious but circumspect to a fault.

Having spent centuries working together — first within the Bureau of Nature, and then under the Bureau of Seasons — the Wind Masters have come to know and detest each other's foibles and flaws, bickering fiercely among each other. They meet only once each season, assembling at White Venerable Bear's aerial domain in Creation, the Tower Aneme, to coordinate weather patterns for the coming months. They belong to the bureau's civilian side, working under Ishasala, Goddess of Clear Skies, but they report to Kanasri in the Aerial Legion. They have little respect for Ishasala, who wastes her time trying to play peacemaker between them, and chafe at taking orders from Kanasri, an elemental not even old enough to attain dragonhood — perhaps the only matters on which they agree. When given orders they don't care to enact, the Wind Masters do everything in their power to logjam the process, appealing to whichever of the two *didn't* give the order or claiming to be already overloaded with work from the other side of the bureau. As a result, little that requires their participation gets done without bribes, leverage, or a threat from something the Great Bears actually fear — a short list indeed.

Let Mountains Fall, Weather-Worker Second Class

A veteran of the Seasons Revolt, Let Mountains Fall earned his reputation not through great feats of heroism but the slow, demanding work of bringing countless season-spirits together as a unified whole. A crocodile-headed water elemental known as a sobeksis, he's a steadfast egalitarian with little regard for hierarchy or Heaven's law. Famous for his affability and coarse humor, he's known throughout the bureau as a friend, associate, and familiar face.

Let Mountains Fall technically belongs to the bureau's lowest ranks, having turned down every management position offered to him. He much prefers a role on the front lines as a humble weather-worker, treasuring the camaraderie of his fellow workers and the anonymity that comes with his low standing outside the bureau. He's still passionately involved in organizing the Celestial Bureaucracy's lower ranks, aiding spirits across the five bureaus in negotiating better wages, working hours, and conditions. This has made him an enemy of many of the Celestial Bureaucracy's line management, and he's drawn the notice of a few of the Bureaucracy's uppermost echelons.

The elemental's current project is Bureau of Humanity's Urban Periphery Department, whose junior officials handle the bulk of all reports from city fathers and other urban terrestrial gods, a duty fobbed off on them by those in the Division of Cities who're supposed to read them. This isn't a purely selfless plan — the office has cut him on the bribes of ambrosia they regularly receive for covering up Wun Ja's conspiracy with the city fathers in official records.

Outside of work, Let Mountains Fall pursues a passion for poetry. His verse is enthusiastic at best, but

he's a surprisingly vicious critic. His occasional threats to devour poets whose work displeases him draw raucous laughter...though it's a rare poet whose heart doesn't skip a beat when they meet him.

Chapter Three: Yu-Shan

Behold glorious Yu-Shan, where the gods dwell in luxury and splendor! It's a city the size of a continent, resting upon a tranquil sea of quicksilver. Diamond spires dot its skyline, shimmering and ancient. Powerful deities gorge themselves on celestial wine at banquets beyond imagining. It's also a place of ruined temples turned to slums, where wayward immortals inhabit the broken precincts of a lost age; and abandoned estates regressed to wilderness, populated by divine beasts and reclusive elemental spirits.

Here, in glorious Yu-Shan, the Celestial Bureaucracy oversees Creation. Here, the story of Creation is woven upon the Loom of Fate according to the gods' designs. Here, divine ministers barter and intrigue with one another for the destiny of nations and paupers alike. Here, too, dwell and work the Sidereal Exalted, Chosen of the Maidens — once mortal, now peers and colleagues to the shapers of destiny. It's a place of contradiction and allure; of excess and corruption; of vanity and virtue. It's also the blank page upon which the stories of the Sidereal Exalted may be told.

Citizens of Heaven

Heaven is known as the city of the gods, and they comprise its substantial majority, but aren't its sole inhabitants. Its populace includes elementals immigrated from Creation, unique spirits like the pattern spiders and the Age's daughters, a smattering of rare ghosts and demons, and even the occasional behemoth. The city also has a small, persistent human population: Heaven's Dragons, Sidereals, God-Blooded and their families, and mortal favorites of the gods.

Gods

Gods come in every size and shape. Some seem almost human, save for glowing eyes or extra arms; others take the forms of talking beasts, endless coils of living shadows, or many-eyed pillars of flowing fire. While even the least of them can work miracles, their spiritual powers grow to suit their duty and rank within the Celestial Bureaucracy as their Essence swells with each promotion — or diminishes in demotion. They're naturally ageless, freed from such necessities as food, drink, or sleep, though they do relish feasting, wine, and repose that onlookers might never notice. They think and feel as mortals do, sharing the same passions and desires, except where their power, immortality, and nature color them with experiences no mortal will ever know.

The greatest distinction of the gods is that they're immortal. They suffer neither infirmity nor death from old age, though they may age and mature to reflect their self-image. That which would kill others only disperses their Essence for a time before they reform — at least, most of the time. Gods without a personal cult or a position within the Celestial Bureaucracy lack a worldly anchor, and might take years, decades, or even centuries to return. Others may reform warped or incomplete, and some unlucky few dissipate into nothingness.

There are other limits to godly immortality. Powerful magic — like that of the Exalted — can slay them outright. Similarly, in the brief few weeks before Yu-Shan could enforce a proper quarantine, the Great Contagion killed more gods than any event since the Divine Revolution. A few gods also have unique flaws in their immortality, doomed to be slain forever by a lover's betrayal, an obsidian spear, or an arrow inscribed with their true name.

Relationships are a vital touchstone for the deathless gods. While they may have many acquaintances, friendships tend to be few, intense, and long-lasting. Courtship and romance take myriad forms. Some divine lovers cement longstanding relationships with ritual marriages; others consider even hundred-year

courtships a casual fling. Monogamy is romanticized in heavenly art and popular opinion, but it's rare in practice, at least in the long term: few gods expect to remain compatible with any one person for millennia. Likewise, such relationships typically end amicably or unremarkably — though with notable exceptions. Burning Feather's infamous divorce from the swan-goddess Marindall saw half of Heaven embroiled in the scandal; to their mutual frustration, melodramas inspired by it remain popular and profitable in Heaven's playhouses.

Gods typically reproduce sexually. Some have esoteric means of procreation, particularly those with unusual forms: the living flame Ozumin must spend a year and a day tending a ceremonial bonfire into which his partners throw letters describing their hopes for their child's future, while the apple-goddess Smiling-at-Sunrise prunes away one of her extra arms to nurture into her next nearly-identical daughter. A rare few gods come into being without any parents at all, arising from unique conjunctions of circumstance and supernatural forces — they clamber forth from seafoam, emerge unexpectedly from wild gourds, or walk out of a slanted mirror-world. However they come about, godly children have brief infancies, if any, and thereafter typically develop at a mostly human pace until reaching physical maturity.

Spirits and Magic

Martial Arts: Most spirits are restricted by the Terrestrial keyword. Essence 5+ spirits don't suffer this restriction, but typically don't have Mastery. War-gods and other martial may have greater skill in Martial Arts than their Essence would usually warrant, and some spirits may have greater access to styles that resonate with their nature or a god's purview. Spirits are almost universally incapable of learning Sidereal Martial Arts. Exceptions, like Bahal Hesh, God of Martial Arts, and the Deathlord known as the Bishop of the Chalcedony Thurible are vanishingly rare.

Evocations: Most spirits are dissonant with all materials (**Arms of the Chosen**, p. 16). Essence 5+ spirits are neutral instead. Spirits may have improved resonance with materials related to their nature or a god's purview — typically an exotic substance, like a devil-star's crystalline bones, rather than one of the five magical materials. "Some spirits instead resonate with specific kinds of artifacts or artifacts made under certain circumstances or for certain purpose. Five-Metal Tang, God of Swords, is resonant with all daiklaves, while Mushana, God of Courtship, is resonant with any artifact made to woo a lover.

Sorcery: As with mortals and the Exalted, most spirits can't initiate into sorcery. Those who do are typically limited to the Terrestrial Circle sorcery. Essence 5+ spirits can initiate into the Celestial Circle. Some spirits may be able to initiate into Celestial Circle sorcery with Essence 3+ if appropriate to their nature or a god's divine purview, while others have limited access to thematically appropriate Celestial Circle spells. Solar Circle is thought to be beyond even the Celestial Incarnae, though Essence 9+ spirits who are master sorcerers may have limited access to a single thematically appropriate Solar Circle spell related to their purview. Spirits are unable to cast Summon Elemental and similar spells for summoning other spirits.

Necromancy: Rare as sorcery is among spirits, necromancy is even rarer. Gods, elementals, and demons are typically incapable of it entirely. Some

may be able to learn necromancy instead of sorcery if it's appropriate to their nature or a god's divine purview, or if they've been 'corrupted by the whispers of the Neverborn. They follow the same guidelines as sorcerers for determining which circles they can master'.

Elementals

Elementals are Yu-Shan's largest minority population. Born of Creation's Essence, they're immigrants to the celestial city, regarded by most gods as either impoverished relatives or unsophisticated bumpkins. Most are relegated to low-ranking positions, though they've risen to prominence in the elemental-dominated Bureau of Seasons. Many congregate in communities of other elementals, distinctive subcultures amidst the godly society around them, like the cloud people of Hyvant Perch who dwell amid the towering spires of a ruined palace, or the bough-crowned kinnaras of the Street of Birches, who celebrate seasonal festivals based on their homeland in Creation rather than Yu-Shan's calendar.

Elementals assigned positions in the Celestial Bureaucracy aren't spiritually empowered or changed by their office as gods are, nor do they receive ambrosia from prayer. The bureaus sometimes see this as reason enough not to employ or promote elementals, prioritizing less-qualified gods on the assumption that the power the office confers on them will make up any shortfall in experience. Those who do get singled out for employment or promotion are often judged with special harshness and unreasonably high standards by colleagues and supervisors.

Politically and economically disadvantaged compared to the gods, elementals hoping to thrive in Heaven turn to each other. Elementals who attain high-ranking positions often become patrons to other elementals, bringing them into their personal retinue, household, or spirit court. The Bureau of Seasons exemplifies this principle; ambitious elementals compete fiercely when a position becomes available, and so elementals form the majority of its management class.

The eldest and most powerful elementals sometimes undergo a metamorphosis into a draconic form. This transformation is exceedingly rare and enigmatic, but usually accompanies moments of enlightenment or epiphany, intuiting some deep secret about themselves and Creation. Known as lesser elemental dragons to distinguish them from the Five Elemental Dragons, their power exceeds that of elemental peers and most gods. This offers immense prestige within Heaven, as the gods recognize their puissance and the value of ensuring they work with the Celestial Bureaucracy, not against it. Most obtain high rank within whatever bureau they please, but many hold office in the Aerial Legion, the greatest martial force to stand against Heaven's enemies. Censors, Heaven's investigators and judges plenipotentiary (p. XX), are chosen exclusively from lesser elemental dragons, their origins in Creation lending independence from celestial corruption — at least, in theory.

Humanity

Heaven is no place for humanity, yet some have made a place for themselves anyway. Yu-Shan's human populace is extremely small, almost all living on society's fringes or dependent on divine patronage. Despite this, they vitalize Yu-Shan as only brief lives can, reminding godly patrons, friends, and neighbors of the mysteries of change and death.

Sidereals

Sidereals in Heaven enjoy power, wealth, and prestige to rival the greatest gods, and live in luxury most mortals can scarcely imagine. Though few in number, Sidereals are prominent figures in Heaven, combining the mystique of mortality and the dangerous allure of Exaltation. Yet no matter their status,

prestige, or age, Sidereals face significant obstacles to fitting in with godly society. It takes even the most cosmopolitan gods time to see Sidereals as people, rather than as stereotypes of their division, exciting novelties, or celebrities. A Sidereal can expect to be seen as she truly is by gods she counts as friends or long-time coworkers, but few others. Sidereals capable of truly slaying gods receive a vastly different reception, given a wide berth by all of Heaven. Though not necessarily be hated, they're regarded with the fear and solemnity due to that bleak privilege.

Sidereals must also contend with arcane fate, which can make years of friendship evaporate like morning dew. Some hold fiercely to treasured relationships in defiance of this, but few Sidereals can endure such alienation for long and remain unscathed. Some turn their back on Heaven at large, limiting their interactions to their fellow Sidereals and gods of the Bureau of Destiny, who're exempt from arcane fate. Others eschew relationships with minor gods, who're often nearly as susceptible to arcane fate as mortals. Even the most jaded Sidereal can't help but occasionally smile when a teahouse proprietor remembers her usual order, though, or sigh sadly when she's been forgotten the next day.

When not laboring in destiny's service or playing heavenly politics, they take to leisure, recreation, and vice with all the intensity of the Exalted. Liquor, cannabis, and tobacco are used so commonly that they're the foundation for much of Sidereals' interactions outside of work, while many enjoy harder drugs like opium, psychedelic dreamstones, and the potent cocaine derived from Heaven's coca plants. Some clear their heads with adrenaline, hunting behemoths through celestial wilderness or gambling a year's worth of salary on a roll of the dice. Others seek tranquility, whether meditating in secluded manses, attending refined tea ceremonies, or spending time living in mortal enclaves or communities of Heaven's Dragons. Some simply take the opportunity to sleep in, catch up on their reading, or tend to their gardening.

Heaven's Dragons

Heaven's Dragons are ancient mortal lineages bearing the dragon's blood (**Heirs of the Shogunate**, p. 114). These families have a long-established role in Yu-Shan's business and intrigues, with those who Exalt serving the Celestial Bureaucracy, powerful gods, and Sidereals as free agents, off-the-books assets, and envoys to Creation.

Some form long-lasting friendships or romantic partnerships with Sidereals. Human contact is a precious thing in the city of gods, and Dragon-Blooded can overcome arcane fate — the Oracle Atagi Thousandfold has been the loving but unremembered patron of generations of Star-Touched descendants with the Water Aspect spy known as Willow Eyes. Other Sidereals seek out Heaven's Dragons for allies and students, such as Anys Syn, who secretly observes the Glass Carillon enclave's Dragons for a long-prophesied disciple.

Exigents

Exigents rarely take up residence with their divine patrons in Yu-Shan; most are Chosen to answer crises in Creation, and many gods who create Exigents are destroyed in the process. Nonetheless, some Exigents still call Heaven home, acting as champions, emissaries, or fixers for their patrons. Such Exalted do face scrutiny from the Bureau of Destiny, lest they abet their patrons in violating heavenly law, but given the bureau's general disinterest in a task wholly unrelated to destiny, this may amount to nothing more than a Sidereal dropping in to visit every now and then.

Other Exalted

Heaven has few other Exalted visitors, and fewer such residents, yet they aren't wholly unknown. Those with legitimate business in Yu-Shan, backing from divine allies, or skill in subterfuge can secure entry through one of Heaven's gateways. This has grown vanishingly rare since the Usurpation, with the Solars

sealed away and the Silver Pact wary of Bronze Faction treachery. While it has neither capacity nor desire to hunt down every Lunar or Solar who sets foot in Heaven, the Bronze Faction poses so great a threat that few of its enemies could feel comfortable on its home turf. But with the return of the Solars — particularly Eclipse Caste diplomats — and the Gold Faction's resurgence, the state of play has changed significantly. How Heaven will respond remains an open question.

The Getimian Threat

The average god knows far less about Getimians than the Bureau of Destiny does. To Heaven at large, they're an insidious cadre of saboteurs and terrorists, possessed of power to threaten Heaven itself. Censors and senior celestial lions are among the few the Bureau of Destiny has fully briefed on the threat, as their cooperation is key to thwarting Getimian attacks on Yu-Shan.

Mortals

Most mortals in Heaven are companions, consorts, servants, or paramours of the gods. Some are taken up for short engagements; others remain in Yu-Shan for the rest of their brief lives. Their mortality makes them a novelty to the gods, the subject of fascination, gossip, and potentially unwanted attention. Heaven's law affords them little protection beyond what their host extends, and few have the means to survive in a city where a day's meal is an expensive luxury. Yet savvy mortals have parlayed their position in a god's household into considerable power and prestige, especially if they leverage their charms or skills to build their own reputations. That a mortal seamstress' prestige might exceed a minor god's by dint of her host causes great frustration for such spirits (and is the subject of several famous poems).

Mortals lacking divine patronage often find themselves on celestial society's margins. Some found themselves in Heaven during Calibration as unwitting guests of the Carnival of Meeting (p. XX). Others are orphaned or disowned offspring of God-Blooded, Sidereals, and the like, or managed to discover the key to one of the gates that lead to Heaven. Theirs is a difficult life, struggling to afford the most basic necessities and denied even the paltry dole afforded to unemployed spirits. They live among perils that the city's divine residents give little thought to, like its canals' toxic quicksilver. These mortals survive by resourcefulness, cunning, and persistence. Some find employment as servants or retainers; others ally with minor spirits, praying to their divine neighbors in exchange for a portion of ambrosia. This can sometimes be a cynical or mercenary arrangement, but it can also be a sacred exchange of reciprocal gratitude, deepening bonds between spirit and mortal communities.

God-Blooded

While most celestial gods leave children begat by mortal lovers to live in Creation, some bring favored God-Blooded descendants to dwell with them in Heaven. If mortals are novelties in Yu-Shan, God-Blooded are celebrities, figures of rumor and attention. Most live off their divine parent's largesse as they indulge in heavenly wonders. Some God-Blooded bring families of their own with them to their godly parent's estate, or start new families in Heaven.

God-Blooded who live free of their parents — either by their own choice or after being disowned — have an easier time of it than mortals. Heavenly law affords them protections comparable to those extended to unemployed gods, including the right to claim ambrosia from the dole distributed by the Bureau of Heaven (p. XX). It's not hard for them to find positions among a minor god's household, and a handful secure employment within the Celestial Bureaucracy as secretaries, dogsbodies, or consultants.

Other Denizens

Strange and unique beings also dwell in Yu-Shan, like Gray Flash, who was chosen by Gaia as the Rat Avatar in ages long past and now blesses her favorite teahouses with the services of polite, well-groomed rodents. Rare behemoths stalk Heaven's wilderness; some are relics of Yu-Shan's makers, while others have been imported from Creation by foolhardy gods as novelties or quarry. Ancient automata skitter through shattered ruins in Heaven's time-blasted slums, like the crystalline temple of forgotten Kadmek who once dwelt there with his siblings.

Even Heaven's enemies can be found in Yu-Shan. Reverie Street, flush with flowers and encircled with strings of iron bells, is the Fair Folk's embassy in Heaven, receiving emissaries from fae courts.

Verumipra, the Celestial Bureaucracy's ambassador to Malfeas, occasionally hosts envoys from demons such as Amalion, Lucien, or Oscytell in his estate on the inauspicious Lane of the Crooked Wing.

Heaven's mortals sometimes linger illegally as ghosts after their death. Those who evade the Department of Celestial Concerns' exorcists often take up with Heaven's criminal underground, though a rare few have managed to secure positions in the Celestial Bureaucracy. The tricksome shade Walking Candle rooked their way into a posting as personal assistant to the Taker of Pearls, God of Death by Water.

Ghostly dignitaries rarely have cause to truck with the gods, though a handful have received diplomatic visas to meet with Taru-Han, the Green Lady, and others whose remit extends to the Underworld.

The City That Is Heaven

Yu-Shan is an eperopolis, a continent-city suspended upon a sea of quicksilver. It is perhaps the largest, wealthiest, and most beautiful city there ever was or ever will be. Above all, Yu-Shan is Heaven, home to the gods and the ancients before them. But for all its majesty, Yu-Shan is as imperfect a realm as Creation: beneath the shimmer of ambrosia and the veneer of decorum lies a snarl of immeasurable complexity — a labyrinth of haphazard infrastructure, corrupt politics, indolent officials, and archaic law. While high-ranking functionaries dine on peaches of immortality and sip celestial wine, unemployed and impoverished gods must survive at the margins.

The island on which Yu-Shan sits is roughly ovoid, stretching farther east-west than north-south. Population density varies wildly, from thronging city centers where every square foot is treasured to vast suburban sprawls where gods of modest rank trade proximity to power for comfort and luxury. Further afield stand the vast estates of the truly powerful, as well as celestial wilderness where Heaven carefully tends to its natural wonders. Its geography is vast and varied, stretching from the quicksilver sea that laps at Heaven's shores to the Crown of the Unconquered, a great mesa that rises at its center. Between these can be found overcrowded slums and crystalline forests, luminous palaces among the clouds and canyons that run through colossal office complexes.

Modern Yu-Shan is built upon, around, and sometimes through the original city shaped by the ancients, subsuming cyclopean architecture into city blocks and unreal geometries into low-rent tenements. In highly urbanized areas, such as the Eye-of-Heaven District, all that remains are renovations and retrofits. In Yu-Shan's wilder, less populated areas, the ancients' strange underlying structures are far more obvious.

In the Scowls of Mala'aitu, residents build homes linked by ingenious bridges atop and around rust-red stone heads hundreds of meters tall. The Body Sacrisilica's stained-glass caryatids have been carefully chipped and melted, flame-cut and annealed, to support new galleries, ateliers, gardens, and theaters. The Eight Eternal Signs, atolls of beaten bronze coral and clay dust, once stood as massive runes proclaiming their creator's authority. They've long since grown illegible beneath a webbing of boardwalks and seaside

attractions.

The History of Heaven

THIS IS A TIMELINE

The Beginning of Time The ancients shape Creation and Heaven from the Wyld and make the first gods to tend to Creation.

Prehistory The Celestial Incarnae empower the Exalted and lead the Divine Revolution against the ancients.

Dawn of the First Age The Unconquered Sun is crowned King of Heaven. He pronounces the Creation-Ruling Mandate, entrusting rulership of Creation to the Exalted while proclaiming Heaven the gods' dominion.

Early First Age The Celestial Incarnae abolish the old order under which the gods served the ancients and create the first bureaus.

Early First Age The Maidens retire entirely from the Loom of Fate, entrusting their duties to the newly formed Bureau of Destiny.

Middle First Age In the aftermath of the failed Six Daughters Coup against the Incarnae, the first censors are appointed.

Middle First Age The Bureau of Celestial Concerns merges with the Bureau of Abstractions to form the Bureau of Heaven.

Late First Age A five-year civil war breaks out within the Celestial Bureaucracy as a result of tensions between terrestrial gods and Heaven.

Late First Age The Unconquered Sun turns his face from Creation and withdraws from active governance of Heaven.

Late First Age A labor strike within the Bureau of Nature ends in the formation of the Bureau of Seasons, thanks in large part to the Aerial Legion's support.

Dawn of the Second Age The Solar Purge plunges the Bureau of Humanity into disarray. The Bureau of Heaven seizes the opportunity, beginning its long campaign of plundering offices from the Bureau of Humanity.

Early Shogunate: Carrion-Empress Kapiru, co-head of the Bureau of Nature, is assassinated. Burnished Talon succeeds her as the Hierarchy of Function's leader. The assassin is never found or identified.

Early Shogunate The newly established Immaculate creed disrupts the influx of ambrosia into Heaven, causing the Celestial Bureaucracy to impose massively unpopular austerity measures for a period.

Fall of the Shogunate The Great Contagion ravages Yu-Shan, killing millions of gods, the greatest number of godly deaths since the Divine Revolution.

RY 31 Rising unrest among unemployed gods leads to the Burnt Temple Riots, which ultimately force the Celestial Bureaucracy implement several reforms, including the ambrosia dole.

RY 263 A work stoppage by the Bureau of Humanity's support staff is quashed

when the Bureau of Heaven deploys lion-dogs as strikebreakers.

RY 592 A mission to retrieve a fallen star inadvertently unleashes a plague of astral phasmatidae that spreads throughout nearly all Yu-Shan before they're ultimately contained.

RY 726 The Silver Crane District succumbs to a catastrophic reality infection in the first known Getimian attack on Heaven.

RY 768 The present day.

Politics

While most of the Celestial Bureaucracy attends to matters in Creation, it also encompasses Yu-Shan's internal administration — a matter no less fraught than anything else in the Bureaucracy.

District Administration

The Department of Celestial Concerns formally oversees the administration of each district, but it delegates much of this authority to local leaders as informal “administrators” as long as they don't cause any embarrassment for the department and ensure the district's taxes and administrative fees are collected. Skimming ambrosia off the top of such collections has been recognized as a formal perquisite of the position to avoid the expense of investigation and prosecution.

Administrators typically secure their position through bribery or patronage, but some are appointed to appease a district's populace. Sometimes this means recognizing a district's long-standing traditions of local governance, turning over administration to elected councils, influential local figures, or civic assemblies. In the Eternal Frost District, for instance, a Queen of the Revels is chosen by lot to serve as both administrator and master of ceremonies for the district's never-ending festivities. In other districts, however, this requires complicity with corrupt local politicians, crime syndicates, and powerful outside interests.

Some districts — usually the poorest and most remote — aren't overseen by Celestial Concerns at all, whether from negligence, mismanagement, or callous disinterest. These districts fall between the cracks, cut off from the benefits routed through district administrators. This leaves their inhabitants at the mercy of crime lords, corrupt spirit courts, or other “alternative” governments.

Householder Courts

Residents of Heaven's wealthier neighborhoods and districts often form spirit courts to influence local governance, preserve the district's civic and aesthetic status quo, and guard against perceived threats to “their” district. Referred to as *householder courts*, these associations involve themselves in land sales, traffic control, construction permitting, law enforcement, and more, sometimes to the chagrin of officials whose duties they've usurped. The Department of Celestial Concerns is broadly unwilling to interfere with even the most overreaching of householder courts for fear of political backlash.

Political Dissent

Impoverished and politically powerless residents of Heaven have long understood the city's inequities and fought back against them. Organized activism and agitation are a millennia-old traditions, having taken every form and ideology imaginable across the ages. Many dissidents are unemployed or low-ranking gods, disadvantaged elementals, or legally powerless residents of Heaven's small mortal enclaves. They organize in small local groups, advocating for their rights through work stoppages,

targeted protests of prominent gods, incendiary propaganda, and political violence.

Heaven's upper echelons have never been sympathetic to the demands of the powerless, but mass unrest amid the Great Contagion elevated this opposition to unprecedented heights. Respectable gods dismiss even the most peaceful protests as hooliganism at best or terrorism at worst, and the Bureau of Heaven's lion-dogs are swift to disperse protesters and arrest them en masse. But agitators aren't wholly without allies — some in the Celestial Bureaucracy who publicly deride political dissidents are secret sympathizers, providing funding, assets, and political backing.

While the power of Yu-Shan's elite seems inescapable, those who've fought for change have shaped Heaven's history. The labor strike that birthed the Bureau of Seasons is legendary, but other victories are also remembered. The Bureau of Heaven's ambrosia dole was a concession forced by the Burnt Temple Riots. The practice of enslaving minor spirits came to a bloody close when a slave rebellion timed for the Carnival of Meeting was protected from punishment by a horrified Unconquered Sun. Ten thousand more injustices remain, but those who'd pass judgment on Heaven's fallen state ought to remember the untold multitudes doing all they can to create a better world.

Economics

Prayer, veneration, and sacrifice directed to Heaven's gods takes form as *ambrosia*: a spiritual bounty that arises from the confluence of worship, godly Essence, and Yu-Shan's geomancy. It comes in a variety of grades, depending on the personal puissance and divine office of the god who receives it and the quantity and intensity of the prayers from which it springs. The lowest grade of ambrosia, blended from various sources, is pale brown, with purer blends growing darker. Ambrosia of the highest grade resembles moonstone — milk-white and adularescent, wondrous hues shimmering from deep within. Tablets of raw ambrosia can be carved as readily as firm soap or chewed like caramel candy. While flavorful and nutritious, eating ambrosia is considered a gauche excess even by the wealthiest, most tasteless gods.

Shaping Ambrosia

Ambrosia is pluripotent substance, capable of being shaped into myriad forms and materials. Gods can do so almost intuitively, and elementals can pick up the skill with practice, but not humans — even the Exalted. Shaping ambrosia into anything more sophisticated than simple forms and substances demands the training, technique, and discipline of a *prayerwright*. Some are employees of the Celestial Bureaucracy pursuing a hobby or supplementing their salary, but talented prayerwrights are also among the few unemployed gods who can maintain status in godly society, trading on both their wares' quality and their clientele's prestige.

Most are specialists, honing their technique in shaping weapons, jewelry, foodstuffs, or the like from ambrosia, becoming true aficionados through careful study and practice: The twin clothiers Silk Cloud and Velvet Roar have each spent centuries studying the silk of a single species of moth. Sweet Umori, a masterful chef, sets herself apart from her peers with famed tableside ambrosia-sculpting performances. The jeweler-architect Radienta the Gilded Edificer specializes in intricate metalwork structures, from pagodas of jade filigree to gilded manors styled as giant bangles.

Not all ambrosia is equally potent. The lowest grades can only be shaped into simple, common substances and are difficult to work with; even the finest prayerwrights struggle to make truly sumptuous fare from it. High-grade ambrosia can be shaped into nearly anything imaginable, and is the stuff of wondrous creations. Pure ambrosia taken from a single god's worship resonates with their purview: the pellucid prayerstuff received by Ohanlei, the celestial goddess of tea, is fine indeed, but a cup of chai brewed from it would overshadow anything that could be shaped even from any other ambrosia.

Some things are beyond even the most refined ambrosia: the magical materials, natural wonders like peaches of immortality, and certain other rarities and exotic substances, which consequently command a lordly price in Heaven. Creating highly specific materials is possible, but demands both a masterful prayerwright experienced with the desired material and an appropriate god's ambrosia — creating supernaturally durable glass is one thing, but creating Chiaroscuro glass in particular is far more difficult.

The Coin of Heaven

A portion of all ambrosia flows into the Celestial Bureaucracy's coffers. Taxes levied by the Department of Celestial Concerns can only be paid in ambrosia, and all gods who receive it are required to tithe a portion to the Unconquered Sun. This ambrosia is blended by grade, minted into currency, and put into circulation. Some is used to fund the heavenly bureaus' budgets and their employees' salaries. Celestial Concerns distributes a daily dole of low-grade ambrosia to all spirits in Yu-Shan, ensuring even the meanest have some income. Wealthy gods are technically entitled to this as well, though only those in the direst of financial straits would be so déclassé as to take it. It's far from a perfect system, though: shipments of ambrosia are intercepted by criminal syndicates, diverted by corrupt officials to districts they seek popular support from, or lost due to mismanagement.

Most denominations of ambrosia currency are coins of various sizes, wrapped in thin sheets of gold foil or other precious metals and stamped with heavenly iconography. The most common are known by the symbols emblazoned on them: altars, the lowest denomination and the one used for the Bureau of Heaven's ambrosia dole; lions, commonly used for anything larger than everyday transactions; and peach-blossoms, small coins of valuable high-grade ambrosia that Sidereals and other high-ranking bureau employees are paid in.

Altars contain enough ambrosia for a small but fine meal or a piece of humble garb (by heavenly standards). A single lion suffices for a sumptuous feast for a handful of friends, a large cask of fine brandy, or single splendid outfit. A peach-blossom's rarefied ambrosia is too valuable to use for anything but sophisticated, bespoke designs and supernatural wonders. Ambrosia currency changes hands frequently but rarely remains in circulation for long — it is usually too valuable as a raw material to hoard away.

Once taken outside of the rarified airs of Yu-Shan, ambrosia quickly sublimates into nothingness. As a result, a terrestrial god's paltry salary isn't paid directly to them, but kept in reserve by the Department of Celestial Concerns. With few opportunities to collect their pay, most terrestrial gods use it as a form of credit amongst themselves. Others employ entrepreneurial spirits to collect their ambrosia and have it shaped, in exchange for a healthy cut off the top.

The Service Economy

Ambrosia not used for crafting is sometimes saved, but far more often spent — and wildly, at that — in Yu-Shan's service economy. Luxury resorts, grooming and beautification, and entertainment are the city's most lucrative industries, followed closely by transportation and professional services such as geomancers or veterinarians. Services that mortals would consider necessities are instead luxuries for spirits. While gods may eat at roadside noodle stands for taste alone, most of Yu-Shan's restaurants are intended as performance, focusing on flashy tableside preparations, adventurous ingredients, and artful presentations. Such dinners command the same prices as other performance theater.

As with food, the gods make a luxurious game of grooming and cosmetics. Many pay outrageous premiums for chatoyant purpleheart manicures at one of Lac Alkai's floating salons; others seek undulant, prismatic tattoos from the Yellow Adoxographer. In these exchanges, gods seek not only graceful services

but scintillating amusement: Lac Alkai's manicurists spin boutique gossip into a mixture of poetry and theater, while the Yellow Adoxographer employs nimble-fingered harpists who play in perfect synch with every stab of his starmetal needle.

The Human Sector

Heaven's human inhabitants make up an outsized percentage of its economy — unable to shape ambrosia, they must rely on prayerwrights' services not just for luxuries, but for any necessities they can't provide for themselves. This "human sector" owes its existence largely to the Sidereals — while they're but a small part of Yu-Shan's overall populace, they also represent the greatest concentration of heavenly wealth in human hands.

Chief among human concerns is sustenance. There's no shortage of culinary-inclined gods to contract as part- or full-time chefs for Sidereals with sufficient means. For junior Sidereals, as well as low- and mid-rank clerks, there are a collection of cafeterias within the Most Perfect Lotus of Heavenly Design, humble fare by Yu-Shan's standards but undeniably affordable. In the few residential districts with Heaven's Dragons populations, small tea houses and cafes run by mortals or Dragon-Blooded are popular with human clientele and curious, open-minded spirits. There are also infrequent diners and takeaways, such as Thousand Golden Bites, specializing in the quick, hand-held meals popular in Mahalanka.

With low overhead and few barriers to entry, streetside food carts are among the most common avenues of employment among humans and disenfranchised spirits. One such entrepreneur — a contrarian, unemployed god dubbed the Enthusiast — was so moved by the authenticity of human cuisine as to dedicate his immortal life to its mastery. He specializes in shaping ambrosia into Creation-made cooking, especially dishes the Celestial elite deems ugly or humble, provided the diner-suppliant tells him the story of the dish they requested. The Enthusiast's carts are now found in unlikely places throughout Yu-Shan, managed by other down-to-earth gods seeking reliable employment.

Salons and barbershops that cater to humans pop up in unexpected places, from closet-sized stalls tucked between shops in crooked alleys to entire abandoned lots in derelict market squares. As settings relatively — and uniquely — free of gods and elementals, these places often become the center of human communities, known for easy fellowship and off-the-record gossip. The junior Sidereal who makes a remarkable impression on their well-connected mentor might receive a word-of-mouth invitation to Sazro's Grooming Lounge in the Six Arches District, a centuries-old barbershop serving only the influential "friends of Sazro Sure-Hand."

Most Sidereals keep two separate wardrobes: one for Yu-Shan and one for Creation. The elegant but understated robes that are the Bureau's official uniform are always a safe choice for heavenly functions, but some Sidereals enjoy keeping up with trends in heavenly fashion or prefer the formal dress of their mortal homelands. For casual, everyday wear, almost anything goes if you're unconcerned about your image. On assignments in Creation, most Sidereals prefer to dress to fit in wherever they may go — resplendent destinies are forgiving, but that's a poor excuse for being unprepared.

Of these two wardrobes, clothing for Creation is far harder to come by. Reputable prayer-tailors and clothiers are often outraged at the thought of wasting ambrosia on rude linen tunics, undyed cotton hose, or worse. Since a Sidereal never knows where their next mission might send them, the few prayer-tailors in Heaven without artistic scruples make a brisk trade off the Bureau, and their trade cards change hands between Sidereals. Glatitent Heddle-Parts-the-Leaves, Divine Steward of Bowerbirds, is renowned for her lightning-fast turnaround, mercenary perspective on fashion, and no-questions-asked policy. She's frequented by both Sidereals and the notorious Hundred Razors Court of racketeers and assassins. Her tiny studio, the House of Feathers, has been a site of both tense confrontations and off-the-books

cooperation.

Heaven's Dragons and other mortal communities supplement whatever clothing they can make by hand with clothes rescued from elemental trash collectors or reclaimed from godly cast-offs. Alterations are typically necessary, whether it's taking a coat in from eight arms to two or restyling an outfit to ensure prickly, fashion-conscious gods don't take umbrage at its wearer for dressing above her station. Such gods are less likely to rankle at a human wealthy enough to afford a prayer-tailor's services, but it's still safer to stick to more subdued, conservative styles.

Poverty in Heaven

Though living in Yu-Shan is always easier and more luxurious than most mortals in Creation could ever dream, that doesn't mean its residents are unfamiliar with suffering. Gods without the means to care for themselves are marginalized, trapped in a cycle of demotion and ostracization with little chance to escape. Those who can't afford fines and bribery find Heaven's justice falling ever more swiftly and heavily upon them. A bewilderingly large number of Yu-Shan's gods are unhoused, populating parks and blighted districts at Yu-Shan's periphery. Gods don't need to eat or sleep as mortals do, but poverty still takes its toll on their social and legal standing, depriving them of purpose and security.

Culture

Heaven is home every almost every form of art, literature, entertainment, and vice imaginable. It flourishes with the gods' creativity and freely pilfers from mortal cultures. Tastes vary widely across the city; each district is practically a culture unto itself, especially as one goes further from Yu-Shan's center.

Entertainment

Sports in Yu-Shan are one of the most accessible facets of the city's culture, requiring neither wealth nor influence to pursue. Even in the dustiest slums, a listless god with a stick and a ball can become an athlete of formidable skill. Physical sports run the gamut from mundane games played with divine gusto to competitions only the gods could attempt, such as sky-dancing, dragon polo, and cross-continental relays. Heaven's most famed sporting competitions are held at the Circus Radiant, a coliseum dedicated to excellence in the Unconquered Sun's name. While chariot races dominate much of its celebrated calendar, it also hosts historical reenactments, contests of strength and speed, and dozens of sports inspired by (or stolen from) Creation's peoples.

Under the auspices of Mars, Luna, and the Unconquered Sun, it's little surprise that combat is popular throughout Yu-Shan. Dueling leagues exist for hundreds of weapons and combat styles, catering to almost any ruleset imaginable from technical bouts scored by meticulous judges to free-for-all cage matches. Some duel for points, others to the death — an annoying but temporary condition for most of Heaven's deities'. Hunting clubs cater to enthusiasts of all skill levels, though dues are prohibitive to most below Yu-Shan's middle class, since the clubs spend lavishly in ambrosia and favors to procure interesting quarry from Creation (or, for clubs with flexible views on legality, from Malfeas, the Wyld, and other strange realms). Members of Luna's court are especially famed for their millennia-long game of Hunter and Prey; players take special delight in interrupting tedious or bloviating officials with particularly spirited ambushes.

Yu-Shan is a feast for all the senses, and godly artists are rarely content with limited mortal media. While there are galleries of living paintings and animate sculptures, there are also artists who work exclusively in smell and touch, crafting exhibits from carefully arranged perfumes and silks. Many work with stranger materials still — sky-painters, fire-sculptors, and other exotic artisans abound. Individual artists from less

fortunate backgrounds may find themselves employed by wealthy gods who host private performances within their manors, either as atmosphere for an event or as the event itself. Public performances require authorization, making them less common but still wildly popular. Many now-famous artists began as renegade creators, making their name with unsanctioned public shows; those with luck and talent find a patron who can have their record expunged.

The Fruits of Heaven

Celestial wine is crafted from agate grapes in a painstaking ritual practiced only by its elemental vintners. The product is remarkable and beyond description, even to seasoned sommeliers. All can agree the wine is savory, a touch dry, and potent — but agreeably so, never resulting in any unpleasantness the morning after. Those who drink fall into a deeply introspective euphoria of vivid daydreams and unexpectedly lucid thoughts. Celestial wine also possesses curative properties, capable of healing injuries and curing even magical poisons and diseases. Some in Heaven who lived through the Great Contagion attribute their survival to consuming copious quantities of the stuff, though often to a skeptical response.

The peaches of immortality are Heaven's best-known and most infamous crop. Peach orchards are overseen by the Department of Celestial Concerns' Division of Blessed Pomology, which staffs them with divine guardians and greenskeeper-spirits. Peaches take over a century to reach full maturation. For most, a bite undoes a decade of aging, while finishing the peach restores her to the peak of youth. For especially long-lived Exalted, like Solars and Lunars, a bite undoes a century of age, while an entire peach undoes a millennium — though this can't extend a Sidereal's lifespan. A god who eats a peach can reform after death even without a divine purview or cult, though that's rarely a practical concern for those gods who actually eat them. Elementals and other spirits benefit similarly.

The Division of Blessed Pomology takes the security of Heavenly fruits seriously: the draconic vintners are authorized to use lethal force, its peach-wardens are well-paid and heavily armed, and it provides considerable financial incentives to lion-dogs whole complete its weeks-long training on fruit-identification. Such security has made a successful peach heists a rare and perilous thing — but not a nonexistent one.

Art

Heaven divides art into two styles: timeless and novel. Timeless art appeals to the city's oldest traditions and aesthetics, especially the mind-bendingly complex geometric and fractal patterns. It's classical and dignified, but also doctrinaire: paintings of vast, ambiguous landscapes dominate many collections, and composers return again and again to themes and motifs long-perfected, hesitant to do more than tweak a few notes here or there.

Novel art is more often inspired by the hectic lives of Creation's mortals, or elaborating a single successful work into an entire genre. Heaven has clamored for poems composed in alternating languages, sculptures designed solely to test their materials' tensile strength, or operas accompanied by the music of hundreds of clapping hands. The city is ravenous for these fads; gods spend lavishly to indulge them, but few have any staying power.

Whether timeless or novel, spirit-artists work in media their mortal counterparts can't duplicate. Living watercolors undulate and ripple, crawling across a canvas over hours or days. Smoke-sculptors work the thinnest wisps of incense-smoke into treasures of lace and lattice. As in other celestial matters, these artists seek purpose in challenging themselves and pursuing ever-greater stakes and scope: even the most stolid classicist may seek to hear a favored song rendered by an orchestra of thousands, with music loud enough to churn the seas and fell a mountain.

Architecture

Yu-Shan's construction is multifarious and mosaic, combining the flair of godly architects, the latest trends in Creation, and even the techniques and aesthetics of Yu-Shan's makers. Golden pavilions and glazed tile roofs are a hallmark of the Eye-of-Heaven District; the Cochineal Heath is dominated by smooth, cubic manors of celestine and schorl, standing in contrast to the brilliant red desert.

A god's home may be many things, but in Yu-Shan, it's a status symbol first and foremost. Almost any building material or adornment imaginable can be shaped from ambrosia, but not even those limits suffice to fully flaunt one's wealth. Crystalline cedarwood, behemoth scrimshaw, and other materials only found in Heaven's wilderness or ancient depths command a premium, as do those imported from Creation, like Chiraoscuran glass, Linowan hardwoods, Vanehan steel, and Brightwork porcelain. Building outward horizontally rather than vertically likewise boasts of one's fortune, with land at a premium in Yu-Shan's urban centers. The greatest estates sprawl for miles, filling every inch of acreage with conspicuous affluence. Wealthy neighbors spend centuries attempting to outdo each other with increasingly grandiose renovations, bending bureaucratic regulations on construction as far as they can.

Social Clubs

Sometimes derided as hedonism wearing a thin pretense of cultivation, social clubs are nevertheless the most popular cultural diversions in Yu-Shan. Intimate salons gather in sumptuous gardens to argue philosophy and politics over peaches and wine. Dining clubs reserve entire theater-restaurants for 24 hours of delicate tasting menus and discussion of culinary science. Sisterhoods of bawdy poets collect in tearooms for heated bouts of flying. Unemployed gods gather in communal spaces to tutor and train each other in necessary skills.

A sport or social club might spin off into a secret society, particularly when membership is exclusive or activities and assets clandestine. More than just another avenue for carousing or networking, secret societies provide additional fulfillment and cosmic purpose to spirits who long for such. Secret societies disseminate amongst their members some knowledge of subtle rites, unusual relics, or forgotten paradises, and though most of these organizations are no more esoteric than ritualized study groups, occasionally a secret society with radical practices rises to such prominence as to present inconvenience or danger to powerful local figures or the Department of Celestial Concerns.

For instance, the Blue Cowl Questistry is a society of thrillseekers dedicated to exploring Yu-Shan and seeking out its greatest perils and mysteries. The questrists claim their mystical initiation rites and secret cartography of Heaven predates the Divine Revolution. Most who've heard this take it for obvious puffery, but the Questistry's traditions are at least informed by what its expeditions have uncovered of Heaven's prehistory. It's a respectable society to those who know of it, but some questrists have been known to put pride, curiosity, or greed above good sense, with the occasional disastrous result. Since the unpleasantness with the Plague of Ethics, expeditions off the Celestial Bureaucracy's official maps require preclearance from the Department of Celestial Concerns.

Celebrations

Heaven's calendar is replete with festivals and holidays grand and humble, from the citywide Celestial Peach-Blossom Festival to neighborhood celebrations like the Red Mouse Feast at Jaradu Square. While many festivals mark things familiar to the mortals of Creation — the turning of seasons, anniversaries of important victories — others are more specialized. Gods who've accepted a place on the Immaculate calendar sometimes throw festivals in their own honor meant to compensate for lacking merriment in Creation; others celebrate the anniversary of their most recent promotion in lieu of a birthday.

Most heavenly holidays are marked with copious banqueting. Even the most jaded gods prize the opportunity to sample Heaven's most coveted delicacies: the peaches of immortality and celestial wine. While chefs of vaulting hubris attempt to reinvent these treasures, serving the peaches flambeed or the wine fortified as brandy, they're usually consumed in their natural state to better experience their benefits in restoring youthful vigor and granting glowing health. They are, however, far from Heaven's only famous dishes. Gourmands across Creation can only dream of the tables set by wealthy gods, which overflow with lush ingredients': meat from the silvery emperor-carps, sacred squash radiant with living Essence, candied moonlight, and even stranger pleasures.

Many festivals are local, part of a district's tradition and character. In the Singing Steel District, cunning artificers preen with their latest creations during the Forgenight, which honors the memory of an ancient known as the Great Maker with contests of wit, craft, and artistry. Along the shores of the Mere of Proportion, lovers join together in robes of pearlescent silk on the first dawn of Ascending Fire to pledge their devotion to one another for the year to come.

The Carnival of Meeting

The city's greatest celebration is the Carnival of Meeting. During Calibration, all but the most necessary of Yu-Shan's industries grind to a halt. Papers go unfiled in the empty offices of hundreds of millions of gods as the city loses itself to revelry. For five days, Heaven takes its rest, and the sky goes gloaming-red.

On the third night, the enigmatic Calibration Gate appears somewhere in Creation, without warning or pattern — save that it's always within the notice and reach of mortals. For the night, from sunset to sunrise, mortals may pass through the gate to receive heaven's hospitality, fêted by the gods within the sacred precincts of the Great Plaza of Auspicious Welcome. Others may arrival as old and oft-neglected gates throughout Creation throw themselves open unto the plaza. God-Blooded, favored mortals, and the Exalted sometimes glimpse these portals in dreams the night before, taking it as invitation.

The gods delight in the novelty of their guests, showering them in delicacies and gifts in a bout of dizzying largesse. Immortal troupes perform their favorite plays for mortal audiences, luxuriating in the ambrosia-sweet peal of applause. As fireworks erupt into animated constellations of color, a husband in mourning may take the stage with a word of encouragement and a kiss on the hand from the god of cathartic songs. A penniless mother may watch her hungry family fed on celestial confections as Yu-Shan's finest tailors measure her children for a dozen silken outfits each that will grow with them for the rest of their days. Attendees find themselves forever changed, touched by an ineffable wonder that stirs the hearts of the very gods who help to kindle it.

While the carnival's rules are as ponderous and contradictory as the rest of Heaven's law, the key truth to its long success is that all attendees are forbidden to harm one another. The atmosphere is conducive to joy and repressive to scheming; there's an infectious, lightening spirit in the air and in the music that calls all therein to dance and play. Those who attempt violence find themselves thwarted by quirks of fate, or quietly escorted away by celestial lions.

By morning, the gates beckon away all visitors, mortal and Exalted alike. Those rare few who stay behind

are tempted by the allures of Yu-Shan, captivated by godly patrons and paramours, or simply plied into unconsciousness by Heaven's strongest drinks. These mortals often find themselves at the mercy of any god who shows kindness; the fortunate find their way to mortal enclaves or the holdings of Heaven's Dragons.

Law and Crime

Yu-Shan is paradise, but even paradise has laws. Every manner of criminal can be found here: assassins and pickpockets, corrupt judges the city is home to all manner of corruption, and justice is no more certain here than in Creation.

Heavenly Law

Heaven's law governs the gods, as well as all who hold position in the Celestial Bureaucracy or are in Yu-Shan. The bulk of them are made up of regulations promulgated by the Department of Celestial Concerns, subject to the input and veto of the heads of other Bureaus. Regulations layer upon regulations in vast strata, reflecting the various bureaus' changing leadership and priorities over the millennia. It's not uncommon to find regulations that have gone unheeded for centuries, lost in the shuffle of changing administrations or deliberately hidden in other edicts' fine print.

Set above all other laws of Heaven are the edicts of the Celestial Incarnae. The most famous of these is the Unconquered Sun's pronouncement of the Creation-Ruling Mandate: rulership of Creation belongs to the Exalted; rulership of Heaven belongs to the gods. Yet for all the loftiness of an Incarnae's edict, they're as commonly flouted and rarely punished as any other heavenly law — or mortal law, for that matter.

While heavenly law is ostensibly blind to rank and power, that's rarely true in practice. Powerful and well-connected gods are rarely stopped for anything less than immediate, violent crimes; celestial lions report instead to their superiors, who often add evidence and testimony to their existing files on the perpetrator, banked against an eventual audit. Gods of lesser standing may be fined, detained, or punished on the spot depending on their offense's severity. Ranking gods can charge inferiors with "divine hooliganism" for any meaningful disturbance or misconduct, a blanket charge that usually ends in an undignified arrest.

For all its storied dysfunction, Yu-Shan is no more or less corrupt than Creation. A divine geomancer gladly pockets bribes to allow failing manses to pass inspection. A lion-dog falsifies statistics by reporting crimes that never happened in hopes of getting her office a budget increase. A well-heeled bureaucrat approves or denies requests without even reading them, head still throbbing from celestial cocaine and curare gin.

Law Enforcement

Day-to-day enforcement of Yu-Shan's laws falls largely to the Department of Celestial Concerns' Division of Inevitable Reckoning, a vast host of lion-dogs and celestial lions (p. XX). Lion-dogs walk the city's beats and investigate crimes, empowered to pursue and detain suspects and to mete out punishment for crimes directly to gods of lowly station. Bells of bronze (and in better neighborhoods, jade) can be rung to call them...though how quickly one answers, if at all, depends almost entirely on location. Celestial lions largely hold leadership roles, doling out assignments to their lion-dog subordinates and determining their precinct's priorities, though inexperienced celestial lions spend their early years patrolling well-to-do neighborhoods. Outside of the Division of Inevitable Reckoning, lion-dogs and celestial lions largely hold posts as guardian spirits, like the lions who guard the heavenly gateways.

Budget constraints, mismanagement, and the sheer vastness of Yu-Shan leave the Division understaffed for the task it faces. Unemployed gods, elementals, Exalted, and even mortals are sometimes deputized to shore up paltry ranks, a practice that originated after the Great Contagion. When the issue is budgetary or logistical, more creative solutions are required. The venerable celestial lion Pale Morning petitioned the Unconquered Sun for a spark of the Exigence and chose one of Heaven's mortals to be her champion, a vigilante who can work outside their broken system.

Censors

Heavenly justice is officially the prerogative of the Unconquered Sun in his role as head of the Celestial Bureaucracy, but he's delegated that responsibility and power to Heaven's *censors*. As plenipotentiary officials, each censor speaks with a measure of the Sun's authority, empowering them to prosecute cases against any god from the humblest field god to bureau heads. Each is also a lesser elemental dragon — an elemental whose power and enlightenment allowed them to undergo a rare metamorphosis, taking on a new form and incredible spiritual power (p. XX). Set somewhat apart from godly society by virtue of their nature as elementals, their decisions are generally seen as at least somewhat more disinterested and dispassionate than a god's would be.

Censors receive an office, staff, title, and considerable authority. Most serve as judges for their assigned heavenly districts; others are investigators with specific remits — Righteous Daram punishes the crimes of Creation's enemies, while Breath-of-the-Sea is (theoretically) meant to pursue embezzlement of ambrosia, a task she accomplishes through her considerable experience giving, receiving, seeking, and finding bribes. Lastly, several serve in Creation, overseeing the terrestrial gods in their duties. Whatever their mission, they employ gods and especially other elementals as clerks, advocates, and functionaries, and are authorized to assign and command Yu-Shan's law enforcement apparatus, including celestial lions and lion-dogs.

Even the most dutiful censor has too much to do and too little to do it with. Appeals for their intervention, whether to call for an audit or stave one off, are too many to count. The Celestial Bureaucracy is vast and rife with corruption, and the worst crimes are committed by those best able to conceal their misdeeds. Each censor has their own priorities in determining which crimes to expend their limited resources investigating: one might prioritize the most severe crimes, while another might seek to close as many cases as possible. Understanding these priorities is vital to successfully petitioning for a censor's intervention.

Audits

While lion-dogs and celestial lions have the authority to fine and detain gods on most matters, the true teeth of Heaven's legal system are found in *audits*. An audit is both a formal review of an official's conduct and a criminal investigation into any allegations or discrepancies. An audit can be a torturous, protracted tribunal or a cursory pretext for a *fait accompli*, depending on the charges levied, the defendant's status, and the censor — not to mention outside attempts at influencing an audit's outcome. The majority of audits are carried out at the lowest levels of the Celestial Bureaucracy. Higher-ranking gods can expect the occasional audit every few decades, and have much greater leeway in responding to them.

Audits occur only at a censor's discretion, either on their own initiative or at the prompting of an influential god. Few in the Celestial Bureaucracy have truly spotless records, making a credible threat of an audit a useful tool for blackmail and coercion. But arranging for a rival to be audited is far from easy — the relative scarcity of censors and the heavy workloads they face mean that simply getting a report of auditable conduct in front of one can be a trial in itself. The sky-painter Alta Omatros' efforts to have a

hated rival audited proved fruitless until she wrote a detailed report on his ninety-nine sins in storm clouds over a censor's estate. While Omatros succeeded in catching the censor's attention, the dragon audited both her and her rival — an unsubtle discouragement of such tactics.

An audit commences with a censor's marshals bringing the defendant before her. She recites his appointments, commendations, demerits, and other notable work history since his last audit, along with any charges or allegations laid against him. For powerful gods who've gone decades or centuries without an audit, this recitation can be an ordeal; for low-ranking gods, it can be almost comically brief. They're allowed to respond to any and all charges, presenting evidence and mitigating circumstances, and to be represented by legal counsel, if they can afford the retainer.

The most common punishments for minor crimes are fines of ambrosia and punitive work assignments, such as tending Hiparkes' stables. More severe crimes might also be punished by imprisonment or demotion, while the most extreme crimes can see a god stripped of their purview and exiled from Yu-Shan. A crime's severity depends more on the victim's status than the act itself: robbing a minor spirit rarely receives more than a slap on the wrist, while pilfering from a high-ranking god might earn the culprit a year and a day as that god's personal secretary. It's rare for prominent figures to face harsh punishments; it's those without the means to retain competent counsel or the influence to worm their way out of an audit who suffer the most from audits.

As Chosen of the Maidens, Sidereals enjoy certain codified protections in audits: fines against them are limited to a certain percentage of their salary, the Bureau of Destiny can veto punitive demotions, and they can't be punished by imprisonment or exile. Beyond these formal protections, their status as Heaven's foremost agents in Creation also weighs heavily in their favor. When they *do* face audits or other criminal investigations, it's typically the result of a considerable expenditure of wealth and political capital by an enemy or rival. But this doesn't mean they're above the law entirely — the Bureau of Destiny handles most Sidereal offenses internally, either through formal discipline or pressure from a wayward Sidereal's peers and seniors.

Civil Litigation

Disputes over property, contracts, inheritance, and other civil matters are typically heard by a censor's civil clerks, who hear evidence and argument from both sides and makes a preliminary determination. Few civil clerks have the confidence or experience of a censor, and are more easily swayed by arguments that are light on law and heavy on emotional appeal. But that doesn't mean self-representation is wise — while the substance of the law may sometimes be finessed, the labyrinthine procedural rules are less pliant.

A clerk's determination can be appealed to the censor, but the appellant must actually convince the censor to hear it. Unless a particular case plucks at a censor's heartstrings, notices of appeal are likely to end up buried far, far beneath audit requests. Even if a censor takes a case, reversals are uncommon, though not unusual — they tend to agree with their hand-picked staff's assessment of the evidence and the law, but they're not beyond persuasion.

Corruption is even more persistent in civil litigation than criminal proceedings. It's especially true for the clerks of censors who are willing to overlook it or are actively complicit in such misfeasance, but even an honest censor might miss a viper within her staff. Lawyers are a necessary party to such corruption, and it's far from the only underhanded strategy they employ, including bribing witnesses, forging documents, destroying evidence, and dilatory tactics, not to mention "mismanagement" of their client's funds. An honest lawyer can still win in the face of this, but it requires anticipating and countering every dirty move opposing counsel might make, on top of the immense complexity of the law itself.

Mortals and the Law

Nowhere in Heaven's laws is it written that mortals are without rights — for they're rarely written of at all. A mortal, by law, cannot be the victim of a crime; instead, it is deemed an offense against the god "responsible" for her — a patron, parent, or so on. If there is no responsible god, then the most the offender can be charged with is vandalism. Where the law fails mortals, they must rely on the likes of criminal syndicates, Heaven's Dragons, or spirit courts.

Similarly, mortals can neither sue nor be sued in civil matters. Instead, a responsible god may bring suit for them, or be held vicariously liable for their misconduct. Unlike in criminal matters, there's often great effort put into finding a responsible god by the plaintiff in order to have a defendant to recover from, no matter how tenuous her actual responsibility may be.

The Shadow City

Though it's been nearly a millennium since the Great Contagion eradicated nine-tenths of all life in Creation, many gods whose divine purviews were eradicated by it still remain unemployed. Forced to rely on their shoestring universal income of low-quality ambrosia — deliveries of which are seldom guaranteed to reach the farthest or most treacherous of blighted boroughs — unemployed gods are desperate to regain their quality of life and sense of purpose. Most seek to claw their way back into the Celestial Bureaucracy, whatever the cost. Others find new purpose in illicit organizations or in Yu-Shan's thriving, criminal underworld: colloquially, the Shadow City.

Many begin their life in the Shadow City through business licensing violations — running a food cart without the appropriate permits, operating an unlicensed flume-sedan, working under forged documents, or so on. They're minor violations, punishable only by a small fee — but for those already living on the margins, it can be impossible to make a livelihood without breaking the law. These "shadow employees" are paid meager wages under the table, forced to endure intolerable working conditions without legal protections. Arrests for such violations are rare; shadow employees are more likely to face shakedowns from criminal syndicates and corrupt lion-dogs alike. Under such conditions, many turn to Yu-Shan's crime syndicates for protection.

Organized Crime

There are always gods of vaulting ambition who accept the risky work of directing Yu-Shan's many illicit enterprises. Ambrosia skimming, protection rackets, con games, assassinations, and countless other crimes happen daily in Heaven's slums. The most famous resemble Creation's crime families: close networks of patronage between criminals, reinforced by shared history and culture.

Some are remnants of entire departments left unemployed after the Contagion. For instance, the Blackpaws were once employees of the Bureau of Nature, but when their six species of nocturnal predators went extinct, they became smugglers specializing in exotic beasts those predators once hunted. Now united by their criminal enterprise and a complex network of marriages, the Blackpaws play patron to the criminals of their half-wild district, overseeing a network of black markets and fences while showering former subordinates in charity and largesse.

Other groups have more fluid operations, forming ad hoc crews of thieves, street gangs, and hooligans. They take jobs and seize turf where they can, fighting off rivals and appeasing local powerbrokers with a cut of their takings. Some arise from innocuous origins, like the Thousand Hands — once a loose

coalition of chariot-racing fans, they evolved into political agitators united under the banner of charioteer Ghataes the Wise. They ride the streets of Yu-Shan's middle districts to secure spoils from anyone brave enough to accept their challenges, and to shake gods from their complacency with shows of violence and bravado.

Wherever there's misery, some will attempt to capitalize on it. Loan sharks, cutthroat gambling dens, and ever-innovative alchemists ply the disenfranchised with loans, entertainment, and drugs to dull the anomie of Shadow City life. Some of these parasites even hold legitimate authority: lion-dogs on the take, censors in the pockets of powerful syndicates, and mighty gods who wield thieves and assassins as disposable assets in their petty rivalries.

Travel

Traversing Yu-Shan's massive sprawl would be an epic undertaking were it not for its wonders of transportation. Overseen by the Department of Celestial Concerns, these marvels let the wealthy and powerful travel in speed and splendor, whether walking curated park-lined avenues, skimming quicksilver canals, or soaring on wings of flame.

Quicksilver Canals

Heaven's quicksilver canals radiate out from its center to its outermost rim, providing the city's most ubiquitous method of transit other than foot traffic. While they can be found throughout the city's many districts, they grow more infrequent and distant the further one travels from the city's centers.

All manner of celestial watercraft ply the quicksilver. Dragon boats operated by the Department of Celestial Concerns provide public transit to those who can afford to purchase a canal pass (or bribe the captain). Flume sedans — small catamaran-like ships operated by licensed pilots — serve as private water taxis for those willing to pay for comfort, privacy, or speed. In wealthy districts, the canals bristle with pleasure barges, immense yachts, and other opulent watercraft. A lane of liquid gold, reserved for priority travel, runs down the center of each canal, ensuring prominent gods aren't held up by traffic.

Sky Traffic

Those seeking to travel in the utmost luxury Heaven has to offer take to the skies. Aerial rickshaws are the most common form of aerial travel: chartered sky-carriages capable of carrying a driver and two passengers, or five if they're exceedingly friendly. They travel at a leisurely pace, slower than most water traffic, but afford passengers breathtaking views of the city and ample opportunities for in-flight recreation.

When time is of the essence, high-ranking officials call down one of Heaven's living clouds to ferry them through the sky, outpacing most forms of transit in Yu-Shan. The living clouds have little skill in discerning who's actually qualified to beckon them, making it easy for those in a hurry to misappropriate them. Junior Sidereals have some leeway if they can manage a remotely plausible reason for calling a cloud — though they may earn a reputation as a rebel or troublemaker — but abusing this privilege for purely personal use is grounds for censure. Low-ranking gods face even stricter punishments; the unlucky discover just how tenacious and creative lion-dogs can be in pursuit of airborne perpetrators.

The Dragon Line Rail

One of Heaven's great wonders, the Dragon Line Rail connects major travel hubs, crossing swaths of suburbs and parks to provide transit and shipping across all Yu-Shan. A wonder of orichalcum and jade, each of the great dragon-headed train's many cars is a manse in miniature, drawing power from Heaven's geomancy to reach tremendous speeds. Those who can afford a nonstop passage can travel from one end

of Heaven to another in a few days. Divine criminals and desperate gods sometimes seek to rob the rail's passengers or plunder its cargo, making guard work a profitable sideline for lion-dogs, celestial lions, and the occasional Exalt.

Travel by Sorcery

While sorcerers are perhaps rarer among spirits than among humans, Heaven still has enough to warrant regulation of sorcerous travel. By and large, these boil down to an expectation of decorum; if not for many sorcerers' grandiosity and flamboyance, such rules would scarcely be necessary. A sorcerer who clumsily blocks a canal with a living ship of flower petals, clips a senior gods' skycraft with her Stormwind Rider, or loses control of a summoned steed can expect punishments ranging from informal reprimands and minor fines to punitively harsh assignments, depending on whether they upset anyone important and how much latitude their own status affords them.

The Heavenly Gates

Creation and Yu-Shan are connected by ancient gateways forged by Heaven's makers, allowing those in possession of a gate's key to pass between worlds. Few gates look alike. While circular or arched designs incorporating precious metals, exotic stone, and magical materials are common, a gate can be almost anything: a hidden trapdoor, standing stones, or the shimmering surface of an ancient fountain's waters. Most keys are conceptual rather than literal — incantations, ritual, or certain conjunctions of circumstances, though rare gates originally intended for personal use may be tied to particular tokens. Some keys can only be used by spirits, though Exalted sometimes wield supernatural powers that can force a gate open.

The Department of Celestial Concerns' Division of the Inviolable Gatehouse stations celestial lions to guard most known gates on both sides. Gods, elementals, and Sidereals may pass freely; others are permitted entry to Heaven only if they have legitimate business with the Celestial Bureaucracy. But the lions are neither invincible nor infallible, especially in the face of Exalted grandeur, and their much-vaunted incorruptibility isn't always what it's made out to be.

Not every gate is overseen by the Celestial Bureaucracy. Contagion deaths decimated the Division of the Inviolable Gatehouse' institutional knowledge, including locations and keys to numerous gates. Some gates were never known to the Celestial Bureaucracy, undiscovered since the time of the ancients. Others go unmonitored or undermonitored due to insufficient resources, jurisdictional disputes, mismanagement, or enormous bribes to look the other way. As a result, some gates are controlled by criminal syndicates, spirit courts, or deeply corrupt gods.

The division regularly lobbies for greater funding, but gained no traction until the first Getimian attacks on Heaven demonstrated the necessity of securing the gates. Much of its increased budget has been skimmed off, misappropriated by other divisions, or spent on ultimately pointless boondoggles, but it still sponsors expeditions in search of lost gates and seeks off-the-books assets to aid in reclaiming gates that've fallen into other hands.

The gates are invaluable to spirits seeking to bolster their cults. Creation's peoples have long raised temples, shrines, and holy places near the gates, recognizing them as places where gods gather. Some of these temples are little more than ruins; others are only a few years old.

Storytelling Gates

There's no complete list of locations for gates. Instead, Players can establish a heavenly gate's existence and location by introducing a fact (**Exalted**, p. 237). Sidereals and celestial gods need no special Lore background to do so; other characters might use backgrounds like "The Celestial Bureaucracy" or "Other Realms of Existence." The difficulty is 3 for locations within a few weeks' travel away or that are especially likely sites for gates (such as major cities, geomantic hubs, or First Age ruins), 5 for locations no more than a week away, or difficulty 7+ for locations within a few days travel or that are especially unlikely locations for gates.

Identifying a gate's key requires an applicable Lore background, as above, or an appropriate Occult specialty. It's usually a difficulty 3 (Perception + [Lore or Occult]) roll, although more obscure or less-frequented gates may be difficulty 5+ or require an extended roll or project (**Exalted**, p. 266).

Together with other forms of heavenly transport, the gates potentially let characters travel across Creation at tremendous speeds. This isn't necessarily quick and simple: the canals aren't cross-continental, there's only one train, and use of clouds and sorcery is frequently contentious, to say nothing of potential delays from bureaucratic mismanagement and Yu-Shan's unusual climate and geography. Storytellers are encouraged to introduce one or two fantastic obstacles in Yu-Shan when player characters travel between gates — don't delay them without good reason, but don't give them the impression of an idle and orderly Heaven.

Gates of Note

The **Omphalos Gate** in the Imperial Mountain's foothills is Heaven's primary access point to the central Blessed Isle. It appears as a natural stone archway jutting up from the mountainside, threaded with veins of orichalcum and white jade, on the grounds of one of the mountain's many Immaculate temples. The monks are deferential to their visitors, but never trusting. Gods suspected of using the gate to recruit cults and other potential threats to the Realm may be trailed by Dragon-Blooded monks to watch for any wrongdoing, either surreptitiously or under the pretense of an honor guard. In Yu-Shan, the gate opens onto an uptown borough of the Eye-of-Heaven District.

The **Drowning Gate** lies among the silver-sand lagoons of the Aito Archipelago, whose inhabitants are famed for breathtaking mosaics, beautiful glass prayer-beads, and iconographic panels. A thin, horizontal ring of blue and black jade, it floats just under the water's surface. The archipelago is far removed from most points of interest in the West, but many gods visit it in search of easy ambrosia. The prevailing Aitoan religion, called the Path of Glass, teaches that each god is a facet of reality, weaving almost any spirit they encounter into their sprawling pantheon so that they may more fully venerate the cosmos. Such worship is transient, though; reality has far too many facets to worship any one god for long. In Heaven, the gate opens through a vast mirror in the territory of the Three Masks Syndicate, who take a small cut for its use.

The capricious **Calibration Gate** refuses to remain stationary, vanishing at unpredictable intervals to reappear elsewhere. During the five days of Calibration, however, it blinks away every time it's used, providing entrance into Heaven for those mortals who stumble into the Carnival of Meeting. The gate is a brilliantly painted stone arch adorned with fluttering paper streamers. In Heaven, it opens into the plaza surrounding the Jade Pleasure Dome. Some Sidereals can predict the Calibration Gate's movements with inexplicably convenient accuracy, using it as their primary entrance and exit from Heaven (p. XX).

During the eclipse that heralded the Solars' return five years ago, a small but mighty earthquake in the Summer Mountains' foothills revealed a gate unknown to Heaven which opens only at irregular intervals

according to some undiscovered principle. Seemingly hewn from the mountain itself, every inch of the gate's surface has been carved into statues of writhing, broken bodies, no two alike in appearance or torment. It's thus been named the **Misery Gate**. The team dispatched to investigate was shocked to note that many statues have the features of several still-living Sidereals. While it provokes obsessive study in some who have beheld it, most are unsettled, preferring to leave it undisturbed.

Geomancy

Yu-Shan is rich in geomancy, with a network of dragon lines so dense and so potent that manses and demesnes here are the norm rather than the exception. Within Yu-Shan, even the smallest manse is palatial, while greater manses are truly monumental — often the centerpiece of their borough. Most of Heaven's demesnes and manses are Solar, Lunar, or Sidereal, though elementally aspected manses aren't unheard-of. No Abyssal demesnes or manses are known to exist here.

Manse construction and maintenance within Yu-Shan is regulated by the Department of Celestial Concerns' Division of Heavenly Geomancy. Geomancers must be licensed by the division, though unlicensed manse-architects abound, and not every license is legitimately obtained. The division also maintains a registry of deeds to manses, which conclusively establish ownership under heavenly law.

Not every manse and demesne is spoken for. Abandoned manses in Yu-Shan's blighted neighborhoods offer prime real estate to squatters, who typically lack the knowledge of geomancy or the resources to repair manses or protect them against further disrepair. As a result, decaying manses wreak havoc on local geomancy, inflicting unfortunate residents and neighbors with Essence-warping maladies and bizarre afflictions. Because such tragedies' usual victims are the unemployed and disenfranchised, few officials or lion-dogs take action without significant encouragement.

Yu-Shan's wilderness contains occasional undeveloped demesnes. Gods preserve some to lend their property a "natural" or "rustic" look; others remain uncapped by sheer virtue of their strangeness. The inhospitable Weeping Scablands has long thwarted savants eager to claim both its volatile convergence of clashing elemental demesnes and its oozing deposits of priceless red amber. Geomancers maintain that the Fen of Scorn Embodied could support one of the most powerful Water manses ever known, but the demesne seems to anticipate this, altering its own geomancy in response to any construction.

Climate

Yu-Shan's weather, as scheduled by the Bureau of Seasons, is almost universally pleasant and mild. Temperatures turn slightly colder in winter and warmer in summer, but always remain clement. The bureau doesn't control all of Heaven's weather; artifacts, geomancy, sorcerous workings, and other forces have unpredictable effects on Yu-Shan's climate that the bureau can't easily manage. In addition to the full range of weather seen in Creation, Yu-Shan is also host to strange and miraculous phenomena: The snowflakes of the Eternal Frost District fall in perfect synchronicity with the region's ceaseless festivities, the mists of the Silent Smile Garden enwrap parkgoers in half-glimpsed memories of their past delights, and those who tarry in the Emberwoods may watch heatless wisps of flame dance in the breeze like autumn leaves.

The most spectacular weather in Yu-Shan is seen when one of the Incarnae takes the lead in the Games of Divinity. The Unconquered Sun's prominence brings cloudless skies, lit with blanching sunlight by day and the dim, gloaming radiance of a solar eclipse by night. Luna is attended by silvery mists and moonlit brume, and Creation's moon sometimes wanders into the sky. Mercury brings gusts of wind filled with seaspray and saffron stardust. Venus calls down gentle rains of tears, flurries of jeweled snowflakes, and occasionally, unpredictable tempests. Mars's dominance summons storms, sweltering heat, or battlecries

of thunder. Jupiter brings countless wisps of foxfire and vast, ominous clouds that hang low in the sky. Saturn snuffs out weather and light, creating an eerie, twilight silence. Gaia's rare moments of prominence brings strange, elemental manifestations: diamond-dust siroccos, rippling clouds of heatless fire, a distant ocean that seems to fill the sky.

Heavenly Locales

Yu-Shan is a city of storied locales and wondrous vistas. Divided into over a hundred strange and disparate districts — not counting the strange biomes of the celestial wilderlands — Heaven is awash with places for mystery, intrigue, relaxation, and danger.

Eye-of-Heaven District

At Yu-Shan's heart, the Eye-of-Heaven District rises from the Crown of the Unconquered, a vast mesa of gold-veined marble swallowed by urban sprawl. It is equal parts opulence and efficiency, home to the Jade Pleasure Dome where the Incarnae take their leisure, the headquarters of the Bureau of Heaven, and the golden-roofed townhouses and estates of the greatest and most prominent gods. The density of this kingdom-sized district is dizzying: every inch of land at Heaven's center is spoken for. Every urban alley overflows with boutiques; every natural space is painstakingly cultivated to sparkle with beauty. Even between terraces, the plateau's steep sides are carefully excavated for vertical real estate, sometimes long before zoning permits are authorized.

For all the fabulous expense of Eye-of-Heaven real estate, residents build low and wide in a show of conspicuous consumption. Few buildings stand above three stories; streets are lined with wide, flowering hedges and interspersed with manicured parks. The district could support ten times as many gods in luxury if it had developed as the rest of Yu-Shan has, but its powerful householder courts, business owners, and bureau chiefs all agree that the Eye-of-Heaven won't bend to lesser interests.

This cultivated opulence spills over into residents' private lives. Many owners have outdone each other for centuries in arranging ostentatious celebrations, each jockeying for the unofficial title of most extravagant host. These days, it's not unheard of for invitations to be inscribed on slabs of ambrosia.

As a center for the sprawling Bureau of Heaven, whatever space isn't given over to godly estates is instead under the bureau's control. The bureau's headquarters, the Spire of Virtuous Insight, is one of the few local structures that's allowed to compete with the Jade Pleasure Dome for the skyline. Here, a million officials, clerks, sycophants, and attendants work to promulgate Heaven's laws, oversee ambrosia taxation and exchange, and keep the grossly overinflated bureau's lines of internal communication in some semblance of working order.

The Jade Pleasure Dome

In the exact center of the Eye-of-Heaven District gleams the Jade Pleasure Dome. It is here that the Celestial Incarnae play the Games of Divinity, a sublime mystery of those who made the universe. The Dome floats atop a lake of quicksilver. Several of Heaven's most powerful deities maintain languidly drifting pleasure barges on the lake; other vessels dart unpredictably around them, ferrying prominent passengers to or from the Dome.

The Dome's exterior is a scintillating mosaic of many-colored jade, seemingly hewn from rainbows. Some of the mosaic's pieces are slabs of jade hundred of feet tall; others are smaller than the eye can see, arrayed together in prismatic constellations. No other building in Yu-Shan rivals its size — even if construction regulations allowed it, even the gods and Exalted struggle to match this grand work of the Ancients. Twenty-five gates ring its walls, each guarded by celestial lions and other martial deities — the

least of the Jade Pleasure Dome's defenses.

The Dome's gates open only to spirits bearing an invitation from one of the Celestial Incarnae — or rather, the member of that Incarnae's inner circle entrusted with this sacred responsibility. Most in attendance are division and bureau heads, members of the Incarnae's spirit courts, and the occasional god who's somehow caught an Incarnae's eye. On monumentally rare occasions, spirits whose deeds or long service have caught the attention of one of the Incarnae might be invited to make a single move in the Games, an experience beyond all joy and pleasure.

The Exalted are forbidden from the Jade Pleasure Dome, no matter who may invite them or what crisis might demand such an exigency. No explanation has ever been given, but perhaps none is needed. The First Age's legends of the Divine Revolution spoke of how the Celestial Incarnae sought not just to defeat their masters, but to take their place at the Games of Divinity. It troubled the Old Realm's Exalted that their makers might fear them, but they well understood that fear.

Those who would defy this stricture face one of the greatest challenges in Heaven or Creation. While the Incarnae's guests walk only a short path to the grand chamber where the Games are played, to the uninvited, the Dome is a labyrinth. Its seemingly infinite hallways are stalked by behemoths, colossal automatons, and horrors plucked from bygone Zen-Mu. Every stone thrums with primordial enchantments, pitting trespassers against some of the first sorceries ever worked at Creation's dawn. If any have ever succeeded, their triumph and what came of it go unremembered. Jupiter would bid it unseemly for such a thing to be known.

On the lake's far shore, a mile-wide outer plaza bustles with gods eager for even the slightest glimpse of the Games' fabled mystique. Enterprising prayerwrights set up towering carts or pavilions of embroidered silk to hawk street food and festive streamers. Buskers fill the plaza with music, while artists seek to capture the Dome's beauty with their paints.

The plaza's also the site of a thriving and illegal trade in memories: dreamstones, noetic cages, and other means of capturing a viewer's experiences of the Games of the Divinity. Nothing can truly convey the full splendor of the Games, however. One who shares in a dream of them does not see the Incarnae at play, instead experiencing a transcendent ecstasy beyond the senses. Such mementos are thus highly valued, and any god graced with an invitation to watch the Games can expect exorbitant offers from the Shadow City's purveyors of memory. But such things aren't without danger, even beyond that of the celestial lions that patrol the plaza — the experience is perilously addictive, capable of compromising a spirit's immortality if left unchecked,

Entering the Dome

Entering the Jade Pleasure Dome is a challenge far beyond the scope and scale of many in **Exalted**. It typically works best as a campaign's penultimate challenge or endgame, if at all. Once the players have dared an impenetrable stronghold created by the Ancients and confronted the Celestial Incarnae themselves, there's not much room left for dramatic escalation. Additionally, before making this part of the game, everyone at the table should be on board with the phenomenal danger and consequences of doing so. The specifics of the Dome's defenses are left up to the Storyteller to tailor their challenge to the strengths and weaknesses of the player characters.

The Games of Divinity are one of **Exalted's** greatest mysteries, and it's not easy to give an explanation that's as intriguing as the unknown. Instead of

describing specific details about the Games, you can pause normal play, and briefly read an excerpt from a poem or something like that — a good candidate is Alfred Lord Tennyson's "The Lotos-Eaters." Once the reading is concluded, play resumes with the player characters having witnessed the Games' beauty.

Eternal Frost District

The Eternal Frost District is home to some of the city-continent's most storied celebrations, dedicated as it is to revelry and art. A vast pavilion of filigreed ice known as the Golden Orchestra has featured virtually every musical troupe in Yu-Shan and a few from Creation. The Orchestra is also a popular spot for unorthodox dealings, as a performance's volume can make overhearing conversations nearly impossible. By contrast, the high-vaulted Thousand Masks Playhouse is home to an endless ongoing story told by an ever-growing cast and crew. Despite the name, the epic drama has featured well over one thousand characters at this point. The tale has just entered into its millionth act, which concerns the redemption of Chor Lan, god of bad choices, loosely based on the real god's biography.

The district is named for the frost that rimes its theaters, galleries, and alehouses — a source of beauty rather than hardship for the district's divine inhabitants. They raise vast dens and lodges from snow and scrub them aside just as casually; they exult in the way the district's music resonates with cold air and vibrating ice. Although they might not die of deprivation, the gods still dress for the clime in extravagant cloaks and thick furs, sipping hot drinks at each stop among the Nocturnal Wanderings, nightly parties that meander between the district's many parlors and estates.

The Eternal Frost District is also infamous for drugs of all kinds. Its alchemist-prayerwrights devise pleasures unimaginable on Creation— cinnabar vapor, liquid catharsis, venom from the sacred scorpions of Atek. Celestial cocaine, haoma leaves, and the occasional amphora of misappropriated celestial wine can be found alongside other drugs from across Creation and beyond. Most of the substances available for sale are lawful, if only by feats of legal semantics. A trade in illegal drugs, such as powdered souls and fate grinders, hides itself among the rest, well-disguised and hidden from the law's eyes.

Draping Shadow District

Along the Crown of the Unconquered's southeastern edge lies a district cast forever into unnatural twilight. A gargantuan shawl of indigo silk hangs from the poles that mark the district's border, blotting out all light; from the outside, it resembles a vast tent. Thought to have been one of the city's respites for those Ancients who shied away from light and their servitors, the Draping Shadow District is now home to commerce, finance, hospitality, and crime in equal measure. Bankers keep vaults of ambrosia and jade here, while crimelords and powerbrokers oversee their schemes in Heaven's heart from the district's shadows. Residents and visitors come for respite from the tumultuous weather that sometimes emanates from the Jade Pleasure Dome; no rain, wind, or diamond-storm can pierce the district's gloaming shroud. It's also home to many gods who feel at ease in the dark, like Elytine, god of evening primrose; Unblinking Ayoh, god of albinism; and Stalking Cry, god of Eastern bats.

Gambling dens and lantern-lit resorts litter the district's dark boulevards, and the air is thick with music in a thousand discordant styles. Every alleyway is a bazaar, with otherwise-unemployed deities roped into service by local syndicates as hawkers and drug-pushers. They report up a chain of overseers and middlemen to the Eventide Dozen, an alliance of local mob bosses who've divided up the district among themselves. Even the district's powerful financiers defer to the Dozen, whose many labyrinthine business concerns throughout Heaven are invaluable for laundering wealth of every kind.

Chained Pillar District

This district is named for its floating field of stone pillars, which bureaucrats chained to the ground to prevent them from drifting away. Despite these restraints, the pillars remain in motion, dancing languidly through the air. Each pillar has a unique orbit, weaving and spinning past the others at various speeds — none swift enough to endanger pedestrians — and completing a full lap by dawn. Many stairs, windows, and balconies are built close enough to their orbits that travelers can jump atop pillars and ride them around, hopping from one to another.

Regardless of how one traverses the pillars, life in the district is a daily contest of agility, skill, and balance. Thankfully, the columns' orbits never vary in time or distance, and favorable routes over the pillars open and close at predictable intervals. Longtime residents know when their preferred routes open; bureaucrats living here are even more punctual than expected.

Though building vertically in most districts is seen as a sign of poverty, many structures here climb hundreds of feet to take advantage of pillar routes; for instance, the god Mokumoku's stamp workshop and storefront, whose longest wall is a mere 10 feet, stands over 200 feet tall. This style of living has created an unusually open community, which goes beyond the district's famous rooftop garden parties; local ordinances require structures to have public platforms for neighbors and passersby to leap between adjacent buildings.

While the wandering pillars' paths are predictable for long-time residents, navigating them isn't as easy for newcomers. A growing movement led by Deekor, god of order from chaos, aims to level the field by freezing the pillars' movements in their current orbits. Though Deekor's group is too small to request an official change from the Bureau of Heaven, her petition has enough signatures that the Bureau will need to send an impact survey team to examine the potential magical and environmental effects such a change might cause.

Iron Anklet District

The Iron Anklet District has been largely abandoned by the Department of Celestial Concerns after the Palace of Seventeen Nights was sabotaged during the calamitous Season of Treacheries, its distorted Essence manifesting a flood of hallucinogenic fire that utterly destroyed numerous elementals. Anyone with resources of any sort abandoned the district; the rest remained shackled to it. Now, it's home to hundreds of unhoused gods, Heavenly Dragons, and countless spirits.

Because of the area's blighted status, few of Heaven's Censors or other law enforcement bother entering, save from a handful of particularly self-motivated lion-dogs. Naturally, extralegal power systems have filled the vacuum left by the bureaucrats' evacuation, the foremost being Jet-Toothed Teyamor and his Society of Crimson Months, which supplies the rest of Yu-Shan with Heaven's mandarins, a potent form of orange that causes vivid hallucinations of five possible futures. They also run a protection racket so auspiciously efficient at extracting wealth from the district's downtrodden that some suspect Teyamor has a corrupt Sidereal on staff, which further deters resistance among residents.

The Society has an uneasy partnership with the self-proclaimed Council of Extra-Legal Sanctions, a decentralized body that enforces its own justice — ranging from public shaming, fines, and community service to exile from the district — on fellow Iron Anklet residents who harm neighbors, property, and public order. The Council is democratically ruled; members take turns as voting representatives. Restoring the district to its former glory is impossible, but the Council strives to make it livable again. In time, perhaps they can cleanse it of hallucinogenic flame and get the Bureau of Heaven to remove its blighted status, but few among them trust the bureau.

The district's residents face impossible choices daily; many remain in contaminated and hazardous areas rather than seek protection or support from mobsters. These residents must defend their homes from thrill seekers, vandals, and scavengers.

The Numinous Meres

From the north and curving east around the Crown of the Unconquered winds the broad Celeritous River, its waters a flash of liquid tourmaline, crossed by seven magnificent bridges. In the south it pools into three great lakes, the Numinous Meres: the geometrically perfect Mere of Proportion, the lushly populated Mere of Purpose, and the mesmerizing, tranquil Mere of Radiance. The three lakefront districts' exquisite dragon lines draw many famed geomancers, lending each a unique character. The **Five Auspicious Angles District**'s architecture is strictly symmetrical, promoting harmonious relations. The **Flourishing Volition District**'s geomancy bolsters the fertility of the Mere of Purpose's flora and fauna. The **Enlightenment-Like-Gold District**'s manses magnify the Mere of Radiance's captivating beauty to a degree that endangers unprepared mortals.

Waterfront real estate on the Meres is reserved for manses, the vacation homes of the elite, luxury resorts, and recreational venues. The Meres' weather is strange even by Yu-Shan's standards, ranging from painted winds to lakeside ice shoves of crystalline sighs. Regional folklore and certain scholarly hypotheses attribute this to an emanation of Gaia, said to dwell within a secret fourth mere formed by the negative space of the other three.

Last Clutch of the Wood Dragon

Once a grand temple to the Elemental Dragon of Wood, the Last Clutch's geomancy is so fertile that it's long since been overgrown by a veritable mountain of flora, whose decomposition over the millennia have buried the manse beneath unimaginably rich soil. Date palms, plum trees, vivid amanitas, and more grow amid its circular terraced fields, unscathed by pests, disease, or foul weather.

The Last Clutch lies in the Shattered Faience District. Once a neighborhood of choice for prominent, well-heeled gods, the Clutch's unchecked, uncontainable growth has long since driven out those householders. Today, the district is a slum of storm-stained acropoli and aqueducts choked with malachite bubble-algae.

The Last Clutch is occupied by the Cherished Reapers, a clan of Heaven's Dragons who tend its soil and sell its bountiful crops and lumber. Their ancestors claimed it amidst the Great Contagion. With its owner dead, the Celestial Bureaucracy in disarray, and their stomachs empty, they fended off all contenders. They've held onto it since then through savvy dealmaking with prominent divine gourmands willing to trade political favors for the best of the garden's fruits.

Many Reapers resent their dependence on divine patronage. They've made many bids for independent ownership, but none so audacious as the most recent proposal put to them: stealing the pit of a peach of immortality and planting it in the Clutch. Many Reapers decry it; they risk alienating their backers and suffering dire punishments if caught, for a seed that may not even take root. But the scheme's zealous supporters deem the rewards worth the risk — and if the peach can bloom outside the celestial orchards, where else but the Clutch?

Black Ray Island

In the quicksilver sea floats a colossal, long-dormant manta ray whose skin has crusted over with stone, soil, trees, and now an entire district. Heaven's authorities rarely visit Black Ray Island. As a result, it's become a flourishing center for business of dubious legality. Situated along a valuable trade route in the

southwest sea, the island is a port-of-call for maritime shipping, whether to avoid the inconvenience of overland travel, dodge taxes and kickbacks levied on trade, or smuggle illegal goods. Such valuable cargo usually consists of fine materials imported from Creation such as Randani pottery and spider-silks from the city-state of Oqu, alongside treasures that ambrosia can't replicate — the magical materials, celestial peaches, and other wonders.

While Black Ray Island is officially a mercantile center, it's actually dominated by the Riot — an ever-shifting congress of pirate leaders. Joining the Riot is a path to wealth and power for anyone who can keep a crew together, whether they're a god, elemental, or even mortal. While internally quarrelsome, the crews are collectively an armada to rival any naval power in Heaven, and have banded together in ages past to drive off those few celestial authorities who'd bring them to heel. The Riot also acts as a moderating force, keeping crews from attracting too much of Heaven's attention and bribing officials to look the other way.

The island is itself a valuable resource. Locals mine meat and ray-leather through deep shafts cut into the creature's semi-petrified skin. Those mediums and thaumaturges who can commune with the slumbering ray — called Rayspeakers — carefully manage these operations to maintain the creature's health and cooperation. Operations that irritate or significantly damage the ray meet with natural disasters and popular revolt.

While the ray drifts at a glacial pace, the Rayspeakers can coax it into a general trajectory, though they only do this as the Riot instructs. They choose these courses years in advance to adjust to shifting trade routes or exert control over enigmatic sea-gates — great coral rings or standing banks of pearlescent fog that connect Yu-Shan's quicksilver sea to Creation's waters.

Beyond its value as a port and pirate republic, Black Ray Island is a place of games and contests. Prize fights happen every night, for stakes as low as a round of plum wine and as high as fabled artifacts or deeds to powerful manses. Gaming dens can be found throughout, including one of Plentimon's rare heavenly establishments. Once every three years, the crews of the Riot gather in a ceremonial hunt that sees nine sacred treasures spirited away by chaotic winds to the corners of Heaven's seas. Those who return with one or more receive a greater voice in the Riot and nine days of inexplicably fabulous good fortune.

Celestial Wilderness

Yu-Shan is home to flourishing wilderness, whether in nature preserves beyond the city's hustle and bustle or private parks bordering the estates of the elite. Every manner of biome appears here, though touched with Heaven's mystery and strange magic: mountains that bleed, stained-glass forests, fungal archipelagos, and more. In the Autumn Spiral Grove, trees dance in harmony with the emotions of those nearby; more than one minor earthquake has been born of a visitor gripped by intense passions. The River Malachite turns beasts who drink from it and plants that grow on its shores to living gemstone, a favored fishing hole for those able to digest its petrific carp.

Heaven's flora and fauna are as wondrous and strange as their environs. Many are imported from Creation, with species diverging from terrestrial kin due to godly meddling or exposure to supernatural forces. Others are creations of gods, descendants of bestial spirits, or bygone relics of Heaven's makers. Whispervine blooms are beautiful, but their pollen can cause fugue states and unwanted wing growth. The nozomi deer's soulful gaze causes it to briefly exchange perspectives with those who look into its eyes. Horse-sized crystalline crabs scour the quicksilver sea's floor like magpies in search of glinting treasure, occasionally retrieving wonders lost since the dawn of time.

Straw Rope Islands

These islands stretch along Yu-Shan's western coast, as if a giant threw a handful of verdant mountains into the quicksilver sea. The islands are home to gods who fled the city's bustle in pursuit of privacy, relaxation, or opportunity for spiritual contemplation. Some islands hold powerful deities' vacation-homes; others are retreats for philosophers, artists, hermits, and sorcerers who value the archipelago's natural beauty, isolation, and abundant geomancy.

A handful of lion-dogs and other gods, mostly on the largest island of Yii Yusandi, assert that they're the indigenous inhabitants and all others present are interlopers. Naafa, god of the sugar cane trade, leads the effort to get the Bureau of Heaven to officially acknowledge this. As Yu-Shan's urban development creeps ever closer to the western coast, developers eye the Straw Rope Islands with increasing interest, even as Yii's Yusandi spirits prepare to repel them by force if necessary.

Four Dogs Peak

A lonely mountain rises northeast of the Crown of the Unconquered, a hundred miles from the nearest mountain range. Dozens of springs give birth to the streams and waterfalls that spiral down Four Dogs Peak, joining at its foothills to become the mighty Celeritous River.

The mountain is named for the four ancient sentinel-spirits who dwell atop the mountain, protecting heavenly gates that lead to sacred peaks in Creation's East, West, and North — the South gate was lost ages ago, and now its dog-headed guardian flits between the service of his siblings' gates.

A spirit court exists for each gate, cultivating trade with the peoples of Creation's great peaks. For their wisdom and blessings, the courts receive tribute in precious furs, leather, and timber that are exported for those gods who savor luxuries crafted from these worldly materials.

By ancient edict of Mercury, the spirit courts' dominion over the gates is absolute; the Department of Celestial Concerns has no jurisdiction over them. Those seeking passage through these gates must bribe the courts with open-ended promises of favors — a choice foolish enough to be a recurring theme in heavenly theater. In recognition of Mercury's grace, the spirit courts also permit Sidereals to prove themselves through tests of cunning, endurance, and temperament known as the Four Corners Crucible.

The Membraade Woods

The beautiful gardens and civic parks in western Heaven draw numerous tourists and health-seekers. Noteworthy among these places is the curated majesty of the Membraade Woods. The Membraade aren't one forest but many, a patchwork of natural and supranatural biomes: peat swamp groves beside baobab stands beside brambles of towering elephant-cacti. Seasonal changes are conducted by godly managers and elemental caretakers. In abandoned habitats with neither, the ecosystem lurches out of control.

These myriad environs support several small urban centers and suburbs, all of which incorporate local flora and climate into their architecture. Floating avenues of bayou-barges wind through the cypress knees of the Blackwater Wash District, and the ambitious vertical treehouses of Hollow Throat District defy the gloomy banyan understory with lanterns of natural bioluminescent lichen.

The Membraade also shelters unknown dangers, from spirit-beasts to escaped criminals to monstrous predators smuggled from Creation. One such is the Whale-Head King, a god-eating behemoth of basalt jaws and razor-steel plumage, capable of maintaining perfect, silent stillness as it hunts spirits and Exalted alike through the shadows of the ur-forests.

Eternal Pelisse and the Parhelion Vertices

In Yu-Shan's east, the lustrous Chrysoprase Grasslands ripple and erupt into two remarkable mountain ranges: the mosaic peaks of the Eternal Pelisse, and the rigid facets of the Parhelion Vertices.

The exemplar of all mountain ranges, the Eternal Pelisse reaches Yu-Shan's eastern shores, verging the glossy quicksilver sea with expertly hewn headlands. Each peak is a masterpiece, sculpted to match an individual god's vision of the ideal mountain. Since the Divine Revolution, development of the Eternal Pelisse is managed by the Parliament of the Pelisse, a householder court nominally led by Flashing Peak, god of the Imperial Mountain. But with her too absorbed in Bureau work to attend, it's domineered by Orogens Improbable, god of avalanches. Orogens and his devotees aggressively manipulate land development in the Pelisse. Many peaks exclude residency to all but those whom the peak's god personally favors. But these regulations go unenforced in the Eternal Pelisse's passes, gaps, and valleys, and the increasingly dyspeptic court searches for creative ways to remove divine squatters.

In stark contrast to the Eternal Pelisse's variegated beauty, the Parhelion Vertices' rectangular terraces march in an unnaturally straight column across the Chrysoprase. Known simply as "the Verts" by locals, these hollow bismuth mountains shine with black iridescence, and gently resonate with quiet, irregular tones that repel quicksilver flows and discomfit spirits, discouraging them from lingering. The Verts predate the gods; as such, no one in the Department of Celestial Concerns is certain who holds jurisdiction over them. Since only the most dutiful or determined spirits will patrol here, the bismuth mountains are a no-god's-land; their lack of arable land and development potential leave the range relatively unpopulated. Unsubstantiated legends circulate of secret underground Sidereal installations .

The Quicksilver Sea

A vast sea of glistening quicksilver surrounds Yu-Shan on all sides. Its metallic tides ebb and flow slower than Creation's own, and unseen currents carry ships across trade lanes believed to have been designed by the ancients. Those who sail away from these well-known courses find the quicksilver sea an inscrutable vista that resists attempts to map its secrets and contours. Islands of sapphire and bronze emerge from the mists for one crew, but flee from others who attempt the same journey. Bizarre leviathans dwell in the waters and on these impossible isles, sometimes ferocious and other times friendly — a great, silver-fanged whirlpool haunts the northwestern sea, but so too does a colossal heron whose legs stretch to the seabed and whose song brings peace to the hearts of those lost in anger, sorrow, and pain. At its fringes, the quicksilver sea is robed in a wall of cool mists. Ships that sail into them usually emerge elsewhere, pointed towards Yu-Shan's nearest coast; others emerge in Creation, or never emerge at all.

Curiosities of Yu-Shan

Heaven is a place of mysteries both ancient and new, of wonders beyond even the gods' ken and horrors beyond imagining. Whether forged by the Ancients or the gods, these secret, liminal places are enigmatic even to Heaven's sages.

Remembrance, Veiled in Light

This monastery-manse stands in memorial to a Celestial Incarna who lost his life in the Divine Revolution. Remembrance is elegant in its archaism; its penitent-curators spend every waking hour maintaining its outmoded opalescent domes and exaggerated adamant arches, ceaselessly perpetuating the geomancy of the last known demesne to bear the lost Incarna's aspect. Remembrance's first, only, and current owner is Starless Austeria, God of Starfall Showers, the fallen Incarna's oldest daughter. Disconsolate from endless millennia maintaining a monument to her own grief, despondent with the Department of Celestial Concerns' reluctance to assign a replacement caretaker, Austeria grows ever closer to simply handing the precious manse over to the next Exalt they meet.

The Dweomerforge

A relic of Heaven's first masters, this imposing oblong tower erupts upward through the city's modern architecture to rise above its skyline. Its history has been thoroughly redacted, leaving Heaven at large to guess at its purpose. Some say Creation's firmament was forged here. Others believe it's where the ancients fabricated the terrible weapons they turned on the gods in the Divine Revolution. The most outlandish rumors claim that the Dweomerforge is itself a cast-off fragment of one of the Ancients.

Long ago, the Dweomerforge was sealed behind divine barrier auras by the Department of Celestial Concerns and the Division of Secrets. Only officials of those two offices may legally enter for purposes of research and ousting trespassers. Scavenging the Dweomerforge can be a lucrative venture for those who uncover ancient artifacts or long-lost secrets, but it also holds great perils, such as autonomous puzzle-weapons once fielded against the enemies of the gods; igneous panthers, creatures of molten hunger; and intricate crystalline matrices that arc with sapphire lightning 'fatal even to immortals.

The Dweomerforge's surroundings have become a hub of industry. Just outside the barrier auras stand countless prayerwrights' smithies and foundries, powered by the raw Essence that seeps out of the exclusion zone. Some artisans make illicit use of materials and designs scavenged from the Dweomerforge. Others maintain secret workshops within its outermost chambers, risking steep punishment to employ its wondrous properties. Some ambrosia-shaping techniques can only be accomplished in the strange gravity found at the Dweomerforge's summit, while certain exotic, indestructible metals can only be smelted in its magmatic depths. Such contraband masterpieces command a premium among the cultured and the ostentatious, who gladly pay the necessary bribes and fines to keep their favorite artisans from hauled away by lion-dogs.

Arcadelt's Folly

The ruins of Arcadelt's Folly, on Yu-Shan's southern coast, were once the Emerald Sojourn District. This was a luxury district for gods visiting the neighboring Silver Bells Port or the Isle of Exquisite Ornaments, replete with sumptuous lodgings, glittering casinos, and soaring concert halls. It fell to ruin in the Fair Folk invasion, as the legions of chaos spilled into Heaven through the district's heavenly gate, halted only when the disaster-god Arcadelt unleashed one of the dooms he governs in a desperate gambit to end the fae incursion. The ruined district is now a bordermarch quarantined from the rest of Heaven, though rumors of lost wonders and Wyld prodigies still draw treasure seekers to brave the baleful curses and fae horrors that haunt the corrupted district.

The Countermand Wall

Across Yu-Shan's northern frontier from the Quay of Dawn to the Qual of Twilight looms the Countermand of the Diffusion of Orderly Patterns, usually called the Countermand Wall. This wall of adamant and iron, tall as three men and wrought with ornate, esoteric shapes, marks out some forgotten boundary, a limit beyond which the city was not meant to expand. The majority stretching north to east is new-built, and with many structures abutting or attaching to the iron of the wall in densely packed districts. In the west, portions of the Countermand Wall predate the Divine Revolution, and the archaic design evokes something wild and primeval. Attempts to build north of the wall have been met with unavoidable disasters — howling locust-derechos, burning fog, floods of molten gold. Students of the history of Heaven suspect the wall marks a treaty between Yu-Shan's ancient creators and some unknown power.

Heavenly Plot Hooks

Storytellers and players looking to populate Yu-Shan with interesting opportunities for intrigue and

adventure might consider any of the following as a starting place for stories set in Heaven.

The Unending Party: For the past year, the pleasure barge known as the Eternal Joy has sailed the Respite Cirque without ever docking to unload passengers or take on fresh provisions. Those who've encountered the vessel on the quicksilver waves have remarked that her passengers seem simultaneously ecstatic and exhausted. Absent any immediate threat, the celestial lions have refused to investigate, but neighboring barges are beginning to report strange, infrequent sobs and a mysterious smoke.

A Night in the Spotlight: Dela Fel, a premiere socialite and the god of saffron, is infamous for his exclusive parties, which feature unusual guests from Heaven and Creation alike — and on at least one famous evening, the demon Florivet. Tonight, he intends to host a circle of junior Sidereals...and turn the party's cruelest taunting attention on any who can't make an amusing show of themselves.

The Three Records Caper: Emerald Calculus, a senior historian within the Department of Celestial Concerns, seeks to end the bureaucratic infighting and confusion over whether the Jade Pleasure Dome is considered part of the Eye-of-Heaven District or its own administrative region. They seek to commission the Circle to infiltrate the Million Parcels Archive and destroy any two of the original three contradictory planning documents for the district, leaving the surviving document as the definitive version.

The Blank Page Affair: Over the course of a week, an entire department-complex's ink begins to fail, leaving no mark on paper as it's used. The office's work grinds to a halt, leaving clerks, calligraphers, and artists in a panic. Investigation may reveal an infestation of strange spiritual parasites that feed on the ink's properties. The circle is called upon to research the infestation's provenance, which leads them to a trio of godly suspects with grudges against the department.

Someone Else's Nightmares: The Chosen of Mercury known as Shepherd of the North Star has been plagued with nightmarish dreams of not Exalting, instead living dozens of lives in Creation where he serves as savior, martyr, and hero to people of many nations. Shepherd suspects that someone is meddling with his dreams or with fate itself, but is unskilled in investigations of this nature. Careful footwork may reveal Getimian interference, trying to turn Shepherd to their cause.

The Dread Fever Protocols: The celestial lions have quarantined the Bright Sand District, where Heaven's foremost glassblowers ply their trade. A disease that's emerged in the district mimics the awful symptoms of the Great Contagion, and Yu-Shan would rather see the district perish than risk spreading the infection. Sidereal agents may be sent to investigate the disease's true nature and origin, to evacuate a powerful god trapped within the quarantine, or to find the secret route smugglers are using to ferry in (fake) bottles of celestial wine.

Following the Tear: Recently, residents found a purse of five hearthstones in the Clouded Crystal Circle, a park at the center of the Hidden Spires District. Four were immediately claimed by furious owners; the fifth remains unclaimed. It seems tied to a nearby manse, though no nearby manse's hearthstone is unaccounted for. Some suspect it's the hearthstone of the lost Crying Dragon House, named for the leaks in the dragon lines beneath it and the elaborate mechanisms that would regulate the dangers posed by such leaks...if anyone had maintained them in the past five centuries.

Quicksilver Races: The canal raider known as Axolotl Smile runs an illegal canal-racing circuit in the densely populated Ninefold Swifts District. While once tolerated as a nuisance, his crew have laid claim to a manse raised by the world's makers, granting them unprecedented control over the course and speed of the district's quicksilver canals. What was once a recreation for fools and thrillseekers now endangers the entire district.

The Author With the Loose Lips: The House of Mirth-by-Morning, one of Yu-Shan's oldest literary

houses, began distribution of a new serial novel on what later proved to be the day the Jade Prison broke. Each weekly installment of *Vultures of Fortune* meets wild acclaim and speculation from fans. Its anonymous author claims to crafting a fictional, highly dramatized account of the politics, espionage, and intrigue of life within the Bureau of Destiny, but senior officials bristle at the negative portrayal of the Chosen of the Maidens. Behind closed doors, they debate how to identify the author and silence them before any more bureau secrets can be revealed in their “fictional” exposés.

The Why of Hau: When Tumbling Hau gave up his lofty position as the Magnificent Overseer of Matters Financial, he was ridiculed as a fool. Now seemingly content to live in the shadows of his former office, Hau has gained a reputation as a gutter-philosopher, keenly able to pierce heavenly officials’ pretensions with a measured gaze and a cutting question. His adherents — to whom he’s bitterly indifferent — champion him with increasing fervor, subtly undermining their superiors in the Bureaucracy with Hau’s canny observances and razor-sharp rejoinders. Heaven’s eyes turn upon him now with increasing displeasure, seeking a remedy to his seemingly infectious desire to question authority.

Chapter Four: Character Creation

This chapter takes you through the process of creating a Sidereal player character. Starting Sidereal player characters have typically completed their training in the Bureau of Destiny and gotten a few missions under their belt. They've had time to get familiar with the bureau, establish social relationships, and know who's who among fellow Sidereals.

Traits

You'll make a number of choices about your character's system traits in character creation. It may help to skip ahead and read about those traits or reference their description in **Exalted Third Edition**. A quick summary:

Caste: Your Caste reflects the Maiden who chose you and determines which division of the Bureau of Destiny you work for. Each Caste expresses an archetypal role; it makes it easier for you to gain certain Abilities that fit that role and gives you your innate anima powers (p. XX).

Birth Sign and Exaltation Sign: You can skip these if this is your first time making a Sidereal — they're connected to rules for prophecies, and it's fine to wait until you want to use those rules to pick a sign. They're chosen from the constellations of the Maidens' astrological houses (p. XX).

Attributes: Your character's innate strengths and aptitudes (**Exalted**, p. 148).

Abilities: Your character's skills, both from her mortal life and bureau training (**Exalted**, p. 149). Abilities also determine what Charms you can learn. You'll pick some Abilities to be Favored; these get the same discount as those associated with your Caste. Favored Abilities let you branch out beyond its archetypal role to represent your character concept.

Specialties: A specific area of expertise your character has in an Ability (**Exalted**, p. 123).

Merits: Miscellaneous traits associated with your character's origin and backstory. **Exalted**, p. 157. Some Merits provide mechanical advantages, while others give narrative benefits, like wealth or loyal followers. If you want an artifact or manse, you'll take it as a Merit.

Charms: The Sidereal Exalted's fate-weaving powers (p. XX). Charms are the most complicated part of the game, but you don't need to read them all — just those available at Essence 1. Most Charms require a certain rating in an Ability; you may want to pick Charms before your Abilities.

Intimacies: Intimacies focus in on your character's personality, emotions, and relationships (**Exalted**, p. 170). Each represents a personality trait, relationship, agenda, philosophical position, religious belief, or similar detail about your character. It's harder for social influence to sway you against your Intimacies, but it's easier to convince you to do something your Intimacies support. Charms and other magic may also draw on your character's Intimacies.

Limit Trigger: A condition that causes your character to gain Limit, bringing her closer to giving in to the hubris of the Great Curse (p. XX).

Step 1: Concept and Caste

Start character creation by talking with your Storyteller about her plans for the game, and discussing character concepts with your fellow players. Think about your character's origin, personality, skills, and the heroic archetypes that inspire her. Determine which of the five

Sidereal Castes fits her best.

You should also decide whether your Sidereal works for the Bureau of Destiny or is a rogue agent, as well as her feelings about the Bronze and Gold Factions (p. XX). In a game where most player characters are Sidereals, you'll want to discuss these choices with the other players. Not everyone needs to belong to the same faction, but you should discuss in advance the dynamic this creates among characters.

Example Character Concepts

Journeys: Daredevil pilot, divine shipwright, eremite mystic, explorer of Yu-Shan, guide to the lost, Heavenly courier, inescapable tracker, mysterious patron of merchants, pirate queen of the Quicksilver Sea, scavenger prince, swift-footed huntress, wandering troublemaker.

Serenity: Brooding artist, divine labor organizer, drunken master, eccentric artificer, envoy to the Cult of the Illuminated, Heavenly socialite, hopeless romantic, inveterate meddler, respected arbiter, procurer of divine vices, silver-tongued negotiator, virtuoso performer.

Battles: Agent provocateur, charismatic general, cutthroat gambler, demon hunter, ferocious lawyer, Heavenly vigilante, hot-headed duelist, iconoclastic philosopher, Immaculate master, political gadfly, warrior-priest of Mars, wily strategist.

Secrets: Ambassador to other worlds, audacious thief, enigmatic prophet, exposé of the wicked, fixer to the gods, Heavenly kingpin, information broker, master infiltrator, redactor of forbidden knowledge, savant of the First Age, sly trickster, spymaster of the All-Seeing Eye.

Endings: Ascetic sage, compassionate physician, crusading legal reformer, cunning poisoner, divine assassin, eulogist of the unmourned, incorruptible auditor, master exorcist, penitent killer seeking atonement, scathing critic, secret backer of revolutionaries, unseen protector.

Optional Step: Birth Sign and Exaltation Sign

A Sidereal's birth sign and Exaltation sign provide benefits when she manipulates fate on a large-scale using prophecy (p. XX). You don't need to choose these signs at character creation, especially if you're unfamiliar with the constellations. You can wait until later to pick it, either when you have a better idea of which you want or when you undertake a prophecy and want its benefits.

If you want, you can go ahead and choose them at character creation. They're chosen from the twenty-five constellations of Sidereal astrology (p. XX). Your character's birth sign can come from any astrological house, but her Exaltation sign must come from her patron Maiden's house.

Step 2: Attributes

Each Attribute begins with one dot. Next, of the categories of Attributes — Physical (Dexterity, Stamina, Strength), Social (Appearance, Charisma, Manipulation), and Mental (Intelligence, Perception, Wits) — choose one as primary, another as secondary, and the third as tertiary. Distribute eight dots between your primary Attributes, six dots between your secondary Attributes, and four dots between your tertiary Attributes. Attributes can't be raised above five.

Step 3: Abilities

Sidereals receive five Caste Abilities based on their Caste:

Journeys: Resistance, Ride, Sail, Survival, Thrown

Serenity: Craft, Dodge, Linguistics, Performance, Socialize

Battles: Archery, Brawl, Melee, Presence, War

Secrets: Investigation, Larceny, Lore, Occult, Stealth

Endings: Athletics, Awareness, Bureaucracy, Integrity, Medicine

Next, pick five Abilities of your choice as Favored Abilities. Unlike other Exalted, a Sidereal who has Brawl as a Caste or Favored Ability doesn't automatically extend the same status to Martial Arts, or vice versa — instead, **all Sidereals treat Martial Arts as a Caste Ability.**

Divide 28 dots among your Abilities. Each starts at zero, and can't be raised above three without spending bonus points. Abilities can't be raised above five. Each Favored Ability must have at least one dot assigned to it.

Assign four specialties. You must have at least one dot in an Ability to take a specialty in it.

Step 4: Merits

Choose ten dots of Merits. All Sidereals receive the Martial Artist Merit for free.

Sidereals in the Bureau of Destiny's employ at character creation distribute five additional dots among the Backing, Contacts, Manse, Mentor, Resources, and Retainers Merits. The typical status of a Sidereal at character creation is Backing 2 and a Resources 3 stipend; having less than that indicates some complications in the Sidereal's official standing or finances (p. XX).

Step 5: Charms

Choose fifteen Charms (p. XX). Most Sidereal Charms require a minimum rating in their associated Ability — if you don't qualify, you'll need to raise that Ability's rating with bonus points.

You may choose Martial Arts Charms or Evocations in place of Sidereal Charms. If you choose Terrestrial Circle Sorcery as a starting Charm, you may also learn spells in place of Charms.

Charms and Abilities

Several Sidereal Charms have unorthodox effects for their Ability. You may want to consider taking certain Abilities at character creation in addition to the usual Abilities.

Combat: Medicine, Performance, Presence.

Mobility, Speed, and Travel: Investigation, Resistance.

Subterfuge: Athletics, Awareness, Bureaucracy.

Resisting Poison, Disease, and Hazards: Athletics, Presence.

Feats of Strength: Resistance, Survival.

Social: Craft, Dodge, Lore, Ride, Sail.

Healing: Craft.

Tracking: Awareness.

Training: Performance, Sail.

Dealing With Spirits: Bureaucracy, Medicine.

Familiars: Ride.

Step 6: Intimacies and Limit Trigger

Choose Intimacies to represent your Sidereal's beliefs and relationships. At least one must be Defining, and one must be Major. Likewise, at least one must be positive, and one must be negative.

Many Sidereal have Principles reflecting their political agenda and their philosophical views on fate and their patron Maiden's purview. Many have Ties the Bureau of Destiny or other heavenly bureaus, family, romantic partners, coworkers, political allies and rivals, their patron Maidens, the Bronze and Gold Factions, the Immaculate Order, the Cult of the Illuminated, the Getimian Exalted and other enemies of fate, the Realm, and the Silver Pact.

Choose a Limit trigger — a circumstance that exacerbates your Sidereal's Great Curse (p. XX).

Step 7: Bonus Points

You have 15 bonus points that can be spent anytime during character creation to raise your character's traits.

<BEGIN TABLE>

TRAIT	COST
Primary or Secondary Attribute	4 per dot
Tertiary Attribute	3 per dot
Caste or Favored Ability	1 per dot
Non-Caste, Non-Favored Ability	2 per dot
Specialty	1
Merits	1 per dot
Caste or Favored Charm	4
Non-Caste, Non-Favored Charm	5
Spell (Occult Caste or Favored)	4
Spell (Occult non-Caste, non-Favored)	5
Evocation	4
Willpower	2 per dot

<END TABLE>

It's most cost-effective to spend bonus points on Caste and Favored Abilities and Colleges or to

raise Abilities above 3. Using them to buy Charms, Evocations, or spells is the least efficient option.

Step 8: Finishing Touches

You begin at Essence 1. Sidereals have $(9 + [\text{Essence} \times 2])$ personal motes and $(25 + [\text{Essence} \times 6])$ peripheral motes, for 11 personal motes and 31 peripheral motes at Essence 1.

You begin with five Willpower, which can be raised with bonus points.

You begin with seven health levels: a -0 level, two -1 levels, two -2 levels, a -4 level, and an Incapacitated level. You may gain additional health levels with Ox-Body Technique (p. XX).

Alternate Character Creation

You can modify the above rules to adjust the power of player characters. The options below are only examples; playgroups should feel free to make their own.

Experienced Sidereals

For starting as a Sidereal with at least five years of experience, make the following changes to the rules above:

- Your starting Essence is 2.
- Choose thirteen dots of Merits, plus five bonus dots if you serve the Bureau of Destiny.
- Choose twenty Charms.
- Spend eighteen bonus points.

New Sidereals

If you're playing a Sidereal who's just Exalted, use the rules for mortal character creation (**Exalted**, p. 125) with the following changes. Likewise, if you're playing a mortal who later Exalts as a Sidereal, keeping your mortal traits and add the following:

- Choose your character's Caste, birth sign, and Exaltation sign.
- Pick five Favored Abilities. You'll need at least one dot in each.
- Pick ten Charms.
- Pick a Limit trigger.
- Gain the Martial Artist Merit for free. A mortal player character who already had it receives a refund of twelve experience.

At the end of the current story, a newly Exalted Sidereal gains five Charms and two dots of Willpower for free. You'll two dots among her primary Attributes, two dots among secondary Attributes, and one dot among tertiary Attributes.

Character Creation Summary

Step 1: Concept and Caste

- Consult with the Storyteller and other players, and come up with a character concept.
- Determine whether your character belongs to the Bureau of Heaven.

- Determine whether your character aligns herself with the Bronze Faction, the Gold Faction, or neither.
- Pick a Caste. Note its anima powers.

Option Step: Birth Sign and Exaltation Sign

- Choose a constellation as your birth sign.
- Choose one of your Maiden's constellations as your Exaltation sign.

Step 2: Attributes

- Place one dot in each Attribute.
- Divide 8 dots among primary Attributes, 6 dots among secondary Attributes, and 4 dots among tertiary Attributes.

Step 3: Abilities

- Mark your Caste Abilities, plus Martial Arts.
- Select five Favored Abilities, which can't be the same as Caste Abilities.
- Divide 28 dots among all Abilities. None may be raised above 3 without spending bonus points, and each Favored Ability must have at least one dot.
- Assign four specialties.

Step 4: Merits

- Select 10 dots of Merits, plus Martial Artist.
- If you work for the Bureau of Destiny, distribute five additional dots among Backing, Contacts, Manse, Mentor, Resources, and Retainers.

Step 5: Charms

- Select 15 Charms.

Step 6: Intimacies and Limit Trigger

- Choose at least four Intimacies, including at least one Defining Intimacy, one Major Intimacy, one positive Tie, and one negative Tie.
- Choose your Limit trigger.

Step 7: Bonus Points

- Spend 15 bonus points.

Step 8: Finishing Touches

- Record Essence (1), personal notes (9 + [Essence x2]), peripheral notes (25 + [Essence x6]), health levels (-0/-1x2/-2x2/-4/Incapacitated) and Willpower (5).

Caste Abilities

Journeys: Resistance, Ride, Sail, Survival, Thrown

Serenity: Craft, Dodge, Linguistics, Performance, Socialize

Battles: Archery, Brawl, Melee, Presence, War

Secrets: Investigation, Larceny, Lore, Occult, Stealth

Endings: Athletics, Awareness, Bureaucracy, Integrity, Medicine

Bonus Point Costs

<BEGIN TABLE>

TRAIT	COST
Primary or Secondary Attribute	4 per dot
Tertiary Attribute	3 per dot
Caste or Favored Ability	1 per dot
Non-Caste, Non-Favored Ability	2 per dot
Specialty	1
Merits	1 per dot
Caste or Favored Charm	4
Non-Caste, Non-Favored Charm	5
Spell (Occult Caste or Favored)	4
Spell (Occult non-Caste, non-Favored)	5
Evocation	4
Willpower	2 per dot

<END TABLE>

Chapter Five: Traits

This chapter details Sidereals' unique traits, Castes, Great Curse, character advancement rules.

Martial Arts

Sidereals gain Mastery with a style's Charms (Exalted, p. 427) while in its Form. Learning all of a style's Charms grants permanent Mastery. Sidereal Martial Arts Forms grant Mastery with all styles.

Sorcery and Necromancy

Sidereals can initiate into Celestial Circle sorcery, but only Ivory Circle necromancy.

Evocations

Sidereals are resonant with starmetal and dissonant with other materials (Arms of the Chosen, p. 16).

Merits

While a Sidereal's Merits can represent anything, the following are common for those employed by the Bureau of Destiny.

Allies

Fellow Sidereals are five-dot Allies. Powerful gods are five-dot allies, but most gods are three-dot Allies.

Artifact

This Merit can represent artifacts on indefinite loan from the Bureau. A Sidereal can retain such an artifact for as long as she has use for it except in extremis, but she may take on ritual or bureaucratic obligations associated with it. Examples include purifying a cursed manse with the artifact every Calibration, undergo impromptu tests of character from the god who forged it, or having to occasionally secure an ornery god's signature on authorization forms. The obligation is a Flaw, granting experience when it significantly inconveniences her (Exalted, p. 167).

Backing

Most have at least two-dot Backing in the Bureau of Destiny. Those without Backing are fresh recruits, under disciplinary probation, distrusted by the bureau, etc. Four-dot Backing at character creation can represent being a favorite or protégé of a prominent elder Sidereal or high-ranking god, or a position secured through bribery, blackmail, or similar means.

Most Sidereals who're politically aligned with the Bronze Faction or Gold Faction don't have Backing in them. Those who do hold recognition and political power within a faction, giving them a meaningful voice in its decision-making. Four-dot Backing is limited to a faction's foremost elders. It's not available at character creation. Faction Sidereals may also have Backing in the Immaculate Order or the Cult of the Illuminated.

Contacts

Three-dot Contacts covers a single bureau, while five-dot Contacts span the Celestial Bureaucracy.

Familiar

Sidereals may take pattern spiders (p. XX) as three-dot familiars.

Language

Old Realm is Yu-Shan's native tongue, though many gods speak at least one mortal language.

Manse

Many Sidereals have manses in Heaven. They're typically Lunar, Sidereal, or Solar manses, though others exist in Yu-Shan.

Hearthstones Amulets

Most hearthstones must be socketed in an artifact to confer their benefits. As an optional rule, Storytellers can give player characters who take the Hearthstone or Manse Merits a free hearthstone amulet (Exalted, p. 601).

Mentor

Experienced Sidereals are three-dot Mentors. Senior gods of the Celestial Bureaucracy are usually two- or three-dot Mentors.

Retainers

Minor spirits, commonly employed by Sidereals as secretaries, bodyguards, couriers, etc., are two-dot Retainers. Young Heaven's Dragons (p. XX) are often employed in similar capacities as four-dot Retainers.

Resources

The typical starting salary is three-dot Resources; Sidereals can expect a quick promotion to four dots after a few successful missions. Lower ratings reflect sizable debts, disciplinary pay cuts, assets seizures incidental to auditing, poor money management, etc.

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Chosen of Journeys

Light-footed Mercury, Maiden of Journeys, sees every path that could be taken and knows what lies at their ends. It is her Chosen's duty to ensure that all things go where Heaven wills them. Her Harbingers are the invisible hand on the ship's till, the rider whose message comes just in time, the guide who knows the secret ways through the wilderness. When uncertainty, fear, or distraction keep travelers from their destined paths, Mercury's Chosen guide them back on course; when obstacles stand in his way, they intercede to remove them.

In the First Age, Heaven's Messengers charted Creation's most perilous wildernesses, the writhing chaos of the deep Wyld, the Demon City's alien geometries, the Underworld's dark waterways, and more. As navigators and advisors, they guided diplomatic missions and armies on the march, blessing them with Mercury's favor and coordinating their movements with destiny. At sea, they bedeviled the likes of Lintha, the Niobran League, and the Orphan Maelstrom born of the Dreaming Sea. The First Age's wondrous conveyances came under their oversight: skyships, gates of auspicious passage, dragon line rails that once spanned Creation's geomancy, distant starspires, and more.

Much has been lost in the Second Age. Gone are the great roadways that spanned Directions, the

gleaming fleets that filled the skies. Today's Harbingers make do with what remains, weaving the fates of caravans, seafaring ships, and travelers by foot. Many seek to rebuild, guiding explorers seeking long-lost trade routes, blessing projects to build roads and bridges, or restoring artifact conveyances fallen into ruin. As explorers and wayfarers, they travel to far-flung corners of the world in search of ancient artifacts, rare materials, and other assets to benefit the bureau or their own personal agendas.

Destined Harbingers' mortal lives are defined by journeys. Some made their living as itinerant laborers, sailors, caravan guards, couriers, traveling merchants, diplomats, or scavenger princes. Others took to the road in search of greater opportunities, freedom from persecution, or a chance to escape the past. Some were born into nomadic or semi-nomadic cultures, while others grew up amidst mass migrations. Not all have profound reasons for their journeys: escaping gambling debts, a drunken mishap, and simple wanderlust all please Mercury.

Caste Mark: The Sign of Journeys. Harbingers have yellow irises and minute flecks of glittering golden starlight in their pupils.

Anima Banner: Harbingers' animas and halos come in shades of yellow ranging from bright goldrenrod to rich saffron. Anima banners are sometimes accompanied by the smell of dusty roads, the calls of gulls and scent of sea spray, the roar of distant thunder, and the like.

Iconic Anima: Animals known for their speed; ships, chariots, and other vehicles; trees of golden stardust that spring up from the Sidereal's footsteps; geometric patterns that evoke labyrinths, compasses, or itineraria; and the like.

Anima Effects: Harbingers can divine destiny's plans for journeys and make Mercury's sign to bless themselves and allies with swiftness or travel almost anywhere (p. XX).

Caste Abilities: Resistance, Ride, Sail, Survival, Thrown.

Associations: The color yellow, the element of air, the season of winter, the West.

Sobriquets: Mercury's Chosen, Harbingers, Heaven's Messengers.

Concepts: Brilliant slacker, explorer of First Age ruins, hard-bitten commander, master of the wilderness, pirate queen of the Quicksilver Sea, shepherd of destiny's charges, secret patron of a Guild hierarchy, skyship engineer, stoic pillar of strength, walker of other worlds.

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Chosen of Serenity

When Venus laughs, all the world's suffering seems worth it; when she weeps, all joy dies. The Maiden of Serenity oversees all forms of relationships and societies, and her Joybringers ensure that these unfold in accordance with Heaven's agenda. Artists, diplomats, intriguers, artificers, and tempters, they undertake the delicate work of weaving the fates of those with free will. They unite or separate star-crossed lovers, bring peace in times of conflict, play kingmaker in matters of politics and commerce, shape societies, and safeguard Creation's peoples from suffering and sorrow.

In the First Age, Joybringers safeguarded Creation's peace and prosperity against threats from within and without. They negotiated treaties among warring Exalted, led efforts to rebuild in the aftermath of cataclysm, and mended the damage done to Creation by otherworldly incursions. As Heaven's Envoys, they negotiated with otherworldly courts in Yu-Shan's name, negotiating the Seven-Limbed Pact, the

Dispensation of Verumpira, and the Black Moon Accords that brought peace with the devil-stars. And, as friends, advisors, matchmakers, and muses, they counseled the Chosen in their personal lives, helping bring together auspicious pairings of Exalted in sacred marriages and other relationships.

Venus' Chosen face many trials in the Age of Sorrows, wrestling with a world riven by chaos and strife so that destinies of peace, joy, and tranquility might come to pass. Arcane fate and the bitter schism left by the Solar Purge have thwarted any hopes of counseling fellow Chosen as companions and confidantes; instead, today's Joybringers guide and manipulate mortal queens, worldly spirits, merchant princes, and others through whom they can shape the course of politics, culture, and commerce. Fate's enemies have scarred the world beyond repair, but still Heaven's Envoys seek to mend what can be salvaged and offer what solace there is to give.

Destined Joybringers' mortal lives play out among vibrant webs of relationships. Some were born into urban metropoli or other densely populated regions; others grew up among smaller but closely-knit communities, whether rustic villages or secluded monasteries. Some sought to bring joy to others — artists and artisans, people-pleasers, those who make great sacrifices for their children or their people. Others sought life's pleasures for themselves as rakes, social climbers, or merchants. Not all tend toward extraversion; reclusive poets, eremitic philosophers, and perpetually preoccupied craftsmen have all won Venus' favor.

Caste Mark: The Sign of Serenity. Joybringers have blue irises and minute flecks of shimmering cerulean starlight in their pupils.

Anima Banner: Joybringer's halos and animas range from the palest turquoise to the deepest ultramarine. Anima banners are sometimes accompanied unearthly music, ethereal laughter, the sound of silk on silk, the aroma of roses, wine, or cannabis smoke, and the like.

Iconic Anima: Blossoming flowers, cages of thorned briars, sapphire-leaved trees, and other magnificent flora; social animals, like dolphins, wolves, or swarming bees; dancing figures made of stardust; artistic depictions of the Sidereal that begin as the barest sketches and gradually complete themselves.

Anima Effects: Joybringers can divine destiny's plans for social interactions and make Venus' sign to bless efforts to create joy and prosperity or halt even the greatest conflicts. (p. XX).

Caste Abilities: Craft, Dodge, Linguistics, Performance, Socialize.

Associations: The color blue, the element of wood, the season of spring, the Center.

Sobriquets: Venus' Chosen, Joybringers, Heaven's Envoys.

Concepts: Ambassador to otherworldly courts, benefactor of destitute gods, Bureau artificer, dissolute artist, famed matchmaker, heavenly socialite, powerbroker to the gods, quick-witted rake, spiritual guide, steely-eyed negotiator, virtuoso performer.

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Chosen of Battles

Stern Mars, the Maiden of Battles, oversees all fated strife: clashing armies, political rivals vying for supremacy, words spoken in anger between young lovers. All conflicts fall under her Chosen's remit, a duty that calls them to battlefields and boudoirs, alehouses and courtrooms. Heaven's Soldiers incite hostility and discord when peace outlasts its appointed span, lend their skill at arms and strategy to

destined victors, and thwart untimely resolutions to necessary conflicts. Destiny demands their intervention in battles great and small, whether plunging kingdoms into war or teaching a child how to fight back against a bully.

The First Age's Shieldbearers devoted themselves to Creation's defense, driving back otherworldly incursions, hunting down terrors that slipped past their watch, and sowing discord among fate's enemies: playing the Scorpion Empire against the Southern Fair Folk in the Split-Second War, outwitting the thinking-engine Jazex IX's betrayal of Heaven, holding the Loom of Fate against the Omen-Spore Infestation. They led armies of martial gods to battle, counseled their fellow Exalted in strategy, and coordinated deployments of the Aerial Legion with the Old Realm's forces. When complacency and world-weariness bred stagnation, Mars' Chosen provoked their fellow Chosen to action with blunt words, harsh truths, and sound counsel.

The endless conflict of the Second Age leaves much to be done. Occluded by arcane fate, Mars' Chosen can no longer lead armies or advise Exalted generals openly. Instead, they manipulate events to divert recruits and materiel to forces favored by Heaven, and armor themselves in resplendent destinies as generals' confidantes, nameless soldiers, or unlikely leaders. They're still at the fore of martial conflict against enemies of fate, whether hunting down demons loosed by Infernal sorcerers, making preparations against Getimian assaults on Heaven, or disrupting alliances between faerie courts as agents provocateurs.

Destined Shieldbearers' mortal lives are touched by conflict. Some are born to career military families or martial castes; others are war orphans or the children of refugees. Many grew well-acquainted with violence as conscripts, mercenaries, hired muscle, gladiators, or brawlers. Others were immersed in different kinds of battles: politics, business, athletic competitions, debate, or family vendettas. Shieldbearers' perspectives on conflict vary widely. Some are all but berserkers, their rage tempered only by duty, while others aspire to pacifism, turning to violence only when they must.

Caste Mark: The Sign of Battles. Shieldbearers have red irises and minute flecks of vivid crimson starlight in their pupils.

Anima Banner: Shieldbearers' halos and animas range from bright scarlet to dark burgundy. Anima banners sometimes accompanied by the sound of steel ringing out against steel, banners snapping in the wind, or wrathful war cries, the scents and hubbub of a soldier's mess hall, or the like.

Iconic Anima: Predatory animals and beasts of burden; storms of flying swords or whirling axes; massed ranks of indistinct, faceless soldiers; great fortresses flying crimson banners, and the like.

Anima Effects: Shieldbearers can divine destiny's plans for conflict or make Mars' sign to shield themselves and their allies or turn the tide of battle (p. XX).

Caste Abilities: Archery, Brawl, Melee, Presence, War.

Associations: The color scarlet, the element of fire, the season of summer, the East.

Sobriquets: Mars' Chosen, Shieldbearers, Heaven's Soldiers.

Concepts: Agent provocateur, ascetic warrior-monk, calculating tactician, demon hunter, disciple of an overbearing mentor, flamboyant duelist, heavenly prizefighter, hot-headed orator, inspiring mentor, veteran of the Wyld Hunt.

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Chosen of Secrets

Oldest and most mysterious of her sisters, Jupiter knows much and speaks little. She presides over mystery and revelation, truth and falsehood, ignorance and understanding, and the lines between them. Her Chosen ensure that all things are hidden or revealed as destiny demands, thwarting seekers after forbidden knowledge or wresting secrets whose time has come from their keepers. They are savants and spies, mystics and masterminds, distinguished by their foresight even among their Sidereal peers. In Heaven's name, they've put great libraries to the torch, deposed monarchs to expose their secret sins, and sought out long-forgotten lore from demons, ghosts, and worse.

The First Age's Oracles explored the mysteries of the unknown cosmos, infiltrated the courts of Creation's enemies, investigated crimes committed by or against the Chosen, and oversaw great libraries and academies fit for a glorious age. At the same time, they sealed away baleful remnants of the world's makers, censored dangerous secrets from discovery by their fellow Exalted, and kept knowledge of Creation's vulnerabilities from the world's foes. Their foresight guided the Old Realm through many trials, from the akuma Canticle Shrike's blighting of the omphalos to the Skyeater Moth's emergence from the Wyld beneath the world's depths.

Much knowledge has been lost to the Second Age that Heaven's Eyes may yet reveal when destiny demands it, while some secrets of the Old Realm must be kept hidden until the stars are right. Contemporary secrets also demand their attention. Oracles warn princes of what the future holds for them, blackmail the truculent back onto their destined course, and set in motion long chains of events with strategic disclosures of information. They also strive to conceal conspiracies, secret societies, and mystery cults, either in fulfillment of destiny or as assets they might later call upon.

Destined Oracles' mortal lives are touched by mystery. Some were driven by unanswered questions: foundlings seeking after their lineage, students of spiritual mysteries, savants obsessed with unsolvable problems. Others had secrets of their own: a criminal past, romantic infidelity, treasonous ambitions, or knowledge too dangerous to share. Some led lives of constant deception: spies, charlatans, thieves, cardsharps, and priests entrusted with mysteries of the divine. Some have a taciturn predisposition, but there are just as many Oracles who'd never stop talking if they could.

Caste Mark: The Sign of Secrets. Oracles have green irises and minute flecks of emerald starlight in their pupils.

Anima Banner: Oracles' halos and anima banners range from pale celadon to the darkest greens. Anima banners are sometimes accompanied by eerie silences, the faint sound of turning pages, the scents of incense, smoke, and paper, and the like.

Iconic Anima: Unfurling scrolls, sacred mirrors, or eyeless masks that float in the air around the Sidereal; vast libraries, intricate orreys, or overgrown ruins; a great eye that burns like a jade star; formless shadows that radiate uncanny dread; and the like.

Anima Effects: Oracles can divine destiny's plans for deception and revelation or make Jupiter's sign to safeguard secrets or conceal themselves and their allies.

Caste Abilities: Investigation, Larceny, Lore, Occult, Stealth.

Associations: The color green, the element of water, Calibration, the North.

Sobriquets: Jupiter's Chosen, Oracles, Heaven's Eyes.

Concepts: All-knowing spymaster, censor of forbidden knowledge, dogged investigator, enigmatic

sorcerer, heavenly crime lord, peerless infiltrator, priest versed in sacred mysteries, savant of First Age lore, scheming blackmailer, teacher of heroes.

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Chosen of Endings

Grim Saturn sees every possible ending, smiling only when they come to pass at their appointed hour. Her Chosen ensure these endings come to pass only as Heaven wills. They are assassins of those who defy their destined deaths, exorcists and psychopomps guiding the undead to reincarnation within fate's order, magistrates purging institutional corruption, and physicians battling plagues. But their sobriquet as Destiny's Gardeners isn't just a euphemism. They're guardians, healers, and caretakers as often as they are killers, lest an untimely ending snarl destiny. The tapestry of fate is Heaven's garden, and it must be nourished and pruned in equal measure.

The First Age's Reckoners were hunters and slayers of Creation's foes, the sword to the shield of Mars' Chosen. They led preemptive strikes that decapitated the leadership of faerie warbands and monstrous armies, passed judgment on forbidden gods escaped from their gaols, and banished prehuman horrors awakened from the Underworld by the Neverborn's death. They warned their fellow Chosen of future perils, whether fending off night-grim assassins as a sorcerer-queen's consort and sentinel or seeking out corruption and disloyalty within a god-kings' dominion.

The Second Age is a time of many endings, and Saturn's Chosen are stretched thin. The nature of their duty has changed little with the passage of ages, but it's grown all the more difficult. Poverty, war, and pestilence cut short countless lives, while kingdoms, religions, and cultures fall long before their destined end. All the while, Creation's foes grow ever stronger, claiming new champions who threaten Heaven itself. The Reckoners remain resolute in the face of this, their conviction untarnished by despair. So long as there is something left that they can sacrifice of themselves, the Age of Sorrows has not defeated them.

Destined Reckoners' mortal lives are touched by death. Some lost a parent, sibling, friend, or lover at a formative time in their life, while others faced the imminent possibility of their own death. Some belong to ancestor cults or have other interaction with the undead, whether as a denizen of the shadowlands, an exorcist or ghost channeler, or a student of necromancy. Others live through times of great upheaval and death: plagues, falling regimes, famines, and worse. Some are predisposed to dour professionalism, abiding melancholy, or morose brooding by this, but others find solace in asceticism, dark humor, or *joie de vivre*.

Caste Mark: The Sign of Endings. Reckoners have violet irises and minute flecks of scintillating purple starlight in their pupils.

Anima Banner: Reckoners' halos and anima banners range from pale lilac to grave-dark violet. Anima banners are sometimes accompanied by whispering voices, eerie chills, the smell of grave dirt, the sound of raitons' wings, and the like.

Iconic Anima: Funereal monuments, grand tombs, and age-worn cenotaphs; jackals, raitons, scarabs, and other carrion-eaters; spectral processions of starlit mourners; poisonous flowers that spread where the anima's light falls; and the like.

Anima Effects: Reckoners can divine destiny's plans for endings or make Saturn's sign to bless attacks with killing power or doom enemies who stand against them (p. XX).

Caste Abilities: Athletics, Awareness, Bureaucracy, Integrity, Medicine.

Associations: The color purple, the element of earth, the season of autumn, the South.

Sobriquets: Saturn's Chosen, Reckoners, Heaven's Gardeners.

Concepts: Bureau internal affairs, eulogist of the unmourned, heavenly vigilante, legal reformer, mysterious guardian, necromancer who slays the undead, pacifist atoning for a violent past, psychopomp-assassin, self-sacrificing physician, warden of First Age tombs.

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Anima

As Sidereals spend Essence, they manifest halos and then anima banners in their patron Maidens' colors. Every five peripheral motes spent an instant increases a Sidereal's anima banner by one level. Their anima banners are subtler than other Chosen's.

BEGIN TABLE

Anima Level	Effects
Dim	The Sidereal's anima is invisible.
Glowing	The Sidereal's Caste Mark appears on her brow but can be concealed with headbands, veils, hoods, and similar coverings.
Burning	A halo wreathes the Sidereal's head, subsuming her Caste Mark, and anima limns her body. This may be accompanied by other sensory displays. Stealth rolls suffer a -3 penalty; other characters add +3 dice on rolls opposing her disguises.
Bonfire	The Sidereal's anima banner engulfs her in a brilliant aura. Upon reaching bonfire and at suitably dramatic moments, she manifests a unique iconic display. Stealth is impossible.

END TABLE

Anima Effects

For one mote, a Sidereal can manifest her Caste Mark for as long as she wants or sense the approximate location of any nearby heavenly gates (p. XX).

Auspicious Prospects

Each Caste has an Auspicious Prospects for (Caste) power that divines how certain events or developments relate to destiny's plan. If an event would help ensure destiny comes to pass, and the

Sidereal does something meaningful to ensure that event happens, she fulfills that auspicious prospect. The same is for thwarting something contrary to destiny. Fulfilling an auspicious prospect grants one Willpower, subtracts one Limit, and grants a Role Bonus (p. XX).

Not everything is accounted for by destiny. If an event doesn't matter one way or the other, there's no auspicious prospect to fulfill, but the Sidereal can intervene in the matter as she sees fit without having to fear any repercussions within the Bureau of Destiny — at least, not for official reasons. This is almost always the case for events involving the actions of the Exalted and other powerful beings (p. XX).

If the Storyteller doesn't have a particular answer in mind, he should pick whatever result best serves the story. Revealing an auspicious prospect can introduce a plot hook for player characters to follow up on or a narrative complication to contend with, while a neutral result gives players license to make bold decisions.

Journeys

Auspicious Prospects for Journeys: The Harbinger may pay one mote to learn whether a journey would align with destiny and any relevant details about the journey's circumstances, like what time the travelers should set out.

Lesser Sign of Mercury: The Harbinger may pay five motes to reflexively make Mercury's lesser sign, tracing it in yellow stardust. Until her next turn, she and all allies within close range add (her Essence, maximum 5) non-Charm dice on movement actions. This is free at bonfire.

Greater Sign of Mercury: Once per story, the Harbinger may pay twenty motes and one Willpower to make Mercury's greater sign, shining golden in the sky. She transports herself, her Circlemates, and up to (Essence x2) others to anywhere she's familiar with in Creation or Heaven. Rolls she makes to overcome wards against such travel gain -2 target number. In combat, this takes her entire turn and she must wait until the start of her next turn for this effect to take place. If she moves or is moved before her next turn, this power fails, refunding its cost and resetting it. Characters she brings with her must remain within long range until this is completed.

Serenity

Auspicious Prospects for Serenity: The Joybringer may pay one mote to learn whether an interpersonal relationship or someone's happiness would align with destiny.

Lesser Sign of Venus: The Joybringer may pay five motes to reflexively make Venus' lesser sign in a flourish of cerulean stardust. Until her next turn, she and all allies within close range add (her Essence, maximum 5) non-Charm dice on influence rolls involving positive emotions and Craft rolls for basic and major projects. Resolve bonuses from their positive Ties increase by one. This is free at bonfire.

Greater Sign of Venus: Once per story, the Joybringer may pay twenty motes and one Willpower to make Venus' greater sign, illuminating the battlefield with a sapphire light. This takes her entire turn. All participants in the battle stand down, as a Psyche effect that lasts (Essence) days. If someone wants to reinstate hostilities, he must enter a Decision Point and cite a Defining Intimacy to spend (higher of Sidereal's Essence or 3) Willpower. This doesn't apply to attacking characters not involved in the original battle, nor does it apply to fighting back in self-defense.

Battles

Auspicious Prospects for Battles: The Shieldbearer may pay one mote to learn whether a battle, conflict, or rivalry would align with destiny and any relevant details of about the conflict's circumstances, like who should win.

Lesser Sign of Mars: The Shieldbearer may pay five motes to reflexively make Mars' lesser sign with a flash of crimson stardust. Until her next turn, she and all allies within close range gain +1 non-Charms Defense and add (her Essence, maximum 5) non-Charms dice on War rolls. This is free at bonfire.

Greater Sign of Mars: Once per story, the Shieldbearer may pay twenty motes and one Willpower to make the Mars' greater sign, casting a baleful crimson glow down from the heavens. She rolls (Wits + [Archery, Brawl, Melee, Presence, or War]), granting Initiative equal to her successes to herself and each of her allies. This uses her entire turn. For the rest of the scene, she and her allies add (her Essence) to their base Initiative. Battle groups instead gain Might 2.

Secrets

Auspicious Prospects for Secrets: The Oracles may pay one mote to learn whether concealing or revealing a piece of information would align with destiny.

Lesser Sign of Jupiter: The Oracle may pay five motes to reflexively make Jupiter's lesser sign, drawing it in emerald stardust. Until her next turn, she and allies within close range gain +1 non-Charms Guile and add (her Essence, maximum 5) non-Charms dice on Manipulation, Larceny, and Stealth rolls.

Greater Sign of Jupiter: Once per story, the Oracle may pay twenty motes and one Willpower to reflexively make Jupiter's greater sign, traced across the sky in emerald radiance. She, her allies, and up to (Essence x2) other characters are immune to effects opposing their Guile and add (her Essence) to their Resolve. Un-Exalted characters can't lie to them or refuse to answer their questions unless they spend one Willpower per lie or refusal; characters with Essence less than the Sidereal's can't resist. This lasts one scene. Additionally, for that scene and the next (Essence) days, Investigation rolls against the blessed characters fail automatically and they're immune to magic that would scry on them or divine their future.

Endings

Auspicious Prospects for Endings: The Reckoner may pay one mote to determine whether an ending would align with destiny and any relevant details of a destined ending, like how someone's supposed to die.

Lesser Sign of Saturn: The Reckoner may pay five motes to reflexively make Saturn's lesser sign, trailing violet stardust from her fingertips. Until her next turn, she and all allies within close range add (Sidereal's Essence, maximum 5) Overwhelming on withering attacks and add an automatic success on decisive damage rolls. This is free at bonfire.

Greater Sign of Saturn: Once per story, the Reckoner may pay twenty and one Willpower to make Saturn's greater sign, shining brilliant violet in the sky above. This takes her entire turn. She and her allies gain -1 target number on damage rolls, or -2 against enemies of fate, and ignore Hardness. Un-Exalted enemies can't take crippling injuries (Exalted, p. 201) and automatically fail rolls against poison, disease, and crippling effects. Medicine rolls to treat their ailments likewise fail. Those slain in battle pass unto Lethe, though powerful Exalted still require proper burial rituals to ensure they won't linger as hungry ghosts.

The Constellations

The constellations of Creation's zodiac stand out against the night sky, each presiding over certain threads of fate. Sidereals invoke the constellations to create resplendent destinies and speak prophecy. Constellations are also the thematic foundations of Sidereal Charms.

Creation's cultures demarcate the stars in countless different ways and ascribe vastly different meanings to the same signs. These beliefs and perspectives don't influence Sidereal magic that draws on the constellations.

Constellations and Culture

The constellations of Sidereal astrology aren't universal throughout Creation, though they are well-known. Those portions of the Immaculate Texts that address astrology describe these constellations, as do other traditions and cultures with roots in the First Age. However, the Sidereals' understanding of the constellations isn't always borne out in a culture's practice and beliefs. Some use the stars to determine auspicious times to embark on certain endeavors, while others look to them for harbingers of peril. The Immaculate Order scrutinizes the placement of the Captain on the birth charts of prospective candidates to become the next Mouth of Peace.

Many other cultures have their own interpretations of the stars. Some recognize the same constellations by other names – cultures without seafaring traditions refer to the Mast as the Ash Tree, the Tower, the Obelisk, and other names, while those that don't make use of bows know Cultures the Quiver as the Knife, the Atlatl, or the Sling. Others divide the skies into entirely different groupings of constellations.

The meanings ascribed to Sidereal constellations reflect the Maidens' understanding of fate and the cosmos, deep truths that are evinced in Sidereal Charms. However, this doesn't mean other perspectives are wrong. Those with the gift for astrology can divine portents in the stars no matter what names they know them by. As is often the case in the Maidens' affairs, the truth is not a singular thing.

The House of Journeys

The Captain

The Captain rules journeys made possible by leadership. It's the sign of ship's officers, professional soldiers, work gang bosses, and stern parents. Its positive aspects include determination, discipline, organization, strength of will, measured use of force, and prudence in using one's power and authority. Its negative aspects include the selfish or irrational pursuit of authority, the paranoia of the powerful, abuses of authority, and bureaucratic inertia.

Themes: Ambition, authority, bureaucracies, crystals, discipline, distrust, hierarchy, parenting, rigid rules, stern demeanor, tyrannical governance, willpower.

Resplendent Destinies: Bullies, bureaucrats, disciplinarians, military officers, navigators, professional soldiers, shepherds, ship's officers, social climbers, stern parents, tutors, work gang bosses.

Trappings: Concern for the well-being of followers, emblems of rank and tokens of authority, fearlessness, no sign of fatigue, not kind but fair, a scepter.

Ability: Sail.

The Gull

The Gull rules journeys made for their own sake and unmotivated by desire for profit, except perhaps a day's wage. It's the sign of stray dogs, homeless people, and itinerant monks. The Gull encompasses journeys of self-examination and change as well as literal travel. In its positive aspect, travel brings the freedom of the road, opportunities to share outsiders' perspectives, and unexpected rewards, while self-examination leads to growth, self-understanding, and the resolution of inner turmoil. In its negative aspect, travelers are thoughtlessly irresponsible or go without the respite of home, while introspection proves shallow and self-serving or simply isn't done.

Themes: Fish, homeless people, introspection, irresponsibility, itinerant monks, migrant laborers, migratory birds, rakish charisma, stray dogs, thoughtlessness, wandering, wind.

Resplendent Destinies: Drifters, fugitives, foreigners, homeless people, itinerant monks, layabouts, migrant laborers, philosophers, rakes, refugees, runaways, vacationers.

Trappings: Dirty, happy, hungry, a staff, a traveler's cape.

Ability: Thrown.

The Mast

The Mast rules journeys made possible by the physical strength and exertion. It's the sign of ditchdiggers, domestic servants, soldiers, scribes, and insects. In its positive aspect, strength is turned unquestioningly to vital tasks and supports the efforts and endeavors of others. In its negative aspect, strength is used unthinkingly, and the mighty are unwilling to question their orders and unable to communicate.

Themes: Architecture, domestic servants, ignorance, insects, manual laborers, physical exertion, scribes, silence, soldiers, stoicism, strength, tools.

Resplendent Destinies: Architects, athletes, boatmen, caravan guards, domestic servants, flunkies, manual laborers, nomads, oldest children, rickshaw drivers, scribes, soldiers.

Trappings: Drab clothes, honest, ignorant, silent, strength.

Ability: Resistance.

The Messenger

The Messenger rules journeys made for the sake of duty or obligation. It's the sign of couriers, aides, diplomats, and service to one's family. In its positive aspect, travelers are brave, professional, and skillful, overcoming great odds to meet their obligations. In its negative aspect, travelers perform good service for bad ends, thoughtlessly abuse their power, and abdicate moral responsibility.

Themes: Arrogance, bravery, communication, diplomacy, duty, news, non-migratory birds, personal aides, professionalism, selflessness, service to one's family, skillful service.

Resplendent Destinies: Aides-de-camps, attendants, bounty hunters, camp followers, couriers, diplomats, dutiful children, guides, heralds, horsemen, missionaries, scouts.

Trappings: Daring, a mount, a package, a weapon, urgent business.

Ability: Ride.

The Ship's Wheel

The Ship's Wheel rules journeys made in the face of great hardship and the persistence of those who defy

all obstacles. Its name harkens to steersmen lashing themselves to the wheel so their ships may weather the storm. It's the sign of furnace stokers, steersmen, those made foolish by love, and the Solar Exalted. In its positive aspect, endeavors weather all adversities and perseverance is rewarded. In its negative aspect, people pursue doomed causes, boondoggles, and quixotic obsessions that lead only to their ruin.

Themes: Burdensome debts, perseverance, religious beliefs, obsession, salmon, self-sacrifice, Solar Exalted, steersmen and furnace-stokers, underdogs, wartime travel, wasted effort, wild animals.

Resplendent Destinies: Ascetics, cultists, debtors, doomed causes, firebrands, shikari, Solars, revolutionaries, starving artists, steersmen and furnace-stokers, underdogs, quixotic romantics.

Trappings: Determination, a long cape or jacket, silent, unsleeping, unwashed, wristlets or a belt of rope.

Ability: Survival.

The House of Serenity

The Ewer

The Ewer rules relationships based on love and affection. It's the sign of courtship, star-crossed romances, idealism, and revolutionaries. In its positive aspect, relationships come about from flirtation, courtship, or seduction or arise from friendship, shared dreams, or enduring affection. In its negative aspect, would-be suitors are thoughtless, obsessive, or doomed to failure.

Themes: Amphibians, charity, dreams, courtship, flirtation and seduction, happy marriages, idealism, infatuation, imagination, love, righteousness, star-crossed romances.

Resplendent Destinies: Idealists, marriage-seekers, monks, nursemaids, parents, philanderers, poets, revolutionaries, romantics, star-crossed lovers.

Trappings: Blissfully happy, flowers, in love with love, poetry, well-dressed.

Ability: Dodge.

The Lovers

The Lovers rule imbalanced and uneven relationships. It's the sign of debt, slavery, poverty, and sexual intimacy. In its positive aspect, such relationships prove beneficial, or at least a mixed bag, like the best relationships one can hope for between parent and child, teacher and student, employer and employee, or landlord and tenant. In its negative aspect, the relationship's power imbalance leads to exploitation, manipulation, or, physical, emotional, or financial abuse.

Themes: Abuse, desire, duress, lack of options, power imbalances, physical intimacy, servitude, unfair contracts, unhealthy relationships, unspoken obligations, vermin, victims of the Fair Folk.

Resplendent Destinies: Bankrupt businessman, beggars, conscripts, laborers paid unlivable wages, libertines, mistreated children, prisoners, sex workers, slaves, students, tenant farmers, unhappy spouses.

Trappings: Beauty, rumpled hair, silk robes, some sign of violence or restraints, superficial friendliness.

Ability: Socialize.

The Musician

The Musician rules contentment in life and sensual pleasure. It's the sign of joy, desire, and art. In its positive aspect, people indulge in luxury and leisure and return from their idylls renewed. In its negative aspect, pleasure leads to the neglect of one's responsibilities, greed and pointless materialism conquer

reason, and people compromise their principles in pursuit of pleasure.

Themes: Contentment in living, excess, extramarital relationships, greed, hedonism, herbivorous animals that live in small groups, intoxication, laughter, luxury, music, theater.

Resplendent Destinies: Actors, artists, cheating spouses, cooks, corrupt businessmen, drunkards, the Fair Folk, gourmands, the idle rich, merrymakers, musicians, poets.

Trappings: Cynical wisdom, face make-up, a musical instrument, outlandish dress, uninhibited.

Ability: Performance.

The Peacock

The Peacock rules relationships entered into for pragmatic reasons. It's the sign of sex workers, heads of households, and Dragon-Blooded families. In its positive aspect, these relationships are mutually beneficial: practical alliances, well-considered partnerships, thoughtfully arranged marriages. In its negative aspect, they're entered into out of necessity and barely functional: forced alliances, loveless marriages, and friendships born entirely out of proximity.

Themes: Adoption and fostering, bright colors, diplomacy, distraction, dualities, greed, love for wealth's sake, matchmaking, necessity, procreation, sex work, snares and traps.

Resplendent Destinies: Adopted outcastes, contracted laborers, diplomats, hangers-on, heads of households, hostellers, lawyers, married Dragon-Blooded, matchmakers, sex workers, those who've married for wealth.

Trappings: Finery, flirtation, poise, pride, taste.

Ability: Craft.

The Pillar

The Pillar rules relationships tested by time. It's the sign of parenthood, sovereignty, and platonic relationships: family, friends, coworkers, business partners, and acquaintances as casual as drinking buddies. In its positive aspects, these relationships prove stable and steady in the face of challenges. In its negative aspects, they are tested and found wanting.

Themes: Bureaucrats and functionaries, business, civil society, family, friendship, herd animals, mutual benefit, resolving interpersonal issues, royalty, stability, stagnation, unjust authority.

Resplendent Destinies: Bad parents, bureaucrats, businessmen, caring parents, courtiers, domestic servants, elderly spouses, politicians, priests, shepherds, unhappy spouses, visiting nobility.

Trappings: Firm but just, plain dress, perceptive, practical, a wedding ring.

Ability: Linguistics.

The House of Battles

The Banner

The Banner rules storied deeds, heroic reputation, and battles won through fear. It's the sign of gossip, renown, and self-sacrifice. In its positive aspect, leadership overcomes great obstacles, fame is recognized and rewarded, and glory is won on the battlefield. In its negative aspect, leadership proves uninspiring, infamous deeds are committed, panic overwhelms the mind, and baseless rumor passes for truth, terrorism, uninspiring leadership, and those who live off their reputation.

Themes: Ceremony, epic poetry, governance through fear, heraldry, intimidation, leadership, martial glory, martyrdom, news, philanthropy, reputation, rumor.

Resplendent Destinies: Braggarts, folk heroes, generals, gossips, heralds, outlaws, pariahs, philanthropists, politicians, revolutionaries, storytellers, town criers.

Trappings: Fearless, larger than life, striking dress, victory.

Ability: War.

The Gauntlet

The Gauntlet rules choices between bad and worse, decisions made under pressure, and battles won through ruthlessness. It's the sign of sergeants, disciplinarians, practical parents, surgeons, judges, and those who enforce laws through violence. In its positive aspect, difficult choices are made with the courage and conviction to do what's necessary no matter the cost. In its negative aspect, such choices are made callously, ruthlessly, and by those willing to justify the whims of the moment as necessity.

Themes: Appeals to a greater good, callousness, confrontation, discipline, hard choices, legal systems, managing livestock, necessity, pragmatism, ruthlessness, sacrificing others, self-justification, sergeants, surgery.

Resplendent Destinies: Diplomats, hired killers, hostages, the impoverished, judges, livestock farmers, practical parents, quartermasters, sergeants, stern teachers, surgeons, watchmen.

Trappings: Arbitrary punishments, bloodstains, brutality, a cudgel, meaningless commands, a uniform.

Ability: Brawl.

The Quiver

The Quiver rules versatility, cunning, and battles won through ingenuity. It's the sign of the quick-witted, duelists, know-it-alls, socialites, generals, and urbane boors. In its positive aspect, victory comes from ingenuity, adaptability, a cool head, a diversity of ideas, or trust in the expertise of others. In its negative aspect, groupthink, ignorance, and irrationality prevail, while bad ideas are explained well.

Themes: Boorishness, cleverness, conformity, foolishness, haste, marksmanship, options, pride, quick wits, self-absorption, strategy, versatility.

Resplendent Destinies: Advisors, archers, charlatans, demagogues, duelists, generals, know-it-alls, philosophers, savants, socialites, wise children, young Dragon-Blooded.

Trappings: A bow, clever, educated, a map case, witty.

Ability: Archery.

The Shield

The Shield rules courage, the willingness to endure and inflict pain, and battles fought without regard for victory. It's the sign of warriors who fight outside of military ranks, assassins, scouts, and the Lunar Exalted. Its positive aspect governs valor in the face of danger, warriors who fight to protect their comrades in arms, and heroes who dare impossible odds. In its negative aspect, it governs headstrong foolishness, excessive self-sacrifice, thoughtless violence, and a dangerous willingness to die.

Themes: Anger, assassination, boasting, courage, Lunar Exalted, pain, predatory mammals that hunt alone, protection, scouting, self-sacrifice.

Resplendent Destinies: Ascetics, bullies, hellraisers, hired killers, idealists, interrogators, Lunars, miners,

prisoners, scouts, warriors, wrathful parents.

Trappings: Eager for battle, a leather strap, a shield, a trophy, a weapon.

Ability: Presence.

The Spear

The Spear governs martial prowess, military discipline, and battles won through skill. It's the sign of veterans, skilled militias, mercenaries, bodyguards, arms instructors, and competition. In its positive aspect, skill and discipline are used for good causes and prevail over undisciplined opposition. In its negative aspect, experts and decision-makers succumb to professional myopia, refuse to consider unconventional approaches, and emphasize the appearance of professionalism over substance.

Themes: Blood sport, bravery, competition, discipline, failures of imagination, gambling, mercenaries, military service, professionalism, tactics, taking initiative, training exercises.

Resplendent Destinies: Arms instructors, artisans, athletes, blood sport, bodyguards, gamblers, gladiators, janissaries, martial artists, mercenaries, militiamen, soldiers, students.

Trappings: Brave, called by a family name or nickname, disciplined, a uniform but no rank.

Ability: Melee.

The House of Secrets

The Guardians

The Guardians rule practical wisdom and knowledge gained through experience. It's the sign of shamans, midwives, those selling talismans and other wonders, snake-oil peddlers, and incompetence. In its positive aspect, such knowledge is useful even if it isn't entirely true, conveyed by wise elders, self-trained experts, and those who live by simple, honest labor. In its negative aspect, this knowledge is falsehood, quackery, and superstition spoken by con men, doomsayers, and the gullible.

Themes: Folklore, fraud, herbal remedies, inevitability, midwifery, observation, patience, respect for the elderly, shamans, superstition, thaumaturgy, tradition.

Resplendent Destinies: Artisans, charlatans, the elderly, exorcists, farmers, fortune tellers, hermits, hunters, midwives, outcasts, shamans, thaumaturgists.

Trappings: Gives helpful advice, knows the weather, suspicious, a talisman, uneducated.

Ability: Larceny.

The Key

The Key rules scholarly knowledge, secrets revealed by intellectual efforts, and tasks accomplished through cleverness. It's the sign of physicians, scavenger princes, tinkers, junk sellers, and primates. In its positive aspect, experimentation, inquiry, and sharp thinking lead to useful insights and new solutions. In its negative aspect, such efforts are pointless, wasteful, or delve into matters best left unknown.

Themes: Archives, cleverness, corruption, curiosity, hubris, innovation, mechanical devices, medicine, primates, research, technicalities, tinkering.

Resplendent Destinies: Alchemists, anatomists, entrepreneurs, heretics, investigators, junk peddlers, mudlarks, physicians, savants, scavenger princes, students, tinkers.

Trappings: Claims to be innocent, large appetites, looks dishonest, a measuring stick, a pen but nothing to

write on.

Ability: Investigation.

The Mask

The Mask rules secret wisdom and concealed knowledge. It's the sign of spies, priests, and archivists. In its positive aspect, it conceals trade secrets, religious mysteries, information held in confidence, and rites of initiation. In its negative aspect, knowledge is hidden because of greed, fear, doubt, or self-superiority. It is the sign in which the Jade Prison was sealed after the Solar Purge, giving rise to the Sidereals' arcane fate.

Themes: Codes and ciphers, covert sabotage, extortion, informants, introversion, keeping secrets, lies, mysteries, religious initiation, secret police, trickery, worship.

Resplendent Destinies: Blackmailers, bookies, charlatans, confidantes, counterfeiters, criminals, cultists, diplomats, lawyers, librarians, priests, spies.

Trappings: Clings to sacred places and places of power, enters unannounced, a mask, quiet, soft clothes.

Ability: Stealth.

The Sorcerer

The Sorcerer rules mystical wisdom and the secrets of power. It's the sign of the Exalted, gods, sorcery, necromancy, thaumaturgy, artifice, and geomancy. In its positive aspect, supernatural power is wielded wisely and justly, accomplishing miracles and forging wonders for the world's betterment. In its negative aspect, such power is used selfishly or for misguided reasons, or is sought from untrustworthy sources like ghosts and demons.

Themes: Arrogance, artifice, consorting with otherworldly powers, Essence, the Exalted, geomancy, good luck charms, humanity, the magical materials, necromancy, sorcery, spirits.

Resplendent Destinies: Craftsmen, Exalted, geomancers, God-Blooded, infernalists, necromancers, scholars of otherworldly lore, shamans, sorcerers, spirits, strange children, thaumaturgists.

Trappings: An anima banner, an artifact, a Caste Mark, a crown, a hearthstone, regal bearing.

Ability: Occult.

The Treasure Trove

The Treasure Trove rules revealed wisdom, shared knowledge, and divination. It also encompasses ordeals overcome through personal prowess and rewards won thereby. It's the sign of savants, teachers, fortune-tellers, and revolutionaries seeking popular support. In its positive aspect, education flourishes, intellectuals turn their erudition to the betterment of society, and new ideas change the world. In its negative aspect, intellectual life is choked by elitism and pointless cerebration, trivia is prized over wisdom, and intellectuals pursue petty, self-gratifying goals without any sense of duty to others.

Themes: Crop blights, education, fortune-telling, inflexibility, intellectual vanity, logic, revolution, scholarship, secret societies, stinging insects, willful ignorance, the written word.

Resplendent Destinies: Astrologers, authors, ideologues, know-it-alls, librarians, prophets, revolutionaries, savants, scavenger princes, spies, teachers, translators.

Trappings: A book, educated, impractical, impoverished, a scholar's robes.

Ability: Lore.

The House of Endings

The Corpse

The Corpse rules the end of lives and ways of life. It's the sign of quick and painless deaths, butterflies, reincarnation, the deathbed, young affianced couples, and those forced to change careers in middle age. In its positive aspect, endings are met with planning, dignity, and grace. In its negative aspect, endings are agonizing, overwhelming, and traumatic.

Themes: Departures, divorce, dying, insects that undergo metamorphosis, regrets, reincarnation, shapeshifters, sudden changes, thresholds, transformation, unfamiliar circumstances, unfinished business.

Resplendent Destinies: Divorcees, emigres, exiles, ghosts, the nouveau riche, physicians, priests, religious converts, refugees, retirees, those in mourning, young fiancés.

Trappings: Calm, an emblem of a butterfly, no shoes, a textbook, well-dressed.

Ability: Medicine.

The Crow

The Crow rules the end of delusions and denial. It is the sign of slow but painless deaths, death by old age, inevitability and the recognition thereof, ancestor worship, young widows, and the elderly. In its positive aspect, those who face their mortality take solace in gallows humor, find comfort in the thought of death, or willingly face near-certain death for what they believe in. In its negative aspect, the inevitability of death drives those who confront it to despair, depression, apathy, and cynicism.

Themes: Accepting death, ancestor worship, callousness, depression, false bravado, grief, indifference, inevitability, insight, morbid humor, realization, waking from sleep.

Resplendent Destinies: Ancestor cultists, bohemians, the elderly, gravediggers, morticians, orphans, philosophers, satirists, teenagers, those who live by crime, veterans, widows.

Trappings: Attracted to shiny objects, a black cloak, black feathers, clever, morbid humor.

Ability: Awareness.

The Haywain

The Haywain rules ambiguous endings that are difficult to describe and the gradual decline and failure of systems with fuzzy boundaries and imprecise definitions. It's the sign of mysterious deaths, death by sorcery, faltering alliances, bureaucratic mismanagement, corrupt institutions, family troubles, the difficulties of old age, and divinity. In its positive aspect, these endings are the beginning of something new. In its negative aspect, creeping decay and gradual collapse leads to stagnation and inaction.

Themes: Aging, comebacks, cover-ups, creative destruction, deteriorating institutions, divinity, financial difficulties, interpersonal difficulties, mysteries, renewal, stagnation, treachery.

Resplendent Destinies: Conspirators, corrupt officials, counterfeiters, debtors, dubious claimants to positions of authority, the elderly, entrepreneurs, gods, holders of sinecures, lawyers, retirees, traitors.

Trappings: Ambitions, arrogant, demands bribes, disheveled robes, hearing loss, informal, unconcerned with the big picture.

Ability: Bureaucracy.

The Rising Smoke

The Rising Smoke rules the endings of journeys both literal and figurative. While the Corpse holds sway over changes in the circumstances of one's life, the Rising Smoke governs changes to one's self, those that unfold over time with experience and self-understanding. It's the sign of quick but painful deaths, youth, apprenticeships, lawsuits, and bodies on their way to be buried. In its positive aspect, journeys end in growth, transformation, and fulfillment, as with the end of a student's time in school. In its negative aspect, journeys prove fruitless or lead only to suffering.

Themes: Apprentices and journeymen, chance, fresh prospects, gender transition, growth, litigation, murder, new employment, rest, rites of passage, stagnation, youth.

Resplendent Destinies: Apprentices and journeymen, charioteers, enthusiastic amateurs, hostellers, inexperienced employees, litigants, messengers, novitiates, professional mourners, students, traveling merchants, youths.

Trappings: Brand new equipment, good luck charms, naïve, optimistic, prayer strips, a purse of money from a teacher.

Ability: Athletics.

The Sword

The Sword rules the endings of hopes and dreams. It's the sign of slow and painful deaths, long-lasting suffering, despair, ghosts, has-beens, and expecting parents. In its positive aspect, hopes end once they've been fulfilled. In its negative aspects, hopes wither and die, leaving people broken, crushed, and worn down.

Themes: Defeat, despair, disease, failure, falls from glory, ghosts, inheritance, perseverance, pregnancy, resignation, salesmanship, suffering.

Resplendent Destinies: Adult children of wealthy parents, deserters, expecting parents, ghosts, has-beens, indentured servants, revolutionaries, prisoners, salesmen, those with nothing left to live for, the sickly, the unemployed.

Trappings: Burial ceremonies, no shoes, weeps but can't be consoled, a withered flower, worn out.

Ability: Integrity.

Arcane Fate

The broken Mask obscures Sidereals from memory. When someone leaves a Sidereal's presence (or vice versa), he forgets her completely. He remembers the results of her actions, but attributes them to someone or something else. This doesn't apply to knowledge of the Sidereal Exalted as a whole, only to individual Sidereals.

Nontrivial characters can roll (Wits + Integrity) at difficulty 7 to resist a Sidereal's arcane fate. Quick Characters without an applicable pool roll (base Resolve x2). Ties to the Sidereal add (Intimacy) non-Charm dice on this roll, and a character's history with an existing Sidereal, knowledge of Sidereals in general, and other circumstances may grant similar bonuses. Arcane fate is a mind-altering Shaping effect (p. XX). Magic that specifically protects against memory-altering Psyche effects can also be used against it.

Additionally, a nontrivial character with a Tie to a Sidereal can roll as above if he later encounters her again to regain any memories of her that he's lost to arcane fate. At the Storyteller's discretion, something that reminds him of the Sidereal or that gives him reason to suspect his memories have altered may also

let him roll.

Some characters are immune to arcane fate. Other Sidereals and gods in the Bureau of Destiny are immune, as are powerful enemies of fate (p. XX) — those who're Exalted or have Essence 5+ — are likewise immune to arcane fate. Familiars, sorcerously-bound spirits, and beings she's created, animated, or summoned with magic are also immune. A Sidereal player character's Circlemates are immune to her arcane fate.

Documents and other recorded information about Sidereals — either individually or a whole — are also subject to arcane fate. They're lost, destroyed, or otherwise rendered inaccessible through subtle manipulations of fate. This doesn't apply to records that maintained by characters immune to arcane fate, nor to those that contain only minimal detail or that describe Sidereals with vague, indirect, or symbolic language, like the Immaculate Texts.

There aren't specific rules for arcane fate's applicability to records. The Storyteller can invoke it when dramatically appropriate. Such records might still be retrieved or reconstructed; rolls to do so have a minimum difficulty of 7.

Arcane Fate vs. Merits

Arcane fate can easily interfere with Merits like Allies, Mentor, and Retainers. The Storyteller should be generous in granting bonus dice on such character's rolls against it and in giving them opportunities to roll to recover lost memories. If arcane fate causes such a relationship to deteriorate to the point that the Sidereal's player is no longer interested in trying to maintain it, the Storyteller should refund the Merit's experience point cost.

Resplendent Destinies

Sidereals shield themselves from arcane fate with resplendent destinies, mystical “cover identities” drawn from the themes and archetypes of the constellations. Wearing a resplendent destiny doesn't change a Sidereal's appearance; those who interact with her mentally “fill in” details that cause her to seem like a soldier, a tax collector, an arrogant Dynast, etc. Each constellation lists example identities, but players can invent their own. It's also fine to leave a resplendent destiny's constellation unspecified, especially if you're still unfamiliar with them.

Creating a resplendent destiny is a miscellaneous action that costs one Willpower. People perceive and treat each resplendent destiny as a different person, though it's still possible to draw connections between them and make deductions. While wearing a resplendent destiny, characters don't need to roll against a Sidereal's arcane fate, though they may still forget small or superficial details about her. If she disguises herself in a way that fits her destiny, opposing rolls suffer a -3 penalty. This doesn't apply to disguises impersonating specific individuals.

The Sidereal can have up to (Essence + 3) resplendent destinies, although only one can be active at a time. She can reflexively don a new resplendent destiny or slough off her old one once per scene. If the Sidereal's anima reaches bonfire, her resplendent destiny recedes, and she can't don new ones until it dims.

Resplendent destinies don't last forever. At each story's end, the Sidereal rolls (Willpower) at difficulty (Essence) — the more powerful she becomes, the harder it is to maintain false identities. If she fails, she permanently loses a resplendent destiny chosen by her player. She can still create resplendent destinies of

the same role, but not that specific cover identity. Memories of the lost destiny are erased by arcane fate.

Sidereal Prophecy

Sidereals shape the future's course through prophecies, utterances that echo through the weave of fate. A Sidereal prophesy can be thought of as a prediction that fate works to fulfill: "The city will fall to an army bearing red banners." "None who keep or trade slaves shall prosper here." "You and your descendants shall have good health unto the seventh generation." It exerts a subtle influence on fate, tweaking probabilities and nudging the odds to help make that prediction a reality.

Each prophesy is based on a constellation. Constellations whose thematic associations are clearly appropriate to the predicted outcome can always be used, but players can draw on other constellations that aren't as directly on point if they incorporate its themes and trappings into their prophecy. To prophesy of a city's prosperity spoken under the Banner's auspices, the Sidereal might need to specify that it will be the city's poets and their epic verse that will bring wealth.

These thematic associations are meant to help come up with interesting and narratively resonant prophecies, not to keep you from getting to play the game. Storytellers should be generous in giving players' leeway here, rather than stopping play to look up constellations.

Making a Prophecy

Making a prophecy uses the rules for sorcerous workings (Exalted, p. 483), with the following changes:

1. The Sidereal rolls ([Charisma, Intelligence, or Manipulation] + [Bureaucracy, Linguistics, Lore, Occult, or Performance]). Different Sidereals might make their prophecies in very different ways: calculating horoscopes, meditating on the stars, impressing pattern spiders with the quality of one's calligraphy.
2. Instead of an Ambition rating, prophecies have four Ambition Factors: Duration, Frequency, Power, and Scope. Their goal number is ([total Ambition Factors] x5).
3. Prophecies don't have Finesse. Each interval's roll is at difficulty 3.
4. Prophecies don't have Circles.
5. Prophecies suffer complications on any failure, not just botches.
6. Prophecies cost four experience points. They're refunded when the prophecy ends or becomes narratively irrelevant, as usual.

Effect

A prophesy lets a Sidereal's player impose -1 or +1 target number (p. XX) on a roll made by a prophesy's target or in a targeted location if doing so helps fulfill her prediction. How often she can do so depends on the prophesy's Frequency.

Prophecies also have narrative effects the Storyteller should take these into consideration in determining how their targets' futures unfolded. If a Sidereal prophesies that a city-state's army will triumph if they fight without regard for survival, she might find on a later visit to that city that it's successfully conquered a neighboring polity, but suffered significant casualties.

Prophecy and Destiny

Prophecy is distinct from destiny. Destiny is planned by heavenly

committees, and it isn't self-fulfilling, requiring the intervention of pattern spiders, gods, and Sidereals to make sure it's fulfilled. A prophecy is a single Sidereal's pronouncement. It seeks to bring about its foretold future, but lacks the cosmic import of destiny.

Target

Prophecies typically affect a person, group, community, or location, although the Storyteller may allow other targets if it makes sense. The number of characters or size of location a prophecy can target is determined by its Scope.

Note that prophecies may affect characters who don't exist at the time of their utterance, like blessing someone and all her daughters unto the seventh generation. If the number of targets ultimately exceeds what the prophecy's Scope allows, any new targets beyond the limit aren't affected.

To speak a prophecy, the Sidereal must have substantial interactions with its targets over the course of the extended action. She need not deal extensively with every target but must meaningfully engage with a group or location.

Ambition Factors

Prophecies have four Ambition Factors: Duration, how long they last; Frequency, how often their effect manifests; Power, how strong of a character it can affect; and Scope, how many targets it can affect. Ordinary, no Ambition Factor can exceed (higher of Essence or 3) and the total can't exceed $([Essence \times 2] + 5)$. The Sidereal adds +1 to the maximum rating of individual Ambition Factors and +5 to the maximum total rating for prophecies of her birth sign or Exaltation sign (p. XX).

Duration

A prophecy's Duration determines how long it lasts. Note that when the duration elapses, its experience point cost is refunded.

BEGIN TABLE

1	One month
2	One season
3	One year
4	Ten years
5	One hundred years

END TABLE

Frequency

A prophecy's Frequency determines how often its target number reduction applies. It also makes the destiny's narrative effects more common, as adjudicated by the Storyteller.

BEGIN TABLE

1	Once per story.
---	-----------------

- 2 Once per week.
- 3 Once per day.
- 4 Once per scene.
- 5 Whenever appropriate.

END TABLE

Power

The higher a prophesy's Power, the more puissant of characters it's capable of affecting.

BEGIN TABLE

1	The prophesy can only affect mortals and trivial characters.
2	The prophesy can affect un-Exalted characters with Essence 1.
3	The prophesy can affect un-Exalted characters with Essence equal to or less than the Sidereal's (higher of Essence or 3).
4	The prophesy can affect all characters with Essence equal to or less than the Sidereal's (higher of Essence or 3).
5	The prophesy can affect all characters.

END TABLE

Scope

A prophesy's Scope determines how many people or how large a region it can affect.

BEGIN TABLE

1	A group of up to ten people, a single household.
2	A group of up to twenty-five people, a small hamlet, a few households.
3	A group of up to one hundred people, a village.
4	A group of up to one thousand people, a town, a

	neighborhood of a city.
5	A group of up to ten thousand people, a small city, a district of a large city.

END TABLE

Means

Prophecies use the following Means rather than those available for sorcerous workings.

Cooperation

The assistance of fellow Sidereal or of a supernatural being whose powers are thematically related to the prophecy adds +1 terminus. A larger group of cooperating Sidereals — more than a single Circle — add +2 terminus.

Cosignatories

The signature of another Sidereal or a god of the Bureau of Destiny on a memorandum notifying the Bureau of the prophecy adds +1 terminus. This differs from Cooperation in that a cosignatory lends political influence to smooth out bureaucratic complications to a prophecy, rather than aiding in making the prophecy itself. An Essence 6+ cosignatory adds +2 terminus.

Extra Time

Increasing the prophecy's interval to one month adds +1 terminus. Increasing it to three months adds +2 terminus. A one-year interval adds +3 terminus.

Trappings

If the Sidereal wears or displays at least three of the appropriate constellation's trappings (p. XX) for the entirety of making the prophecy, she adds +1 terminus.

Complications

If the Sidereal fails an interval roll, her prophecy suffers a complication from those below. If she fails to complete it before its terminus expires, she suffers an additional complication.

Anomalous Backlash

A flaw in the prophecy strains and tears reality, with consequences that ripple throughout the weave of fate. These can be as inoffensive and deniable, like a string of outrageously improbable coincidences, but they can also be dangerous, like loosing an unbound Second Circle demon in Creation or creating a bordermarch or shadowland that engulfs a building. Even harmless anomalies can interfere with the fulfillment of destiny; Sidereals responsible for creating them are expected to ensure this doesn't happen.

Audits

The Sidereal's prophecy incurs political retaliation in the form of an audit. She's haled before one of Yu-Shan's censors and must defend herself against criminal charges, real or fabricated. This might involve social influence, using Investigation to uncover exculpatory evidence, using Lore to introduce relevant loopholes, etc. If she and her Circle can't convince the censor of her innocence, she's assigned a burdensome mission or duty or suffers severe fines or a demotion.

Competing Agendas

Prominent figures in the Celestial Bureaucracy have goals that conflict with the prophecy, and take steps to thwart it. Usually, this means a member of a destiny planning committee proposing a planned destiny that conflicts with the prophecy's outcome, forcing the Sidereal to sway the rest of the committee to avoid coming into conflict with destiny. Alternatively, another Sidereal might make a prophecy of his own that opposes her prediction.

Prophecy and Rogue Sidereals

Sidereal prophecy is a manifestation of their divine authority over fate and destiny, requiring no sanction from the Bureau of Destiny. The only obstacles that rogue Sidereals normally face in making prophecies are that they can't roll with Bureaucracy and can't use Cosignatories as Means. They likewise won't face Audit or Competing Agenda complications.

Paradox Spirits

Reality splinters and fractures around the Sidereal, birthing a malevolent paradox spirit. Paradox spirits are alien creatures of color and shadow, intertwined with fate's weave and with the prophecy from which they were born. A few share certain qualities of their Sidereal "parent," drawing its colors from her anima's hues, wearing a warped semblance of her face, speaking with her voice, or sharing her memories. Paradox spirits seek to fulfill the prophecy they were born from, but their methods are unpredictable, amoral, and likely to cause significant problems for the Sidereal. A paradox spirit's Essence equals the Sidereal's. It has whatever other traits the Storyteller assigns it, which can include Sidereal Charms.

Getimian Interference

This complication can only come into play if the Sidereal's already suffered an anomalous backlash or created a paradox spirit. A Getimian antagonist seeks to leverage this weakness in the weave of fate to empower his reality warping magic, infecting the world with his Origin on a large scale. Other powerful adversaries might have reasons of their own for leveraging flaws in fate.

Putting It All Together

Nurai Lark's-Song wants to prophesy that a band of traveling performers who did them a favor will find great success, blessing them when they put on performances for paying audiences. The Musician is obviously applicable, although the playgroup also discusses the Banner as an option.

Nurai's best dice pool for prophecy is (Charisma + Bureaucracy), so they'll be engaging with the Bureau of Destiny to smooth the way for her prophesy to be spoken into the Loom. She can't just stick to her office in Yu-Shan, though; she'll need to have substantial interactions with most of the performers over the course of making the prophesy.

Nurai's player next determines the prophecy's Ambition Factors. Nurai is Essence 1 and the Musician isn't their sign, so no single factor can exceed 3 and the total can't exceed 7. The troupe is only a handful of people, so Nurai only needs Scope 1, and they're all mortals, so the prophesy only needs Power 1. Nurai takes Duration 3 to make the blessing last a year and Frequency 2 to reach the limit on their Ambition Factors. These total to 7, so the prophecy's goal number is 35.

Next, Nurai assesses their Means to determine the prophesy's terminus. The goal number is pretty high, so they'll need every advantage they can get: they convince a Circlemate to assist by reviewing their paperwork, offer Yaogin a substantial bribe to bring him on board as a cosignatory, and display the

trappings of the Musician (in this case, by carrying an erhu, wearing blush, and dispensing cynical life lessons). These add +4 to the prophesy's base terminus of 5, giving Nurai nine rolls to complete it.

The base difficulty for a prophesy's interval roll is always 3, so Nurai will need an average of seven successes on each roll — not too hard with their dice pool and an Excellency. All goes well until Nurai fails a roll, introducing a complication. After discussing possibilities with Nurai's player, the Storyteller decides this manifests as a paradox spirit willing to go to any length to secure the troupe a paying audience.

Nurai's prophesy makes the troupe's next year a profitable one, considerably increasing their reputation and their standard of living, and Nurai's player can occasionally reduce the target number of Performance rolls troupe members make on screen. However, the paradox spirit's interventions — like kidnapping nobles and wealthy merchants and forcing them to attend — draw the wrong kind of attention. Nurai would be wise to intercede before an audience member's hired muscle or Immaculate monks make problems for the performers.

Character Advancement

Sidereals gain five experience points per session.

BEGIN TABLE

Attribute increase	current rating	x4
Non-Caste, Non-Favored Ability increase	current rating	x2
Caste/Favored Ability increase	(current rating x2) - 1	
New Ability	3	
Specialty	3	
Purchased Merit	new rating	x3
Willpower	8	
Charm	10 (8 if Occult Caste/Favored)	
Sidereal Martial Arts Charm	10	
Spell	10 (8 if Favored)	
Evocation	10	

END TABLE

Sidereal Experience

Sidereals can earn Sidereal experience by fulfilling Experience Bonuses and Role Bonuses. She can achieve each of these once per session, which grants two Sidereal experience. It can be spent on any experience cost except learning Sidereal Charms.

Expression Bonus

Once per session, a Sidereal earns 2 Sidereal Experience from:

- Expressing or upholding Major or Defining Intimacies in moments that reveal something significant about her or provide character growth.
- Facing significant challenges or danger to uphold Major or Defining Intimacies.
- Facing significant obstacles from Flaws (Exalted, p. 167).

Role Bonus

Once per session, a Sidereal earns 2 Sidereal Experience from:

- Intentionally ceding the scene’s “spotlight” to another player character to set him up for an interesting or dramatic moment or directly supporting him in such a moment.
- Fulfilling an auspicious prospect (p. XX).
- Journeys: Solving significant problems through the path of least resistance; traversing hostile environments or enduring severe harm for a Major or Defining Intimacy’s sake; upholding Major or Defining Intimacies by seeking out new experiences; guiding others through unfamiliar territory — literal or figurative — in furtherance of her or her Circle’s goals.
- Serenity: Resolving meaningful disputes; soothing the feelings of narratively significant characters to her own advantage; upholding Major or Defining Ties by bringing others together in partnerships (romantic or otherwise); creating or restoring lasting institutions, infrastructure, artifacts, or blessings that improves people’s lives.
- Battles: Inciting violent conflicts in furtherance of her or her Circle’s goals; gaining a tactical advantage that can benefit a Strategic Maneuver roll (Exalted, p. 212); training soldiers or stockpiling materiel in preparation for significant battles; inspiring others to uphold Major or Defining Intimacies through violence or forceful argument.
- Secrets: Learning something that helps advance her or her Circle’s goals; using knowledge to solve significant problems; upholding a Major or Defining Intimacy by meddling in someone’s private affairs; advancing her or her Circle’s goals by concealing or falsifying information.
- Endings: Advancing her or her Circle’s goals by killing powerful enemies; bringing longstanding problems to decisive conclusion; saving others from mortal peril or organizations from ruin; defeating powerful undead or necromancers or undoing their baleful magics.

Training Times

Raising traits with experience points requires training or time spent gaining practical experience. Multiple traits can be trained simultaneously if it makes sense. A mentor can reduce the times listed below, as can devoting one’s time fully to training.

BEGIN TABLE

Attribute	(new rating) months
Non-Caste/Favored Ability	(new rating) weeks
Caste/Favored Ability	(new rating) days
Specialty	two weeks

Purchased Merit	(new rating) weeks
Willpower	one month
Charm	(Ability + Essence minimum) days, or (Ability minimum) days if Caste/Favored.
Sidereal Martial Arts Charm	(Essence minimum x4) days
Spell	(Circle x2) weeks
Evocation	(Essence minimum x4) days

END TABLE

Raising Essence

A Sidereal's Essence increases once she's spent a certain amount of experience (not including Sidereal experience). She must then cultivate her Essence while meditating in sacred places or locales thematically associated with her Maiden, though a player character's Essence may increase instantly in dramatic, character-defining moments.

BEGIN TABLE

Essence 2	50 xp
Essence 3	125 xp
Essence 4:	200 xp
Essence 5:	300 xp
Essence 6:	Only available at Storyteller's discretion.

END TABLE

When using experienced character creation rules, (p. XX), reduce these thresholds by 50.

The Great Curse

In their worst moments, the Sidereals' foresight and wisdom betrays them, breeding hubris, presumptuous arrogance, and misplaced priorities.

Gaining and Losing Limit

Sidereals gain Limit under the following circumstances:

- Once per scene, when a Sidereal acts against a Defining Intimacy, she rolls two dice, gaining Limit equal to the successes.
- When the Sidereal's advice goes ignored or a plan she suggests is shot down, she rolls one die, or (Intimacy) dice if she has an Intimacy that supports the plan, and gains Limit equal to her successes. She can't roll more than four dice total per scene this way.
- Each Sidereal has a unique Limit trigger that exacerbates her Great Curse. When it's met, she rolls three

dice, gaining Limit equal to her successes.

Gaining Limit reaffirms a Sidereal's confidence — gaining Limit grants her one Willpower, maximum once per scene.

A Sidereal can lose Limit by fulfilling auspicious prospects (p. XX). When she faces a major defeat or setback, her player may choose to lose one Limit and one Willpower. Sidereals don't lose Limit from accomplishing legendary social goals; such triumphs do little to mitigate their hubris.

Limit Triggers

Sidereal Limit Triggers are usually situations that cause them to feel excessive pride or self-confidence, drive them to double down on troubled plans, or succumb to skewed priorities or a self-centered perspective. Examples include:

- The Sidereal succeeds despite overwhelming odds or having been discouraged by others.
- Someone the Sidereal has a Tie toward suffers a significant failure or setback because they ignored her advice.
- The Sidereal is hindered by the failures or mistakes of allies, subordinates, or superiors.
- The Sidereal is praised by someone for whom she has a positive Tie.
- The Sidereal suffers a significant failure or setback.
- An unforeseen enemy or complication poses an obstacle to the Sidereal's plans.
- Serious difference of opinion or competing goals strain the Sidereal's relationship with an ally, subordinate, or superior.
- Someone the Sidereal has a positive Tie toward faces significant danger or distress.

Celestial Hubris

When a Sidereal reaches Limit 10, she succumbs to Celestial Hubris. This may occur immediately or later at a suitable moment, at the Storyteller's discretion. The Storyteller chooses a Celestial Hubris from those below or creates a new one; she should discuss this with the Sidereal's player to ensure it sets up dramatic moments and character development he's interested in.

Celestial Hubris works as follows:

- A Sidereal's Celestial Hubris counts as a Defining Intimacy. If it would let her treat influence as unacceptable (*Exalted*, p. 220), she must do so.
- Celestial Hubris lasts one scene or one session. It may end early if a specific condition is met. If it begins too late to impact the game, the Storyteller can have it spill over into the next scene or session.
- Once Celestial Hubris ends, the Sidereal's Limit resets to 0 and her temporary Willpower resets to equal to her permanent Willpower.

Conspiracy of Silence

The Sidereal believes that some piece of significant information must be kept secret from everyone she knows and the world at large for their own good. She refuses to reveal it or anything that might help someone discover it on their own, except in hints so cryptic as to be useless. She'll confiscate or destroy any documents or records containing such information and ensure those who already know it won't reveal it, whether by persuasion, coercion, or mind-warping magic. If she must, she'll kill to keep the secret,

though she can spare those for whom she has positive Ties.

Duration: Session. This ends if the Sidereal's secrecy creates a significant obstacle to her or her Circle's goals.

Doomsayer's Warning

The Sidereal fixates on a calamity she believes will befall her and those who matter to her unless they abandon an agenda, plan, perspective, or location. She'll persuade others to do so if she can and force them if she can't, though she can refrain from causing physical harm to those for whom she has positive Ties. If she encounters a danger she believes is related to this calamity, she'll flee or avoid it; she can't confront it directly unless she has no other options.

Even if the Sidereal successfully convinces others to leave behind what she warned against, her dread doesn't abate. A new calamity will inevitably loom on the horizon, and something else must be abandoned to avert it.

Duration: Session. This ends if the Sidereal is forced to confront a significant danger she believes is related to the calamity and succeeds.

Foreseen Threat Elimination

The Sidereal has no time for delay. If she's aware of an enemy or threat, she'll take immediate and decisive action to deal with it using the most extreme measures possible. She can choose what methods she employs, but can't take any half measures. She need not commit her every waking hour to this, but must make it her utmost priority. When facing multiple threats, she may choose whether to prioritize the most imminent problem or the most severe one.

Duration: Session. This ends if the Sidereal loses a battle she initiated because of this Hubris.

Futile Decorum Observance

The Sidereal fixates on etiquette, decorum, consensus-building, and proper bureaucratic procedure to the expense of all else, unwilling to compromise the most trivial rules no matter how urgent the peril she faces or how great an advantage she concedes. If a problem can be addressed through political or bureaucratic action, she'll prioritize that method. When making decisions or plans, she'll go to great lengths to ensure that all involved can agree to it, even if she has unilateral decision-making authority.

Duration: Session. This ends if the Sidereal's inaction or delay causes someone or something for which she has a positive Major or Defining Tie to come to harm.

Infallible Seer Arrogance

The Sidereal is convinced that she has foreseen every possibility and planned for every contingency, unwilling to believe that she's capable of making mistakes or errors in judgment. She rationalizes away failures and mistakes and refuses to accept any occurrence she hasn't anticipated, dismissing it as something other than what it seems. She also exhibits a selective memory, remembering the past in a self-serving fashion that omits any errors on her part.

Duration: Session. This ends if someone for whom the Sidereal has a positive Major or Defining Tie succeeds on an influence roll to show the Sidereal how her decisions have harmed him.

Skewed Priorities Agenda

The Sidereal believes that one of her personal goals, chosen by her player, is vital to destiny and the good of Creation. Even if her ambition is in outright opposition to the heavenly agenda, she believes this to be

the result of corruption, mismanagement, and incompetence among those responsible for planning destiny. She must act to advance her agenda whenever she has the opportunity, prioritizing it above all other courses of action, unless doing so would cause direct physical harm to someone for whom she has a positive Tie.

Duration: Session. This ends if the Sidereal's pursuit of her ambition stops a destined event from coming to pass or creates a significant peril, obstacle, or complication to one of her Major or Defining Intimacies.

Solipsistic Certitude

The Sidereal sees no need to take the opinions, concerns, or advice of others into consideration, confident in her own wisdom. She makes decisions based solely on her own judgment and priorities; even if she's given advice that seems obviously correct to her, she's too proud to act on it. She likewise ignores any criticism of her choices or actions.

Duration: Session. This ends if the Sidereal suffers a significant defeat or setback that could've been avoided if she'd heeded someone else's guidance.

Surrounded by Fools

The Sidereal believes her allies, peers, superiors, and subordinates to be short-sighted incompetents, incapable of being trusted with even the least of tasks. If something must be done, she'll do it herself. If it's impossible for her to avoid delegating some tasks, she micromanages those assigned the task in even the most irrelevant details. Any Ties of respect or other Ties based on appreciating someone's skill, knowledge, or judgment are suppressed for the Hubris' duration.

Duration: Session. This ends if the Sidereal is saved from a significant peril by someone for whom she has a suppressed Major or Defining Tie.

Unseen Nemesis Expectation

The Sidereal is convinced that any problem, danger, or complication she faces is caused by some greater peril, chosen by her player when she succumbs to this Hubris. She's unwilling to entertain any alternative theories, no matter how far-fetched blaming things on the chosen enemy or peril is. She need not overlook someone's obvious culpability for their own actions; she'll simply see him as acting on her ultimate enemy's behalf.

Duration: Session. This ends if the Sidereal or someone for whom she has a positive Major or Defining Tie comes to harm from a peril that the Sidereal had dismissed as a threat.

Chapter Six: Charms

Dice Limit

Sidereals can't add more than (higher of Essence or 3, maximum 5) bonus dice from Excellencies or other magic on (Attribute + Ability) rolls. Automatic successes count as two dice toward this limit. They can't add more than (higher of Essence or 3, maximum 5) to static values. (Unlike other Exalted, this isn't halved).

Excellencies

Excellencies are Sidereals' fundamental supernatural prowess. They can add dice to (Attribute + Ability) rolls for one mote per die or raise static values for two motes per +1.

With Ability 3, the Sidereal can pay one mote to reduce an (Attribute + Ability) roll's target number by one (usually to 6). With Ability 5, she may pay two motes to reduce its target number by two. With Ability 5, Essence 3, she may pay three motes, one Willpower to reduce its target number by three.

Sidereals gain Excellencies for each Caste or Favored Ability they have at 1+ and each other Ability they know a Charm from.

Target Numbers

Sidereal Charms can change rolls' target numbers — the number dice must show to count as successes. This is described as, e.g., “-1 target number” or “+2 target number.” Subtracting from target numbers improves the odds of success; adding to them makes failure more likely. **No combination of effects can raise a roll's target number above 9 or reduce it below 4.**

Some effects benefit or penalize rolls based on specific dice results, e.g., by rerolling 6s. A change in whether a number is a success or a failure won't make beneficial effects detrimental or vice versa: if 6s are successes, they wouldn't be rerolled; if 7s are failures, they don't give extra successes with double 7s.

When an effect grants a Sidereal a free full Excellency, it includes target number reduction.

Enemies of Fate

Enemies of fate are otherworldly beings outside of fate's weave: demons, fae, and undead, as well as Getimians, Abyssals, Infernals. The Storyteller may deem other beings enemies of fate, while some may eventually lose that status by refraining from meddling with fate or destiny and living in Creation or Yu-Shan long enough for the Loom of Fate to account for them.

The undead Liminals are enemies of fate by nature, but maintaining their lifeline to their creator or other living character exempts them from this, serving as their thread of fate. The Alchemical Exalted hale from another world, but their Great Maker long ago integrated himself into fate, a status shared with his world-body's denizens.

Prayer Strips

Each Sidereal Ability has a capstone Charm requiring any ten Charms of the Ability; these make use of a prayer strip bearing the scripture associated with that Ability's constellation, an

enigmatic poem, story, or koan of unknown origin.

Sidereals are assumed to have any prayer strips they may need, whether in trendy jade or ivory cases or wadded up in a pocket, unless specifically denied access to them. Creating a prayer strip is a difficulty 2 basic craft project rolled with (Dexterity + [an appropriate Craft or Linguistics]), which takes a few minutes. This can be done as a miscellaneous action at a -4 penalty. Prayer strips in use with a Charm are indestructible unless specified otherwise.

Maiden Charms

Each Maiden has a set of associated non-Ability Charms. That Maiden's Chosen count them as Favored; others treat them as non-Favored. **Maiden Charms count as belonging to their Maiden's Abilities to meet prayer strip Charms' prerequisites.** Each Maiden Charm can only be used this way once; you can mark them with a * or other symbol on your character sheet to indicate when they've been used.

Maiden Charms' prerequisites reference "(Caste) Charms." These include the Charms of all that Caste's Abilities as well as the Caste's associated Maiden Charms. Likewise, Ability minimums that reference "(Caste) Abilities" mean that Caste's Abilities.

Sidereal Charms and the Celestial Bureaucracy

Sidereal Charms can interact with the Celestial Bureaucracy's administration and records. Heavenly functionaries can't gainsay the Sidereals' intrinsic authority over destiny simply by rejecting her paperwork. Engaging with the Celestial Bureaucracy may let characters interact with such effects in ways that aren't normally possible, but it won't negate them outright or trivialize them.

Recognizing Sidereal Charms

While most Exalted Charms are abstracted representations of prowess, Sidereal Charms are distinct techniques for weaving fate. While arcane fate and Sidereal obfuscation have minimized knowledge of their Charms, they're not entirely unknown. Characters with both Lore and Occult specialties in Sidereals can recognize a Charm with an overtly supernatural display with an (Intelligence + [lower of Lore or Occult]) roll. Its difficulty is (Charm's minimum Essence + 3). Gods employed by the Bureau of Destiny and other Sidereals don't need specialties to roll. Charms without overt displays can't be recognized.

Sidereal Themes

Sidereal Charms' esoteric effects draw from the themes of their Abilities and their associated constellations and scriptures. The Ability informs its Charms' themes as with Solars, but the constellation and scripture are often more significant. Constellations determine what fates an Ability deals with — "journeys for duty's sake," "battles won through ingenuity," "the end of hope" — and provide their thematic associations. An Ability's scripture takes a particular perspective on a constellation's themes, focusing in on the broad range of concepts constellations cover. A scripture's thematic influence is often most prominent of the three, especially at lower Essence.

Predicting Exaltation

Predicting Exaltation is all but impossible. Doing so requires foretelling

the choices of the Exalted's patrons, whose reclusive nature and supreme power can thwart even the mightiest Exalted's efforts. Nor is it any easier to predict when or if the blood of the Dragons will awaken. Magic can still reveal information useful for predicting an Exaltation — e.g., *Of Truths Best Unspoken* can reveal that a Solar's appearance will have a historic impact at a certain time and place.

Sidereal Exaltation is an exception. Sidereals are chosen at the moment of their birth but Exalt later in life. There's no specific Charm for identifying Sidereals-to-be, but clever use of magic can do so.

Creating Sidereal Charms

Sidereals can't create new Sidereal Charms independently. There are two exceptions to this, which players and Storytellers are encouraged to use. If a player wants to create a new Sidereal Charm to address a specific situation or challenge, her character can do so by entreating the Maidens. This is a narrative process rather than a mechanical one. Once the Sidereal's sought the appropriate Maiden's favor — through prayer, official requisition forms, a discreet liaison at the Festival of Meeting, etc. — her player and the Storyteller should work together to determine an interesting geas, quest, puzzle, or ordeal imposed by the Maiden.

Once the Maiden's test reaches a satisfying resolution (and the Charm's design has been finalized), the Sidereal learns the new Charm, incurring experience debt (p. XX) if necessary. At first, other Sidereals can only learn it from her, though after a few stories it becomes accessible to all Sidereals.

The Sidereal's player doesn't need to have the specifics of the new Charm detailed at the beginning of the process; it's fine to just entreat the Maidens for "something to help with feats of strength" or "something to deal with this trade embargo." The Sidereal's player, the Storyteller, and the playgroup should work together to design a fitting Charm. Remember that Sidereal Charms rarely provide straightforward solutions. While a player's custom Charm should do what they want it to, it should do so in unexpected or unconventional ways.

Alternatively, if the playgroup wants to add new Sidereal Charms that aren't especially relevant to the events of the current story, the Storyteller can decide a "new" Charm has always existed. Such Charms are still as esoteric as those created by petitioning the Maidens.

New Keywords

Divination: Divination Charms are a Sidereal's powers of foresight, prophecy, and prediction. They're limited in how much information they can provide on enemies of fate (p. XX). Their presence and actions can be divined, but not their appearance, identity, or specific nature; they are indistinct, featureless voids within prophetic visions. Note that non-Sidereal Charms that predict the future, like God-King's Shrike, aren't Divination Charms.

Shaping: Shaping effects transforms characters' bodies, minds, souls, or fates. They can be defended against with magic like *Destiny-Manifesting Method* (**Exalted**, p. 304).

Versatile: Archery, Brawl, Melee, and Thrown Charms with this keyword can enhance attacks and parries with Martial Arts if the Sidereal uses a weapon compatible with that Ability. Versatile

Charms from multiple Abilities can't enhance the same action.

The House of Journeys

Ascending Journeys Horoscope

Cost: 1m or 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Any Journeys Ability 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Shaping (Fate), Stackable

Duration: One story

Prerequisite Charms: Any three Journeys Charms

The Sidereal lends her favor to those who move within Mercury's purview, easing their travels by land, sea, or air.

The Sidereal blesses another character with good fortune on a journey named by her: sailing to a certain port, traveling through a certain forest, pursuing a certain Anathema, etc. This costs one mote for mortals or three motes, one Willpower for others. The blessed character gains -1 target number on Athletics, Resistance, Ride, Sail, and Survival rolls involving the journey outside of combat. This also applies to any guide who leads the blessed character, the pilot of any vehicle he travels on, and any mount he rides.

Blessing a character requires a constellation-themed interaction with him. Upon taking this Charm, the Sidereal's player chooses two of the below options. Additional options can be purchased for one bonus point or three experience points apiece.

Celestial Navigator Counsel (the Ship's Wheel): The Sidereal's target sets out on a journey, path, route, or course of action at her advice. She becomes aware when he does so and can use this Charm reflexively.

Duty's Reward Benediction (The Messenger): The Sidereal's target performs a service for her as part of his official duties or employment.

Endeavor-Sustaining Labors (The Mast): The Sidereal's target pays her for her labor.

Heaven-Sent Crew Auspice (The Captain): The Sidereal's target aids her in reaching her destination or overcoming an obstacle.

Stray Dog Gratitude (The Gull): The Sidereal's target performs an act of kindness for a subordinate, a manual laborer, someone homeless, or an animal.

The Sidereal can bless multiple characters with this Charm.

Descending Journeys Horoscope

Cost: 1m or 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Any Journeys Ability 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Shaping (Fate), Stackable

Duration: One story

Prerequisite Charms: Any three Journeys Charms

The Sidereal invokes the Mercury's auspices to place obstacles in a traveler's path.

The Sidereal and her target make opposed (Wits + Journeys Ability) rolls. This costs one mote for mortals or three motes, one Willpower for others. Success curses him, inflicting misfortune on a journey named by the Sidereal. He suffers +1 target number on Athletics, Resistance, Ride, Sail, and Survival rolls involving the journey outside of combat.

Cursing a character requires a constellation-themed interaction with him. Upon taking this Charm, the Sidereal's player chooses two of the below options. Additional options can be purchased for one bonus point or three experience points apiece.

Cracked Foundation Curse (The Mast): The Sidereal's target refuses to provide aid to someone performing a difficult task, whether it's requested of them or not.

Flea-Bitten Karma (The Gull): The Sidereal's target ignores or denies a request for the bare essentials of life — enough food to not go hungry, enough money to just barely scrape by, somewhere warm to sleep for a night, etc.

Forsaken Castaway Curse (The Captain): The Sidereal's target abandons someone, literally or figuratively, or leaves something important that's been entrusted to him behind.

Never Look Back (The Ship's Wheel): The Sidereal's target sets out on a journey, path, route, or course of action she suggested but subsequently abandons it. She becomes aware when he does so and can use this Charm reflexively, typically to curse his journey back.

Thrown Shoe Negligence (The Messenger): The Sidereal's target neglects a duty, job, or obligation he's agreed to perform.

The Sidereal can curse multiple characters with this Charm.

Astrology at a Distance

When a Sidereal uses an Ascending (Caste) Horoscope or Descending (Caste) Horoscope on a Storyteller character, the Storyteller doesn't need to meticulously track everything that character does offscreen — instead, she can portray the blessing or curse's effects narratively, as with prophecies (p. XX). Cursing a scavenger prince seeking to plunder the same ruins as a rival with Descending Journeys Horoscope might delay him reaching the ruins, causing him to get there at the same time or after as his rival. It might also cause him to reach his journey's end much worse for the wear than normally.

Honest Face Spirit

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Any Journeys Ability 2, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Any Journeys Charm

The Sidereal is easily trusted, distinguished by fate from her shiftless and unreliable fellows.

The Sidereal gains +2 Guile. Anyone seeking someone to perform a task or responsibility is inclined to see her as qualified, which counts as a Minor Tie. Rolls to uncover a lack of qualifications suffer +1 target number.

An Any Journeys Ability 5, Essence 2 repurchase extends this Charm's duration to Indefinite.

Good Worker Spirit

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Any Journeys Ability 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Honest Face Spirit

The Sidereal may not work an honest day in her life, but she knows how to look like she does.

When the Sidereal lies about where she's been, what she's doing, or why she hasn't done something, she seems to be telling the truth, halving penalties for implausible claims. Effects opposing her Guile can't reveal any information to the contrary for the scene. The Sidereal can even contest lie-detecting magic like Judge's Ear Technique, rolling (Manipulation + Journeys Ability) at -1 target number.

Such is the intricacy of the Sidereal's schemes that even when not using this Charm directly, it's still difficult to catch her out. Uncovering evidence of her slacking off, performing subpar work, not showing up, or otherwise neglecting her duties always requires a roll at a minimum difficulty of 3, no matter how obvious the evidence may be. Trivial characters can't roll at all.

Mysterious Traveler Wisdom

Cost: —; **Mins:** Any Journeys Ability 2, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Any Journeys Charm

The Sidereal is an enigmatic figure roaming Creation, offering her wisdom to those who join her on the road.

The Sidereal gains the following benefits:

- Anyone journeying with her or evaluating potential guides, crew, passengers, or other companions assume she has knowledge useful to the journey. This counts as a Minor Tie.
- Once per day, she may grant someone following her advice -1 target number on a Ride, Sail, or Survival roll.
- Rolls to uncover how she came to be aboard a ship, with a group of travelers, etc. suffer +1 target number. Trivial characters automatically fail such rolls.
- When she and her traveling companions sleep, she senses if any of them suffer from baleful magic. She doesn't learn the victim's identity but adds (Essence) dice on rolls to follow up on this. Discovering and curing the affliction counts as fulfilling an auspicious prospect.

Fellow Traveler Rapport

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Any Journeys Ability 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Any three Journeys Charms

The Sidereal comes to understand those who travel in her company, whether over a round of grog or around the campfire's warmth.

The Sidereal makes a special (Perception + [Resistance, Ride, Sail Survival, or Thrown]) read intentions roll against a character traveling on the same vehicle or along the same route as her. Success lets her player asks the Storyteller one of the following questions, plus an additional question for every 3 extra successes:

- Why is he making this journey?
- Where's he been that I should know about?
- How prepared is he for the difficulties and dangers of this journey?
- Where does he call home?

If the Storyteller doesn't have an answer in mind for a question, the Sidereal's player should provide one, as if introducing a fact.

Reset: Once per scene.

Predestined Escort Coincidence

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Any Journeys Ability 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Mysterious Traveler Wisdom

Glimpsing the direction of someone's fate, the Sidereal subtly tugs his strand into place.

The Sidereal makes a special (Perception + Journeys Ability) read intentions roll to discern where someone most wants to travel to. If her target already has some business that requires travel or plans for travel, the Sidereal learns both the destination and what he intends to do here. If not, this reveals a destination related to one of his Major or Defining Intimacies that he yearns to visit, as well as that Intimacy — a farmer with a Defining Principle of belief in the Immaculate Philosophy might long to make the pilgrimage to Juche.

If the Sidereal succeeds, she can then wordlessly make an influence roll a persuade roll to convince her target to let her provide transportation, serve as a guide, or otherwise help him in making that journey. If successful, her target realizes the Sidereal can provide such aid and seeks it from her. She's never perceived as this influence's source. Successfully leading him to his destination counts as fulfilling an auspicious prospect (p. XX).

Auspicious Voyage Omen

Cost: —(10m, 1wp); **Mins:** Any Journeys Ability 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Ascending Journeys Horoscope or Descending Journeys Horoscope

The Sidereal twines together the fates of those who share her path, foretelling the constellation under which they will reach their destination.

As the Sidereal embarks on a journey, she can use an Ascending (Caste) Horoscope Charm on her traveling companions for ten motes, one Willpower. She must engage them in a social interaction, behavior, or ritual related to one of the constellations whose blessings she knows for that Charm.

The Sidereal can use a Descending (Caste) Horoscope Charm instead or in addition to an Ascending Horoscope, at no cost increase. If a traveling companion harms another unprovoked or the Sidereal learns of one's malevolent intentions toward another, he loses the blessing and suffers the Descending Horoscope.

With an Any Journeys Ability 5, Essence 4 repurchase, the Sidereal can spend five days performing a constellation-themed ritual to use this effect on a vehicle of any size or on a road, bridge, heavenly canal, mountain pass, or similar route for one story. For the latter type of target, the Charm's effect extends out to a day's travel in all directions from where the Charm was used (not counting any travel magic). The chosen Horoscopes' effects apply to all travelers on or within the route or vehicle.

Joyous Grasshopper Spirit

Cost: —; **Mins:** Any Journeys Ability 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Good Worker Spirit

Like the shiftless grasshopper, the Sidereal eats while there is plenty, makes love when she wishes, sleeps as much as she pleases, and if she dies of it, dies happy.

The Sidereal regains an additional Willpower from sleep. Once per day, when she indulges in sensual or hedonistic pleasures or neglects a responsibility or obligation to enjoy herself, she gains one Willpower.

When the Sidereal upholds a Defining Intimacy, accomplishes a major character or story goal, or fulfills an auspicious prospect by indulging herself or neglecting her duties or obligations, she loses one Limit.

Satisfaction in Emptiness

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Any Journeys Ability 4, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Joyous Grasshopper Spirit

The Sidereal finds peace in letting go, accepting the impermanence of the world she's sworn to serve.

When a character makes an inspire roll or instill roll against the Sidereal to create or strengthen emotion-based Intimacies, he must roll twice, taking the lower result. The doesn't apply to rolls based on emotions of simple happiness and joy in living.

The Sidereal can enhance this Charm by abandoning an artifact or something the Storyteller deems equally meaningful and significant to the Sidereal — casting it into the ocean, leaving it unattended in a place teeming with thieves, gifting it to a Storyteller character, etc. If she does, she reduces the cost to resist affected influence rolls by one Willpower. If she subsequently encounters whatever she abandoned, this Charm ends.

Legitimate Ownership Benefit

Cost: 10m, 3wp; **Mins:** Any Journeys Ability 5, Essence 4

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Any ten Journeys Charms

The Sidereal makes the Greater Sign of the Captain before a heavenly gate to impose her authority upon it, rimming its edge with saffron fire as a distant destination appears on its other side.

When the Sidereal and any characters accompanying her cross through one of Heaven's gates (p. XX), she can use this Charm to appear at one of the following destinations instead of that gate's normal exit:

- A manse to which she's attuned.
- A building she legally owns or holds legitimate authority over.
- A ship or similar vehicle she's piloted this story or that she owns or holds legitimate authority over.
- The Bureau of Destiny, if she's in its employ.

Resistance — The Mast

Sidereal Resistance Charms fortify the body with the endurance, strength, vigor, and stoic determination of the Mast. Following in the Eternal Maiden's footsteps, these Charms empower Sidereals who commit themselves unwaveringly to a destination or task. Such commitment demands the entirety of one's focus; thus, these Charms invoke the world's recognition of her service to it to shelter her from harm. While Resistance is most often rolled with Stamina, Sidereal Resistance Charms also benefit from high Strength.

The Scripture of the Eternal Maiden

Once, there was a maiden...

...made from a lump of iron, shaped by wind, sea, and fire.

Fearing how wood might shape her, she ran, and did not look back.

One day, she forgot what she ran from.

So she pulled out her heart to ask it.

"Why don't you look back and see?" it said.

So, she sighed and threw her heart away.

"I have no use for beginnings," said she.

Ox-Body Technique

Cost: —; **Mins:** Resistance 1, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal has cultivated great inner discipline, suffusing her with supernal vitality.

The Sidereal gains additional health levels based on her Stamina rating:

Stamina 1-2: One –0 level.

Stamina 3-4: One –0 level and one –1 level.

Stamina 5: Two –0 levels.

This Charm may be purchased (Resistance) times. If the Sidereal's Stamina increases, her health levels change to reflect her new rating.

The Mast Sways

Cost: 1i; **Mins:** Resistance 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Perilous, Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Mast endures lashing lightning and mighty zephyrs, bent but unbroken, that the ship might stay steady in its course.

When an ally within medium range would be knocked prone or forcibly moved, the Sidereal suffers it in his stead, falling prone or being knocked back the same distance and direction. Any damage it would have inflicted likewise goes to the Sidereal. It can't redirect falls due to gravity.

While using Unswerving Juggernaut Principle, forced movement sends the Sidereal further along her path, rather than keeping the same direction as the original effect.

Special activation rules: This Charm must normally be used after an attack roll, but before damage. If an enemy uses applicable magic after damage is rolled, it can be used at that time instead.

Optimistic Security Practice

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Dual

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Reflecting on the sacrifices she may one day be called upon to make, the Sidereal imbues her enemies with her own generosity of spirit.

After a **withering** attack hits her, but before damage is rolled, the Sidereal can impose a –2 penalty on the damage roll. If she has a positive Tie or compassionate Principle applicable to her

attacker, the penalty increases to (Intimacy + 1).

If the Sidereal is unarmored, she can penalize **decisive** attacks.

Strength of the Mast

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

So long as she is the strongest one present, the Sidereal's strength is equal to any task.

The Sidereal adds +2 to her effective Strength to determine if she can attempt a feat of strength. If this would raise her effective Strength above that of all other characters present, the bonus increases to (higher of Essence or 3). If the Sidereal's effective Strength exceeds the feat's minimum, each excess dot adds one die.

Yeddim-Hauling Wage

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Resistance 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Strength of the Mast

The Sidereal hauls even the weightiest of burdens with strength well-suited to backbreaking labor.

The Sidereal lowers the cost to drag a grappled enemy to one round of control, and steals a point of Initiative from him.

Alternatively, the Sidereal can roll a (Stamina + Resistance) feat of strength to drag, pull, or carry something, gaining Strength of the Mast's benefits for free.

Invisible at the Center

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Resistance 4, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Shaping (Fate)

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Strength of the Mast

So long as the Sidereal commits herself to a meek life of toil beneath her station, she is beneath the notice of princes, magistrates, and her superiors.

After a few hours or days spent looking for menial work, the Sidereal's assured to find a job of some kind involving physical labor that will pay just enough for her to eat, clothe herself, and find shelter, but nothing more. Alternatively, she may empower such a job she already has.

As long as the Sidereal retains this employment, doesn't complain, and spends significant time on the job during downtimes, she gains the following benefits:

- Once per day, she may waive an Excellency's cost to reduce the target number of an Athletics or Resistance roll related to her job.
- She gains +2 Guile against any rolls that would reveal she's anything more than an impoverished laborer.
- Investigation rolls and tracking rolls against her suffer +1 target number.
- Bureaucratic processes involving her falter, taking twice as long as usual to complete.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by accomplishing a major character or story goal through physical exertion. Harbingers can reset it by fulfilling an auspicious prospect.

Unswerving Juggernaut Principle

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Resistance 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Dual

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: None

Yellow stardust glitters beneath the Sidereal's skin, hair, clothes, and eyes as she begins to run, writing her journey into the tapestry of fate.

So long as the Sidereal continues moving in the direction she set out in, she gains +(Dexterity, Stamina, or Strength) soak and +1 Hardness. This stacks with Hardness from magic, but not from armor. She has no need of sleep, ignores fatigue penalties, and adds (Essence) dice on Resistance rolls and rolls against environmental hazards. If the Sidereal rides a mount, it gains these benefits as well.

If changing circumstances render the original cause of the Sidereal's journey irrelevant, she senses this and rolls (Perception + Resistance), receiving more information the more successes she receives.

This Charm ends if the Sidereal stops moving forward, diverges from her original course by more than ten degrees, looks away from what's directly in front of her, takes any non-reflexive action other than a movement action, or uses any magic that doesn't enhance movement action.

Unwavering Well-Being Meditation

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Resistance 4, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute, Perilous, Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal's calm certainty in the face of danger turns away harm, leaving enemies to question whether she can even be defeated by the likes of them.

The Sidereal causes an attack against her to miss unless her attacker enters a Decision Point and spends one Willpower. The intensity of Intimacy he must cite to resist depends on the Sidereal's Initiative relative to his:

BEGIN TABLE

Sidereal's Initiative	Intensity
Lower than attacker's Initiative by 6+	No Intimacy needed
Lower than attacker's Initiative by 1-5	Minor
Equal or higher than attacker's Initiative by 1-9	Major
Higher than attacker's Initiative by 10+	Defining

END TABLE

Once a character's spent Willpower to resist, he's immune to this Charm for the rest of the scene.

The Center Must Hold

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Resistance 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Optimistic Security Practice, Unwavering Well-Being Meditation

Too much depends on the Sidereal for her to let herself die.

The Sidereal can use this Charm after being hit by an attack but before the damage roll, adding +1 target number on that roll. Uncountable damage is negated instead; she's immune to a recurring source of uncountable damage for the scene.

With a Resistance 5, Essence 3 repurchase, if the Sidereal's unarmed, she may pay a one-Willpower surcharge to add +2 target number.

Unbroken Weave Deflection

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Clash, Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: The Center Must Hold

Weapons ring and ricochet off the Sidereal's iron fate.

The Sidereal clashes an attack against her with a (Stamina + Resistance) disarm gambit. Ranged attacks can be clashed, but attackers aren't disarmed and the Sidereal doesn't pay Initiative. The same's true for unarmed attacks.

While using Forward-Thinking Technique, the Sidereal can clash ambushes with this Charm. She can use Charms to enhance the clash attack normally, but can't use other Charms to defend against the gambit.

Forward-Thinking Technique

Cost: —(+1wp); **Mins:** Resistance 4, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Dual

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Unswerving Juggernaut Principle

The Sidereal's world narrows to her journey, seeing only the next step forward.

The Sidereal may pay a one-Willpower surcharge when she uses Unswerving Juggernaut Principle to gain the following benefits:

- +1 Evasion. If she's unarmored, this bonus is non-Charm.
- Against unexpected attacks, the soak bonus increases to ([Dexterity, Stamina, or Strength] + Resistance) and the Hardness bonus increases to (Essence).
- She can roll to cover her tracks reflexively, without ending Unswerving Juggernaut Principle. Until a character succeeds on an opposed tracking roll or sees her in motion, he won't realize she's moving in a straight line, no matter how obvious this is.

One Way Forward

Cost: 4m, 2i; **Mins:** Resistance 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Perilous

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Unswerving Juggernaut Principle

The Sidereal sloughs off that which holds her back, purging her fate of all but its intended course.

The Sidereal is immune to forced movement. This doesn't stop prevent being knocked prone or falls due to gravity.

If the Sidereal's unarmored or using Unswerving Juggernaut Principle, she gains -1 target number on rolls with any Ability against impediments to movement: an Athletics roll to leap over a pit, a Larceny roll to pick a lock, a roll against an enemy's grapple control roll, etc.

Special activation rules: This Charm must normally be used after an attack roll, but before damage. If an enemy uses applicable magic after damage is rolled, it can be used at that time instead.

Heartless Maiden Trance

Cost: 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Optimistic Security Practice, Unwavering Well-Being Meditation

The Sidereal's chest convulses as she swallows her heart, purging her body of mortal weakness.

The Sidereal ignores wound penalties and doesn't need to eat, drink, breathe, or sleep. Any poisons or diseases she suffers from are held in abeyance; she doesn't suffer their effects and their duration is suspended. She's immune to crippling effects and other hostile magic that targets the heart, like Heart-Ripping Claw (**Exalted**, p. 456). She ceases to regain Essence naturally, although she still regains motes in combat.

Loom-Shifting Nudge

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Yeddim-Hauling Wage

The weave of fate itself strains as the Sidereal performs feats of impossible might, wrestling behemoths and kicking down towers.

The Sidereal can grapple a Legendary Size foe or forcibly move it with an attack or similar effect. She waives the Willpower cost to reduce the target number of rolls to do so with any Ability.

Alternatively, the Sidereal can undertake a feat of strength that would normally be

impossible given her size and leverage, lifting an object as though her grip's leverage extended one range band further than usual or destroying a portion of a large object one range band beyond what she could normally do.

With Essence 5, every five extra successes on a feat of strength extend its scale by one range band, maximum +4.

Reset: Once per day unless reset by fulfilling an auspicious prospect with a feat of strength or joining battle against a Legendary Size enemy.

The Mast Upholds All

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Invisible at the Center, Yeddim-Hauling Wage

The Sidereal's passive stoicism bends the world around her to uphold others' efforts.

When the Sidereal provides passive or unskilled support to another character's action — bracing against a stone block to provide leverage for his feat of strength, looming threateningly behind him as he makes a threaten roll, providing manual labor in his workshop — she rolls (Stamina + Resistance). He can use her successes in place of his own. The Sidereal's aid can't be noticed.

The Sidereal can't use this Charm if she's previously attempted the same action this scene. If the character she aids fails, it counts as her failing for any applicable retry conditions.

Reset: Once per scene.

Inevitability Without Finesse

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 4

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Forward-Thinking Technique, Strength of the Mast

Grasping the skeins of her enemy's fate in her clutched fist, the Sidereal forges an unalterable path between the momentum behind her attack and his heart.

The Sidereal chooses an enemy at medium range or beyond. Each time she moves a range band closer to him, he loses one Initiative, which she gains. If she moves into close range with him for the first time after using this Charm and makes an attack, it's unblockable and undodgeable.

Once the Sidereal's reached close range with her target, this Charm ends. It also ends if she's crashed or if she moves away from her target.

Reset: Once per scene.

Maiden Sheds No Tears

Cost: —; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 4

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Heartless Maiden Trance

Casting aside her heart, the Sidereal frees herself from the burden of humanity.

When the Sidereal uses Heartless Maiden Trance, she may banish her emotions along with her heart. Any emotion-based Intimacies or Principles of compassion she has are suppressed. She can't be affected by inspire rolls or rolls to instill emotion-based Ties or Principles of compassion. Psyche effects and mind-altering Shaping effects are suppressed as well. She can't regain Willpower from sleep.

One-Direction Invocation

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Resistance 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: Dual

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Any ten Resistance Charms

As the Sidereal pledges herself to a quest, she tosses a prayer strip bearing the Scripture of the Eternal Maiden into the air to dart about at random, trailing vivid yellow afterimages.

The Sidereal names a goal and binds herself to it, forsaking everything — even who she is — to reach it. This has the following effects:

- She treats influence that opposes her goal as unacceptable (**Exalted**, p. 220).
- She can't be reduced below Initiative 1 by **withering** attacks, though they still award the full amount of Initiative damage rolled.
- She adds (Stamina) Hardness, stacking with other Hardness sources.
- She heals a level of damage at the start of each turn. Outside of combat, she multiplies the rate at which she heals naturally by (Stamina x5).
- She can't take non-reflexive action that aren't relevant to her goal. (She can still perform basic tasks that don't require rolls). Actions that are only tangentially relevant suffer a -3 penalty.
- She forsakes her name. It's forgotten by everyone who knows it — including her — and erased wherever it may be written. This also applies to nicknames, sobriquets, and the similar appellations.

- She adds (Stamina) to the difficulty of rolls opposing her arcane fate. It applies against characters who're normally immune to it.

Upon accomplishing her goal, the Sidereal rolls (Willpower) dice, gaining Willpower equal to her successes and Limit equal to her 10s. Her name is restored to the world and characters immune to arcane fate regain any suppressed memories.

If the Sidereal ends this Charm before completing her goal or if her goal becomes impossible, she loses all Limit. All memories that anyone else has of her are erased. Her name becomes irrevocably lost, even to herself, and her arcane fate remains empowered as above.

It's possible to requisition a new identity from the Bureau of Heaven's Department of Abstract matters, but this requires either lengthy bureaucratic procedures or convincing a politically prominent god to fast track her request. It may be possible to acquire a new identity by other means. The new identity lets the Sidereal take a new name and frees her of her empowered arcane fate, but doesn't restore old memories of her — she's not that person anymore.

Reset: Once per story.

Ride — The Messenger

Sidereal Ride Charms evince their legendary horsemanship, incredible speed, and unflinching diligence as couriers and riders. These Charms also bind others to her, imposing duties like those of the Messenger upon them or claiming them as her own, just as the Desirable Maiden's pursuers sought to do. They can empower and uplift those bound to the Sidereal or exploit them as mere tools of her will. While Ride is most often rolled with Dexterity, Sidereal Ride Charms also benefit from high Charisma or Manipulation.

The Scripture of the Desirable Maiden
 Once, there was a maiden...
 ...whom many men wanted for their own.
 She stepped as softly as starlight.
 She shone with glory.
 And one by one, they came to claim her.
 She fled by the quickest route she found.
 "Why do you run?" the stormclouds said.
 She said, "I cannot help who drives me."

Blow-Wind-Blow Style

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Ride 2, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal rides undeterred through fire and ice, drawing on a bond between her and her mount forged over nights spent sleeping in the open under pouring rain and miles run through blistering heat.

The Sidereal adds (Stamina) dice on a mounted movement action and ignores that many points of environmental penalties (including from difficult terrain). She also adds this bonus on her and her mount's roll against any environmental hazards they ride through. Success on a rush or disengage awards both her and her mount one Initiative.

Iron Heart, Iron Horse

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Ride 2, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal masters her fear as forcefully as any stallion she's broken, riding boldly onward into peril.

The Sidereal and any mount she rides gain +1 Resolve. This increases to +3 Resolve against fear-based influence, but inflicts -1 Resolve against influence that aligns with Intimacies of bravery. If the Sidereal has such an Intimacy, her steed gains it as well and adds (Intimacy) dice on attack rolls and to its Overwhelming.

Ordained Bridle of Mercury

Cost: 10m (1wp); **Mins:** Ride 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Until the bridle is presented

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal shapes yellow stardust into a bridle with reins and bit, a tether to bind a new mount to her fate.

When the Sidereal presents the bridle to an animal, she makes a special ([Charisma or Manipulation] + Ride) persuade roll against it. If she succeeds, the animal accepts the bridle, which vanishes once it is placed, making that animal the Sidereal's familiar and giving it a Major Tie of submission to her. She must pay a one-Willpower surcharge to present the bridle to animals that would be two-dot familiars (**Exalted**, p. 161), and it can't be used against animals that would be three-dot familiars or animals that are already someone's familiar.

Alternatively, instead of choosing an animal to present the bridle to, the Sidereal may let fate decide. An animal of the Storyteller's choice will enter the scene and let the Sidereal place the bridle on it without needing to roll. The Storyteller can choose animals that are two- or even

three-dot familiars, without requiring the Willpower surcharge.

Breaking the Wild Mortal

Cost: —(+1wp); **Mins:** Ride 3, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Ordained Bridle of Mercury

The Sidereal binds mortals to her fate as easily as she does beasts.

The Sidereal can present the Ordained Bridle of Mercury to mortals. If she succeeds on the roll, the mortal will let her place the bridle on him, though he'll retain no memory of this embarrassing moment. Rather than becoming her familiar, he gains a Minor Tie of familiarity to her that he can't voluntarily erode unless he spends one Willpower. Dice added by this Intimacy on rolls to resist the Sidereal's arcane fate are converted to automatic successes; affected trivial characters with can roll to resist it.

The Sidereal can let fate provide, specifying an occupation and personality and learning where she can find someone fitting that description to whom she can present the bridle. Alternatively, she can pay a one-Willpower surcharge to present it to a mortal of her choice. If the Sidereal's target is capable of being ridden by her as her mount — for example, because he's a quadrupedal mutant — she waives the Willpower surcharge.

Field Mouse Rider

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One hour

Prerequisite Charms: Ordained Bridle of Mercury

The Sidereal demands the impossible of her familiars and is not disappointed, bending their fates in service to hers.

The Sidereal can ride one of her familiars no matter how unsuited it is to that task — even a flea can bear her weight. Her familiar doesn't suffer any ill effects from this. If it has no Speed Bonus listed or a negative Speed Bonus, its Speed Bonus becomes +0; otherwise, its Speed Bonus increases by +1.

If the Sidereal renews this Charm when its duration ends, she waives its Willpower cost.

With an Essence 2 repurchase, the Sidereal can use this Charm to ride animals other than her familiar. If she knows Breaking the Wild Mortal, she can use it on any willing character.

Plausible Stabling Arrangement

Cost: 3m (10m, 1wp); **Mins:** Ride 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal need not keep precise track of her faithful steed, twining the strand of its fate together with hers to ensure it's there when she has need of it.

To use this Charm, the Sidereal must have dismounted and her mount must be somewhere it can't be perceived by any character. Her mount disappears. She can find it by going to any stable or other place where horses are kept (regardless of whether her mount is a horse), discovering it serendipitously waiting for her.

If there's no time to find a stable, the Sidereal can use this Charm for ten motes and one Willpower to have fate instantly return her mount to her. It runs to her, and she can reflexively mount it as a movement action.

Yellow Path

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One journey

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal sees the shortest path to her goal illumined by a glimmering yellow trail of stardust.

While traveling along the path revealed by this Charm the Sidereal, her Circlemates, and up to (Essence) others double the speed at which they travel and gain -1 target number on rolls to forage, find shelter, overcome obstacles, or endure environmental hazards along the way. There's no guarantee this path will be safe or easy; the Storyteller should choose whatever route and difficulties are best suited to the story.

If the Sidereal has a deadline to get somewhere, she can roll (Essence + Ride), unmodified by any other effects, to make it on time. The roll's difficulty is 5 if the Sidereal has any chance of making it on time, or 10 otherwise. She can't use this Charm more than once per deadline.

This Charm is compatible with all forms of movement, not just mounted travel.

Messenger's Oath

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Iron Heart, Iron Horse

Making a silent promise to Mercury, the Sidereal leashes herself to her obligations.

Upon accepting a task, responsibility, or mission, the Sidereal gains a Minor Principle for completing it loyally and diligently. The Intimacy can't be weakened or altered by any means and influence opposing it suffers +1 target number. Any mount ridden by the Sidereal gains her Intimacy and this benefit.

This Charm normally can't be ended voluntarily, though the Sidereal can end it to swear to a more demanding task. It ends when the Sidereal fulfills her obligation or when fulfilling it becomes impossible or narratively irrelevant. Success counts as fulfilling an auspicious prospect (p. XX); failure causes her to lose one Limit.

Desirable Maiden's Bargain

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Messenger's Oath, Yellow Path

The Sidereal reveals the truths that drive her, spreading them on wind and whisper, in exchange for Mercury's guidance.

Outdoors, in the dim before dawn or the dark of a storm, the Sidereal may use this Charm while performing a task, responsibility, or mission. The Storyteller asks her player a question related to that task and her reasons for doing it. If she gives an honest answer, fate conspires to reveal it to whomever that information is most dramatically relevant to. In exchange, sunrise or lightning-flash reveals the location of somewhere nearby where the Sidereal can find a clue, companion, tool, or other benefit that will meaningfully advance her progress. She and her Circle gain -1 target number on Awareness, Investigation, or Survival rolls to reach or find that location or the revealed benefit.

Reset: Once per story unless reset when the obligation is fulfilled or when fulfilling it becomes impossible or narratively irrelevant.

Spirit-Shape Companion

Cost: 10m, 1wp, 1xp; **Mins:** Ride 3, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Ordained Bridle of Mercury

The Sidereal invokes her intrinsic authority over the Celestial Bureaucracy to promote a familiar into its ranks.

The Sidereal transforms one of her familiars into a god, conferring the following benefits:

- He gains a human-level faculty for complex and abstract thought and the ability to understand the Sidereal's native tongue and Old Realm.
- His natural state is dematerialized.
- He gains a pool of ten personal motes, if he didn't have one already, and the Materialize Charm (**Exalted**, p. 510).
- He may spend five motes as if using a Simple Charm to transform into a human-like shape that still bears signs of his animal form. His traits remain unchanged, but his human-like anatomy may let him avoid certain penalties. Changing back to his animal form works the same way.
- If killed without magic capable of permanently destroying spirits, he reforms at the story's end (**Exalted**, p. 509).
- He gains a Defining Tie of obligation to the Sidereal. No influence, other than the Sidereal's, can make him act against this Intimacy.

This Charm's experience cost is waived the first time the Sidereal uses it. If an enhanced familiar is permanently killed, the Sidereal regains any experience spent enhancing him.

Acquaintance-Improving Dressage

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: One week

Prerequisite Charms: Spirit-Shape Companion

Putting faithful servants through their paces, the Sidereal draws forth hidden depths.

The Sidereal trains an animal — including one apotheosized with Spirit-Shape Companion — in a latent special ability or Merit (**Exalted**, p. 554), rolling ([Charisma or Manipulation + Ride]). She doesn't need to meet the usual specialty requirements and shortens the training interval to one week.

If the Sidereal knows Breaking the Wild Mortal, she can instead train its targets or characters who're otherwise immune to her arcane fate, letting them go into experience debt to gain specialties of "Serving the Sidereal" in up to (Sidereal's Essence +1) Abilities or (her Essence/2,

rounded up) dots of Willpower. Training time is reduced to one week.

With Ride 5, Essence 3 repurchase, the Sidereal can pay a two-experience surcharge to grant an animal familiar a magical ability, spirit familiars a spirit Charm, or someone immune to her arcane fate a Sidereal Charm, Martial Arts Charm, Eclipse Charm, spell, or thaumaturgical ritual she knows that they qualify to learn. The surcharge is waived the first time she uses this Charm, and when she uses it on player characters. Spent experience is regained. Experience spent this way is regained if the beneficiary dies.

Glory Path

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Ride 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Until next turn

Prerequisite Charms: Blow-Wind-Blow Style, Iron Heart, Iron Horse, Yellow Path

Mercury's golden light illuminates the Sidereal's path, empowering her to overcome any obstacle.

The Sidereal's mount can move across surfaces that couldn't normally bear its weight and can move up vertical surfaces or upside-down on ceilings. It can even move across thin air, though it can't ascend or descend horizontally without a surface to move on. If the Sidereal ends her movement somewhere her mount couldn't normally stand and doesn't use this Charm on her next turn, they fall as usual.

Godly Companion

Cost: —; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Spirit-Shape Companion

The Sidereal summons a bridle of stardust that transforms into a memorandum on saffron paper, bearing one line for her signature and another for her familiar's.

Upon purchasing this Charm, the Sidereal secures a promotion in the Celestial Bureaucracy for a familiar uplifted with Spirit-Shape Companion. The Sidereal's player and the Storyteller should determine what role the Sidereal's familiar receives. He gains the following benefits:

- He gains two-dot Backing in the bureau he's promoted into. His official duties include accompanying the Sidereal, allowing him to remain by her side, but he may face occasional bureaucratic obligations.

- He gains two dots of Essence.
- His mote pool increases to $(\text{Essence} \times 10) + 50$.
- He gains (Sidereal's Essence) spirit Charms that reflect his new office or his animal origin. He gains additional Charms as the Sidereal's Essence rises and one Charm at the end of any story in which he played a meaningful role.

The Sidereal may purchase this Charm once for each of her qualifying familiars. If a familiar is permanently killed, the experience cost is refunded.

Fiend-Humbling Horsemanship

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Psyche, Shaping (Body)

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Breaking the Wild Mortal, Godly Companion

The Sidereal binds devils to Heaven's service, teaching them humility and repentance as they bear her on her journeys.

The Sidereal creates a stardust bridle and makes a (Dexterity + Ride) gambit to place it on an Exalted enemy of fate within close range. The gambit's difficulty is (higher of target's Essence or 3). Success turns her enemy into a horse with a noticeably otherworldly appearance that reflects his nature. He uses a horse's traits (**Exalted**, p. 566) instead of his own for physical actions and can't use his Charms or other magic. He retains his cognitive faculties, memories, and Intimacies. If the gambit's attack roll also beat his Resolve, he gains a Defining Principle of "I must allow the Sidereal to ride me" that can't be weakened or altered. Dice added by this Intimacy on rolls to resist the Sidereal's arcane fate are converted to automatic successes. Both effects endure for (1 + Sidereal's extra successes) days, or that many months for characters whose Essence is lower than the Sidereal's.

If a transformed character with Essence 1-3 has or forms a Defining Tie of loyalty, obedience, or the like toward the Sidereal, he becomes her familiar permanently. She may choose to reverse the transformation or to render it permanent.

Reset: Once per story.

Invisible Spirit Rider

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Godly Companion, Yellow Path

The Sidereal rides along the spirit world's secret paths.

When the Sidereal's mount dematerializes, she may do so along with it. This Charm ends if her mount rematerializes or if she dismounts.

Spirits that are naturally material, like elementals and horses transformed with Fiend-Humbling Horsemanship, may dematerialize while ridden by the Sidereal. This works like a Simple Charm, costing (Essence x10) motes and one Willpower.

Message-Without-Messenger Pact

Cost: —(+1ahl); **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Messenger's Oath

The world sees the Sidereal as nothing more than an extension of her obligations, a mysterious figure bound by a pact signed in blood.

When the Sidereal uses Messenger's Oath, she may pay an aggravated health level to grant her and any mount she rides the following benefits:

- Their appearance is obscured; others perceive them as a rider and mount suitable for what they understand her obligation to be. This works like a resplendent destiny (p. XX), suppressing the Sidereal's arcane fate, but doesn't count against the limit on them.
- Rolls against them to discover information unrelated to the obligation suffer +1 target number. They can oppose scrying, Divination Charms, and similar magic that's normally unrolled, rolling (Manipulation + Ride) against an appropriate (Attribute + Ability) roll.
- If an opposing character fails a roll to scry on one of them, the Sidereal may pay one Willpower to make him believe he succeeded, providing false information that would be true of whomever issued her the task.
- Her Auspicious Prospects for (Caste) reveal whether something will benefit or hinder her task, rather than whether they align with destiny.

Without Temptation

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Breaking the Wild Mortal

With a firm touch on the strands of fate, the Sidereal frees those in her service from the possibility

of disobedience.

The Sidereal's familiars, characters affected by Breaking the Wild Mortal, and characters with positive Major or Defining Ties to the Sidereal may treat influence as unacceptable (**Exalted**, p. 220) if it would create or strengthen a negative Tie to her, weaken a positive Tie to her, or cause them to act against her best interests. If an influence roll opposes one of the Sidereal's Intimacies related to her agendas or ambitions, the character must treat it as unacceptable. Likewise, they can't take actions that oppose or threaten such Intimacies.

Affected characters can't voluntarily weaken positive Ties to the Sidereal unless they pay three Willpower each time they do so.

Riding the Dragon

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Ride 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One day

Prerequisite Charms: Any ten Ride Charms

The Sidereal affixes a prayer strip bearing the Scripture of the Desirable Maiden to a boon companion's forehead, burning with a terrible celestial light that fills her victim with an indescribable sense of shock, horror, and elation as a great and terrible transformation begins.

This Charm can only be used on the Sidereal's familiars, her mortal Allies, Contacts, Cult, Followers, Mentors, and Retainers, and characters she's used Breaking the Wild Mortal on. Affixing the prayer strip requires a difficulty 1 Brawl or Martial Arts gambit against an unwilling character. The Sidereal's victim has a chance to tear it from his forehead before the transformation is complete. If he isn't restrained, no roll is required; otherwise, he reflexively rolls (Dexterity + Athletics) or another appropriate pool a difficulty set by the Storyteller. If he fails, he's too late, and the transformation sets in.

A transformed character becomes a lesser elemental dragon of air or water (p. XX), the Scripture of the Desirable Maiden spelled out along his back. He gains a Defining Tie of obedience to the Sidereal and loses all other Intimacies. In combat, he immediately rolls Join Battle, replacing his previous Initiative.

The Sidereal's victim reverts to his true form once this Charm ends, but he is far from unscathed. The immense spiritual toll the transformation exacts causes grievous and permanent damage to his soul and identity. The Storyteller determines the specifics: he fall into a coma, suffer total amnesia, etc. It may be possible to undo this with magic like Soul Projection Method (**Exalted**, p. 358).

Reset: Once per day.

Sail — The Captain

Sidereal Sail Charms express their legendary skill as seafarers and pilots of wondrous conveyances, letting them depart from prosaic waters to ply otherworldly oceans. Like the

Maiden at Sea, these Charms expect danger along her journeys, shattering obstacles and fending off seaborne foes to see her ship through to its destination. Under the Captain's auspices, a Sidereal may demand obedience from both her crew and any who obstruct her vessel's journey, righting their misdeeds. While Sail is most often rolled with Intelligence or Wits, Sidereal Sail Charms also benefit from high Charisma.

The Scripture of the Maiden at Sea

Once, there was a maiden...

...who set sail with a Captain she did not know. The sea came over the side as a creature with teeth. So, she set it on fire, until only the teeth were left. It wasn't expecting that to happen.

She noticed the ship was crushing the waves, and told the Captain to steer the ship higher, so that it could be above them. "But not too high," she said. "I'd hate to crush the clouds."

A face in the depths glared at the Captain. The maiden got angry. She broke the face, and broke the depths, and broke the sea, leaving only the white caps of the waves. "Why did you do that?" asked the face.

"Rarely is travel peaceful," the maiden said.

Certain Peril Preparation

Cost: —; **Mins:** Sail 1, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

Expecting no peace in her travels, the Sidereal is rarely disappointed — or caught off guard.

The Sidereal gains the following benefits:

- She adds (Sail) dice on Perception rolls with any Ability to notice hidden dangers while traveling (by ship or otherwise), and on Join Battle rolls while aboard a vehicle.
- She strikes fear into the heart of oceangoing foes: enemy sailors, sea monsters, hostile aquatic animals, and similar marine enemies count as having a Minor Tie of fear toward her.
- When she recruits a surrendered foe into her crew, any negative Ties he has toward her are lost and he gains a Major Tie of loyalty to her.
- In naval combat, she reduces the Momentum cost of naval stratagems by one if the roll's target number is reduced by any amount. Positioning stratagems instead award one extra Momentum, even if they fail.

Salt-Into-Ash Sleight

Cost: 7m; **Mins:** Sail 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Clapping her hands, the Sidereal wreathes a spirit in an aura of yellow fire, an omen presaging a sudden journey.

The Sidereal makes a special (Charisma + Sail) persuade roll against a spirit within medium range. Water elementals and other spirits associated with water count as having a Major Intimacy supporting this influence. If the Sidereal succeeds, that spirit recalls some unfinished business he has in another place. It presses increasingly on his mind, imposing a -3 penalty on any rolls he makes that don't directly aid in attending to that matter.

Once the scene ends, the urgency of the spirit's business becomes unbearable. He enters a Decision Point and must spend one Willpower to not immediately set off for that location. He must travel toward that location and attend to his unfinished business, if possible, for at least (10 - his Willpower) hours before he can stop; Willpower 10 spirits must spend at least five minutes before they can stop.

The unfinished business isn't created by the Sidereal; rather, this Charm provides a narrative guarantee that the spirit does have some such unfinished business to attend to. The Storyteller chooses its nature, which the Sidereal doesn't learn.

Serendipitous Voyage

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal's eyes glint yellow as she looks away from the present, tracing her route backward from its destination.

The Sidereal rolls ([Intelligence, Perception, or Wits] + Sail) to introduce the fact that there's a vessel at a nearby port or other vehicle that's willing to take her aboard and that will, if even remotely possible, reach a destination of her choice, though its captain and crew may not yet know it. The roll's difficulty depends on how far-flung the chosen destination is, the number of nearby ships or vehicles present in the Sidereal's present locale, and any factors that might complicate her securing passage aboard a ship. If she chooses a destination that isn't accessible by her the introduced vehicle (like an inland city if she travels by boat), she'll instead arrive at the location that's the furthest that vehicle can travel toward the chosen destination.

As long as the Sidereal travels aboard it, the vessel is assured to eventually arrive at least in the vicinity of the chosen destination unless dramatic events render this completely impossible.

However, there's no guarantee the voyage will be safe, speedy, or cheap. If Lintha pirates set fire to a ship, it may be that only the vessel's wreckage will eventually wash up at the chosen destination's shores.

Ship-Commanding Attitude

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal radiates intimidating charisma, commanding the obedience of her crew and the surrender of her foes.

The Sidereal's bargain, persuade, and threaten rolls treat her targets' negative Ties toward her as one step lower in intensity. Characters who work under her command are treated as having a Minor Tie of loyalty to her.

Stone-Skipping Spirit

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One day

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal exhales a puff of wind that untangles the thread of a ship's fate from the weave of sky and sea.

The Sidereal blesses a ship, adding (her Essence) dice on any character's rolls to navigate naval hazards, enact Positioning or Escape stratagems, or otherwise maneuver it. The ship's Speed isn't penalized by bad weather, opposing wind or currents, or the like, and its crew is immune to environmental penalties. It won't take on any water no matter how badly damaged it may be, though this won't help with any it's already taken on.

Special activation rules: This Charm's Willpower cost is waived if renewed at the end of its duration.

Yellow Sky Augury

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Divination

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal tugs at the strands of fate like a leadsman's chains, judging the depth of perils a journey holds.

Contemplating a proposed route, the Sidereal rolls (Perception + Sail). The Storyteller should give her player a description of how dangerous a journey along it would be, predicting danger that would occur within a number of hours equal to the Sidereal's successes. She doesn't learn the precise form this danger takes: she might discern that a path would pose little danger to her but would threaten the life of her mortal companions, but she wouldn't learn if that danger is from harsh weather, wild beasts, bandits, or a traitor among her own traveling companions.

If the Sidereal uses this Charm to evaluate multiple routes and chooses to take a particularly dangerous option, successfully completing her journey counts as fulfilling an auspicious prospect (p. XX).

Choosing for Fangs

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Sail 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Ship-Commanding Attitude

The Sidereal and her chosen enforcers impose discipline through fear, working her crew hard without a single complaint.

The Sidereal can use this Charm after she or a subordinate acting under her orders imposes disciplinary measures on a member of a group the Sidereal holds direct authority over — her ship's crew, soldiers under her command, etc. She makes a special (Charisma + Sail) threaten roll against all group members. Affected characters suffer the following:

- They can't protest or complain about the Sidereal or their working conditions. No matter how much they resent her, they won't speak out. This doesn't prevent acts of disloyalty, only expressions of discontent.
- Quitting their job requires entering a Decision Point and citing a Major or Defining Intimacy to spend three Willpower.
- They suffer -1 Resolve against the Sidereal's persuade and threaten rolls and those of characters acting on her orders.
- If the Sidereal uses Ship-Commanding Attitude against them, they're treated as having a Major Intimacy supporting her influence rather than a Minor one.

A character who upholds a Major or Defining Intimacy of courage, recklessness, audacity, or anger by challenging the Sidereal's authority is freed from this effect.

Iron Drill Exercise

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Sail 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Choosing for Fangs

The Sidereal sets a formidable example, her every action and command honing her crew's discipline, seamanship, and expertise.

The Sidereal spends a month training a group equivalent to a Size (Charisma) battle group (**Exalted**, p. 206). This regimen consists of ordering that group in the performance of its duties; its members may not even realize they're learning from her. Completing the training increases the battle group's Drill by one step and grants its members the following benefits:

- +1 permanent Willpower, maximum 5.
- +1 Resolve, maximum 5.
- +1 die on Sail-based dice pools, maximum 10.
- +1 die on dice pools based on Ability of the Sidereal's choice, maximum 10.

This Charm can't train Exalted, player characters, or other beings whose nature makes them inappropriate for inclusion in battle groups.

Special activation rules: If the Sidereal trains characters she holds direct authority over, she may use Choosing for Fangs on them reflexively, waiving its Willpower cost.

Omen of Mutiny

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Sail 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Pilot

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Choosing for Fangs

In the dark of night, the Sidereal listens for whispers of disloyalty from her crew.

As midnight falls, the Sidereal makes a special ([Charisma or Perception] + Sail) read intentions roll against all characters aboard a ship she pilots or all subordinates within an organization she belongs to. She can also use it when she plays games of chance with such characters, but doing so limits this Charm to those she can perceive. She learns which of them currently poses the greatest threat to her authority if she beats that character's Guile. For every three extra successes, her player can ask the Storyteller one of the following questions:

- How dangerous is the threat he poses?

- What Intimacies does he have toward me?
- Does he have support from others in the crew or organization?
- What's the least amount of force I could use to make him fall in line?

If the Sidereal disciplines that character the following morning, she can use Choosing for Fangs for free.

Walls of Salt and Ash

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One day

Prerequisite Charms: Salt-Into-Ash Sleight

The Sidereal traces the Lesser Sign of the Captain on a ship's prow in glimmering yellow stardust, warding it against the direst perils of otherworldly seas.

Hostile enemies of fate cannot willingly come aboard the warded ship unless their Essence exceeds the Sidereal's or they spend one Willpower. Un-Exalted enemies of fate suffer +1 target number on rolls aboard it.

Implicit Admiralty Assumption

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Sail 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Omen of Mutiny

The Greater Sign of the Captain shines in the Sidereal's left eye — bright enough to be seen, unless she covers it — as she effects assumed importance.

The Sidereal makes a special (Charisma + Sail) influence roll. Characters whose Resolve is beaten by this will assume the Sidereal is the direct superior of whoever present has the most apparent authority. If it's more plausible, onlookers may assume the Sidereal holds a position in another organization that's analogous in authority to that character's superior. This belief counts as a Major Intimacy. The illusion is broken if the Sidereal explicitly claims an authority, privilege, or position she doesn't legitimately possess.

The apparent authority figure is affected as well, though his position counts a Defining Intimacy opposing this influence. Different characters may draw different assumptions, and the Sidereal received no knowledge of what affected characters believe. Resisting this influence requires entering a Decision Point and spending three Willpower.

Mirror-Shattering Method

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Pilot

Duration: One journey

Prerequisite Charms: Serendipitous Voyage, Stone-Skipping Spirit

Casting a handful of salt into a body of water — even if it's only a puddle — the Sidereal opens a vortex leading to a secret sea, its winds bearing flower petals and butterflies.

The Sidereal leads a ship or other vessel capable of traversing sea or sky into the secret sea. While it's separate from Creation, location and movement within it correlates to Creation, letting a journey through it lead to a distant destination. The ship can travel over what would be dry land and always enjoys Speed bonuses from currents and wind, but it's impossible to perceive Creation from the ship or deliberately navigate toward a destination; instead, the ship's journey ends at a destination that will prove beneficial to the Sidereal or her Circle's goals or to someone she wishes to help. If possible, based on the distance traveled, this will be a body of water that's safe and unobserved. Alternatively, she and her Circle may swim through the sea, twice as fast as normal.

It's possible to observe the ship's movement from Creation as a slight shimmer in the wind, requiring a difficulty 7 (Perception + Awareness) roll to detect. It's impossible to track without magic like Unshakeable Bloodhound Technique (**Exalted**, p. 410); rolls to do so suffer a -5 penalty. Other Sidereals using Mirror-Shattering Method can interact with the ship; magic like Silver Curtain Parted (**Lunars**, p. 249) can let characters board the ship if they detect it.

Alternatively, the Sidereal can lead a journey through the sea to other worlds: Yu-Shan's quicksilver sea; the Demon City's ocean, who is the Yozi Kimberly; the Underworld's many rivers, etc. Such travel always takes five days, leading to a destination as above.

Meticulous Disaster Agenda

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Mirror-Shattering Method, Yellow Sky Augury

The Sidereal trades safety for expedience, beckoning one of the many troubles listed in the Division of Journeys' records of peril to win Mercury's favor for her ship by overcoming it.

While traveling aboard a ship, the Sidereal foretells a disaster it will face if it continues on its course. Her player chooses the general nature of the danger — “a storm”, “Fair Folk,” “privateers,” etc. The Storyteller determines the specifics so that it can pose a significant

challenge to her and her Circle and other allies. The threat can't come from aboard the ship, ruling out mutiny and the like.

If the Storyteller thinks imminent peril suits the current story, the disaster occurs before the next sunrise or sunset; otherwise, it occurs as soon as dramatically appropriate. Either way, the Sidereal predicts the time of its occurrence with sufficient accuracy for those aboard ship to prepare for it if they heed her.

If the Sidereal and her companions overcome the challenge, a sudden gale of golden wind propels her ship forward with tremendous force, sending it far enough along its course that the time needed to complete the remainder of the journey is divided by (Essence), though never sooner than the next sunrise or sunset. If the ship's captain heeded her warning, he gains -1 target number on unopposed Sail rolls for the rest of the journey.

Reset: Once per journey.

Disaster-Accelerating Expedience

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Sail 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Shaping (Fate)

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Meticulous Disaster Agenda

Tugging at the thread of a crisis that yet awaits her, the Sidereal pulls it forward — why put off for tomorrow what can be done today?

Upon learning of some future danger, suffering, or disaster that she's likely to face in the future, the Sidereal rolls (Intelligence + Sail) to ensure it happens sooner than normally would. The difficulty depends on how far in the future that disaster lies: difficulty 1 for days, difficulty 3 for weeks, difficulty 5 for months, 7 for years, or 10 for anything more. If the disaster is the result of magic like God-King's Shrike, she makes an opposed roll instead.

Additionally, if accelerating the disaster requires changes in the decisions of nontrivial characters, the Sidereal's roll must beat their Resolve and leverage at least a Minor Intimacy. They can enter a Decision Point to resist for one Willpower, unconsciously breaking from the course fate has prepared for them.

If the Sidereal succeeds, the disaster occurs at the next dramatically appropriate sunrise or sunset. Though it comes early, it's diminished or flawed in some way that gives the Sidereal a significant advantage in overcoming it, taking into consideration the reduced time to prepare for it. A mutiny occurs before her entire crew turns against her; the assassin sent against her turns out to be mortal rather than an outcaste; a hurricane befalls her ship while it's near a refuge where the storm can be more easily weathered.

Overcoming the challenge counts as fulfilling an auspicious prospect (p. XX).

Additionally, fate ensures the Sidereal won't face a similar peril for a year and a day, barring magical intervention. They may loom in her future, like an impending mutiny, but

won't boil over into outright disaster until that time's passed.

Dire Squall Forewarning

Cost: 30m, 1wp; **Mins:** Sail 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Shaping (Fate)

Duration: Until the disaster occurs

Prerequisite Charms: Disaster-Accelerating Expedience

The Sidereal speaks of the ocean's perils and seafarer's sins, condemning a ship to Mercury's disfavor unless its captain heeds her warning.

The Sidereal gives a fearsome admonition to a ship's captain, rolling (Intelligence + Sail) to introduce a fact about a disaster that will befall the ship. As with Meticulous Disaster Agenda, the Sidereal's player chooses the general nature of the disaster. A peril that would challenge a ship of mortals is difficulty 3; if the Sidereal wishes to pose a challenge worthy of supernatural characters aboard the ship, this increases to (5 + the highest Essence among them). She can't predict such great perils unless a supernatural character of appropriate Essence is aboard the ship.

If successful, the disaster occurs at a time chosen by the Sidereal, though she must give the ship at least (5 + highest Essence of characters aboard ship) days to prepare. If it occurs onscreen — typically when it's used on player characters or when a Sidereal player character arranges to be present for it — the Storyteller should determine the details of the disaster to make it a challenge for the ship. If it occurs offscreen, resolve it as an opposed roll against the Sidereal's using the most appropriate (Attribute + Ability). Whoever aboard the ship has the highest dice pool rolls.

The Sidereal's warning must include a route that the target ship can take to ensure the disaster never happens: "head due east," "take shelter in this nearby cove," "stay in port," etc. By default, it can be no greater than an inconvenient task (**Exalted**, p. 216); 3+ extra successes lets her choose a serious task, while 6+ allows a life-changing task. Regardless of severity, the journey must be feasible within the time given. The disaster is also averted if the Sidereal ends this Charm prematurely.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by accomplishing a legendary social goal with Sail rolls or Sail Charms.

Five Ordeals Odyssey

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Sail 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Until the challenge is overcome

Prerequisite Charms: Any ten Sail Charms

The Sidereal casts a prayer strip bearing the Scripture of the Maiden at Sea into the air as she

confronts an adversary or obstacle; the prayer strip hangs in the air, wreathed in dandelion-hued lightning.

The Sidereal can use this Charm when confronted with any enemy, obstacle, or other threat to her safety or progress while aboard a ship or other vessel that travels sea or sky. She and any other Sidereals waive the Willpower cost to use Excellencies to reduce target numbers for rolls with any Ability. Non-Sidereals gain -1 target number on rolls to overcome the challenge.

If the Sidereal and her allies defeat their enemies or prevail over a challenge, her prayer strip erupts into a conflagration of lightning, fire, and thunder, wreaking overwhelming destruction on nearby enemies, natural features, and other phenomena that comprise part of the challenge or are related to it. Defeating an enemy ship's crew might decimate a fleet it belongs to; navigating through a storm could disperse it; a calm that's stranded her ship gives way to a powerful wind driving her to her destination. This won't kill nontrivial characters, though it may incapacitate them; the specifics of the destruction are up to the Storyteller.

If the Sidereal is defeated or gives up or it becomes impossible to overcome the challenge, this Charm ends. She rolls (Essence) dice, losing Limit equal to her successes.

Reset: Once per story.

Survival — The Ship's Wheel

Sidereal Survival Charms evince their prowess as wayfarers, trackers, and wilderness guides. A Sidereal may become one with the wilderness, mirroring it as it mirrors her; like the Maiden Entombed, she dwells within that which is in her own image. These Charms urge perseverance against even the most insurmountable odds, empowering a Sidereal with the tenacious might of the Ship's Wheel. While Survival is most often rolled with Intelligence, Perception, and Wits, Sidereal Survival Charms also benefit from high Charisma and Stamina.

The Scripture of the Maiden Entombed

Once, there was a maiden...

...who lived in a tomb, and the tomb was made in her image.

Because she lived in a tomb, she became like the dead.

She slept, and dreamed,

and sometimes, woke, and walked within the confines of her tomb.

"Why do you move?" her own ghost asked. "Why walk at all?"

"I am not trapped while yet I run," said she.

Adopting the Untamed Face

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal mirrors the fates of the world's beasts, walking a pattern older than humanity.

Animals count as having a Minor Tie of familiarity toward the Sidereal, as do shapeshifters capable of turning into animals — Lunars, Sidereals with Feathered Cloak Trick (p. XX), etc. She ignores the Resolve bonus for lacking a common language (**Exalted**, p. 221) against such characters.

Becoming the Wilderness

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Survival 1, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One day

Prerequisite Charms: None

Weaving a cat's cradle from the fate of the land around her, the Sidereal makes the world a mirror of her soul.

The Sidereal gains the following benefits:

- She adds (Essence) dice on Awareness and Survival rolls.
- She reduces environmental penalties on actions with all Abilities by one.
- Environmental hazards' damage rolls suffer +1 target number against her.
- When she forages for food, she finds enough to feed (extra successes) additional characters for a day.

Creation's Subtle Whisper

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Survival 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Becoming the Wilderness

The land whispers to the Sidereal, telling her what she must know.

The Sidereal communes with the surrounding region with a (Perception + Survival) roll against difficulty 1-5, based on her familiarity with it and any impediments to interacting directly with its flora, fauna, and natural features. Success lets her player asks the Storyteller one of the following questions, plus an additional question for every 3 extra successes:

- What's a relevant detail about nearby flora or fauna?
- What's the overall mood of the nearby region's spirits?

- What's a nearby manse, demesne, or other place of power that I'd be interested in, and where is it?
- What's the most significant threat to the land itself, and where is it? This is typically a shadowland, bordermarch, baleful sorcerous working, or other large-scale supernatural force.

If the Storyteller doesn't have an answer in mind, the Sidereal's player should provide one, as if introducing a fact.

Reset: Once per scene.

World-Witness Concentration

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Survival 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Becoming the Wilderness

The Sidereal's piercing scrutiny discerns the subtle tracks left by thoughts, words, and abstract qualia.

On a successful tracking roll, the Sidereal also learns a relevant and useful fact about her quarry, plus an additional such fact for every three extra successes: his intended destination, his emotional state when he left the tracks, his physical appearance, etc. She can oppose magical concealment that's otherwise perfect, like a Solar's Traceless Passage.

Poetic Sacrifice Insurance

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal reminds the world of the great sacrifices she must one day make in its service, winning a reprieve from her current suffering.

The Sidereal can use this Charm when she fails a roll with any Ability against an environmental hazard, trap, or similar danger or to navigate a marine hazard (**Exalted**, p. 244) to roll again. It receives the benefits of all magic used to enhance the first roll; the Sidereal can use additional Charms as well. If she succeeds, she gains one Willpower.

Stronger Than This Job

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Survival 5, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Poetic Sacrifice Insurance

The Sidereal endures whatever ordeals her job might require, persisting through to the end of her shift.

The Sidereal ignores up to (Stamina/2) points of penalty on a physical roll with any Ability, adding them as bonus dice. This doesn't affect environmental penalties, penalties for poor lighting, and other penalties based on factors external to her.

If the Sidereal's performing menial labor for an employer, this Charm's duration is extended for the entirety of her shift.

Sky Spirit Demand

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal strives to mirror a spirit's fate, becoming his reflection as he becomes hers.

A roll to instill a single spirit with an Intimacy reflecting one of the Sidereal's goals succeeds automatically — but in return, that spirit also automatically instills the Sidereal with such an Intimacy. Neither character can resist with Willpower, nor can they voluntarily weaken the instilled Intimacy unless they enter a Decision Point and cite another Intimacy of equal or greater intensity. Air elementals and other spirits associated with air must cite a Defining Intimacy in this Decision Point. Once one character has done so, both are free to weaken their Intimacies.

Reset: This Charm can only be used against a spirit once per story.

Sky-and-Rain Mantra

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Survival 3, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One day

Prerequisite Charms: Sky Spirit Demand

Gazing skyward as she makes the Lesser Sign of the Ship's Wheel, the Sidereal shapes the skies to

create or remove obstacles.

The Sidereal rolls (Stamina + Survival) to change the local weather. The difficulty of the roll depends on how drastic a change she wishes to make: creating a light rain or mist or creating or stilling light winds is difficulty 1; strengthening heavy rain to a thunderstorm or dissipating a storm might be difficulty 2-3. Creating a blizzard or thunderstorm out of nowhere or diminishing a hurricane to a severe storm is difficulty 5+. If successful, the Sidereal's changes take place over a matter of minutes or hours, depending on how extensive they are. The weather can extend up to (Stamina + extra successes) miles from where the Sidereal uses it. It lasts until at least the end of this Charm's duration.

The Sidereal may suffer a penalty for creating unseasonable weather or weather that doesn't naturally occur in that region. She can't create extreme natural disasters like hurricanes, tsunamis, or tornadoes unless local conditions are already such that it's likely that one could form naturally; such rolls are at difficulty 6+.

While using *Becoming the Wilderness*, the Sidereal's immune to any weather she creates with this Charm.

Reset: Once per day.

Entombed Soul Monument

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Survival 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Stackable

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: *Becoming the Wilderness*

The Sidereal has become one with the world's heart, and the world with her own.

After an hour spent interacting with a natural landscape, the Sidereal buries one of her Intimacies within it, giving it form as a small natural feature. Her duty to Heaven might become a natural pillar of stone; compassion might become a fruit-bearing plant or freshwater spring; her love for another might become a tree that faintly resembles them.

The buried Intimacy can't modify the Sidereal's Resolve, justify persuade actions against her, or be cited in Decision Points, and it can't be detected unless her behavior reveals it. (It can still be used for other purposes, like certain Charms). She loses these benefits while within long range of the natural feature. She can bury multiple Intimacies.

The Sidereal can't voluntarily end this Charm unless she's within medium range of the feature. This Charm ends if it's destroyed.

Tomb-Parole Sanction

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Survival 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: (Essence + Charisma) days

Prerequisite Charms: Adopting the Untamed Face, Sky Spirit Demand

The Sidereal dreams another life, escaping the stony tomb of her body to slumber in another's grave.

As the Sidereal sleeps, she projects her lucidly dreaming mind into an animal or spirit within long range, her slumbering body turning to stone as she leaves it. Alternatively, her player may leave the choice of host up to the Storyteller, extending the range to one mile. Against nontrivial targets, this requires a special (Charisma + Survival) influence roll. If successful, she enters her target's mind:

- She experiences the world through his senses. She can make Perception rolls, using her own dice pools and Charms and benefitting from her host's sense-enhancing Merits (but not a spirit's Charms). Depending on her rolls, she may notice details that he overlooks, or vice versa.
- She can make influence rolls against her host, letting her dreams seep into its mind as fleeting whims or sudden impulses. Against trivial targets, she succeeds without needing to roll and doesn't need to leverage Intimacies for persuade rolls.
- If she wears a resplendent destiny, her host seems appropriate for the role: under a soldier's destiny, a wolf might seem a well-trained war hound; under a sailor's guise, a gladenymph appears to be an ocean spirit.

Other characters' familiars are immune to this Charm. If the Sidereal uses it on her own familiar, she extends its duration to Indefinite and ignores its range limit.

The Sidereal's petrified body gains +5 soak and Hardness 20. This Charm ends if she takes **decisive** damage. If her host dies, this Charm ends and the Sidereal suffers (10 – Essence) dice of unavoidable aggravated damage. Exorcism can also expel her, dealing the same damage.

Beloved World Embrace

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Becoming the Wilderness, Poetic Sacrifice Insurance

The world will not betray its servant; infernos and hurricanes know her as a friend.

The Sidereal rolls (Charisma + Survival) against the difficulty of an environmental hazard within long range. If the hazard was created by a character's magic, he makes an opposing (Attribute + Ability) roll; the Sidereal must beat both the hazard's difficulty and the opposed roll. If successful, the Sidereal wins over the hazard. She may have it move one range band in direction and it won't damage her, her allies, and anyone or anything else she designates for the rest of the scene.

Alternatively, the Sidereal makes a (Charisma + Survival) persuade roll against an elemental or a spirit associated with an element or the wilderness. This influence is difficult to overturn (*Exalted*, p. 221); both the overturning character and the spirit must pay an additional Willpower.

Wilderness-Commanding Practice

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Survival 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Until completed

Prerequisite Charms: Beloved World Embrace

Mirroring the fate of the world around her, the Sidereal bends the wilderness to her will.

The Sidereal can shape the geography of the land around her, rolling (Charisma + Survival) to transform, relocate, create, or destroy a natural feature or localized weather phenomenon within long range. She need not take overt action to do so; the world changes to accommodate her desires. She can't shape buildings and other artificial structures.

Shaping natural features that span up to (Essence/2, rounded up) range bands can be done instantly. Tasks that could be accomplished with mundane efforts and a day's work are difficulty 1-2; other changes are difficulty 3+, based on the size, complexity, and durability of the natural feature and the nature of the change. Relocations and small changes are easiest; significant changes are more difficult; and creation and destruction are hardest. Relocated features can't be moved more than (Essence) range bands.

Altering larger natural features—changing a river's course, raising a large hill from the earth, stirring a thunderstorm—is an extended roll. The difficulty for each interval is as above; the goal number is (interval difficulty x5). The interval is one week by default, but more significant alterations may have longer intervals at the Storyteller's discretion. Creating or destroying mountains, oceans, islands, and other vast geographic features is possible with this Charm, but would be the work of centuries.

Marshalling Infinite Strength

Cost: 5m, 1wp (5m per round/hour); **Mins:** Survival 5, Essence 3

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: One task

Prerequisite Charms: Stronger Than This Job

Lashing her fate to that of what her job demands, the Sidereal does not allow herself to cease from her labors.

Once the Sidereal begins a task with any Ability, she can continue to do so indefinitely, regardless of fatigue, injury, or other conditions. This doesn't prevent her from suffering such

effects. If another character acts in a way that would make it impossible for the Sidereal to meaningfully perform the task, she waives an Excellency's cost to reduce the target number of an opposing roll with any Ability. She can roll (Stamina + Survival) against magic that doesn't normally allow opposed rolls; the character using it makes an appropriate (Attribute + Ability) roll if necessary.

If the Sidereal dies before completing the task, both her ghost and the hungry ghost that resides within her corpse will continue her labors. Her next incarnation may feel an inexplicable sense of urgency surrounding the Sidereal's memories of the task if it remains unfulfilled.

The Sidereal must pay five motes each hour to maintain this Charm. In combat, she must do so at the end of each turn other than the one in which she uses this Charm. It ends if she takes any non-reflexive action that's not related to the task or basic sustenance.

Reset: Once per day.

Oar-Cracking Exertion

Cost: 1ahl; **Mins:** Survival 5, Essence 4

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Marshalling Infinite Strength

Straining against the limits of her strength, the Sidereal fulfills her duty to the world no matter the cost.

The Sidereal can use this Charm against an obstacle to a task that supports a Defining Intimacy or that would make material progress toward a major character or story goal. She may waive the cost of up to three Charms or other effects she uses against the obstacle. Effects with ongoing durations end once the scene does. The Sidereal can also reset Charms to use against the obstacle; these also count toward the three-Charm limit. She can't use these with Charms that create, enhance, or defend against attacks.

If the Sidereal's task supports a Defining Principle of duty, she waives this Charm's health level cost.

Reset: Once per day unless reset by upholding the Intimacy the task aligned with or fulfilling the goal it advanced. Harbingers can reset it by fulfilling an auspicious prospect.

Dreaming the Wild Lands

Cost: 20m, 1wp; **Mins:** Survival 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: (Perception) days

Prerequisite Charms: Any ten Survival Charms

The Sidereal tosses a prayer strip bearing the Scripture of the Eternal Maiden to dance in the wind about her, casting off shapeless golden phantasms as her consciousness spreads throughout the land.

As long as the Sidereal can see her prayer strip, her senses are magnified, granting the following benefits:

- She can make Perception-based rolls out to (Perception) miles from the prayer strip.
- She's aware of all Survival rolls within her sense's range and can grant -1 or +1 target number.
- She can communicate mentally with any animal or spirit within her sense's range without needing a shared language.
- She can convince animals and spirits to act against someone she can perceive with a special (Manipulation + Survival) roll. This both instills them with a Major Tie of hatred toward that character and persuades them to act against him in some way, supported by the instilled Intimacy and requiring a Decision Point to resist as usual. Animals can't spend Willpower to resist unless they're someone's familiar or are otherwise magically empowered.
- She can pay three motes to use Tomb-Parole Sanction reflexively while awake, experiencing both her senses and her host's rather than turning to stone. She can use it on multiple hosts. If she perceives the same thing through multiple hosts, she makes one roll but adds dice equal to the effective Size of that group (**Exalted**, p. 206) and ignores penalties that don't affect all hosts.
- If she knows Wilderness-Commanding Practice, she can use it on any natural feature she perceives regardless of distance. It costs only five motes when used for changes that can be completed instantly.

The prayer strip is clearly visible for a mile; noticing it from further away requires a (Perception + Awareness) roll. Weather and other environmental conditions can't obscure it.

Thrown — The Gull

Sidereal Thrown Charms excel in violence from afar, sending axes, knives, and javelins on fatal journeys. Weapons aren't the only things these Charms set in motion; all that move across the battlefield can be afflicted with the Gull's insatiable wanderlust. The undead are especially vulnerable to these Charms, tormented like the ghosts pierced by the Maiden and Shadow's baleful thorns. In combat, Sidereal Thrown restricts and controls the movement of enemies, forcing them into disadvantageous positions and maintaining distance as a means of defense. While Thrown is most often rolled with Dexterity, Sidereal Thrown Charms also benefit from high Wits.

The Scripture of the Maiden and Shadow

Once, there was a maiden...

...whose shadow fled from her. She chased it over fire and stone.

She chased her shadow to a monster's mouth. It went right in. It didn't know how to stop.

The maiden caught her shadow in a deep cave full of ghosts. It turned into a ball of thorns that wrapped around her. When the ghosts pricked their fingers on the thorns, they came to life. This didn't make anyone very happy.

The maiden made a ladder from the ghost's bones, but it only pointed downward. "Why go on?" her shadow asked.

"I can't quit now," said she.

Insatiable Weapon Wanderlust

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Thrown 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Uniform, Versatile

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Whispering to her weapon of distant lands to her weapon, the Sidereal fills its heart with unquenchable wanderlust.

The Sidereal's attack extends its range by one band, maximum long. If the attack roll's target number is reduced, she extends the attack's range by two bands instead.

With Thrown 5, Essence 3, the Sidereal may pay a one-Willpower surcharge to extend this Charm's maximum range to extreme.

Returning Swallow Flight

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Thrown 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only, Versatile

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal's grip lingers on her weapon even after it leaves her hand, carried toward her enemy to drag him back.

An enemy damaged by the Sidereal's **decisive** attack is dragged one range band toward her. If he collides with an object or surface, he suffers an additional (Thrown/2, rounded up) dice of **decisive** damage, ignoring Hardness. This is normally bashing, though some impacts may deal lethal damage.

Shrike-Roosting Gesture

Cost: 3m (1m); **Mins:** Thrown 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Returning Swallow Flight

The Sidereal tugs at a strand of fate that tethers her to something she's recently held, calling it to hand.

The Sidereal recalls to her hand an object that she's held or had on her person at some point in the scene. If there's any obstacle to this, she rolls (Wits + Thrown) against a difficulty set by the Storyteller or a character's opposing (Attribute + Ability) roll. The Sidereal must have a free hand to catch the object to use this Charm.

This Charm costs only one mote when used to retrieve a Thrown weapon.

Pelican Aloft Departure

Cost: —(+2m); **Mins:** Thrown 4, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Versatile

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Returning Swallow Flight

Closing her fingers into a fist as her weapon flies, the Sidereal turns her lingering grasp into a forceful blow.

The Sidereal may pay a two-mote surcharge to knock an enemy back with Returning Swallow Flight rather than dragging him to her.

Shadow-Piercing Needle

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Dual, Versatile

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal's weapon unspools into a shimmering yellow strand of needle-sharp Essence, piercing both armor and soul.

The Sidereal's attack ignores her enemy's soak and Hardness (including any from armor). Instead, he's treated as having soak (Resolve + current temporary Willpower) and Hardness (Resolve) against the attack, if these are lower than his own values. He can raise these values

further with applicable magic.

Pain Amplification Stratagem

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Dual

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Shadow-Piercing Needle

The Sidereal weeps tears of blood onto her weapon, mourning the violence she is about to inflict.

The Sidereal's damage roll gains -1 target number. If her enemy has a -2 or worse wound penalty, it gains -2 target number instead. If she has a positive Tie to him, the attack supports it; such is her hypothetical sorrow.

Willful Weapon Method

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal throws both her weapon and its shadow, speeding inexorably toward her enemy's heart.

The Sidereal makes a **decisive** attack. If she misses, she reflexively makes a second attack with her weapon's shadow against the same target, with (Initiative/2, rounded down) base damage. Success on the second attack doesn't reset the Sidereal's Initiative; she instead loses Initiative equal to her successes on the damage roll. If she hits, she gains one Willpower.

Maiden-and-Shadow Form

Cost: 10m; **Mins:** Thrown 4, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Aggravated, Dual, Form

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Any four Thrown Charms

The Sidereal's shadow rises from the earth, embracing her gently as it splinters into countless thorns of darkness that encircle her hands and limbs.

The Sidereal gains the following benefits:

- She ignores penalties for flurrying attacks with movement actions.
- At the start of each of her turns, her shadow-thorns inflict (Essence, maximum 5) dice of lethal damage, ignoring Hardness, on enemies within close range. Enemies who hit her with unarmed or natural attacks also suffer this damage. It's aggravated against the undead.
- Against the undead, her **decisive** attacks add (Essence, maximum 5) damage dice.
- She's immune to magic that affects her shadow.

Special activation rules: The Sidereal can enter this Form reflexively when she succeeds on a disengage roll with 5+ total successes.

Impromptu Betrayal Trick

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Willful Weapon Technique

Once the Sidereal's sent her enemy's weapon flying from his grasp, there's no telling where it could end up.

When the Sidereal successfully disarms a character, she can use this Charm to reflexively make a **decisive** attack using the disarmed weapon against a character within medium range of its former wielder. She suffers no penalties for attacking with an artifact weapon attuned by another character.

This Charm's Willpower cost is waived if the Sidereal attacks an enemy suffering from Life-Gets-Worse Approach.

Careless Surveillance Tactic

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Thrown 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Impromptu Betrayal Trick

The Sidereal's foes can't predict her attacks if she doesn't know she's making them.

When an enemy comes within close range of the Sidereal, a weapon leaps from her hand unbidden, making a **decisive** attack against him. The target rolls (Perception + Wits) against her attack roll. If he fails, it becomes a surprise attack, inflicting -2 Defense.

Against enemies of fate, the Sidereal can attack whenever they move a range band toward her — voluntarily or otherwise — as long as they end their movement within medium range.

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by crashing an enemy or dealing **decisive** damage with Willful Weapon Method.

Life-Gets-Worse Approach

Cost: 3m (1wp); **Mins:** Thrown 4, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only, Versatile

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Returning Swallow Flight

As the Sidereal's weapon strikes true, it gives off a soft yellow radiance that calls to things traveling through the air, beckoning them to join it.

If the Sidereal's **decisive** attack deals damage, her weapon is embedded in her enemy where it struck him, increasing his wound penalty by one as its radiance draws dust, debris, and the occasional insect into his wounds.

When a ranged attack against another character misses, the Sidereal may pay one Willpower to redirect it against him. The attacker makes a new attack roll, retaining all effects that applied to the first roll. **Decisive** attacks use the Sidereal's Initiative to calculate damage rather than the attacker's and reset her to base if successful. Any Initiative a **withering** attack would award goes to the Sidereal.

A character may pay three Initiative to roll (Strength + Athletics) roll opposing the Sidereal's (Wits + Thrown) roll, dislodging the weapon and ending this Charm's effects if he succeeds. This is a miscellaneous action that can't be flurried. Outside of combat, it can be removed with a difficulty 3 (Intelligence + Medicine) roll that takes five minutes to perform.

Shining Flock of Adversities

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Dual

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Life-Gets-Worse Approach

Promising that things can always be worse, the Sidereal causes a weapon embedded in her foe to dissolve into a golden whirlwind, drawing in stray arrows, stones and debris, and the occasional small animal.

The Sidereal makes an undodgeable (Wits + Thrown) **withering** or **decisive** attack against an enemy afflicted by Life-Gets-Worse Approach and all other enemies within short range of him.

The primary target suffers damage normally if hit; secondary targets suffer (Essence) dice of **withering** or **decisive** damage, ignoring soak and Hardness. Such **withering** damage doesn't award Initiative. Secondary targets can't suffer more damage than the primary target.

On a **withering** attack, she can't gain more than (Essence) Initiative from Any attack roll. On a **decisive** attack, each damage roll has (Wits) base damage and divide the Sidereal's Initiative evenly among them, rounded up, to determine their damage. If her primary target is crashed or suffers 3+ **decisive** damage, the embedded weapon dissolves into his Essence, becoming impossible to remove for the scene.

If the Sidereal has any familiars within short range of the primary target, she may have them be drawn into close range of him. One of her familiars may reflexively make an attack against him: **withering** if the Sidereal's was **decisive**, or vice versa. This counts as its attack for the round, or the next round if it's already attacked.

Reset: This Charm can't be used against the same enemy more than once per scene.

Frayed Skein Entanglement

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Versatile

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Pelican Aloft Departure

Unspooling a length of an enemy's fate, the Sidereal pulls them about as she pleases.

The Sidereal makes a (Strength + Thrown) grapple gambit against an enemy within medium range. Her Defense isn't penalized and she can flurry normally while grappling. If she subsequently throws her enemy, she sends him flying two range bands in any direction.

Against enemies of fate, the Sidereal instead binds them with a chain of golden stardust. Any target number reduction to her attack roll also applies to the Initiative and control roll.

Magpie's Favorite Bauble

Cost: —(+3m); **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Shrike-Roosting Gesture

Making a throwing gesture with an empty hand, the Sidereal catches and draws in the thread of an object's fate.

The Sidereal can pay a three-mote surcharge to use Shrike-Roosting Gesture on an object she hasn't handled that scene as long as it's not in active use, treating it as a pickpocketing roll.

Disarmed weapons are valid targets, though artifacts remain attuned to their wielders.

With an Essence 3 repurchase, stealing an artifact weapon breaks its attunement, but the original wielder's motes remain committed for the scene, freeing the Sidereal from needing to commit her own.

Unmoved Mover Principle

Cost: 5m, 2i; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Pelican Aloft Departure

Swirling a stardust-wreathed finger through the weave of fate, the Sidereal creates a reverberation that sends foes flying.

The Sidereal can disengage without moving as long as an enemy is within close range. If an enemy fails his opposed roll, his player determines whether he's knocked back one range band or falls prone. They don't cross the intervening space; their location is simply redefined by fate. Until the Sidereal's next turn, affected characters must pay two Initiative to rise from prone or move back into close range.

Essence Thorn Practice

Cost: 8m, 3i, 1wp; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Aggravated, Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Pain Amplification Stratagem

The Sidereal dispenses with the intermediate steps of murder from a distance, unconcerned with the particulars of her weapon's flight or whether she has a weapon at all.

The Sidereal makes an unblockable **decisive** attack against an enemy within medium range, ignoring environmental penalties, poor visual conditions, and even full cover. If she has no weapon, she may create a blade or barb of yellow Essence. The attack has (Essence) dice of base for each range band it crosses, maximum fifteen. This ignores Hardness. It doesn't include her Initiative or reset her to base. Against undead, it deals aggravated damage and gains -1 target number on the damage roll.

If the Sidereal wishes, she may follow in the wake of a successful attack, moving up to close range with her target. This counts as her movement action for the round.

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by incapacitating a nontrivial enemy with a **decisive** attack that resets the Sidereal's base Initiative.

Maiden-and-Shadow Enlightenment

Cost: —; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Maiden-and-Shadow Form, any five Thrown Charms

The Sidereal's ceaseless pursuit of the art of killing at a distance has led her through the gates of sublime transcendence.

Upon purchasing this Charm, the Sidereal chooses a Sidereal Martial Art. She can learn it without needing the requisite Martial Arts Charms. She can use it with all Thrown weapons, though this doesn't make it compatible with other styles that use them (unless the Sidereal also purchases this Charm for them). All her Thrown Charms count as Versatile for that style and as Martial Arts for any of its Charms that interact with other styles, like Prismatic Arrangement of Creation Form (p. XX).

This Charm can be purchased any number of times.

Three-Body Trilemma

Cost: 10m, 1i, 1wp; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only, Versatile

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Unmoved Mover Principle

The Sidereal's weapon intertwines her fate with her foe's, making them indistinguishable to the world's eyes.

After resetting to base Initiative from a **decisive** attack, the Sidereal may use this Charm to trade places with her target, appearing just in time to catch her weapon from the air. She doesn't cross the intervening space. This can't affect enemies substantially larger than her unless she uses Loom-Shifting Nudge (p. XX).

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by reaching Initiative 12+.

Flown Beyond the World

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 4

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only, Versatile

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Three-Body Trilemma

Looping a strand of saffron Essence around herself and her foe, the Sidereal pulls them both down into the vasty depth to fight alone.

The Sidereal can use this Charm on her turn to reflexively make an unblockable gambit against an enemy within medium range. The gambit's difficulty is the target's (higher of Essence or 3). If successful, both of them vanish from the battlefield, reappearing in a vast cavern, full of shadows and thorns, whose location is known only to Mercury. The distance between the two of them remains unchanged. The combatants return to the world once the scene ends, when one of them is incapacitated, or if neither wish to continue fighting. They can also escape by successfully withdrawing from combat (**Exalted**, p. 199), finding a secret path out of the cavern.

The cavern is wide open, allowing the vanished combats to move freely across it in any direction. At the Storyteller's discretion, it may include difficult terrain — stalagmites, briars, etc. — or other natural features. Some claim to have seen strange ghosts within it, though this is unsubstantiated. While the Sidereal and her foe are within it, others can't perceive or interact with them, or vice versa, but magic like Silver Curtain Parted (**Lunars**, p. 249) can let characters follow them into the cavern.

Shadow Migration Tactic

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Essence Thorn Practice, Willful Weapon Method

The Sidereal digs her fingers into someone's shadow and rips it free, flinging it with stolen strength to set its journey in motion.

The Sidereal makes an unarmed (Strength + Thrown) gambit against an enemy within close range. Its difficulty is the target's (higher of Essence or Defense). If successful, she steals his shadow and makes a **decisive** attack with it against another character within medium range, using the same attack roll. This secondary target must be chosen before the gambit's attack roll; if it doesn't beat his Defense, this Charm has no effect. The thrown shadow uses its master's Initiative to determine damage and resets his Initiative instead of the Sidereal's. She can enhance this with other Charms, which must be used before the roll. The shadow eventually returns to its master, though it may dally for a while.

Alternatively, if the Sidereal's somehow lost her shadow, she can replace it with a stolen one. This counts as a sorcerous curse on the victim.

Reset: Once per scene.

Wandering Axe Foresight

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Ceaseless Surveillance Tactic, Shrike-Roosting Gesture

The Sidereal frees her weapon to roam as it pleases, assured that fate will guide it to her enemy's heart.

The Sidereal makes a **decisive** attack against an enemy who's at a location she's been within the past hour. She doesn't throw her weapon at him — instead, she's revealed to have previously thrown a weapon, which only now appears to strike. Accordingly, the actual distance between the Sidereal and her target and any cover is irrelevant, and she doesn't need to aim to attack at medium or even extreme range. If the Sidereal's Initiative is higher than her target's, he rolls (Perception + Awareness) against her attack roll. If he fails, it becomes an ambush (**Exalted**, p. 203).

This Charm can be used outside of combat. The Sidereal and her target rolls Join Battle to determine her Initiative for the attack's damage and whether it's an ambush. Anyone who subsequently examines the weapon glimpses a vision of the Sidereal — though this is vulnerable to arcane fate unless she's wearing a resplendent destiny.

Reset: Once per day. This Charm can't be used against the same character more than once per story.

Unrelenting Torment Technique

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Thrown 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Any ten Thrown Charms

The Sidereal throws a prayer strip bearing the Scripture of the Maiden and Shadow at an enemy; it adheres to him upon impact, wreathing him in an unpleasant, pulsing yellow glow.

The Sidereal makes a gambit against a character within long range who has hostile intentions toward her, even if combat hasn't broken out yet. The gambit's difficulty is the target's base Resolve; no Initiative roll is needed outside of combat.

On success, the strip affixes itself to the target, imposing a -3 penalty on Stealth rolls. He succumbs to an overpowering, irrational desire to harm the Sidereal, preventing him from taking any non-reflexive actions except to move toward her or attack her. He can pay one Willpower to resist this for a turn. If he can't perceive the Sidereal, this Psyche effect subsides until he can.

Unfortunately for this Charm's victim, his aggression is turned back on him. When he attacks or

rushes the Sidereal, she reflexively makes a **withering** or **decisive** attack against him with a hatchet of golden Essence. She can attack him no matter how far away he is, even at extreme range.

A character can attempt to remove the affixed prayer tag with a special gambit, rolling (Strength + Athletics) opposing the Sidereal's (Dexterity + Thrown). A character can substitute a different dice pool with an appropriate stunt. The Initiative roll's difficulty is 8. The prayer strip remains affixed indefinitely if not removed.

The House of Serenity

Ascending Serenity Horoscope

Cost: 1m or 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Any Serenity Ability 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Shaping (Fate), Stackable

Duration: One story

Prerequisite Charms: Any three Serenity Charms

The Sidereal smiles upon those seeking leisure and escape from strife, taking them into the house of Venus.

The Sidereal blesses another character with good fortune in a specific social, political, or business goal: winning a certain farmhand's heart, getting a job with a merchant prince's caravan, securing a position in a queen's court, etc. This costs one mote for mortals or three motes, one Willpower for others. Once per scene, he may gain -1 target number on an influence roll, read intentions roll, or a Bureaucracy roll related to this objective.

Blessing a character requires a constellation-themed interaction with him. Upon taking this Charm, the Sidereal's player chooses two of the below options. Additional options can be purchased for one bonus point or three experience points apiece.

Blissful Idiot Blessing (The Ewer): The Sidereal's target confesses his feelings to someone. If they're reciprocated, she can bless the objection of his attentions reflexively with a second use of this Charm.

Infallible Matchmaker Advice (The Peacock): The Sidereal's target heeds her advice in matters of romance, friendship, or politics. She becomes aware when he does so and can use this Charm reflexively.

Starlit Waltz Invitation (The Musician): The Sidereal's target dances with her.

Leashed Heart's Reward (The Lovers): The Sidereal's target makes a promise to her.

Unexpected Guest Hospitality (The Pillar): The Sidereal's target invites her into his home or shares a meal with her.

The Sidereal can bless multiple characters with this Charm.

Descending Serenity Horoscope

Cost: 1 or 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Any Serenity Ability 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Shaping (Fate), Stackable

Duration: One story

Prerequisite Charms: Any three Serenity Charms

The Sidereal proclaims Venus's disfavor, souring her victim's fortunes in his social life and romantic pursuits.

The Sidereal rolls (Charisma + Serenity Ability) opposing her target's (Wits + Serenity Ability) roll. This costs one mote for mortals or three motes, one Willpower for others. Success curses him, inflicting misfortune on his pursuit of a social, business, or political goal chosen by the Sidereal. Once per scene, the Sidereal's player may impose +1 target number on a influence roll, read intentions roll, or a Bureaucracy roll related to this objective. The Sidereal need not be present.

Cursing a character requires a constellation-themed interaction with him. Upon taking this Charm, the Sidereal's player chooses two of the below options. Additional options can be purchased for one bonus point or three experience points apiece.

Abstemious Monk's Regret (The Musician): The Sidereal's target declines an opportunity to indulge in a sensual pleasure, leisure activity, or casual social event that he enjoys.

Broken Promise Punishment (The Lovers): The Sidereal's target breaks a promise to her. She becomes aware when he does so and can use this Charm reflexively.

Faithless Rake's Doom (The Pillar): The Sidereal's target interferes in or tries to break up a relationship — romantic or otherwise — or ends one of his own relationships.

Foolish Heart Affliction (The Peacock): The Sidereal's target ignores advice he sought from her in matters of romance, friendship, or politics. She becomes aware when he does so and can use this Charm reflexively.

Vexatious Suitor Curse (The Ewer): The Sidereal's target confesses his feelings to someone.

The Sidereal can curse multiple characters with this Charm.

Mystical Bonds

Lunars' bonds with their Solar, Abyssal, or Infernal mate count as relationships, as do Dragon-Blooded's Sworn Kinships.

Celestial Union Understanding

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Any Serenity Ability 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Any three Serenity Charms

The Sidereal understands all the ways fate brings people together.

When the Sidereal witnesses an interaction between two people in a relationship — friends, family, lovers, business partners — she makes a special (Perception + Serenity Ability) read intentions roll against the higher of the two's Guile. Success lets her player asks the Storyteller one of the following questions, plus an additional question for every 3 extra successes:

- What keeps them together?
- What's the biggest problem facing their relationship?
- How far would each of them go to help the other?
- Which one of them should I talk to first if I want to accomplish some specific goal?

If the Storyteller doesn't have an answer in mind for a question, the Sidereal's player should provide one, as if introducing a fact.

Reset: Once per scene.

Spouse-Saving Grace

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Any Serenity Ability 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Any three Serenity Charms

When the Sidereal's partners make fools of themselves, she steps in to repair their reputations.

When a character the Sidereal has a positive Tie toward fails a roll, she can use social influence to leverage that failure as though it were a Minor Tie possessed by characters who observed the failure. The influence it supports depends on the failure's specifics, but the Storyteller should give the Sidereal's player wide leeway, especially if she stunts. She adds (Intimacy) dice on all such influence rolls.

Worthy Cause Demonstration

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Any Serenity Ability 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Any three Serenity Charms

The Sidereal's joy in life makes clear the righteousness of her cause and the wickedness of those who oppose one so serene.

While the Sidereal openly presents herself as a member of a group that is oppressed by or defined by its opposition to another group — a rebellion, enslaved laborers, a heretical cult, an artistic counterculture, the Gold Faction, etc. — those who interact with her are swayed to her side. They count as having a Minor Tie of sympathy to the Sidereal's group and a Minor Tie of condemnation to the other group. If a character already has a Tie a group whose emotional context opposes the one imposed by this Charm, he instead treats that Tie as one step weaker (though the other Tie is imposed normally).

Sway of Unseen Stars

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Any Serenity Ability 4, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Any five Serenity Charms

The Sidereal disguises herself in many seemings, her resplendent destinies shining like stars in the constellation of herself.

When the Sidereal makes an influence roll, it benefits from any of her target's Intimacies that would apply if she were any of her inactive resplendent destinies. If her influence roll beats a target's Guile, she learns what those Intimacies are.

Abandoned Words Curse

Cost: 8m, 1wp (3m, 1wp); **Mins:** Any Serenity Ability 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: One story

Prerequisite Charms: Any five Serenity Charms

Chanting syllables that don't quite form recognizable words in any language and whose broken rhythm never settles on a meter, the Sidereal untethers her listener from language.

The Sidereal makes a special (Manipulation + [Linguistics, Performance, or Socialize]) instill roll against a single character. Success removes his knowledge of all languages, rendering him unable to employ or understand spoken or written communication. The victim may pay one Willpower to regain understanding of a single language for a scene. Once he's done so (Sidereal's Essence) times, this influence ends. Otherwise, it lasts until this Charm ends.

With Essence 5, this Charm's duration becomes Indefinite.

Special activation rules: When the Sidereal curses a character with Descending Serenity

Horoscope, she may use this Charm against him reflexively, reducing its cost to three motes, one Willpower.

Tyrannous Majority Mirror

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Any Serenity Ability 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Worthy Cause Demonstration (x2)

The Sidereal sways public opinion to her cause's side, revealing her opposition's iniquities.

To use this Charm, the Sidereal must be using Worthy Cause Demonstration, unless she's actually a member of the group she's representing. After a few hours or days spent advocating for the group she represents, participating in public events put on by them, or suffering public persecution, she may pay five motes, one Willpower to make a special (Charisma + Serenity Ability) instill roll against all characters who interacted with her during this time.

Success instills a Major Tie of sympathy to the Sidereal's group and a Major Tie of condemnation toward the other. When the Sidereal uses Worthy Cause Demonstration while interacting with affected characters, these count as one step higher. Voluntarily eroding one of these Intimacies costs three Willpower per step. If both are fully eroded, the character's freed from this effect.

While this Charm is active, the Sidereal waives Worthy Cause Demonstration's Willpower cost when using it for the same group.

Without Words, Without the Wordless

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Any Serenity Ability 5, Essence 4

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute, Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Abandoned Words Curse

The Sidereal meditates on one of the forbidden sigil-syllables sealed away within the Demon Prince Elloge, emptying her mind to remedy that which make her vulnerable.

The Sidereal can use this Charm after an influence roll against her that's conveyed through language or a roll against her Guile while she's speaking, writing, signing, etc. She inflicts the Abandoned Words Curse on herself to perfectly defend against the opposing roll.

The Abandoned Words Curse lasts until the story ends. It can resisted with Willpower or negated with magic as usual. At the Storyteller's discretion, a stunt may let a character recover a language without needing to spend a point of Willpower, especially if it draws on an Intimacy.

Reset: Once per story, unless reset when the curse is broken prematurely.

Craft — The Peacock

Sidereal Craft Charms express their renowned prowess as artisans, smiths, and artificers, and their expertise in planning and fulfilling destiny. Under the Peacock's auspices, Sidereals forge pragmatic relationships and communities based on shared goals and common interests, weaving the strands of fate that tie people to each other. Like the Maiden and Lover, they see beauty in all things, tempering even the most monstrous of suitors and enemies into valuable allies. While Craft can be rolled with many Attributes, Sidereal Craft Charms particularly benefit from high Charisma and Perception.

The Scripture of Lover and Maiden

Once, there was a maiden...

...who met a thing that lived outside the world, and there was a beauty to it.

It burned with an unholy wrath that could destroy Creation.

It hated her as much as it loved her.

Its kiss was blood and perfection, for its teeth were sharp.

It offered her power, and with it, hooks to tear her soul.

With care not to burn her fingers, she took it into her life.

"Love is what you make of it," said she.

Elegant Patterns of Fate

Cost: —; **Mins:** Craft 1, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

Creation's destiny is the Sidereal's greatest masterpiece; sustaining the cosmic order renews her creative energies.

The Sidereal gains the following benefits:

- She adds (Craft) dice on Lore and Occult rolls involving knowledge of fate, destiny, and enemies of fate.
- Fulfilling an auspicious prospect or using an Ascending (Caste) Horoscope or Descending (Caste) Horoscope Charm awards craft points as per a basic project (**Exalted**, p. 240).
- Successfully enacting a prophecy awards gold points equal to its highest Ambition Factor.
- She can pay the experience point cost of prophecies with white points, paying five white

points per experience point.

Warp-and-Weft Handiwork

Cost: 5m, 2s/g/wxp; **Mins:** Craft 4, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Elegant Patterns of Fate

The Sidereal draws inspiration from her understanding of fate and destiny, overcoming creative challenges through innovative design.

The Sidereal adds a non-Charm success on a Craft roll. If it's made at target number 4, she adds two successes instead. If she completes a project with that roll, the finished product has an unexpected but useful feature: an outfit might have easily concealed secret pockets, a sword might be durable enough to use for leverage in feats of strength, an artifact's Evocations might incorporate an unexpected theme, etc.

This Charm costs silver points on basic and major projects, gold points on superior projects, and white points on legendary projects.

Elemental Vision

Cost: —; **Mins:** Craft 1, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal's eyes shimmer with the Essence of her patron Maiden's element as she deals with spirits.

Each of the Maidens is associated with an element: Mercury with air, Venus with wood, Mars with fire, Jupiter with water, and Saturn with earth. The Sidereal gains the following benefits with respect to her Maiden's element:

- She adds (Craft) dice on Occult rolls involving elements and other spirits associated with her Maiden's element as well as demesnes, manses, hearthstones, and similar elemental magic. This bonus doesn't apply on Shape Sorcery rolls.
- Her understanding of the element smooths her dealings with its elementals, Dragon-Blooded of the appropriate Aspect, and other supernatural beings associated with it. Such characters count as having a Minor Tie of patience to her unless they have a negative Tie to her.
- She can use Craft instead of the usual Ability for any Perception-based roll against a spirit. Against elementals and other spirits associated with her Maiden's element, she waives

Excellencies' mote costs to reduce such roll's target numbers.

- She can use Craft instead of Lore to introduce facts about her Maiden's element and spirits or other phenomena associated with it. She doesn't need a Lore background to do so.

Creation of Beauty

Cost: 10m; **Mins:** Craft 2, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal plies her raw materials with honeyed words and winsome grace, bringing forth their hidden beauty.

The Sidereal adds ([Appearance or Charisma] / 2) non-Charms dice on a Craft roll. If she's creating something as a gift for someone else, this increases to (Appearance or Charisma). Any penalties she suffers from lacking equipment

If the Sidereal's working with raw materials to which her Elemental Vision applies or has an applicable World-Shaping Artistic Vision, this increases to (Appearance or Charisma).

Atelier-and-Embassy Auspice

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal's handiwork smooths tensions between even the most ferocious of enemies, ensuring peace at her table.

The Sidereal brings peace to a conversation or event over a meal she prepared, in the presence of her artwork, or in a similar context involving her craft. Those present treat negative Ties to each other as one step weaker. No one can initiate hostilities unless they pay two Willpower or are insulted, provoked, or harmed.

Wife-Procuring Tailfeathers

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Craft 4, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Shaping (Fate)

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Atelier-and-Embassy Auspice

The Sidereal's elegant bearing, unmatched fashion sense, and artistic talent make her an obvious catch.

After a few hours or days spent courting potential partners who belong to a culture, organization, or social stratum, the Sidereal's assured to find at least one group member, chosen by the Storyteller, who's willing to marry her within the week, though it may be a loveless marriage. (Players may volunteer their characters for this.) Alternatively, she can empower an existing marriage and choose a group her spouse belongs to.

As long as she remains married and spends significant time managing their household during downtimes, she gains the following benefits:

- Characters with Ties toward her spouse count as having the same Ties to her at Minor intensity. A significant number of group members are assured to have positive Ties toward him.
- She gains a position of influence equivalent to two-dot Backing or Influence the group her spouse belongs to.
- She waives Excellencies' mote costs to reduce the target numbers of Bureaucracy, Lore, or Socialize rolls involving the group her spouse belongs to.
- She waives the mote cost to use Suitor-Measuring Eye on members of her spouse's group and to reduce its roll's target number with Excellencies.

In cultures without marriage, this Charm instead applies to whatever local custom comes closest to a lifelong partnership in which finances are intermingled.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by accomplishing a major character or story goal with the help of a spouse or through financial dealings. Joybringers can reset it by fulfilling an auspicious prospect.

Destiny-Knitting Entanglement

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Shaping (Fate), Stackable

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal's fate is interwoven with trinkets, curios, and weapons, always close at hand no matter the distance.

After a scene spent interacting with an object light enough for the Sidereal to wear or hold in her hands, she binds it to her fate. While it's within long range, she can reflexively return it to her hand via favorable coincidences: a stumbling enemy kicks her weapon toward her, a strong wind blows a garment off a clothesline, a ring dropped off a cliff lands on the head of a curious hybrec.

Beyond this range, the Sidereal can make (Perception + appropriate Craft) rolls to discern general details about the object's current circumstances regardless of distance, though she can't make out specifics — e.g., she could tell that it's in a heavily guarded vault, but couldn't make out the names or faces of individual guards.

The Sidereal can recall distant objects with a (Wits + appropriate Craft), setting in motion a chain of favorable coincidences: a guard steals it and flees in her direction to avoid punishment, a thief fences it to someone shipping goods to her location, a dog grabs it and runs, etc. One success ensures its return, but with no guarantee it'll be quick. Two successes ensure it's back within a week; three successes, a day; four successes, an hour; and five successes, a minute.

The Sidereal can bind herself to any number of objects.

Excellent Implementation of Objectives

Cost: 8m; **Mins:** Craft 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal weaves her blueprints into the pattern of fate, ensuring her project's swift completion.

The Sidereal undertakes a basic or major project, completing most such tasks in a matter of minutes as long as she has all necessary tools and materials. The most arduous, work-intensive projects can be completed in an hour if basic or a day if major.

A Craft 5, Essence 3 repurchase lets the Sidereal pay a two-mote, one-Willpower surcharge to undertake superior projects with this Charm. Creating artifacts require (Artifact – 1) months, or half that for repairs; the time to complete a manse is halved; mundane large-scale projects can be completed in no more than (10 – Essence) weeks. She can't use this Charm to create N/A artifacts or First Age artifice.

Mending Warped Designs

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Craft 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal mends the scars left by the enemies of fate, restoring the cosmic balance by tending to the wounded and repairing what's broken.

After an hour tending to a patient's wounds, the Sidereal rolls (Intelligence + Craft). She must

have surgical equipment but can substitute tools associated with her Craft with a stunt. Once her patient's received a full day's rest, he heals levels of non-aggravated damage equal to the Sidereal's success. If her patient's health track contains any damage inflicted by an enemy of fate (p. XX), he heals instantly instead, her body snapping back to how it was before he was wounded.

Alternatively, she can use this Charm to undertake and complete a basic or major repair project in a matter of minutes or a superior or legendary repair project in one week for mundane objects and structures, ([Artifact or Manse] – 1) weeks for artifacts and manses, or (10 – Essence) weeks for N/A artifacts and manses. If the damage she's repairing was caused by an enemy of fate, she completes basic and major repairs instantly and superior or legendary repairs in (10 – Essence, minimum 1) hours.

Untangling Snarled Strands

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Shaping (Fate)

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Mending Warped Designs

Even the most terrifying and alien horrors can bring joy and prosperity to the world; the Sidereal offers them a chance to do so.

The Sidereal stitches a willing enemy of fate into the tapestry of reality, freeing it from this status. The blessed character's Essence is marked by his newly loyalty to Creation; gods, elementals, and Sidereals recognize its newfound status. If such characters have negative Ties to a category of beings that the blessed character belongs to — e.g., “demons,” “Anathema,” “otherworldly beings” — they treat those Intimacy's intensity as one step lower against him.

If the blessed character intentionally acts in opposition to destiny, he's stripped of these benefits. His treachery reverberates through fate's weave and turns back against him sevenfold; he suffers a cosmic punishment appropriate to his crime as if he'd broken an oath sanctified by the Eclipse anima (**Exalted**, p. 176). Acts that threaten the well-being of Creation itself, like opening shadowlands or spreading bordermarches, likewise revoke this blessing. The Sidereal glimpses this act of treachery in a fleeting vision; successfully remedying the damage done counts as fulfilling an auspicious prospect.

World-Shaping Artistic Vision

Cost: —; **Mins:** Craft 3, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal weaves fate with a distinctive personal flair.

Upon purchasing this Charm, the Sidereal's player chooses a circumstance comparable to a specialty as her particular focus in weaving fate: "while outnumbered," "at night," "for love," "against enemies of fate," "making bad decisions," "opposing the status quo," etc. Her appearance often shifts subtly to reflect this focus: a Sidereal who excels when battling enemies of fate might take on a wrathful mien, while one specializing in moving among the halls of power might take on a noble, dignified bearing.

When the Sidereal's focus applies, she waives the mote cost to lower target numbers for rolls with any Ability using Excellencies. If she undertakes a prophecy related to her focus, she doesn't suffer a complication the first time she fails a roll (p. XX). She also treats it as a basic objective for Craft projects (**Exalted**, p. 240), which she can benefit from in addition to the usual three.

The Sidereal's player may change her focus to reflect major character development or significant changes in the Sidereal's life.

Predestined Delivery Shaping

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Shaping (Fate)

Duration: Until the object arrives

Prerequisite Charms: Destiny-Knitting Entanglement

Fate bears the Sidereal's gifts to their intended recipients — and with them, whatever blessings or curses she sees fit to impose.

The Sidereal rolls (Intelligence + Craft) to introduce a fact about how someone she's interacted with in the last day will come into possession of something she's created, or how it will arrive at a location she's familiar with. This has difficulty 1-10 depending on how unlikely the Sidereal's proposed fact is.

If successful, fate ensures this course of events happens, or something extremely close: a pickpocket lifts a ring off the Sidereal only to be caught by its intended recipient; storm winds blow a letter off the Sidereal's desk and carry it to the recipient; a passing eagle somehow drops a sword into a Circlemate's hand.

When the object arrives, the Sidereal gains craft points as per completing a basic project (**Exalted**, p. 240). If it was sent to a person, she can reflexively use an Ascending (Caste) Horoscope or Descending (Caste) Horoscope on him.

Sidereals can use this Charm to leave bequests for their next incarnation once they Exalt: artifacts, finery, messages, or whatever else they deem appropriate.

Sword-Queen's Foretold Blade

Cost: 1wp; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Shaping (Fate), Stackable

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Elegant Patterns of Fate, Excellent Implementation of Objectives

The Sidereal can't always wait on for a foretold hero and a destined blade; sometimes, she must manufacture both.

The Sidereal imbues one of her resplendent destinies in an object that can be held or worn, which must relate to the destiny's role or its constellation's trappings. The Sidereal can't don the resplendent destiny while it's imbued, but it still counts against her limit.

The imbued object takes on a semblance more suited to the destiny's roll and becomes an artifact, though it doesn't become indestructible. (Non-weapon, non-armor artifacts typically have an attunement cost of two motes and have an attunement bonus comparable to those of other artifacts.) Those who wield or wear the artifact are wreathed in its resplendent destiny, suppressing those of other Sidereals.

Evocations can be awakened from the imbued destiny, based on its role and constellation and the Sidereal's Caste. Sidereals are resonant with them; other characters treat them as exotic materials (**Arms of the Chosen**, p. 15). If the imbued object is destroyed, characters can still use awakened Evocations if the Sidereal imbues the same resplendent destiny in another object.

As long as a character's awakened an Evocation for that resplendent destiny, the destiny never fades at the end of a story and can't be magically destroyed, though the Sidereal can voluntarily end it. If she does, or if she dies or otherwise leaves the narrative, player characters are refunded experience spent on these Evocations.

The Sidereal can use this Charm multiple times to imbue multiple objects with a resplendent destiny.

Reset: Once per story unless reset when another character uses the imbued object to achieve a major character or story goal.

Heaven-and-Hell Embassy

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One day

Prerequisite Charms: Untangling Snarled Strands

The Sidereal holds her patron Maiden's sanction as an envoy to realms beyond fate's reach.

When the Sidereal deals with enemies of fate, they can't take offense at her words or craftsmanship, nor can they form negative Ties toward her because of them, so long as she doesn't intend to give offense. Any negative Ties they have toward Sidereals, the Exalted, or

denizens of Creation or Yu-Shan are treated as one step lower. They can pay one Willpower to resist this for one scene.

If the Sidereal knows Terrestrial Circle Sorcery, she can offer a First Circle demon a year and a day of freedom from Malfeas as part of a bargain roll, letting it walk Creation unbound for that time. With Essence 3, she can free Second Circle demons until the next full moon. With Essence 5, she can free a Third Circle during the next Calibration. She can't release more than one demon at a time this way.

Proper Plumage

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Until the Sidereal removes her outfit

Prerequisite Charms: Wife-Procuring Tailfeathers

The Sidereal's impeccable taste earns her the world's esteem, ensuring her wardrobe is never found wanting.

After a scene spent trying on, styling, mending, or creating clothing, the Sidereal dons an outfit appropriate for some specific event or occasion. While she wears it, she gains a bonus dot of Appearance, which can raise her Appearance above 5. She loses the Hideous Merit if she has it.

With an appropriate Craft, like tailoring or weaving, the Sidereal can gain (Essence) silver points for using this Charm once per day.

Swan-and-Duckling Parable

Cost: —; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Stackable

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Proper Plumage

Even the most haggard of waterfowl might play the part of a regal swan, given proper grooming.

The Sidereal can use Proper Plumage on another character after a scene spent having him try on outfits, giving fashion advice, tailoring his wardrobe, or buying clothes for him. Its bonus Appearance doesn't stack with other bonus dots.

With an appropriate Craft, the Sidereal gains (Essence) gold points when that character upholds a Major or Defining Intimacy or accomplishes a major character story goal with this Charm's help.

The Sidereal can use Proper Plumage multiple times to benefit multiple characters.

Unraveled Skein Insight

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Elegant Patterns of Fate

All the world is the Sidereal's muse, repaying her for her service in inspiration.

The Sidereal can use this Charm after a scene spent crafting, seeking to fulfill an auspicious prospect, or opposing enemies of fate. She may exchange silver for gold craft points at a rate of two to one or exchange white for gold or gold for silver at a rate of one to two. Each activation only lets her convert one type of craft points.

Cosmos-Sustaining Demiurge

Cost: 20m, 1wp; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Mending Warped Designs

The Sidereal tends to Creation's tattered edges, shoring up the walls of reality.

The Sidereal undertakes a superior Craft (Geomancy) project to seal a bordermarch, shadowland, or similar incursion of an otherworldly realm. The project has difficulty 5, terminus 6, and a one-day interval. Its goal number depends on the blighted region's size:

[BEGIN TABLE]

Size Goal Number

A house-sized structure 15

A palace-sized structure, a village, a neighborhood 30

A group of villages, a small city, a small forest 50

A small city and surrounding villages, a medium-sized city, a large forest
75

Up to (Essence x100) square miles Equal to square miles

[END TABLE]

Success seals away the blight, restoring the land to Creation. This lasts for a year and a day, after

which the blight reforms at the region's center and begins spreading back to its original boundaries. At the Storyteller's discretion, rituals, wards, geomantic engineering, and other mystical practices may be able to contain the blight after this time expires, potentially even permanently. This is especially true if these measures are based on facts introduced by the players or have been enacted through a successful project (**Exalted**, p. 226).

If the project fails, the Sidereal can't use this Charm on that region again for the rest of the story, and it rages out of control with multiple potential consequences: the blight might spread further, dangerous fae or undead might swarm out of it, local spirits might be corrupted, etc.

This Charm normally has no effect on middlemarches of the Wyld, but if all the bordermarches touching on a middlemarch have been sealed, the Sidereal can use it to revert the middlemarch to a bordermarch until the next moon, halving the project's goal number. If she can complete a second use of this Charm before the newly diminished bordermarch reverts, she seal it fully, as above.

Fortuitous Fellowship

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Shaping (Fate)

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Swan-and-Duckling Parable

The Sidereal twists strands of fate into a cord, bringing strangers together as harmonious communities.

The Sidereal sets events in motion that will lead to the formation of a new group or organization. She determines the group's nature and its initial agenda but has no control over who joins it unless she intervenes directly; otherwise, coincidence and serendipity determine the group's membership as like-minded people meet, discover shared interests, and form connections. This is a major project that takes a few days to complete, using a Craft related or associated with the group: Weaponsmithing for a mercenary company, Cooking for teahouse employees, Masonry for a mountain-god's cult, etc. Once the project is complete, the Sidereal rolls (Charisma + Craft); the group forms with membership equivalent to one dot of Size (**Exalted**, p. 206) for each success. The Storyteller may impose a limit on the group's maximum size if the surrounding community isn't large enough to sustain a huge organization.

Alternatively, the Sidereal can choose to bring together a group of people who share some trait — hair color, ethnicity, taste in fashion — without dictating the nature or agenda of the group they form, a technique known as the Singular Plumage Riot. The Storyteller chooses an agenda that will be beneficial to the Sidereal.

Those brought together to form the group gain a Minor Tie of belonging toward it and a Minor Principle reflecting its agenda. With Singular Plumage Riot, these Intimacies are Major instead. This doesn't apply to characters who subsequently join the group.

Once per story, when the Sidereal interacts with the official affairs of a Fortuitous Fellowship or the personal affairs of a group member, she rolls (Charisma + Craft), gaining gold points equal to

her successes.

Reset: Once per story.

Unassuming Vizier Wisdom

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Shaping

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Fortuitous Fellowship

Insinuating herself among temporal powers, the Sidereal weaves herself into his dominion as its guardian.

After giving a gift or making a show of obeisance to a community's leader in a way that aligns with one of his Major or Defining Intimacies, the Sidereal lashes the community's fate to her own:

- If she supports the community's leader, he gains -1 target number on Bureaucracy, Lore, and Socialize rolls related to projects or other bureaucratic tasks initiated for the community's benefit.
- She can make read intentions, profile character, and diagnosis rolls against the community as a whole with (Perception + Craft) after a scene spent interacting with community members. This lets her discern common Intimacies among the community, map out relationships within the community, detect epidemics, etc. If someone's actively concealing the sought information, she must also beat his Guile.
- She can use Wife-Procuring Tailfeathers (p. XX) to secure a position of prominence in the organization, rather than a marriage. Its benefits apply for that organization as usual. Members apply their Intimacies toward the organization to the Sidereal, rather than their Ties to her spouse.
- If she knows Cosmos-Sustaining Demiurge, community members and their property within (Essence x10) miles of her are immune to Wyld exposure (p. XX).

Implicit Construction Methodology

Cost: 10m, 1wp, 1wxp per dot; **Mins:** Craft 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One project

Prerequisite Charms: Any ten Craft Charms

Contemplating her design, the Sidereal braids a prayer strip bearing the Scripture of Lover and Maiden around her wrist; it transforms into a band of cold blue light, a sign of the world's favor.

The Sidereal blesses a superior project to create an artifact, paying one white point per dot of its rating. So long as she has the necessary tools and materials, the project completes itself without requiring her to roll, pay any further craft points, or use a project slot. The amount of time this takes depends on the artifact's rating:

BEGIN TABLE

Artifact Rating	Time
2	(6 – Craft [Artifact]) hours
3	(6 – Craft [Artifact]) days
4	(6 – Craft [Artifact]) weeks
5	(6 – Craft [Artifact]) months

END TABLE

This Charm can also be used to create a manse atop a demesne; this takes (6 – Craft [Geomancy]) months for a three-dot manse or (15 – Craft [Geomancy]) months for a 5-dot manse. It can't create N/A-rated artifacts or manses or First Age artifice.

This Charm doesn't award craft points; it is the world that is inspired, not the Sidereal.

Reset: Once per story.

Dodge — The Ewer

Sidereal Dodge Charms evince their prowess in evading harm and avoiding trouble, whether ducking under an enemy's attack, demurring from the romantic pursuits governed by the Ewer, or dodging audits, emotions, wars, and other things that simply shouldn't be possible to dodge. Like the Hunted Maiden, these Charms find joy in facing peril, prevailing over fear and despair. While Dodge is most often used with Dexterity, Sidereal Dodge Charms also benefit from high Appearance or Manipulation, as well as high Wits.

The Scripture of the Hunted Maiden

Once, there was a maiden...

...who was driven from her land.

Great black stags chased after her, and their eyes shone blue.

Monsters scrambled after her through the bush, though they found her not.

Stumbling on a log, she fell, and thought to surrender and end the torment of the hunt, but then she stood, and stuck out her tongue at the dark woods behind her.

"Love is smiling at your troubles," she said.

Absent Self

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Dodge 1, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Foreseeing her enemy's attacks, the Sidereal arranges to be elsewhere when they land.

The Sidereal ignores (higher of Essence or 3) points of Evasion penalty. This can't negate penalties from surprise attacks. If she's unarmored or suffers no Evasion penalties, she can dodge an attack whose successes equal her Evasion.

Elusive Object of Desire

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Dodge 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Counterattack, Mute, Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Absent Self

Wreathed in the fate of desires unfulfilled, the Sidereal is pursued by those who cannot touch her.

If the Sidereal successfully dodges an attack, she counterattacks with an (Appearance + Dodge) instill roll to create a Tie of infatuation toward her. She isn't perceived as the source of this influence. Against enemies with Defining Ties of infatuation toward the Sidereal, the counterattack succeeds automatically.

If the Sidereal succeeds, her attacker must use his next turn to move toward her (if not already at close range) and attack her. If attacking the Sidereal isn't possible, he can take another action but can't attack anyone but her. This costs one Willpower to resist, separate from resisting the instill roll.

Trouble Reduction Strategy

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Dodge 4, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Absent Self

Spotting impending danger to an ally, the Sidereal convinces fate she's dodged it on his behalf.

The Sidereal reflexively takes a defend other action using Evasion instead of Parry. Her protection lasts for this Charm's duration, but the ward must remain within close range to receive

it.

This Charm ends if the Sidereal uses a defend other action on another character.

Avoidance

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Perilous, Shaping (Mind)

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Absent Self

The Sidereal evades unpleasant situations by deciding she was never there.

The Sidereal rolls (Wits + Dodge) at a difficulty of (3 + rounds this scene), or difficulty 4 outside of combat. She suffers a penalty equal to the number of nontrivial enemies within medium range of her; if she's in a battle group's space, she also suffers a penalty equal to its Size. If the Sidereal succeeds, she disappears, reappearing in a nearby location of the Storyteller's choice.

All characters present in the scene forget the Sidereal was there. If there's any physical evidence that could identify the Sidereal, her successes are treated as a conceal evidence roll to obscure it. This can be resisted with magic that specifically protects against memory-altering Psyche effects.

If the Sidereal knows Trouble Reduction Strategy, she can bring willing characters within close range with her when she uses this Charm, paying an additional five motes per character.

Reset: Once per scene.

Delighted Maiden Mien

Cost: —; **Mins:** Dodge 1, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Snappy Banter Approach

Keeping things light and cheery, the Sidereal hides her worries behind a smile.

The Sidereal can calculate Guile with (Appearance + Dodge).

With Dodge 4, Essence 2, the Sidereal can pay five motes to inflict +1 target number on a roll opposing her Guile. This becomes +2 if she's acting in support of a Tie of romantic or sexual desire. This effect is Mute.

Frenzied Courtship Dodge

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Dodge 4, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Shaping (Fate)

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Delighted Maiden Mien

The Sidereal dodges into the path of romance, making herself an easy target for the arrows of love.

After a few hours spent interacting with potential romantic partners, the Sidereal's assured to find at least one partner willing to engage in courtship, formal marriage negotiations, or a whirlwind romance, chosen by the Storyteller. (Players may volunteer their characters for this.)

Alternatively, she can empower an existing courtship.

As long as the Sidereal continues this romantic pursuit and spends significant time with her partner during downtimes, she gains the following benefits:

- She gains +2 Resolve against rolls to instill Ties of romantic or sexual desire to anyone but her partner.
- Non-Hideous characters other than her partner don't add dice from Appearance on influence rolls against her.
- She must treat other character' bargain and persuade rolls for seduction and instill rolls to weaken Ties of romantic or sexual desire toward her partner as unacceptable.
- She shines with the joy of heedless love, waiving Excellencies' mote costs to reduce the target number of rolls to instill positive Ties or inspire positive emotions.

If the Sidereal marries her partner or joins with him in a similar custom, this Charm ends and she can't use it with him again.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by accomplishing a major character or story goal with the help of a romantic partner or by seducing someone. Joybringers can reset it by fulfilling an auspicious prospect.

Graceful Crane Stance

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal is one with the world, balanced within and without.

The Sidereal gains perfect balance and can stand on or move across surfaces too narrow or weak to support her normally without needing to roll.

Empty Sky Tranquility

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal takes steps to avoid a future where her enemy's quiver has anything left.

The Sidereal rolls a special (Wits + Dodge) disarm gambit against an enemy wielding a ranged weapon within medium range. Instead of using his Defense, the target opposes the attack roll with a (Wits + combat Ability) ammunition check (**Exalted**, p. 202). If successful, he's revealed to have unexpectedly run out of ammunition and suffers **withering** damage equal to the Initiative roll's extra successes, awarding Initiative to the Sidereal as usual. If he's previously cached any ammunition nearby, it also turns out to have somehow disappeared or become unusable. He suffers +1 target number on rolls to scavenge for more ammunition.

Characters with Charms like Phantom Arrow Technique are immune to this gambit.

Special activation rules: This Charm can be flurried.

Snappy Banter Approach

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal's quick-witted repartee extracts uncouth suitors from awkward situations.

When an ally fails a spoken influence roll with any Ability, the Sidereal can use this Charm to let him roll again. The reroll receives the benefits of all magic used to enhance the first roll; her ally can use additional Charms to enhance it as well. To use this Charm, the Sidereal must notice her ally's influence and must be able to speak to all targets so she can make her excuses.

Reset: Once per scene.

Duck Fate

Cost: 7m; **Mins:** Dodge 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform, Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Absent Self

Sensing an impending danger rippling toward her through the skeins of fate, the Sidereal deftly steps out of its path.

The Sidereal can use Evasion to defend against any hostile effect: undodgeable attacks, environmental hazards, falling damage, social influence, Shaping effects, etc. If the effect is one that could normally be opposed with a dice roll or static value, the Sidereal substitutes her Evasion for successes on the roll or the applicable static value. If it isn't, the Storyteller should assign a dice pool for the source's effect to roll against the Sidereal's Evasion. Against ongoing or recurring effects, once the Sidereal successfully defends with this Charm, she's immune for the rest of the scene.

Duck Fate can only defend against the actions and magic of other characters and environmental effects with defined mechanics. Appropriate stunts may bypass this limitation, letting a Sidereals dodge performance review, debts, her feelings, etc.

Enticing Mystery Elopement

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Dodge 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Elusive Object of Desire

The Sidereal presents an idealized image of herself for suitors to obsess over, blinding them to the truth.

When the Sidereal successfully asserts her Evasion or Guile, she can use this Charm to reflexively roll (Appearance + Dodge) to enter concealment. Enemies whose Resolve is lower than her Appearance suffer a penalty on opposed rolls equal to the difference. If she uses this concealment to ambush her attacker, she applies a free full Excellency on her Join Battle roll.

If the Sidereal uses this Charm together with Elusive Object of Desire, she makes one roll for both. If she successfully establishes concealment against her attacker, he can't spend Willpower to resist that Charm's instill roll or subsequent effects unless she enters a Decision Point and cites an Intimacy equal or greater than his Tie of infatuation to her.

Unwelcome Courtship Interception

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Trouble Reduction Strategy

The Sidereal evades the loss of a friend or ally by taking his wounds in his stead.

When an enemy makes an attack against one of the Sidereal's allies, the Sidereal can use this Charm to move instantly into close range of that ally and redirect the attack to herself before it's rolled. This doesn't count as her movement action. She can't redirect undodgeable attacks unless she also uses Duck Fate, nor can she redirect ambushes if the attacker would have also qualified to ambush her.

If the Sidereal is protecting her target with Trouble Reduction Strategy, this Charm's cost is reduced by two motes.

Auspicious Sidestep Serendipity

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Perilous, Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Absent Self

The Sidereal maneuvers around possibilities that would give her enemy a clear shot, forcing him to contend with a less favorable reality.

An attack against the Sidereal's Evasion suffers +1 target number. Dodging grants her one Initiative for each die that isn't a success because of target number reduction, maximum (Essence).

With a Dodge 5, Essence 3 repurchase, the Sidereal may pay a one-Willpower surcharge to inflict +2 target number. Her enemy loses any Initiative she gains with this Charm.

Sweet Flirtation Smile

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Snappy Banter Approach

The Sidereal's pleasing appearance and serene demeanor let her avoid confrontation, sidestepping the enmity of even her worst nemesis.

The Sidereal makes a special ([Appearance or Manipulation] + Dodge) instill roll against a character who can perceive her and has a negative Tie that applies to her. If she beats his Resolve, none of his negative Ties can apply to her for the rest of the scene.

If the suppression of the victim's negative Ties would make him act inconsistently with one of his

other Major or Defining Intimacies, he can spend one Willpower to resist this influence, becoming immune for the scene.

Suitor-Deflecting Sidestep

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Frenzied Courtship Dodge, Snappy Banter Approach

Stepping out of the way of her suitor's attention, the Sidereal lets the arrow of his infatuation find a new mark.

The Sidereal makes a special ([Appearance or Manipulation] + Dodge) instill roll against a character who has a positive Tie toward her or who intends to court, flirt with, or seduce her. Such Ties can't be used to bolster his Resolve against this influence; Ties of romantic or sexual interest toward the Sidereal penalize his Resolve against it. If successful, she dodges his interest in her, redirecting it to another character he can observe. (If no such character exists, this Charm has no effect.)

Any positive Ties the target has toward the Sidereal become Ties toward the other character. If he has such a Tie to a category that includes the Sidereal (e.g., tall people), it changes to a category that includes the other character but not the Sidereal. If he's currently actively pursuing the Sidereal, he'll do so with his other instead. He forgets having ever been interested in the Sidereal.

If the affected character is reminded of his previous feelings toward the Sidereal, he may spend one Willpower to resist this. Altered Intimacies return to normal. If he had a Tie of romantic or sexual desire toward her, he must pay three Willpower to resist.

Nemesis Evasion Smile

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Duck Fate

The Sidereal seeks out the strand of fate for one of her troubles, ensuring her own thread never crosses it.

The Sidereal chooses a character or a source of suffering that's comparable to a specialty in scope: "swords," "sandstorms," "unemployment," "failing my mission," etc. She gains the following benefits:

- She's immune to fear-based influence by the chosen character or that relies on the threat

of the chosen woe.

- She waives Duck Fate's cost against that character or woe (but not its repurchase's surcharge).
- Once per scene, she can waive the cost of reducing the target number of a roll with any Ability with Excellencies to avoid harm or discomfort from it.
- Magic that predicts her future won't show any outcome in which she comes to suffering because of it.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by decisively resolving the problems posed to the Sidereal by the chosen character or woe. If she maintains this Charm for multiple stories, she can't reuse until the next story or she resets it.

Neighborhood Relocation Scheme

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Dodge 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: Shaping (Fate, Mind)

Duration: Until the Sidereal stops moving

Prerequisite Charms: Any ten Dodge Charms

The Sidereal wraps a long prayer strip bearing the Scripture of the Hunted Maiden around her waist, where it transforms into a crystalline band of sky-blue Essence, binding herself to the world that they might evade calamity and strife together.

The Sidereal can transport a landscape or community across Creation, reshaping both reality and the Celestial Bureaucracy's records to make it as if it had always been there. When she uses this Charm, she chooses a region out to (Essence) miles from her, ensnaring all inhabitants, structures, habitations, natural features, demesnes and manses, and the landscape within her fate. She can't pick and choose what to bring, nor can she bring something that doesn't fall entirely within this range. This can't transport unwilling nontrivial characters or their residences, nor can it move demesnes or manses if an attuned character's player is unwilling.

As the Sidereal moves, the region moves with her. She must travel under her own power, rendering this incompatible with mounts and sorcerous travel. Vehicles are also incompatible unless they're self-propelled, like wheeled chairs. The region and its inhabitants exist at a remove from reality until they reach their destination; they're visible, but outsiders can't interact with without specialized magic.

The prayer strip slowly tightens around her waist, inflicting one die of bashing damage each hour. Incapacitation from this isn't fatal but ends the Charm, leaving the transported region wherever she fell.

Once the Sidereal stops moving, the region is integrated into the world around her. It won't destroy anything that was there originally: bringing a desert into a forest would cause the forest to recede enough to make room; dragging a village on top of another would blend their architecture together.

Characters' memories, maps and other documentation, and Heaven's records are altered to reflect that the transported region has always been as its destination. This can be resisted like arcane fate (p. XX). Even destiny is revised, seamlessly accounting for the Sidereal's changes (though she should expect to pick up her coworkers' bar tabs for the foreseeable future if she uses this Charm frivolously.)

Reset: Once per story unless reset by learning of a narratively relevant threat to an entire region.

Linguistics — The Pillar

Sidereal Linguistics Charms evince the legendary eloquence, rhetorical prowess, and mastery of languages of Sidereal poets, playwrights, translators, and essayists. Under the Pillar's auspices, these Charms bring people together in relationships founded on trust and mutual understanding. Like the Bride, these Charms express boundless optimism in people, assuring Sidereals of the good in others. While Linguistics can be used with any social Attribute, Sidereal Linguistics Charms particularly benefit from Charisma.

The Scripture of the Bride

Once, there was a maiden...

...who fled a shadow, in the company of a friend.

They traveled through strange places, and among strange people.

"How can you trust me," he asked, "with such horror behind you?"

"Love endures," she said.

Blue Vervain Binding

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal recites a formal blessing over a pair of creatures, tying their fates together under the Pillar's auspices.

The Sidereal performs a minute-long ceremony, requiring that both characters be present to witness it, even if they don't understand it. Those beings become capable of understanding each other without a shared language. The Sidereal can include herself in such a pairing, and can affect animals, constructs, or stranger things. This can make it possible to communicate with animals but doesn't make those animals any more intelligent.

With a Linguistics 5, Essence 2 repurchase, the Sidereal can use this Charm instantly, committing its mote cost, to grant herself the ability to communicate with all characters for one scene. At the end of the scene, she gains a Minor Tie with a positive context of her choice to one of the characters she communicated with, chosen by the Storyteller. She can't weaken it until the story ends.

Reset: Characters other than the Sidereal can't benefit from more than one use of this Charm per story.

Favorable Inflection Procedure

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal speaks someone's name with an intonation that echoes the pattern of his fate, filling his heart with warmth, happiness, and a feeling of connection to her.

Addressing someone by name or nickname — either verbally or in writing — the Sidereal rolls (Charisma + Linguistics). This counts as both a roll to instill a positive Tie toward the Sidereal and a roll to inspire happiness. The Sidereal is never perceived as the source of this effect.

If the Sidereal uses this Charm on someone hostile to her or upset with her, he forgets the reason for that, losing his train of thought. Subsequent events may remind him of it, and he remembers it if he spends Willpower to resist both of this Charm's influences.

If the Sidereal has stolen a name with Name-Pilfering Practice (p. XX), she can use this Charm to plant it on another character, addressing him by that name. If she succeeds, she transfers it and its benefits to him, in addition to the above effects.

Reset: This Charm can't be used against a character more than once per scene.

Best Friend's Couch Invitation

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 4, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Shaping (Fate)

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Favorable Inflection Procedure

All humanity is the Sidereal's friend; she need never want for a place to lay her head.

After a few hours or days spent in a community, the Sidereal's assured to find at least one resident, chosen by the Storyteller, who'll let her stay at his home for a few days as if hosting an old friend. (Players may volunteer their characters for this.) He'll keep her as well-fed as anyone in the house and providing her a spare bed, couch, or floor to sleep on. Once she's worn out her welcome, she'll quickly find another host without needing to use this Charm again, moving to a new home every few days. Alternatively, the Sidereal can empower hospitality that's already been offered to her, though she must still avoid wearing out her welcome.

As long the Sidereal she lives with these newfound friends and spends significant time

interacting with them over downtimes, she gains the following benefits:

- She's welcomed into her friends' community; its members treat negative Ties toward foreigners, strangers, or outsiders as one step weaker for her.
- When she sleeps in her host's house, she gains an additional Willpower from a full night's rest.
- It's difficult to keep track of her as she moves from home to home; Investigation and tracking rolls against her suffer +1 target number.
- She can use Favorable Inflection Procedure against multiple members of her friends' community, waiving multiple target penalties.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by accomplishing a major character or story goal with the help of the Sidereal's new friends. Joybringers can reset it by fulfilling an auspicious prospect.

Ice-and-Fire Binding

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal recites ritual prayers for health and prosperity, binding a spirit to the Maiden of Serenity's service.

After a scene spent praying to a god or elemental with an Essence of up to (higher of Sidereal's Essence or 3), the Sidereal rolls (Intelligence + Linguistics). If she prays to a fire elemental or a god associated with fire, the maximum Essence increases by one.

Success summons that spirit and imposes a Defining Principle of "I must ensure and defend the joy, health, and pleasure of those around me." This Intimacy can't be weakened or altered by any means. If that Intimacy could let the spirit treat influence as unacceptable (**Exalted**, p. 220), he must do so. The spirit can't use Hurry Home while bound by this Charm.

Alternatively, the Sidereal can use this Charm against a spirit of any kind present in the scene. Doing so works as above, except she can recite the binding in a single turn.

This binding lasts (1 + Sidereal's extra successes) seasons. Once it ends, the Sidereal may have the spirit forget her identity and all details about her.

Equitable Partnership

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 4, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Shaping (Fate)

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Ice-and-Fire Binding

The Sidereal feels along the weave of fate for a patron with pockets deep enough to fund her ambitions.

After a few hours or days spent discussing a business plan or opportunity for profit with potential financial backers, the Sidereal's assured to find at least one person willing to fund her scheme, providing a sum proportionate to the Sidereal's competence and the plan's plausibility. That character forms a Major Intimacy reflecting his commitment to this arrangement, which could be a Tie to the Sidereal or a Principle reflecting his motivation for funding her.

With a Linguistics 5, Essence 3 repurchase, the Sidereal may roll (Charisma + Linguistics) to seek out a supernatural being as a patron. The Storyteller chooses who or are what kind of being she secures patronage from, but the Sidereal's roll determines his strength: Every two successes let her gain one dot worth of Allies, Mentor, or Retainers. At the end of the story, the Merits are lost unless the Sidereal qualifies to retain them as Story Merits (**Exalted**, p. 158).

Reset: Once per story unless reset by accomplishing a legendary social goal through business dealings, political meddling, legal matters, or the aid of relationships established with this Charm.

Reset: Once per day.

Knot of Destiny

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal speaks with a sibilance that reminds quarreling lovers or bickering siblings of all the good their bond has brought them, mending even the most tattered threads of fate.

The Sidereal chooses a relationship — romantic, familial, business, or otherwise — between characters present in the scene. Addressing one or more characters involved in it, she subtly shifts its emotional dynamic. Those involved in the relationship count as having a Minor Tie of respect to each other person in it (even those not present). Any negative Ties they have to each other are treated as one step weaker. The Sidereal is never perceived as the source of this.

The Sidereal can expand the range of emotional contexts she can impose by purchasing the below for three experience points or one bonus point each. She must apply the same emotional context to all targets.

- **Fascination**, particularly for the details of a character's history, his day-to-day doings, and his personal and business relationships.
- **Friendly competition**. This competition is expressed in whatever venue best fits the relationship's nature.
- **Infatuation**. This applies only if everyone in the relationship is romantically compatible.

If a player opts out via the Red Rule (**Exalted**, p. 222), the Tie is instead one of respect, both for his character and for other targets interacting with him.

- **Willingness to deal in good faith** — in business transactions, legal affairs, negotiations, etc.

With a Linguistics 5, Essence 3 repurchase, the Sidereal can pay one mote per character and one Willpower to selectively choose which contexts she imposes on each character, including the option to change contexts reflexively mid-scene.

Enduring Companionship Affirmation

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Knot of Destiny

The Sidereal's words strengthen bonds of love, friendship, and mutual benefit, empowering them to withstand the test of time.

When the Sidereal succeeds on a verbal or written instill roll to create or strengthen a positive Tie, her target can't willingly weaken that Intimacy and gains +1 Resolve against influence that would do so. This ends if the Tie's object mistreats or offends her.

Alternatively, when the Sidereal rolls to overturn influence (**Exalted**, p. 221) that opposes one of its target's positive Ties, she waives the Willpower cost for both her and her target. Success reinforces that Tie as above.

This Charm's Willpower cost is waived when used on Ties of trust.

Comforting Matriarch Embrace

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Enduring Companionship Affirmation

The Sidereal's kind eyes, soothing words, and gentle touch soothe the hearts of those under her care.

When the Sidereal speaks soothingly, comforts, or holds a character before he sleeps, she rolls (Charisma + Linguistics), banking her successes as a pool of bonus dice for him and granting him Willpower equal to her 10s. For that night's sleep, he adds (Sidereal's Essence) Guile and Resolve against magic that observes or intrudes on his dreams.

The comforted character may add up to (Sidereal's Charisma) banked dice on influence rolls to speak plainly and openly about strong feelings and difficult topics and rolls opposing disease, poison, and other ailments. He can also spend them to raise his Resolve, expending two dice per +1 bonus. Enhanced rolls ignore penalties from fear-based effects. This lasts (Sidereal's Essence) days.

Aster Petal Covenant

Cost: 3m per Charm; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Stackable

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Equitable Partnership

Reciting the seven vows that Venus once swore to an unknown paramour, the Sidereal binds herself and a puissant companion together with her sacred oath.

The Sidereal can gain Eclipse Charms from a willing character by swearing a formal pact with him, committing three motes per Charm. She may have up to (Essence) Eclipse Charms from this Charm at a time, either through a single use or multiple stacked activations. She can also use this Charm if she completes a serious or life-changing task (**Exalted**, p. 216) at a character's request, considering her performance of the task as his implicit consent to the pact.

The Sidereal may permanently learn these Eclipse Charms accessed for eight experience points each. She no longer needs to commit motes to use them and they don't count toward the maximum of (Essence). She waives the experience point cost of the first Eclipse Charm purchased this way.

Beloved Maiden's Bride

Cost: —; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Aster Petal Covenant

The Sidereal pledges herself to her patron Maiden in sacred marriage, catching the light of the Pillar's stars for her wedding band.

To learn this Charm, the Sidereal must have a positive Defining Tie to her patron Maiden.

- Her Tie to her Maiden can't be weakened or altered and she can't gain negative Ties to the Maiden. Anyone who sees her ring is aware of her Intimacy, though those unfamiliar with the Maidens perceive it as being directed to that Maiden's purview instead.
- Sidereals, the Bureau of Destiny's gods, and spirits associated with the Maiden's purview

who see the ring treat their negative Ties toward her as one step lower, and she benefits from their positive Ties to her Maiden.

- Whenever she fulfills an auspicious prospect, she sees her Maiden smiling. This counts as upholding her Tie.
- She waives the cost of reducing target numbers with Excellencies on rolls with any Ability for a prophecy of one of her Maiden's constellations.

The ring of stardust can't be removed. If the Sidereal needs to conceal it, she rolls (Dexterity + Larceny) against the (Perception + Awareness) of onlookers, who suffer +2 target number. Trivial characters don't receive a roll. It can't be concealed at burning anima or higher.

Secret Bloodline Revelation

Cost: 10m, 1wp, 2xp; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: Shaping (Fate)

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Aster Petal Covenant, Enduring Companionship

Affirmation

The Sidereal folds a signed petition into a paper crane, sending it fluttering off to roost in the Celestial Bureaucracy's records of divine lineage.

The Sidereal creates a familial relationship between a god and another character, proclaiming the god's new child to the world. Neither character need be present for her to do so, but each must have signed the petition, a lengthy document written in Old Realm. These signatures may be procured through fraud, duress, or sharp practice; a Sidereal who's stolen someone's name with Name-Pilfering Practice (p. XX) may sign for them.

The god becomes his newfound descendant's parent for all purposes, including magic like Knot of Destiny. The descendant's player may choose to have this overwrite her relationship with any of her other parents, whether by birth or adoption. This newfound parentage empowers her as a God-Blooded. Exalted descendants gain Divine Heritage as a training effect (p. XX). Mortals gain a pool of ten motes, (higher of their Essence or 3) Eclipse Charms appropriate to their parent, and Exalted Healing (**Exalted**, p. 165). They gain new Charms as their Essence increases; player characters may purchase them with experience points.

The Storyteller should determine how non-human descendants are affected on a case-by-case basis. Generally, supernatural beings with Charms gain Divine Heritage, while characters without mote pools benefit as mortals. Gods can't be made children of other gods with this Charm.

If a descendant is killed or ceases to be relevant to the story, its experience cost is refunded.

Reset: Once per story.

Divine Heritage (•••••) — Innate Merit

Divine Heritage is a five-dot Innate Merit for the Exalted children of

spirits, fae, and other creatures. Players should work with the Storyteller to define their parent's nature and themes. Purchasing this Merit gives the character an Eclipse Charm appropriate to their parent for free and lets her purchase others with bonus points or experience. Her lineage's manifestations may also include Flaws and other Merits.

Circumstance-Contriving Resplendency

Cost: —; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Equitable Partnership (x2)

The Sidereal writes new details into her resplendent destiny's story, ensuring she has whatever assets may be necessary for the part she plays.

While wearing a resplendent destiny, the Sidereal can use Equitable Partnership to draw a variety of Merits appropriate to its destiny and role into her life instead of a single powerful backer. If she wears the associated constellation's trappings, she gains +1 die from exceptional equipment. She can choose any of the Allies, Backing, Command, Contacts, Cult, Followers, Influence, Mentor, Resources, or Retainers Merits that fit the destiny. Fate brings them into her lives as quickly as necessary to ensure she benefits from them.

Remembering the Best Times

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Psyche

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Enduring Companionship Affirmation

Under the Sidereal's subtle ministrations, those whom she brings together are never far from each other's hearts.

The Sidereal makes a special (Charisma + Linguistics) instill roll against two or more characters, each of whom must have a positive Tie to each other target. She may do so verbally or through a written message sent to each recipient.

Affected characters can only weaken these Ties voluntarily after a scene in which a Tie's object mistreats or offends them. These Ties can be reduced to Minor intensity, but can't be fully removed by any means. Affected characters can and must reject Psyche effect that would erase their memories of a Tie's object or cast them in a worse light as unacceptable (**Exalted**, p. 220).

Resisting this Psyche effect requires spending three Willpower each day over (Sidereal's Essence) days.

Lover's Oath

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Linguistics 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: Stackable

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Any ten Linguistics Charms

The Sidereal and her partner twist the ends of a prayer strip bearing the Scripture of the Bride around their fingers; as they exchange promises, the prayer strip splits and shrivels into two starmetal rings set with sapphires.

The Sidereal binds herself to a willing partner, each of whom must have a positive Defining Tie toward the other. So long as they both wear their starmetal rings, they gain the following benefits:

- Their Ties to each other can't be weakened or altered, except by a partner voluntarily weakening her own Ties or eroding other partners' Ties toward her.
- They can sense each other's emotional state and general circumstances.
- They can pay each other's mote and Willpower costs. Spirits and other characters whose mote pools are significantly larger than the Exalted's can't pay mote costs.
- When one partner would take damage or suffer harmful effects, his partner may choose to suffer it in his stead.
- Other characters can't remove the rings unless their efforts benefit from magic. The rings are nigh-indestructible, like artifacts.

The Sidereal can end this Charm without breaking this partnership, leaving the rings intact. She can subsequently use this Charm to empower them again without her partner needing to be present, even if one or both no longer has the requisite Tie. She may end a partnership if she chooses, shattering both rings.

The Sidereal can bond with multiple partners. She can't take a new partner without each other partners' assent unless she breaks her bond with the dissenters.

Performance — The Musician

Sidereal Performance Charms evince their legendary artistry and virtuosity as musicians, orators, dancers, and actors. A Sidereal's performance speaks of joy in living, well-deserved leisure, hedonistic pleasure, and all other happiness that falls under the Musician's purview. Through these Charms, the Sidereal sees perfection in the imperfect world and brings it into harmony, understanding the Dancer's discovery of the joy of dancing poorly.

Beauty in Misfortune

Cost: —; **Mins:** Performance 3, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

Even as her life crumbles around her, the Sidereal refuses to succumb to despair — how can she, when the world itself calls for an encore?

The Sidereal counts suffering a noteworthy defeat or setback related to her patron Maiden's purview as fulfilling an auspicious prospect (p. XX). She loses one additional Limit when she does. Examples include:

Journeys: Getting somewhere too late. Not being able to catch someone or something you're pursuing. Suffering significant harm from dangers encountered while traveling.

Serenity: Struggling with significant troubles in a relationship (romantic or otherwise). Missing an opportunity to win or leverage someone's positive feelings, obligations, or support for you. An enterprise or organization the Sidereal's involved coming on hard times.

Battles: Retreating, surrendering, or suffering defeat in combat. Having an audience or public sentiment turned against you. Losing soldiers, significant amounts of materiel, artifact armaments, etc.

Secrets: Having a secret you were keeping exposed. Missing an opportunity to learn something, or learning something that's actually inaccurate or detrimental to her. Failure in endeavors involving spirits, sorcery, artifice, geomancy, etc.

Endings: Missing an opportunity to kill someone or destroy something once you set out to do so. Someone or something the Sidereal is protecting or caring for coming to serious harm. The death of a loved one, the end of a relationship, a betrayal by a friend, etc.

These examples aren't exhaustive or mutually exclusive — just because something falls under one Maiden's purview doesn't mean it can't also be under another Maiden's as well.

With a Performance 5, Essence 3 repurchase, the Sidereal may pay ten motes, one Willpower once per story when she fulfills an auspicious prospect this way to end a Psyche effect, Shaping effect, or sorcerous curse she suffers, finding clarity in failure.

The Scripture of the Dancer

Once, there was a maiden...

...who stood at the center of every dance.

Back then, she knew all the dances.

She never missed a step.

One day, she heard something in the music, as a singer dropped the beat.

It taught her the joy of dancing poorly.

She started dancing more and more awry.

"Love has no rules," she said.

Missed Step Enlightenment

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Beauty in Misfortune

The Sidereal teaches others to take joy in failure, cherishing the lessons it has to offer.

When the Sidereal observes a character fail a roll or suffer a setback, she can let him incur experience debt (p. XX) to purchase either (her Essence/2) dots of Attributes relevant to the failure or (her Charisma) dots of relevant Abilities. This can't raise his ratings above the Sidereal's own.

The Sidereal's target doesn't need to actively train to gain this benefit; as he comes to terms with his failure emotionally, he realizes these talents, dividing the necessary training time by (Sidereal's Essence + Charisma).

With a Performance 5, Essence 3 repurchase, the Sidereal may pay a five-mote surcharge to use this as a Simple Charm, addressing up to (Essence x5) characters about a shared failure, setback, or difficulty that they're currently facing or have recently faced. The number of dots each character may purchase is halved, rounded up, unless the Sidereal limits her audience to only (Essence) characters.

Compassionate Essence Replenishment

Cost: —; **Mins:** Performance 3, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal may go unrecognized, but she's a central figure in the lives of others, empowered by the lives and relationships that revolve around her.

The Sidereal gains motes equal to the 9s and 10s on rolls with any Ability to inspire positive emotions, instill positive Ties, weaken negative Ties, or make bargains involving sensual pleasures. This can't exceed the number of motes spent enhancing the roll.

When the Sidereal upholds a Major or Defining Intimacy's that's a positive Tie or compassionate Principle, she may gain five motes in place of the Willpower she'd normally receive.

Easygoing Friend Approach

Cost: —; **Mins:** Performance 3, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal moves and speaks in harmony with the fates of those around her, smoothing over hostility, mistrust, and awkwardness.

People meeting the Sidereal (or her current resplendent destiny) for the first time count as having a Minor Tie of friendship toward her, as do those who share in food, drugs, music, or other sensual pleasures with her. Characters with negative Ties toward her treat them as one step weaker instead.

Impossible-to-Remember Party Approach

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Performance 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: One performance

Prerequisite Charms: Easygoing Friend Approach

Standing at the center of attention, the Sidereal makes whatever party she attends a night to remember — or to regret.

As long as the Sidereal performs, her audience counts as having a Minor Principle of “I should throw caution to the wind and give in to the temptation.” Characters with Principle of asceticism, temperance, discipline, or self-restraint instead treat their intensity as one step lower. This Charm’s performance is incompatible with influence rolls.

Brigand-and-Carouser Attracting Style

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Performance 4, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Shaping (Fate)

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Easygoing Friend Approach

Strumming the threads of fate like a drunken lutist, the Sidereal brings herself into harmony with those on society’s margins.

After a few hours or days spent merrymaking, going to parties, or flirting with strangers, the Sidereal’s assured to find herself caught up with a coterie of outcasts, ne’er-do-wells, and misfits. The Storyteller chooses the group, but the Sidereal may specify a general description: criminals,

bohemian artists, political dissidents, etc. Alternatively, she may empower an existing such a coterie she's fallen in with.

As long as the Sidereal remains involved with her coterie and spends significant time interacting with them over downtimes, she gains the following benefits:

- Her coterie and other characters within their social milieu accept her as one of their own. This counts as a Minor Tie.
- At the start of a scene, she may declare that a coterie member with skills equivalent to a mortal two-dot Retainer is with her, either having just arrived or been with her all along. She can't choose a new Retainer until he leaves, there's a downtime, or the session ends.
- She can introduce facts relevant to her coterie's social milieu or about local rumors with (Wits + Performance).
- She waives Excellencies' mote costs to reduce the target number of Craft, Larceny, or Performance rolls similar to those involved in her coterie's activities.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by accomplishing a major character or story goal by engaging in hedonistic pursuits or giving aid to a group of outcasts or the like. Joybringers can reset it by fulfilling an auspicious prospect.

Faultless Ceremony

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: (Essence) days

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal sanctifies a ceremony in Heaven's eyes, closing any loose ends in its fate.

When the Sidereal participates in a ceremony or ritual — a wedding, a funeral, a banquet, a coming-of-age ritual, etc. — she rolls (Charisma + Performance) against a difficulty of (8 – ceremony's Resources cost). If she succeeds, she blesses up to (1 + extra successes) other characters who participated in the ceremony. They can subsequently gain –1 target number on a roll related to the ceremony: rolling Medicine to care for a recently wedded spouse, Socialize to conduct negotiations over a banquet, etc. Their good fortune also has narrative manifestations: Newlyweds who wish for a child are much more likely to conceive, a dead man's written will is fortuitously found, etc.

Heart-Brightening Presentation Style

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Performance 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal answers the needs and desires of her audience with unfaltering grace and ingenious improvisation.

The Sidereal's Appearance adds bonus dice on an inspire roll to create happiness or other positive emotions. If she succeeds, each affected target's player must also weaken one of their Intimacies based on negative emotions by one step.

Perfection in Life

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Performance 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal sketches out the pattern of what someone's perfect life could be, inspiring their every word and action with a glimpse of a better life.

After at least a minute spent observing or interacting with someone, the Sidereal transfers up to (higher of Essence or 3) Willpower to him.

With a Performance 5, Essence 3 repurchase, the Sidereal can transfer Willpower instantly.

Serenity Beyond Fear

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Beauty in Misfortune, Heart-Brightening Presentation Style, Perfection in Life

The Sidereal's performance puts her audience at ease, freeing them to make choices unfettered by fear or worry.

When the Sidereal makes a persuade roll, it also counts a roll to inspire calm, hope, or happiness. Her targets can't use Intimacies of fear, doubt, or insecurity to bolster their Resolve or in Decision Points; instead, they support the Sidereal's influence.

Unnoticed Virtuoso Encore

Cost: 5m (5m or 5i per round/minute); **Mins:** Performance 3, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute, Shaping (Mind)

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Heart-Brightening Presentation Style

So captivating is the Sidereal's performance that her audience pays no heed to its performer, letting her step out unnoticed.

The Sidereal stops performing, but the performance continues. The lingering vibrations of her performance's fate cause audience members to believe that *someone* is continuing to perform. The Sidereal can't make influence rolls through the lingering performance. The audience pays no heed to the apparent performer and forgets the Sidereal's involvement in the performance, as with arcane fate (p. XX).

The Sidereal can enter concealment within the audience without needing a hiding place and can use the Performance Excellency to enhance Larceny and Stealth rolls against them. Trivial characters can't notice her at all.

If the Sidereal uses this Charm while performing with magic like Fivefold Maiden Melody, she ignores those effect's restrictions on her actions, but must pay five motes or Initiative at the start of each of subsequent turn in combat or minute outside to maintain it.

Defense of Shining Joy

Cost: 4m, 1i; **Mins:** Performance 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Dual

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Perfection in Life

The Sidereal anticipates her enemy's every move as if they were dancing together, maneuvering gracefully in perfect counterpoint to his offense.

The Sidereal adds (Appearance/2, rounded up) Evasion against an attack and dodges even if its successes equal her Evasion. Dodging a **decisive** attack grants her the Initiative her attacker loses for missing.

Listen to the Heart

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Perfection in Life

Listening to the song of someone's heart, the Sidereal hears the notes missing from its harmony.

The Sidereal makes a (Perception + Performance) reads intentions roll. If she and her target are dancing or sharing physical intimacy, her Appearance adds bonus dice, as with influence rolls. If she succeeds, the target's player tells her player what he needs to hear and who he needs to hear it from before he can find happiness, contentment, or hope in the face of the most urgent distress he faces. She doesn't learn what this distress is. Making this happen counts as fulfilling an auspicious prospect (p. XX).

Reset: This Charm can only be used against a given target once per story.

Strange Days

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Performance 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Impossible-to-Remember Party Approach

The Sidereal's compassion warms hearts long grown cold from self-denial, weariness, and despair, encouraging them to enjoy the good things in life.

When a character is presented with the opportunity to indulge in a sensual or hedonistic pleasure, the Sidereal places him into a Decision Point. He must cite a Major Intimacy and spend one Willpower to resist indulging in it. (As always, the Red Rule lets a player veto her character being seduced or placed in a sexual situation.) If he has a Major or Defining Intimacy that supports indulging, he must instead cite a Defining Intimacy to resist. The Sidereal is never perceived as the source of this influence.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by instilling a character with an Intimacy that supports self-gratification or indulgence and then raising it to Defining intensity.

Fivefold Maiden Harmony

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One song

Prerequisite Charms: Heart-Brightening Presentation Style

The Sidereal plays the music of the spheres, the songs once sung by the Five Maidens.

The Sidereal plays her patron Maiden's song, granting its benefits to all allies who hear it. She can't take non-reflexive actions during this performance.

Mercury: Dancing Maiden Tarantella. Allies gain -1 target number on movement rolls and dance-based Performance rolls. They may use Performance instead of the normal Abilities for movement actions.

Venus: Spirit-Soothing Melody. Allies gain +2 Resolve, which is non-Charm against Psyche and Shaping effects. They also increase the Resolve bonus from positive Ties and Principles of compassion by one. They're immune to influence rolls to inspire negative emotions.

Mars: Battle Anthem of the Sidereal Exalted. Allies' damage roll convert one die to an automatic success. Against enemies of fate, this increases to (Sidereal's Essence, maximum 5) dice. Battle groups gain -1 target number on rout checks.

Jupiter: Silence Within Song. Allies gain -1 target number on Manipulation and Larceny rolls. Trivial characters automatically fail Perception rolls against them.

Saturn: Requiem for the Foretold Dead. Allies' attacks ignore (higher of Sidereal's Essence or 3) soak and Hardness. Enemies killed by them pass into Lethe, never lingering as ghosts.

The Sidereal can repurchase this Charm to learn other Maidens' songs; she can only play one at a time.

Song of Spirit Persuasion

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Heart-Brightening Presentation Style

The Sidereal plays the chord that completes a spirit's life, allaying his every fear and answering his every question to bend him to the Sidereal's ends.

The Sidereal makes a special (Manipulation + Performance) instill roll against a spirit. Success instills a positive Major Tie to the Sidereal with an emotional context chosen by the spirit's player. Against fire and wood elementals and other spirits associated with those elements, this Tie is Defining instead.

The spirit can't willingly erode the Tie for the remainder of the story unless the Sidereal directly harms him or threatens one of his Major or Defining Intimacies, and even then, only by one level of intensity per offense.

Reset: This Charm can only be used on a given spirit once per story.

Lining the Road With Sugar and Wine

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Serenity Beyond Fear

Playing in perfect harmony with destiny, the Sidereal reveals the path to happiness.

When the Sidereal makes a persuade roll against a single character to convince him to do something that she genuinely believes would be beneficial for him, she lowers by one the level of Intimacy needed to justify her influence (**Exalted**, p. 216) and increases the Willpower cost to resist by one. She can't be perceived as the influence's source.

If the target successfully accomplishes a life-defining task, it counts as fulfilling an auspicious prospect (p. XX).

The Maiden Stumbles

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Counterattack, Withering-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Beauty in Misfortune, Defense of Shining Joy

Overwhelmed by foes, the Sidereal sees how they might yet complete the pattern of her victory.

After suffering **decisive** damage, the Sidereal can use this Charm to make a **withering** counterattack, rolling ([Appearance or Stamina] + Performance) opposing her enemy's attack roll. The counterattack is unsoakable and has (Essence + Willpower) raw damage. Each success on her damage roll negates one level of **decisive** damage; any excess success inflict **withering** damage as usual after her attacker's Initiative resets.

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by suffering enough **decisive** damage to increase the Sidereal's wound penalty or using Beauty in Misfortune.

Apocalypse-Soothing Psalm

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Defense of Shining Joy, Serenity Beyond Fear

The Sidereal's performance heals a troubled world, shaping its Essence into a pattern that leaves no place for suffering.

As long as the Sidereal continues to perform, she and everyone present in the scene — friend or foe — becomes impervious to all forms of physical harm, Psyche effects, Shaping effects, curses,

possession and other hostile effects. This doesn't prevent social influence, nor does it undo effects already in place.

If an aggressor's harmful act is negated, he experiences what it would have been like to suffer it in a flash of empathy. This doesn't harm him, but gives him a Minor Intimacy chosen by his player expressing reluctance to employ such force or weakens an Intimacy that supports doing so by one step.

The Sidereal can't take non-reflexive actions during this performance. Enemies wishing to disrupt this Charm's protection might do so by using social influence to convince her to abandon the performance.

Special activation rules: The Sidereal can't use this Charm if she or an ally's taken a hostile action this scene.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by upholding a Major or Defining Intimacy or accomplishing a major character or story goal by helping opposing parties reach peace or helping a community weather a crisis. Joybringers can reset it by fulfilling an auspicious prospect this way.

Freeing the Fettered Dancer

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Beauty in Misfortune (x2), Missed Step
Enlightenment

In failure, there is freedom, even from the baleful powers of the mind-warping magic and the world's foes.

When the Sidereal observes a character fail a roll or suffer a setback, she rolls (Charisma + Performance) to free him from a Psyche effect, Shaping effect, or sorcerous curse. The roll's difficulty is the (Essence + 3) of the character who used that effect.

Reset: This Charm can only be used on a character once per story.

Harmonic Completion

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Performance 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Any ten Performance Charms

Wrapping a prayer strip bearing the Scripture of the Dancer around her eyes, the Sidereal

embodies the affirmations and truths that those around her have waited their entire lives to hear, a measured antidote to all the troubles of their lives.

The Sidereal gains the following benefits:

- She gains a bonus dot of Appearance, which can raise her above Appearance 5.
- Her influence rolls to instill positive Ties, weaken negative Ties, inspire positive emotions, or persuade characters by leveraging positive Ties or emotions cost an additional Willpower to resist. Mortals and trivial characters can't assert Resolve or spend Willpower to resist such influence.
- Once per scene, she may waive an Excellency's cost to reduce the target number of an influence roll that benefits from this Charm.
- Characters who can see or hear her gain a Defining Tie of romantic love to her. Characters of incompatible orientation or whose players invoke the Red Rule instead gain a Defining Tie of fascination instead. Ignoring her imposes a -3 penalty on rolls opposing her and -1 Defense and Guile against her. Trivial characters can't opt to ignore her.
- If she knows Perfection in Life (p. XX), she reduces its cost to five motes.

The Sidereal is blinded by the prayer strip, suffering a -3 penalty on vision-based rolls. She can't remove it without ending this Charm.

Socialize — The Lovers

Sidereal Socialize Charms are their legendary skill as courtiers, diplomats, and socialites, as well as their understanding and mastery of the relations between people. Under the Lovers' auspices, these relations are imbalanced and at times exploitative — but like the Desperate Maiden, whose bleak outlook on love they share, these Charms can turn a position of servitude or submission into one of power. While Socialize can be used with Perception or any social Attribute, Sidereal Linguistics Charms particularly benefit from high Manipulation.

The Scripture of the Desperate Maiden

Once, there was a maiden...

...and things just didn't go well for her.

It was just the way of the world, you know?

She had to give up power to get it, and she didn't get much.

Some people hated her for getting any power at all.

She needed a protector,

so she gave herself to a man named Necessity.

"Love is hard," she said.

Follow the Blue String

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Socialize 2, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal sees the strands of fate that connect two people, sensing the emotional tenor of their relationship.

When the Sidereal succeeds on a read intentions roll that reveals a Tie to another individual, if her successes beat the Guile of that Tie's object, she learns what Intimacy, if any, he has for the character she read. He need not be present for her to do so.

Cantarella Kiss Intrigue

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Follow the Blue String

No matter how happy it may make people, love is a knife held to each other's throats.

When the Sidereal shares physical intimacy with a sexual or romantic partner, she makes a ([Manipulation or Perception] + Socialize) read intentions roll against him. If successful, his player reveals learns what she could do that would hurt him the most emotionally in that moment.

With a Socialize 4, Essence 2 repurchase, the Sidereal can pay a one-Willpower surcharge to use this Charm on any read intentions roll or with a Charm that lets her ask the Storyteller questions about someone, gaining the above information in addition to anything else revealed.

Life Without Compunction

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Socialize 2, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal erases any stigma or controversy her actions may carry, making her faux pas and indiscretions unremarkable to others.

When the Sidereal commits a faux pas or violates a custom, she makes a special (Manipulation + Socialize) instill roll against all who witnessed it, ignoring multiple target penalties. A character whose Resolve is beaten won't care about the faux pas and can't form negative Ties toward the Sidereal or weaken positive Ties to her as a result. It doesn't excuse consequences for violating

laws. If the Sidereal's extra successes against a character equal or exceed his Essence, he's convinced the Sidereal's conduct was appropriate and admirable, gaining an appropriate Minor Principle.

A character who was directly harmed or inconvenienced by the Sidereal's act or who has an Intimacy opposed to it may pay one Willpower to resist this influence.

Hot-Eyed Snake Whispering

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Socialize 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal exudes mysterious desirability, drawing eyes and snaring hearts with a deft hand on the strands of fate.

When the Sidereal makes a persuade or bargain roll with any Ability, she can treat any positive Tie her target has toward her as a Tie of romantic or sexual desire. If a character is of incompatible sexual orientation with the Sidereal, she instead treats his Tie as one of fascination.

Gilded Cage Entrapment

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Socialize 4, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Shaping (Fate)

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Hot-Eyed Snake Whispering

The Sidereal takes on the role of an idol to be worshipped or an object to be possessed, gaining power over others by giving them power over her.

After a few hours or days out in public, the Sidereal is assured to find at least one person chosen by the Storyteller who's willing to retain her services as a courtesan, mistress, domestic servant, or similar position that places her in a position of both submission and confidence. The Sidereal may specify a general description for an employer: merchants, gods, Immaculate monks, etc. Alternatively, she can empower such a position she already holds.

As long as the Sidereal maintains this position and spends significant time interacting with her employer over downtimes, she gains the following benefits:

- People want what they can't have; she gains a bonus dot of Appearance, which can raise it above 5. It doesn't apply against her employer. This doesn't apply on threaten rolls if she's Hideous.
- She gains +2 Guile against rolls that would reveal something that's been confided to her

or that could embarrass her employer.

- She can introduce facts with (Manipulation + Socialize) about matters concerning her employer's community, profession, private affairs, or philosophy. If such details about him haven't been established in play, the Sidereal can likewise introduce a fact to do so (e.g., that her employer collects art, which would provide a basis for introducing further facts about art).
- A discreet observer, she waives the mote cost on read intentions rolls against those who consider themselves her superior and Perception rolls for eavesdropping.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by accomplishing a major character or story goal by persuading a patron to undertake a course of action or by being successfully persuaded to perform a serious or life-changing task. Joybringers can reset it by fulfilling an auspicious prospect.

Shun the Smiling Lady

Cost: 7m; **Mins:** Socialize 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche, Shaping (Fate)

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal's eyes flash with blue fire she makes the Lesser Sign of the Lovers against someone, striking his name from the Division of Serenity's rolls of those who will find love.

The Sidereal rolls (Manipulation + Socialize) against the Resolve of a character within medium range. If she succeeds, it becomes impossible for any character to have a Tie of love — romantic, familial, or otherwise — toward the victim by any means, even magic.

Characters who already have such Ties lose them unless they're nontrivial and their Resolve exceeds the Sidereal's Manipulation, in which case their player changes the Tie's context to a different one. Characters whose Essence exceeds the Sidereal's may spend one Willpower to resist this altogether.

The Sidereal's victim may break free of this curse by accomplishing a legendary social goal (**Exalted**, p. 134) that upholds a Defining Tie of love to someone who's ever had a positive Defining Tie toward him.

The curse laid on this Charm's victim is a fate-altering Shaping effect. Its impact on other characters is a Psyche effect.

Reset: This Charm can only be used on a specific character once per story.

Stern Essence Replenishment

Cost: —; **Mins:** Socialize 3, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal is unflinching in doing what she must, imposing her order on the world and thereby forcing it to yield up its power.

A successful instill, inspire, or threaten roll with any Ability awards the Sidereal one mote. If her influence aligned with one of her Principles of ambition, conviction, confidence, or arrogance, she gains (Intimacy + 1) motes instead. This can't exceed the number of motes spent enhancing the roll.

When the Sidereal upholds a Major or Defining Principle of ambition, conviction, confidence, or arrogance, she may gain five motes in place of the Willpower she'd normally receive.

Handsome Boy Eyes

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Socialize 3, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Hot-Eyed Snake Whispering

The Sidereal need only see someone from an across the room to win his heart.

The Sidereal makes an influence roll with any Ability through body language to seduce someone or instill a Tie of romantic or sexual desire toward herself, ignoring the Resolve bonus for using body language (**Exalted**, p. 221). Other characters won't recognize that she attempted to influence her target unless they successfully read her intentions or profile her that scene.

With a Socialize 4 repurchase, the Sidereal can pay a one-mote, one-Willpower surcharge for greater subtlety, adding (Essence) Guile against rolls that would reveal her attempt. Rolls that aren't enhanced by magic or are made by characters with Ties of romantic or sexual desire toward her won't realize this even if successful.

You-and-Yours Stance

Cost: 10m; **Mins:** Socialize 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Hot-Eyed Snake Whispering

The Sidereal vanishes within the blazing incandescence of her desirability; those who look upon see only that she is their most valuable possession and that to disappoint her would break their own hearts.

The Sidereal gains the following benefits:

- Her identity is perfectly concealed.
- She adds (Essence) dice on instill rolls to create Ties of romantic or sexual desire toward her and on persuade and bargain rolls for seduction.
- Against characters with Ties of romantic or sexual desire toward her, she's treated as having a bonus dot of Appearance, which can raise it above 5.
- Enemies with base Resolve less than her Appearance can't attack her or take other harmful action against her unless they pay one Willpower to resist for the scene.

Cash and Murder Games

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Shun the Smiling Lady

The Sidereal sketches out the fate of a potential relationship and sets it in motion, increasing the power someone holds over another.

The Sidereal makes a special (Manipulation + Socialize) instill roll against a single target, choosing someone he knows and a method by which that person could gain power over him — fear, desire, obligation, etc. Success instills a Tie toward the character placed in control with an appropriate emotional context, which can't be resisted with Willpower. The Sidereal is never perceived as the source of this influence.

At the end of each scene in which the two interact, the Tie is strengthened by one step (or reforms at Minor if it's been fully eroded). The victim can pay one Willpower to avoid having this Tie strengthened or created. This Charm ends once he's spent (Sidereal's Essence) Willpower this way.

Ubiquitous Paramour Daydream

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Cash and Murder Games

The Sidereal makes a habit of contemplating potential relationships, concealing her true feelings behind imagined passions.

After successfully asserting Guile against a read intentions roll, the Sidereal can use this Charm,

causing the opposing character to believe he succeeded. However, instead of the truth, he perceives a result that conveys or implies that someone else in the scene, chosen by the Sidereal, has power over her. She chooses what this relationship appears to be: romantic entanglement, a student-teacher relationship, debt, etc.

Idle Pillow Talk Approach

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Life Without Compunction

Few concern themselves with what the Sidereal says, only the way she says it.

As the Sidereal makes a single statement, she makes a special (Manipulation + Socialize) roll against all who hear her, ignoring multiple target penalties. Affected characters consider the statement to be contextually appropriate and inoffensive. Simply by babbling nonsense, she could effortlessly navigate a foreign culture's complex etiquette, give interrogators answers that exonerate her from suspicion, or give password to a guard. Characters who hear the statement repeated secondhand are likewise affected. Nontrivial characters may pay one Willpower to resist this influence.

With an Essence 3 repurchase, the Sidereal may pay a one-mote, one Willpower surcharge to extend this Charm's duration to one scene.

Leash-and-Collar Wisdom

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Gilded Cage Entrapment, You-and-Yours Stance

The more the Sidereal's master thinks he can control her, the more vulnerable he is to her honeyed words.

The Sidereal rolls (Manipulation + Socialize) when someone with a Tie of romantic or sexual desire toward her, or an Intimacy reflecting a dominant position over her, is about to ignore her advice or act against the Intimacy. If successful, he must enter a Decision Point and pay one Willpower to proceed with the action. If he doesn't, he must abandon the attempt, and can't retry it that scene.

Once per story, when the Sidereal uses this Charm to prevent someone from acting in opposition to destiny, she succeeds without needing to roll.

Special activation rules: If the Sidereal fails and her target's action lets her curse him with a Descending (Caste) Horoscope, she waives its Willpower cost.

Reset: Once per scene.

Coercion By Any Means

Cost: 3m, 3i, 1wp; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Until grapple is released

Prerequisite Charms: Hot-Eyed Snake Whispering

Passing a hand over her eyes, the Sidereal blinds herself to the subtle distinctions society draws between different applications of uneven force.

When the Sidereal makes a grapple gambit, her target's Defense is penalized by positive Ties toward her or Intimacies that reflect a feeling of dominance over her or desire to exploit her. He also suffers a -(Intimacy) penalty on his roll opposing her control roll. Such Intimacies count as supporting any influence rolls the Sidereal makes against him for the clinch's duration. She can flurry such rolls with grapple actions.

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by crashing an enemy with a **withering** savaging attack or losing a roll opposing an enemy's grapple control roll.

Freedom in Chains

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Ubiquitous Paramour Daydream

No matter how much power she gives up, there are some things the Sidereal refuses to relinquish.

The Sidereal treats her Ties of fear, romantic or sexual desire, or any emotional context reflecting a subordinate or submissive position as one step weaker against other characters' bargain, persuade, and threaten rolls and Psyche effects.

If a character fails such a roll, the Sidereal may use Ubiquitous Paramour Daydream make him believe that he succeeded. This strengthens by one step one of his Ties toward the Sidereal of romantic or sexual desire or an emotional context reflecting a dominant position over her.

Faceless Idol Obsession

Cost: 10m, 1wp, 1ahl; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche, Shaping (Mind)

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Handsome Boy Eyes, Idle Pillow Talk Approach, Leash-and-Collar Wisdom

Cutting away her identity, the Sidereal deepens the feelings of her would-be masters into obsession, becoming a faceless object of their desires.

The Sidereal wordlessly makes a special ([Appearance or Manipulation] + Socialize) instill roll, ignoring multiple target penalties, against all characters with positive Ties toward her or Intimacies that reflect a feeling of dominance over her or desire to exploit her. Affected characters treat those Ties as Obsessions of equal intensity (**Exalted**, p. 169) with the Sidereal, and must immediately roll against the Derangement and the Sidereal's arcane fate.

Weakening these Ties voluntarily costs two Willpower, and characters can't do so while interacting with the Sidereal. Influence rolls to weaken them face the rules for overturning influence (**Exalted**, p. 221).

Obsessed characters experience arcane fate differently. It erases all memory of the Sidereal except for the fact of her existence and an obsessed character's emotions involving her, even if she has a resplendent destiny. A paramour might remember promenading with *someone* he was infatuated with, but nothing else. Their rolls against her arcane fate suffer +1 target number, and victims don't benefit from any intrinsic immunity to arcane fate. Pointing out a gap in a victim's memories works as overturning influence.

Reset: A character can only be affected by this Charm once per story.

Wanting and Fearing Prayer

Cost: 10m, 1wp, 1ahl; **Mins:** Socialize 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche, Shaping (Fate)

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Any ten Socialize Charms

As the Sidereal names aloud two people whose lives she wishes to entangle, she holds up two prayer strips bearing the Scripture of the Desperate Maiden, which burn lambent blue in her hands.

The Sidereal rolls (Manipulation + Socialize) against the Resolve of two characters and proposes a relationship between the two of them. There is no limit on range, but she must have interacted with each of those characters within the previous day or the current session. If she beats a character's Resolve, one of the prayer strips reforms within him, wrapped around his bones. He gains a Defining Tie toward the other character with an emotional context appropriate to the

proposed relationship. This Intimacy can be weakened normally, but the victim can't act against it — even if it's been fully eroded — unless he enters a Decision Point and spends one Willpower to resist for a scene.

If the Sidereal beats both character's Resolve, fate works to bring them together in the proposed relationship. The more plausible that relationship, the more quickly this occurs and the more likely it is to succeed: it's easier to declare two neighbors will fall in love than two strangers from opposite ends of Creation. Once per scene, the Sidereal's player may impose -1 or +1 target number on a roll to help bring about the relationship.

While the prayer strips' light can't shine through even the thinnest layer of skin, it bursts forth brilliantly if that flesh is ever cut away, including if a character reaches a -4 wound penalty. This penalizes Stealth as a glowing anima banner (p. XX). Removing a prayer strip is an extended (Intelligence + Medicine) action with difficulty 4, goal number 20, and an interval of one hour. At each interval, the patient suffers one die of lethal damage, ignoring Hardness. Successfully removing the prayer strip frees that character from this Charm's effects, including that bringing the pair together. If the Sidereal ends this Charm, both prayer strips crumble to ash.

Reset: Once per story.

The House of Battles

Ascending Battles Horoscope

Cost: 1m or 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Any Battles Ability 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Shaping (Fate), Stackable, Uniform

Duration: One story

Prerequisite Charms: Any three Battles Charms

The Sidereal proclaims Mars' favor to warriors, generals, athletes, and hellraisers.

The Sidereal blesses another character with good fortune in a certain kind of battle, conflict, or competition: defending his home city, battling demons, prevailing in games of skill, etc. This costs one mote for mortals or three motes, one Willpower for others. One per scene, the blessed character's player may gain -1 target number on an attack roll, Join Battle roll, War roll, or roll relevant to nonviolent conflict.

Blessing a character requires a constellation-themed interaction with him. Upon taking this Charm, the Sidereal's player chooses two of the below options. Additional options can be purchased for one bonus point or three experience points apiece.

Excessive Valor Reward (The Banner): The Sidereal's target boasts about his accomplishments.

Foretold Victory Blessing (The Quiver): The Sidereal's arget heeds her advice in matters of tactics or strategy, whether on or off the battlefield. She becomes aware when he does so and can use this Charm reflexively.

Instructive Hostility Auspice (The Spear): The Sidereal's target argues, competes, spars, or

fighters with her.

Soul-Strengthening Conviction (The Gauntlet): The Sidereal's target commits to making a risky or costly decision.

Star-Favored Guardian (The Shield): The Sidereal's target puts himself in harm's way for her.

The Sidereal can bless multiple characters with this Charm.

Descending Battles Horoscope

Cost: 1 or 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Any Battles Ability 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Shaping (Fate), Uniform

Duration: One story

Prerequisite Charms: Any three Battles Charms

The Sidereal portends doom in Mars' name, striking victories from the weave of fate.

The Sidereal and her target make opposed (Strength + [Battles Ability]) rolls. This costs one mote for mortals or three motes, one Willpower for others. Success curses him, inflicting misfortune in a type of conflict named by the Sidereal. Once per scene, when he's engaged in such a conflict, the Sidereal's player may inflict +1 target number on an attack roll, Join Battle roll, War roll, or roll relevant to nonviolent conflict. She need not be present.

Cursing a character requires a constellation-themed interaction with him. Upon taking this Charm, the Sidereal's player chooses two of the below options. Additional options can be purchased for one bonus point or three experience points apiece.

Broken Peace Punishment (The Spear): The Sidereal's target argues, competes, spars, or fights with her.

Generous Soul Defeat (The Gauntlet): The Sidereal's target shows mercy to an enemy, shares the spoils of a victory with someone who didn't aid him, or forgives someone the Sidereal thinks doesn't deserve it.

Incompetent General's Folly (The Quiver): The Sidereal's target ignores advice he sought from her in matters of tactics or strategy, whether on or off the battlefield. She becomes aware when he does so and can use this Charm reflexively.

Insufficient Valor Curse (The Shield): The Sidereal's target surrenders or flees from battle, backs down in an argument, or concedes or withdraws from another form of conflict.

Reputation-Destroying Doom (The Banner): The Sidereal's target boasts about his accomplishments.

The Sidereal can curse multiple characters with this Charm.

Auspicious Implement for Strife

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Any Battles Ability 1, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Dual

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

The weak cling to their weapons; the Sidereal recognizes the potential for violence in every stone, dinner utensil, and piece of furniture.

The Sidereal reflexively readies an improvised weapon. She waives the Initiative cost for attacking with it. **Withering** attacks with it add (higher of Essence or 3) raw damage; **decisive** attacks double 10s on the damage roll.

An Any Battles Ability 3, Essence 2 repurchase lets the Sidereal pay a two-mote, one Willpower surcharge to grant the weapon artifact traits. It can then be repurchased any number of times, each repurchase adding an Evocation that can be used with improvised weapons. These Evocations draw their themes and function from the Sidereal's personality, Caste, and birth and Exaltation signs.

Holistic Arsenal Methodology

Cost: —(2m); **Mins:** Any Battles Ability 1, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal's battle prowess is all-encompassing, drawing no distinction between weapons.

The Sidereal can wield weapons with the Martial Arts tag (**Exalted**, p. 586) using an appropriate Ability. This is typically Melee, but those similar to Brawl weapons may be compatible with it — e.g., wind and fire wheels could be used with Brawl or Melee. Ranged weapons, like meteor hammers (p. XX), use the Ability they're tagged with.

For two motes, the Sidereal may reflexively ready a weapon. This cost is waived when she changes from a weapon of one Ability to another (including Martial Arts weapons rendered compatible with other Abilities).

Judicious Application of Force

Cost: —; **Mins:** Any Battles Ability 1, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal's experience serving destiny has taught her that she must sometimes take a blunt approach.

The Sidereal can use Strength instead of Dexterity on nonranged attacks with heavy weapons, unarmed attacks, or natural weapons. Such rolls don't benefit from effects that grant bonus Strength dots, double successes on Strength rolls, or replace her Strength with a higher value.

Knuckle-Cracking Stance

Cost: —; **Mins:** Any Battles Ability 1, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Any Battles Charm

The Sidereal carries herself with the swagger of a battle-seasoned bravo, making clear her willingness to employ violence.

The Sidereal can use Strength instead of social Attributes for threaten rolls and rolls to instill Ties of fear toward her. She may also use Strength instead of Appearance to determine how many bonus dice she adds to such rolls and is treated as Hideous (**Exalted**, p. 162) for them. In combat, an enemy whose Resolve is beaten by such a roll loses one Initiative, which the Sidereal doesn't gain.

Someone's Son Style

Cost: —; **Mins:** Any Battles Ability 2, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Any three Battles Charms

The Sidereal bears the fate of an honest soldier, aided by those who know she may one day stand in their defense.

The Sidereal gains the following benefits:

- Any character she's protected — either personally or by fighting in defense of their community — counts as having a Minor Tie of gratitude toward her.
- She gains +1 Resolve against influence that appeals to pride, ambition, vanity, or self-interest.
- She gains +1 Guile against any effect that would reveal information contradictory with her being nothing more than a soldier.

- Enemy generals can't gain bonus dice from spies, informants, or traitors on Strategic Maneuver rolls against a general the Sidereal fights alongside. The Sidereal herself doesn't gain this benefit as a general.

Battlefield Genius Style

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Any Battles Ability 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Any three Battles Charms

The Sidereal's mind is a well-honed weapon, conquering her enemies with superior tactics.

The Sidereal rolls (Intelligence + Battles Ability) to introduce a fact, treating specialties in all Battles Caste Abilities as Lore backgrounds. In combat, success grants (Essence) Initiative to herself or an ally.

Sheathing the Crimson Blade

Cost: —(1m); **Mins:** Any Battles Ability 3, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Any Battles Charm

Accepting the harsh realities of battle, the Sidereal's expression and demeanor betray no sign of her premeditation of violence.

The Sidereal can use a Battles Caste Ability instead of Socialize to calculate Guile. For one mote, she gains +2 Guile against an effect that would reveal her hostile intentions or negative Ties

Wearing Red to a Wedding

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Any Battles Ability 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Sheathing the Crimson Blade

The world's a cruel and unhappy place. That's just how it is!

People won't comment on or otherwise react to the Sidereal openly brandishing arms or armor,

dripping with blood, or showing other signs of battle, nor will they assume the Sidereal poses a threat to them. These never penalize her social rolls. Nontrivial characters can spend one Willpower to react normally to the Sidereal for a scene.

This Charm ends if the Sidereal attacks or takes other overtly hostile action.

Weak-Spine Sense

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Any Battles Ability 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Any three Battles Charms

The Sidereal knows the scent of fear.

The Sidereal makes a special (Perception + Battles Ability) read intentions roll. Success lets her player asks the Storyteller one of the following questions, plus an additional question for every 3 extra successes:

- Is he afraid of me?
- How could I best intimidate him?
- Who here is he most afraid of?
- What would he face his fears for?

If the Storyteller doesn't have an answer in mind for a question, the Sidereal's player should provide one, as if introducing a fact.

Reset: Once per scene.

Angry Maiden Mantle

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Any Battles Ability 4, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Knuckle-Cracking Stance *or* Weak-Spine Sense

Wrathing herself in Mars' wrath, the Sidereal cows her inferiors in the Celestial Bureaucracy.

When the Sidereal makes an influence roll against a god to threaten him, instill a Tie of fear, or persuade him based on a Tie of fear, the Willpower cost to resist is increased by one. If her target has Ties of fear toward a superior within the Celestial Bureaucracy or to the Five Maidens, it supports this influence as though the Sidereal were its object. She can also use this Charm against other un-Exalted characters officially employed by the Celestial Bureaucracy.

Hero-Supporting Performance

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Any Battles Ability 5, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Any three Battles Charm

The Sidereal is as strong as her strongest comrade.

When the Sidereal makes a Strength-based roll, she rolls twice: once with her own dice pool, and once with the highest dice pool among her allies in the scene. Any magic she uses don't benefit his roll, although he can use his own to enhance it.

Battle-Carrying Presence

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Any Battles Ability 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Hero-Supporting Performance

So long as the Sidereal has the courage and strength to fight on, so too do her comrades in arms.

Allies who can perceive the Sidereal gain +2 Resolve against fear-based influence, up to a maximum of the Sidereal's total Resolve against the effect. Any wound penalties such allies suffer are reduced to the Sidereal's own if it's lower.

Conquering Star Command

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Any Battles Ability 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Any five Battles Charms

Sheathing her bloodied blade, the Sidereal gives a command to her defeated foes that can't be disobeyed.

After defeating one or more foes, the Sidereal makes a ([Appearance or Charisma] + Battles Ability) persuade roll against them, ignoring multiple target penalties and adding a free full Excellency against all defeated enemies. The defeat need not be in battle: athletic competition, debate, and the like also count. The defeat counts as a supporting Intimacy with an intensity based

on its severity:

Minor: The defeat doesn't cause any significant setback for enemies other than their injuries: an ordinary sparring bout, drunken brawl, friendly footrace, petty argument, etc.

Major: The defeat is a consequential setback, though not a total loss: fending off thieves, a battle in a larger war, a competition with a significant prize at stake, etc.

Defining: The defeat thwarts an enemy's agenda, plans, or other overall goals: decisively defeating forces laying siege to a city, assassinating a bodyguard's charge, swaying the public to despise a once-influential demagogue, etc.

Resisting the command in a Decision Point costs two Willpower, but is only possible if a character used magic to defend against the influence or has an opposed Defining Tie.

Understanding Ecstatic Ways

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Any Battles Ability 5, Essence 4

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute, Psyche

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Conquering Star Command, Wearing Red to a Wedding

The Sidereal flenses away the consequences of her actions, freeing herself to partake in the ecstatic battle without concern for civilities and decorum.

Any violent actions the Sidereal undertakes will not give offense to anyone, victim or bystander, nor will anyone be upset or angered by her actions, even if she kills her victim. This doesn't prevent characters from fighting back or aiding those the Sidereal attacks, but they still hold no ill will against her. She may face legal consequences for her actions, but they're conducted dispassionately, no matter how heinous her crime.

Resisting this Psyche effect costs three Willpower. The Sidereal's victim and those with positive Ties toward him Characters with a positive Tie to a may resist for one Willpower instead. Trivial characters can't resist with Willpower.

Archery — The Quiver

Sidereal Archery Charms express their prowess with bows and firewands and their tactical brilliance, prevailing over enemies through the Quiver's cunning, adaptability, and quick wits. Like the Clay Maiden, a Sidereal has a tactic for every situation like arrows in her quiver, and she need not limit herself to prosaic ammunition. In combat, Sidereal Archery prioritizes gambits, hindering foes, and acting before enemies.

The Scripture of the Clay Maiden

Once, there was a maiden...

...who made herself from the substance of the world.

She knew how to eat an owl's heart and gain its insight.

She knew how to bake herself in the sun and melt herself in the rain.

She knew how to mess up wisdom.

She knew how to love, and how to hate.

"Survival is flexibility," she said.

Any-Direction Arrow

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Archery 2, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Uniform, Versatile

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Graced by the chance to serve destiny, the Sidereal's arrow gleefully weaves through the air to strike from an unexpected direction.

The Sidereal's attack ignores Defense bonuses from cover and full defenses. She can attack enemies behind full cover, although they receive +3 non-Charm Defense.

With Archery 4, Essence 2, the Sidereal can pay a one-Willpower surcharge to make her attack unblockable against lower-Initiative enemies.

Flaw-Revealing Tactic

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Archery 2, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only, Versatile

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal's feint exposes the weaknesses of an enemy's defense.

A successful distract gambit inflicts a penalty equal to the enemy's soak and Hardness equal to the Initiative transferred. This lasts until the end of the gambit beneficiary's next turn. If this reduction exceeds either his soak or Hardness, he suffers dice of unspeakable **withering** damage equal to the total difference. This damage awards Initiative to the gambit's beneficiary, separate from the gambit's bonus.

Apologetic Feint

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Archery 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only, Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Flaw-Revealing Tactic

The Sidereal's quick wits win the day, harrying foes with well-placed shots.

The Sidereal reduces the Initiative cost of a disarm, distract, or unhorse gambit by one, or that of a custom gambit enhanced with Generalized Ammunition Technique. Any reduction of the attack roll's target number also applies to the Initiative roll.

Mirrored Fate Shot

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Versatile

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Flaw-Revealing Tactic

The Sidereal need not choose between one arrow in her quiver and its brother, nor must she limit herself to a single tactic.

The Sidereal makes a distract gambit that also includes the effects of a disarm gambit, unhorse gambit, or, at the Storyteller's discretion, an appropriate custom or situational gambit. The gambit's difficulty is 5.

Generalized Ammunition Technique

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Archery 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Uniform, Versatile

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Ever adaptable, the Sidereal makes good use of whatever comes to hand.

The Sidereal can fire any physical thing that's no larger than her fist and no longer than her arm from an Archery weapon. This includes appropriately sized objects, but also things like fire, small animals, handfuls of dust, shouts, music, etc. Her missile isn't damaged by its flight, letting her use this Charm to make long-distance deliveries or send shouted messages.

The improvised projectile gains any tags appropriate to its nature. If an arrow's nature lends itself to a gambit, its Initiative roll gains -1 target number.

A second purchase of this Charm lets the Sidereal pay a one-Initiative surcharge to reflexively reload a weapon with the Slow tag. This lets her use it with magic that creates multiple attacks if

she reloads before each attack past the first.

Strange Quiver Trick

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Generalized Ammunition Technique

The Sidereal's quiver is stocked with the right arrow for every eventuality.

Reaching for ammunition on her person, the Sidereal rolls (Wits + Archery) to produce a mundane object that's small enough to fire with Generalized Ammunition Technique with a Resources rating less than or equal to her successes. She can't use this to steal specific objects.

Special activation rules: This Charm can be placed in a flurry. If the Sidereal flurries it with an attack to fire the object using Generalized Ammunition Technique, uses her attack in place of this Charm's roll.

Reset: Once per scene.

Opportune Shot

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Archery 2, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Spotting a fateful opportunity, the Sidereal looses a well-placed arrow.

The Sidereal adds (higher of Perception or Wits) to her Initiative to determine when she acts; she must use her turn to attack. If she attacks an enemy who hasn't acted that round, the damage roll gains -1 target number.

Clay Maiden Form

Cost: 10m; **Mins:** Archery 4, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Form

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Any four Archery Charms

The Sidereal enters a stance she was never taught, adapting to her enemies' numbers, her tactical disadvantages, and the soil of the battlefield beneath her feet.

The Sidereal gains the following benefits:

- An enemy hit by her attack subtracts his onslaught penalty from his effective Initiative to determine when he acts until his onslaught refreshes.
- She can flurry aiming with a full defense, ignoring the Defense penalty for doing so.
- A successful disarm or distract gambit also rolls dice of **decisive** damage equal to the 10s on the Initiative roll, ignoring Hardness.
- She can make gambits against enemies at medium range or further without needing to aim.

Special activation rules: The Sidereal can enter this Form reflexively when she hits with a **decisive** attack that benefits from aiming.

Misdirected Wisdom Trick

Cost: 3m, 2i; **Mins:** Archery 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Versatile

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Flaw-Revealing Tactic

The Sidereal's arrow draws the eye of her enemy, turning his attention where she wants it.

The Sidereal makes a distract gambit, adding (Manipulation) dice on the attack and Initiative rolls. If the gambit succeeds and either the attack or Initiative roll beats her enemy's Resolve, she misdirects his attention to anyone or anything he can perceive. He must use his next turn to take an action that involves it — attacking an enemy, using defend other to protect an ally, picking up a valuable necklace, etc. He can flurry it with an unrelated action, but the flurry penalty on both rolls increases by two.

Every-Direction Arrow

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Any-Direction Arrow

The Sidereal looses countless arrows in all directions, only for them to converge upon a single foe from every side.

The Sidereal makes (lowest of Dexterity, Perception, or Wits) **decisive** attacks against a single

enemy. Each may be either a damaging attack or a distract gambit. Each attack has a base pool of (Essence) dice for its damage or Initiative roll; the Sidereal divides her Initiative evenly among them, rounded up. If she hits with at least one attack — damaging or a gambit — she resets to base Initiative once all attacks are completed. Gambits' Initiative costs are waived.

The Sidereal need only pay Any-Direction Arrow's cost once to enhance all attacks. Likewise, magic that only applies to gambits need only be used once to enhance all distract gambits.

Parallax Strafing Methodology

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Every-Direction Arrow

Space bends together with the Sidereal's bowstring, opening impossible angles of attack.

The Sidereal makes a **withering** or **decisive** attack as though she were attacking from a point up (Essence/2, rounded up) range bands in any direction from her, including for her weapon's range, determining a **withering** attack's Accuracy bonus, whether she needs to aim, the applicability of cover, etc.

Strategy Without Commitment

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Dual

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Parallax Strafing Methodology

The Sidereal entrusts her arrow to the world, confident that it will find a worthy mark.

The Sidereal makes an attack without choosing a target, instead designating a point within her weapon's range. After the attack roll, she may choose an enemy within close range of that point to attack. Potential targets must use defensive Charms before she rolls.

Clay Maiden Enlightenment

Cost: —; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Clay Maiden Form, any five Archery Charms

The Sidereal has broadened her understanding of archery beyond all limitations, wielding concepts and philosophies as arrows.

Upon purchasing this Charm, the Sidereal chooses a Sidereal Martial Art. She can learn it without needing the requisite Martial Arts Charms. She can use it with all Archery weapons, though this doesn't make it compatible with other styles that use them (unless the Sidereal's also purchases this Charm for them). All her Archery Charms count as Versatile for that style and as Martial Arts for any of its Charms that interact with other styles, like Prismatic Arrangement of Creation Form (p. XX).

This Charm can be purchased any number of times.

Empty Quiver Ruse

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Perilous, Uniform, Versatile

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Apologetic Feint

Not all of the Sidereal's shots are meant to hit; her feints are indistinguishable from her true offense.

After the Sidereal misses an attack, she can use this Charm to convert that attack to a distract gambit that automatically hits. Charms enhancing her attack that aren't compatible with distract gambits don't apply.

Five Seasons Approach

Cost: 3m, 3i, 1wp; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Strategy Without Commitment

If the Sidereal's skill will not suffice, she may trust in the world's esteem for her, its fear of what she would save it from, its dreams of what she might accomplish, or — if all else fails — in luck.

The Sidereal makes a **decisive** attack against an enemy within extreme range, out to four range bands. She doesn't need to aim to attack enemies at medium range or further. The attack's power is born not of strategic advantage but of blind luck; the attack roll ignores penalties and it has base damage (Essence + attack roll extra successes), ignoring Hardness. It doesn't include her Initiative or reset her to base.

If the attack roll's target number is reduced, each point of reduction extends this attack's range by one band, letting the Sidereal attack at extreme range.

Reset: Once per scene, unless reset by landing a **decisive** attack that resets the Sidereal's Initiative and then reaching Initiative 12+.

Hidden Arrow Tactic

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only, Versatile

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Apologetic Feint, Misdirected Wisdom Trick

Only as the Sidereal's foe staggers back to avoid her feint does he notice the second arrow hidden behind it.

After a successful distract gambit, the Sidereal can use this Charm to make a **decisive** attack against her target, which benefits from the distract gambit as well as her ally's attack. It's unblockable and undodgeable but is opposed by her target's (Perception + Awareness). If the gambit was unexpected, this attack is as well.

Reset: Once per scene unless reset when an ally benefitting from a distract gambit by the Sidereal damages a crashed enemy.

Several Arrows of Reason

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Aggravated, Dual, Versatile

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Strange Quiver Trick

The Sidereal fills her quiver with arrows of reason, bane of those things that hail from beyond the realm of rationality.

The Sidereal has access to unlimited ammunition. Against enemies of fate, damage rolls and gambit Initiative rolls gain -1 target number. **Decisive** attacks deal aggravated damage.

Shooting Star Flare

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Versatile

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Strange Quiver Trick

The Sidereal draws her soul's fire back against her bowstring, unleashing an arrow of anima.

The Sidereal fires her anima banner as a **decisive** attack, resetting it to dim. An enemy damaged by it is wreathed in her anima. Exalted enemies gain levels of anima equal to the Sidereal's; the un-Exalted manifest the Sidereal's anima, including her distinctive colors and iconic display, which impairs stealth and disguise as usual (p. XX). They don't gain her anima powers. The Sidereal can transfer anima to a willing ally without an attack or damage roll. This doesn't reset her Initiative.

Alternatively, the Sidereal can fire her anima without a target, causing it to explode in a blinding flare that extends out to (Anima/2, rounded up) range bands from a point within her weapon's range. Enemies within the flare must roll (Stamina + Resistance) opposing the attack roll or be blinded, suffering a -3 penalty on vision-based rolls for (Anima) rounds. This doesn't reset the Sidereal's Initiative.

Quiver-Filling Requisition

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Clash, Decisive-only, Stackable

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Shooting Star Flare

The Sidereal turns the forces arrayed against her to her advantage, replenishing her quiver with her enemies' arrows.

After successfully dodging a ranged attack, the Sidereal can use this Charm draw its projectile, blast, or the like into her anima like an arrow in a quiver. Artifact weapons are immune to this. Stored projectiles are visible only while the Sidereal's anima is at burning or higher.

The next time the Sidereal is attacked — even by an ambush — she clashes it with a **decisive** attack using a stored projectile, sending it flying from her anima.

The Sidereal can also use this Charm to store familiars within her anima. If she uses one to clash, it makes the attack roll, flashing into close range with her attacker.

The Sidereal can stack up to (Essence) uses of this Charm.

Ally-Concealing Arrow

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 4

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Hidden Arrow Tactic

The Sidereal's feint creates a blind spot in her enemy's guard, leaving him vulnerable to a fatal strike.

A successful distract gambit lets its beneficiary reflexively roll Stealth to enter concealment. If he beats the opposed roll of the gambit's target and attacks her before she takes her next turn, his attack becomes an ambush (**Exalted**, p. 203).

Special activation rules: The Sidereal can use Misdirected Wisdom Trick to enhance the gambit, waiving its Initiative cost.

Unburdened Soul Arrow

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Versatile

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Shooting Star Flare

Those who seek to subvert the Sidereal's mind only replenish her quiver; thoughts that might harm her are easily turned against her foes.

To use this Charm, the Sidereal must be suffering a Psyche effect, Shaping effect, or Derangement. She draws it from herself as an arrow of crimson stardust and uses it to make a **decisive** attack. If its damage exceeds her target's Resolve, as modified by any applicable Intimacies, he succumbs to that effect as though he were its original target and the Sidereal's freed from it. If the effect doesn't make sense for the new target (e.g., a Psyche effect compelling him to seduce himself), the Storyteller should modify it appropriately.

Reset: Once per story, unless reset by defeating a significant enemy who's successfully used a Psyche or Shaping effect against the Sidereal this story.

Many-Missiles Bow Technique

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Archery 5, Essence 5

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Varies

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Any ten Archery Charms

The Sidereal casts a prayer strip bearing the Scripture of the Clay Maiden into the air to float above her bow, radiating a gaudy pink light that imbues her quiver with endless possibilities.

The Sidereal may transform her arrows whenever she makes an attack, using one of the transformations below. She chooses three of them upon purchasing this Charm; she may purchase additional transformations for three experience points each.

Boulder (Dual): The Sidereal's arrow transforms into a boulder. Her **withering** or **decisive** attack is undodgeable. 10s on the attack roll adds one die of post-soak **withering** damage or **decisive** damage, up to a maximum of her extra successes. A damaged enemy is knocked prone and pinned beneath the boulder; he can't rise from prone until it's been lifted with a difficulty 5 feat of strength that requires Strength 3.

Fire (Decisive-only): The Sidereal's arrow transforms into a rain of fire. She must have Initiative 12+ to use this transformation. Her **decisive** attack is unblockable. As long as she deals any damage, her target any characters within close range of him whose Evasion is beaten by the attack roll catch flame, suffering (Essence) dice of lethal damage at the start of each of their turns until the flames are extinguished. Flammable scenery may likewise catch flame.

Glass (Dual): The Sidereal's arrow turns into perfectly translucent glass. Her **withering** or **decisive** attack becomes a surprise attack (**Exalted**, p. 203). If she does so on her first turn against a lower-Initiative enemy, he rolls (Perception + Awareness) opposing her attack roll. If he fails, it becomes an ambush.

Grain (Special): A field of ripe wheat sprouts from where the Sidereal's arrow falls. She makes a special (Intelligence + Archery) attack roll. This doesn't count as her attack for the round. The grain provides enough food to feed a group of people with one dot of effective Size (**Exalted**, p. 206) for every two successes, rounded up. This transformation can only be used once per day.

Life (Special): The Sidereal's arrow transforms into a bolt of vital Essence. She makes a special (Intelligence + Archery) attack roll to align this with the flows of her patient's Essence. This doesn't count as her attack for the round. For each success, she may pay 3 Initiative to heal one level of non-aggravated damage. A character can only benefit from this gambit once per day.

Snow (Special): The Sidereal's arrow becomes a flurry of snow. She makes a special (Intelligence + Archery) attack roll. This doesn't count as her attack for the round. The snowfall extends out to (Essence + successes) miles from where her arrow landed — any point within her weapon's range — and lasts for a number of hours equal to her successes. The snow imposes a -1 penalty on vision-based rolls; after some time, piled-up snow may become difficult terrain. The Sidereal can only have one snowfall at a time with this Charm.

If the Sidereal uses Generalized Ammunition Technique to fire an object too durable to be destroyed with a Strength 5 feat of demolition, she can't transform it. In the unlikely event she fires a nontrivial character, she can't transform him either.

Brawl — The Gauntlet

Sidereal Brawl Charms evince the martial prowess, physical might, and violent instincts of hellraisers and bare-knuckled bruisers who fight in destiny's service. Under the Gauntlet's auspices, they reward ruthlessness in making battlefield decisions and force difficult choices on foes. They steel a Sidereal to accept whatever battle she may find herself in and whatever sacrifices are necessary to win, surviving at all costs like the Drowning Maiden. In battle, Sidereal Brawl emphasizes building Initiative to unleash punishing **decisive** attacks and using grapples to restrain and grind down foes.

The Scripture of the Drowning Maiden

Once, there was a maiden...

...falling forever in the water. She reached for purchase, but found nothing; her arms swung through the sea.

The water did not slow her, nor the chill,
but she could not breathe.

Each time she gasped and found no breath, a human child died, and thus, she lived.

"Survival is acceptance," she said.

Horrific Wreath

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Brawl 2, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Aggravated, Dual

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal mirrors her enemy's hostility, wreathing her fists in baleful radiance.

The Sidereal's attack adds (lower of her Strength or enemy's Essence) dice to of post-soak **withering** damage or **decisive** damage. Against enemies of fate, she isn't limited by her Strength and her **decisive** attacks deal aggravated damage.

Hostility Acceptance Technique

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Brawl 2, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Versatile, Withering-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Having resigned herself to conflict's inevitability, the Sidereal rolls with the punches as if it were second nature.

The Sidereal can use this Charm after being hit by a **withering** attack, before the damage roll. The amount of Initiative she loses from the attack is reduced by (higher of Essence or 3), although her attacker still receives the full amount. If this prevents the Sidereal from losing any Initiative, she gains one Initiative.

Speared Boar Struggle

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Brawl 4, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Counterattack, Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Hostility Acceptance Technique

The Sidereal leaves herself wide open, letting the momentum of a foe's attack drive him into her clutches.

The Sidereal may reduce her Defense against an attack by any amount, counterattacking with a damaging **decisive** attack or a grapple gambit. Each point she reduces her Defense by adds a success to the attack, Initiative, and grapple control rolls and reduces the gambit's Initiative cost by one.

Tolerant Strife

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Brawl 2, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform, Versatile

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal takes the battlefield as she finds it, coming to an accommodation with the world.

The Sidereal ignores onslaught penalties and environmental penalties to her Parry. If she blocks an attack, it doesn't inflict an onslaught penalty.

Iron Brute Fist

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only, Versatile

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Violence is a brutish and ugly thing, a truth the Sidereal imparts through bruises and broken bones.

If the Sidereal deals 3+ levels of **decisive** damage or any aggravated damage, or if her target accepts a crippling injury, she inflicts a prominent and unsightly wound — a black eye, a broken nose, patches of torn-out hair, etc. Her victim becomes Hideous (**Exalted**, p. 162) and suffers a -3 penalty on Appearance- and Charisma-based actions other than threaten rolls. This crippling effect lasts until he's healed all levels of damage he suffers from.

Special activation rules: The Sidereal may use this Charm reflexively when a character within close range makes an Appearance or Charisma roll against her, rolling a **decisive** attack that benefits as above before he makes his roll. (Roll Join Battle if necessary).

Lady-or-Tiger Tactic

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Brawl 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

There are no good choices for those caught in the Sidereal's grasp, only those that hurt the least.

When the Sidereal makes a grapple gambit, before the attack roll, her opponent must choose one: either he suffers +1 target number on his grapple control roll or suffers dice of bashing damage equal to her attack roll 10s, ignoring Hardness.

Wrapped Fly Embrace

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Brawl 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Lady-or-Tiger Embrace

Taking her enemy's strand of fate in her hands as she wrestles with him, the Sidereal binds him in manners both seen and unseen.

When the Sidereal makes a grapple gambit and succeeds on the Initiative roll, her control roll inflicts an additional point of onslaught penalty, regardless of whether it succeeds. Any reduction of the attack roll's target number also applies to the Initiative roll and control roll.

Drowning Maiden Form

Cost: 10m; **Mins:** Brawl 4, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Dual, Form

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Any four Brawl Charms

The Sidereal's inner eye witnesses every act of violence she has yet to inflict, immersing her in the boundless sea of blood she must shed to survive.

The Sidereal gains the following benefits:

- Her **withering** attacks gain +1 Overwhelming. This increases to +(Strength/2, rounded up) for unarmed attacks.
- Her **decisive** damage rolls and grapple control rolls gain -1 target number against enemies of fate and crashed enemies.
- She adds (Strength/2, rounded up) soak. If she's unarmored, this increases to (Strength).
- She adds +1 to the Resolve bonus of Intimacies that support engaging in battle, making sacrifices, or disregard the desires of others.

Special activation rules: The Sidereal can enter this Form reflexively when she takes **decisive** damage or Joins Battle while at a -2 or worse wound penalty.

Breath-Seizing Grasp

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Brawl 4, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only, Mute

Duration: Until grapple is released

Prerequisite Charms: Lady-or-Tiger Tactic

The Sidereal brings her foe down with her as she drowns, hand in bloodstained hand.

The Sidereal doesn't lose rounds of control when she's attacked or damaged by lower-Initiative enemies, enemies of fate, or a grappled foe. If she and her foe are both suffocating (**Exalted**, p. 232), each round of asphyxiation he suffers grants her another round's worth of breath. If he's immune to what's suffocating her — e.g., a Water Aspect grappled underwater — she can breathe freely for the clinch's duration.

Sacrifice Without Regret

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Brawl 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only, Perilous, Versatile

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Speared Boar Struggle

The Sidereal may not escape unscathed from her enemies' wrath, but accepts whatever sacrifices are necessary without flinching.

When the Sidereal takes a crippling injury (**Exalted**, p. 201), the damage roll retroactively suffers +1 target number. If this reduces the damage beneath the amount negated by the injury, the Sidereal suffers a commensurately less severe wound, or none if she takes no damage.

If the battle supports a Major or Defining Principle of duty, the damage roll suffers +2 target

number and the injury doesn't count against the once-per-story limit.

Reset: Once per scene.

Sever the Thread

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Iron Brute Fist

The Sidereal's awful strength rips fates and flesh asunder.

To use this Charm, the Sidereal must have Initiative 10+. Her **decisive** damage roll gains -2 target number unless her target's player commits in advance to accepting the highest level of crippling injury possible. Un-Exalted enemies of fate must instead take an injury one step more severe. This doesn't count against the once-per-story limit on taking such injuries and renders him immune to this Charm for the scene.

Unobstructed Blow

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Uniform, Versatile

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Horrific Wreath

The Sidereal writes her blow into forthcoming fate, assuring its inevitability.

The Sidereal makes an unblockable **withering** or **decisive** attack that ignores cover. She can attack through full cover, though her target receives +3 Defense.

Indiscriminate Doom Tribulation

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Unobstructed Blow

Feeling along the threads of her enemies' fates, the Sidereal strums a terrible resonance of betrayal.

The Sidereal makes a **decisive** attack, adding extra successes as damage dice. After the damage roll, her victim may transfer the damage, onslaught penalty, and any other harmful effects of the attack to one of his nontrivial allies present in the scene. If he has a positive Tie to her, that character suffers (Intimacy) additional dice of damage. He must genuinely view her as an ally to enact this betrayal (though the feeling need not be mutual).

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by landing a **decisive** attack that resets the Sidereal's Initiative and then reaching Initiative 15+.

Crimson Palm Counterstrike

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Clash, Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Horrific Wreath, Speared Boar Struggle

Coming to an accommodation with her enemy's killing intent, the Sidereal strikes an instant before he can.

The Sidereal reflexively clashes an attack with a **decisive** attack. If she succeeds against an enemy's **decisive** attack, she gains the Initiative he loses for missing, adding them to her damage roll.

Blood Bought With Blood

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Counterattack, Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Crimson Palm Counterstrike

Accepting whatever may come, the Sidereal escalates a battle to its climax in a pivotal exchange of blows.

When an enemy makes a **decisive** attack against the Sidereal, she can use this Charm, rendering her Defense inapplicable against it. She makes a **decisive** counterattack before the initial attack's damage roll, adding damage dice equal to her attacker's extra successes — and preventing him from using his own extra successes for any relevant effects, like Hungry Tiger Technique (**Exalted**, p. 351). Each level of damage dealt by the counterattack also inflicts a -1 penalty on the initial attack's damage roll. If the Sidereal incapacitates her attacker, he doesn't roll damage.

Although the Sidereal can't use her Defense, she can still clash the attack. She can use Crimson Palm Counterstrike to do so, despite the usual restrictions on Clash and Counterattack Charms; her Initiative doesn't reset until both attacks are complete.

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by crashing a nontrivial enemy whose Initiative was higher than the Sidereal's.

Drowning Maiden Enlightenment

Cost: —; **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Drowning Maiden Form, any five Brawl Charms

The Sidereal has accepted violence as her nature, sacrificing those parts of herself that hold her back from the apex of transcendent strife.

Upon purchasing this Charm, the Sidereal chooses a Sidereal Martial Art. She can learn it without needing the requisite Martial Arts Charms. She can use it with all Brawl weapons, though this doesn't make it compatible with other styles that use them (unless the Sidereal's also purchases this Charm for them). All her Brawl Charms count as Versatile for that style and as Martial Arts for any of its Charms that interact with other styles, like Prismatic Arrangement of Creation Form (p. XX).

This Charm can be purchased any number of times.

Battlefield Decimation Technique

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Indiscriminate Doom Tribulation

Striking at thin air, the Sidereal spread ripples of violence across the battlefield and leaves it to her foes to determine who is struck.

The Sidereal rolls a single unblockable **withering** attack against all enemies within short range, making a separate damage roll against each hit enemy. This ignores all cover, even full cover.

Before the damage rolls are made, players may opt to avoid taking damage, starting with the one whose character faces the most damage dice and going in order. If a player opts out, his character suffers no damage, but the Sidereal gains (her Essence) Initiative and adds half the damage dice he faced, rounded up, to her roll against each other character. If only one enemy remains, he can't opt out.

The Sidereal gains Initiative normally from the highest damage roll. Other damage rolls award up to (her Essence) Initiative. She still gains the full Initiative for hitting and crashing enemies.

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by dealing 8+ levels of **decisive** damage to a nontrivial

enemy.

Dead Spouse Defense

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 4

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only, Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Sacrifice Without Regret

There are oceans of blood yet to be shed in destiny's service; what is one drop more compared to the Sidereal's duty?

The Sidereal can use this Charm after an attack roll against her or other roll to resist damage, but before the damage roll. She speaks the name of a trivial character she's interacted with this story. She automatically defends against all damage or other harm from it; a few seconds later, that person's heart stops.

Reset: Once per story, unless reset by suffering Limit Break.

Someone Dies Strike

Cost: 5m, 3i, 1wp; **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 4

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Perilous, Uniform, Versatile

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Battlefield Decimation Technique

The Sidereal's unyielding grasp on the thread of her destiny can overcome any defense, but it cares not which of her foes falls before her.

When the Sidereal misses with an attack, before losing Initiative she can use this Charm to give her target's player a choice: either it hits him anyway, or she rerolls the attack and all effects enhancing it as an ambush (**Exalted**, p. 203) against an enemy of her choice within (Essence) range bands, who her player must name before he chooses. Her Initiative for a redirected **decisive** attack's damage is reduced by this Charm's cost and similar Initiative losses.

Reset: Once per scene unless reset when a nontrivial enemy's choice in response to one of the Sidereal's Brawl Charms either crashes or deals 3+ **decisive** damage to another nontrivial enemy.

Easily-Accepted Proposition Stance

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Brawl 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Any ten Brawl Charms

The Sidereal knots a prayer strip bearing the Scripture of the Drowning Maiden into her shadow; it shimmers with soft scarlet light that ripples throughout the weave of fate, shaping the course of events unless the Sidereal's foes are willing to face its world-warping force.

The Sidereal rolls (Intelligence + Brawl) to introduce a fact about a dramatic event or circumstance that's about to occur in a battle: a sinkhole swallows up fortifications; a traitor makes his move against a general; a sudden thunderstorm devastates an invading armada; an enemy's reinforcements are delayed by ferocious beasts. She can't dictate the actions of narratively established characters, but can introduce new characters and dictate their short-term motivation. As usual, the Storyteller may veto facts that contradict established details or would be detrimental to the story, or that are outright impossible; if he does, he should suggest an acceptable alternative. A player may not be able to declare that tyrant lizards start raining from the sky, but could instead have a hungry tyrant lizard appear, drawn to her enemy's scent.

A nontrivial enemy may choose to negate this by taking dice of **decisive** damage equal to the Sidereal's successes, ignoring Hardness, as the ripples in fate are grounded through him. If an enemy has fewer undamaged health levels than the dice of damage to be rolled, he can't opt to interpose himself. If no one does, the Sidereal gains Initiative equal to her successes and the chosen event comes to pass.

Reset: Once per day.

Melee — The Spear

With Sidereal Melee Charms, spears, axes, and sword turn from crude implement of violence to extensions of a Sidereal's will as she fights with the discipline, skill, and soldierly expertise of the Spear. Like the Maiden on the Shelf, these Charms' watchwords are precision, focus, and self-control; through these, a Sidereal may transcend mortal senses, perceiving the battlefield and her enemies as ripples in the weave of fate. In combat, Sidereal Melee balances offense and defense and prepares for finishing blows by aiming and delaying. While Melee is most often used with Dexterity, Sidereal Melee Charms also benefit from high Perception.

The Scripture of the Maiden on the Shelf

Once, there was a doll...

...who sat on a child's shelf and watched the entire world.

Her eyes were made of glass,
and their pupils were red.

Her mouth was sewn on.

For years and years, she did not move.

Then, when necessary, she was gone, and the head of that child with her.

"Survival is control," she said.

Impeding the Flow

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Melee 1, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Her weapon enfolded in wind and red stardust, the Sidereal turns aside unwanted fates.

The Sidereal halves penalties to her Parry, rounded down, including penalties from surprise attacks. If she benefits from a full defense or the attack roll's target number has been increased, she ignores all penalties instead.

Indomitable Shieldbearer Expertise

Cost: 4m (2m); **Mins:** Melee 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Impeding the Flow

The Sidereal fights with a seasoned veteran's caution and restraint, avoiding the risks that cost callow troops their lives.

The Sidereal reduces the Initiative cost of full defenses by one and can flurry them with non-attack actions, waiving the Defense penalty from flurries. If she wields a Shield weapon, she reduces the Initiative cost by two and may pay two motes to flurry a full defense with an attack.

Meditation on Violence

Cost: 1m per point of penalty/die; **Mins:** Melee 2, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Dual

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Calm and precision envelop the Sidereal as she strikes.

The Sidereal ignores up to (Perception) in penalties on an attack roll for one mote per point of penalty. If she reduces an attack's penalty to zero (or there was no penalty to begin with), she may add up to (Perception/2) dice of post-soak **withering** damage or **decisive** damage for a further one mote each.

Doom-Seeking Stroke

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Melee 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Dual

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Meditation on Violence

The Sidereal sights along the strands of fate to find the flaw in her enemy's guard.

When the Sidereal makes an attack that benefits from aiming against an enemy at close range, she also adds the dice from aiming to a **withering** attack's post-soak damage or a **decisive** damage roll as well as the attack roll.

Smiling at the Damned

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Melee 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Aggravated, Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Meditation on Violence

The world is tinged red as the Sidereal strikes true, dissolving the Essence that holds together her victim's body.

The Sidereal gains -1 target number on a **decisive** damage roll and deals aggravated damage.

Harmony of Blows

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only, Versatile

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The patterns and flows of the battlefield hold no mysteries for the Sidereal; she perceives every opening and chooses her movements with precision.

The Sidereal can use this Charm after crashing an enemy, succeeding on a gambit, or winning a clash to reflexively make a **withering** or **decisive** attack against that enemy.

Fateful Exchange

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Melee 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Dual

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Harmony of Blows

Countless possibilities converge as the Sidereal crosses blades with her foe; her skill and precision ensure a favorable outcome to the exchange.

When the Sidereal clashes, the opposing attack roll suffers +1 target number. If she clashed by delaying her turn, success refunds the two Initiative lost for doing so.

Orchestration of Conflict

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Melee 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Uniform, Versatile

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Harmony of Blows

The Sidereal's actions ripple across the battlefield, shaping the flow of the conflict.

A successful attack inflicts its onslaught penalty on all enemies within its range.

Instructive Riposte

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Counterattack, Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Harmony of Blows

Waiting for her foe to make the first move, the Sidereal tests his offense and demonstrates its vulnerabilities to him.

The Sidereal makes a **decisive** counterattack in response to any attack, even if it isn't against her. She can't use this Charm if the attack's target uses a Clash or Counterattack Charm of his own.

With a Melee 5, Essence 3 repurchase, the Sidereal may pay a one-Willpower surcharge to use this Charm even if the attack's target clashes or counterattacks.

Maiden-on-the-Shelf Form

Cost: 10m; **Mins:** Melee 4, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Dual, Form

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Any four Melee Charms

The Sidereal's eyes take on a glassy sheen and her skin grows eerily cold to the touch; her every movement bespeaks a restraint, coordination, and focus beyond humanity's limits.

The Sidereal gains the following benefits:

- When she makes an attack that benefits from aiming against an enemy at close range, she adds up to (Perception) attack roll extra successes as damage dice on a **decisive** attack or doubles that many extra successes on a **withering** attack.
- On turns she aims, she can still use reflexive move actions to advance toward the enemy she aimed at.
- She waives the Initiative cost of full defense actions.
- Impeding the Flow negates all Parry penalties. If she benefits from a full defense or is protecting an ally with a defend other action, it adds +1 Parry.

Special activation rules: The Sidereal can enter this Form reflexively when she aims against an enemy at close range or takes a full defense while within close range of at least one nontrivial enemy, applying its benefits to that action.

Serenity in Blood

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Perilous, Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Impeding the Flow

Stirring the currents of fate with her weapon's tip, the Sidereal severs the paths of fate that lead to her being struck.

An attack against the Sidereal's Parry suffers +1 target number. She can block unblockable attacks. If she benefits from a full defense or hasn't acted this round, she can use this Charm after the attack roll.

With a Melee 5, Essence 3 repurchase, the Sidereal may pay a one-Willpower surcharge to inflict +2 target number. Uncountable damage is negated completely; she becomes immune to a recurring source of uncountable damage for the scene.

Inner Eye Strike

Cost: 3m, 1i, 1wp; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Dual, Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Doom-Seeking Stroke

Closing her eyes to the world around her, the Sidereal strikes where fate decrees she must.

The Sidereal aims reflexively before rolling an attack against an enemy within medium range and ignores penalties from blindness and visual conditions. This counts as a turn spent aiming for all purposes. If he's at close range, this Charm's Willpower cost is waived.

The Spear Not Held

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Withering-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Inner Eye Strike

Envisioning the outcome of an exchange of blows with her foe countless times in a single instant, the Sidereal weaves her triumph into fate without ever needing to draw her weapon.

The Sidereal makes a (Perception + Melee) **withering** attack against an enemy within medium range. Its Accuracy and Overwhelming are (Essence, maximum 5). The attack is rolled against the target's Guile. It likewise uses Guile instead of natural soak, and ignores armored soak completely.

Using this Charm to make an unexpected attack doesn't break concealment.

Special activation rules: This Charm can be flurried with an aim, full defense, or threaten action.

Maiden-and-Gambler Stance

Cost: 6m, 1wp (1i per round); **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Perilous, Uniform

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Serenity in Blood (x2)

Drawing on the Spear's sway over the fortunes of gamblers and her own superlative skill, the Sidereal triumphs over risk and long odds.

Successfully blocking an attack grants the Sidereal one mote plus an additional mote for each success her attacker failed by, maximum (Perception).

The Sidereal must pay one Initiative at the start of each round or this Charm ends. It also ends if she's crashed.

Maiden-on-the-Shelf Enlightenment

Cost: —; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Maiden-on-the-Shelf Form, any five Melee Charms

At the center of perfect clarity, the Sidereal's inner eye glimpses the mysteries of the cosmos that still lie beyond it — but not beyond her blade.

Upon purchasing this Charm, the Sidereal chooses a Sidereal Martial Art. She can learn it without needing the requisite Martial Arts Charms. She can use it with all Melee weapons, though this doesn't make it compatible with other styles that use them (unless the Sidereal's also purchases this Charm for them). All her Melee Charms count as Versatile for that style and as Martial Arts for any of its Charms that interact with other styles, like Prismatic Arrangement of Creation Form (p. XX).

This Charm can be purchased any number of times.

Forceful Demonstration of Error

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Clash, Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Fateful Exchange, Instructive Riposte

Not satisfied with simply revealing the weakness of her enemy's offense, the Sidereal counters his imperfect blow with a display of true excellence.

The Sidereal reflexively clashes an attack with a **decisive** attack, and can even clash attacks against other characters, as per Instructive Riposte. She can use that Charm's second purchase to enhance such clashes.

Temperate Blade Meditation

Cost: 2m, 2i, 1wp; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 3

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Dual, Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Inner Eye Strike

The Sidereal's blade is still as untroubled waters, waiting patiently for a perfect opportunity to strike.

To use this Charm, the Sidereal must be aiming at an enemy whose Initiative is lower than that of all allies. She makes a **withering** or **decisive** attack against him, doubling her attack roll extra successes to determine a **withering** attack's raw damage or adds them as dice of **decisive** damage.

Alternatively, when the Sidereal makes a counterattack or clash against an enemy whose Initiative is lower than all allies' while benefitting from a full defense, she can use this Charm reflexively to enhance it, without needing to aim.

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by incapacitating an enemy with an attack that benefitted from aiming or a counterattack or clash while using a full defense.

Ninth Direction Slash

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 4

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: The Spear Not Held, Temperate Blade Meditation

Sensing an unexpected angle of attack, the Sidereal strikes along the path that leads past her enemy's guard.

When the Sidereal makes an attack that benefits from aiming or makes a counterattack or clash while benefitting from a full defense, she rolls (Perception + Melee) opposing her enemy's (Wits + combat Ability) roll. If she succeeds, her attack becomes an ambush (**Exalted**, p. 203).

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by incapacitating an enemy with an attack that benefitted from aiming or a counterattack or clash while using a full defense.

Perfection of the Visionary Warrior

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Melee 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: Clash, Decisive-only

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Any ten Melee Charms

As the Sidereal places a prayer strip marked with the Scripture of the Maiden on the Shelf across her eyes, it adheres and begins to drip with dark blood, an omen of the violence she is about to inflict.

The Sidereal gains the following benefits:

- She ignores vision-based penalties, even blindness.
- Once per round, she may reflexively clash an attack against her with a **decisive** attack. If she knows Fateful Exchange, she can clash attacks that aren't made against her.
- She may raise her Parry with the Melee Excellency for one mote per +1 bonus.
- She ignores Parry penalties from surprise attacks and waives the Willpower surcharge to block an ambush with Serenity in Blood's repurchase.
- She Excellencies' costs to reduce the target number of Perception-based rolls with any Ability in combat.

Presence — The Shield

Sidereal Presence Charms exert their force of personality on those around them. Like the One-Handed Maiden, these Charms assail the iron wall that is the division between self and other, breaking through it to impose a Sidereal's words, decisions, and pain on another. But she need not fear her hand breaking; under the Shield's auspices, her courage, self-assurance, and willingness to endure pain are both her strength and her armor. While Presence can be used with any social Attribute, Sidereal Presence Charms particularly benefit from high Charisma, as well as high Stamina and Strength.

The Scripture of the One-Handed Maiden

Once, there was a maiden...

...who struck an iron wall until it shattered her hand.

She did not stop, though cracks spread throughout her bones.

She did not stop, though blood sprayed her eyes.

She did not stop until she shattered the wall.

"Survival is fury," she said.

Impose Nature

Cost: 7m; **Mins:** Presence 2, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal blesses another with the experience of being her, leaving a ghostly imprint of her Caste Mark on his left hand.

The Sidereal rolls (Charisma + Presence) to instill one of her Major or Defining Intimacies in a single target. His Intimacies don't modify his Resolve against this roll. Success instills the Intimacy at Major intensity in a rush of emotions, but it subsides to Minor once the scene ends. As long as the target has the Intimacy, it counts as Defining for gaining Willpower from upholding it and for purposes of his Charms and other magic.

The mark left by this influence can't be seen after the instant in which this Charm is used except by characters capable of seeing the dematerialized. It vanishes if the target ever erodes that Intimacy.

Caught in the Heart's Wake

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Impose Nature

The Sidereal weaves heartstrings like threads of fate, laying siege to the hearts of others with her own mighty passions.

The Sidereal rolls (Charisma + Presence) to wordlessly inspire whatever emotion she currently feels in against all characters she can perceive, ignoring multiple target penalties. She can't choose to exclude characters from this, and is automatically affected herself, with no chance to resist. Inspired passions penalize Guile as with Resolve against rolls to discover a character's emotional state or discern their emotion-based Intimacies, even those unrelated to the inspired passion.

Characters with an Intimacy instilled by Impose Nature must express the emotion in a way that supports it. Those affected by Presence-in-Absence Technique must do so in a way that unknowingly makes progress toward the circumstances under which the influence is triggered.

Resisting this influence requires entering a Decision Point and invoking a Major or Defining Intimacy to pay one Willpower.

With an Essence 2 repurchase, the Sidereal can pay a four-mote surcharge to grant affected characters a pool of (her Essence) dice each, which they can add to any roll supported by the inspired emotion. These dice are lost when the scene ends.

Presence-in-Absence Technique

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Psyche

Duration: Until the condition is met

Prerequisite Charms: Impose Nature

The fervent force of the Sidereal's personality overcomes boundaries of individuality, leaving an impression of her Essence on someone's unconscious mind.

The Sidereal chooses an influence roll she wishes her target to make and the circumstances under which she makes it. She can't choose conditions her target wouldn't be aware of — “five days from now” or “the next time you see your brother” would be valid, but not “when someone nearby plans to betray you.”

The Sidereal rolls for this influence against her target's Resolve, unmodified by Intimacies, to embed that influence within his mind. She can't enhance it with non-Excellency Charms. If she succeeds, once the condition is met, the target inadvertently makes the chosen influence, using her successes. The target isn't aware of making the influence; it's conveyed unconsciously through the subtext and connotations of his words or actions. If making this influence opposes one of the target's Major or Defining Intimacies, he can pay one Willpower to resist.

This Charm's Willpower cost is waived against characters with one of the Sidereal's Intimacies from Impose Nature.

Water and Fire Treaty

Cost: 1m, 1ahl; **Mins:** Presence 2, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Stackable

Duration: One story

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal binds the elements to fate's defense with an offering of pain.

The Sidereal ritually wounds herself in a ceremony involving one of the elements to entreat its protection: burning her hand in a flame, cutting herself and bleeding into water, anointing a stone with her blood, piercing her flesh on thorns, shedding her blood in the wind, or the like. She gains -1 target number on rolls opposing hazards based on that element and Hardness (Charisma) based on it. She can use this Charm again to protect herself from other elements.

With Presence 4, Essence 2, the Sidereal can pay three motes to extend these benefits to up to (Essence x2) characters for an instant.

Heroic Essence Replenishment

Cost: —; **Mins:** Presence 3, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal draws power from triumph, shaping the world through dominance and force.

The Sidereal gains motes equal to the 10s on persuade and threaten rolls she makes with any Ability and attack rolls against nontrivial enemies that align with a Major or Defining Intimacy of courage, recklessness, audacity, or anger.

When the Sidereal upholds such an Intimacy, she may gain five motes in place of the Willpower she'd normally receive (**Exalted**, p. 169).

Red Haze

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

Flecks of crimson starlight fall over the battlefield as the Sidereal makes the Lesser Sign of the Shield, marking fate's foes for the world's furious opposition.

The Sidereal rolls (Strength + Presence) against the Resolve of all hostile enemies of fate within medium range. A character whose Resolve is beaten is surrounded by glittering crimson stardust, granting -1 target number on damage rolls against him and rendering him visible while dematerialized.

Reset: Once per scene.

Someone Else's Destiny

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Presence 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal's anima hisses as poison flows through her veins, the sound of her problems becoming everyone's problems.

The Sidereal adds (Presence) dice on a roll against poison. The total intervals of poison negated by the roll are stored as a memorandum appended to her fate, maximum (Stamina).

The Sidereal can also use this Charm to discharge a memorandum with a **decisive** attack, even if the stored poison can't normally be conveyed through attacks. Her enemy must roll against the stored intervals of poison if it hits.

Shield of Mars

Cost: 3m, 2i; **Mins:** Presence 4, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Counterattack, Decisive-only, Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Someone Else's Destiny

Snarling fate with a twist of her hand, the Sidereal passes her pain back to her enemy.

The Sidereal makes a (Stamina + Presence) counterattack against a **decisive** attack, rolling after her enemy's attack roll but before the damage roll. It's opposed by the initial attack roll's successes. If she succeeds, one level of **decisive** damage that would be dealt to the Sidereal is instead inflicted on her attacker. If the attack deals no damage, it counts as having missed.

Aspect of the Bear

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Presence 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Red Haze

Donning the fate of an apex predator as if it were a pelt, the Sidereal menaces her foes.

On each of her turns, the Sidereal may reflexively make an influence roll to threaten enemies or instill Ties of fear toward herself. Enemies who already have such Ties suffer a –(Intimacy) penalty on attack rolls or threaten rolls against her unless they pay one Willpower and (Sidereal's Essence, maximum 5) Initiative to resist.

While at bonfire anima, the Sidereal may replace her iconic display with a great bear, potentially concealing her identity from those familiar with her anima.

Hero's Iron Skin

Cost: 2m or 4m; **Mins:** Presence 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Dual, Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Shield of Mars

Ecstatic in battle, the Sidereal welcomes the blows of her enemies and denies them their power thereby.

The Sidereal can use this Charm after being hit by an attack but before the damage roll, inflicting +1 target number. This costs two motes against **withering** damage and four motes against

decisive damage.

With a Presence 5, Essence 3 repurchase, if the Sidereal's unarmored, she may pay a one-Willpower surcharge to inflict +2 target number.

Force Decision

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Impose Nature

Sensing a moment of indecision, the Sidereal injects her own opinion into the matter.

When the Sidereal witnesses a character faced with a choice between multiple options, she may reflexively make a special (Charisma + Presence) persuade roll, putting him into a Decision Point if she succeeds. She names the option she wishes to choose and cites one of her own Intimacies that supports it. He must then either cite an Intimacy of equal or greater intensity opposing that option or pay one Willpower or make the choice chosen by the Sidereal. She can't choose an option her target isn't aware of, though she's free to suggest options before using this Charm. The Sidereal can't be perceived as this effect's source.

If the Sidereal knows Wise Choice (p. XX), she can use it reflexively to evaluate her target's options before she chooses one.

Instructive Conviction Aura

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Presence-in-Absence Technique

Garnet light shines from the Sidereal's mouth and hands, the undimmed radiance of herself.

The Sidereal chooses a Major or Defining Intimacy. The radiance spilling forth from her causes all who see it to tell she has that Intimacy and grants the following benefits:

- Those who see her can use that Intimacy against social influence or for other purposes. If they gain Willpower from upholding it this way, the Sidereal also gains one Willpower.
- When another character makes an influence roll that aligns with the chosen Intimacy, he adds (Sidereal's Charisma) dice.
- When she uses Impose Nature to instill the chosen Intimacy, the Charm's cost is reduced by three motes and she adds (Essence) dice on the roll.

- If she uses Presence-in-Absence Technique to embed influence that aligns with the chosen Intimacy, her target can use that Intimacy, as above, and gains the bonus on influence rolls until he's made the embedded influence.

If the Sidereal's Resolve is beaten by influence opposed by the chosen Intimacy, this Charm ends.

Water and Fire Legion

Cost: 5m, 1hl; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Water and Fire Treaty

Anointing a spirit's brow with her own blood, the Sidereal binds it to serve her as a guardian.

The Sidereal makes a special (Charisma + Presence) instill roll against a touched spirit. Success instills a Principle requiring the spirit to protect something the Sidereal has a positive Tie toward with an intensity equal to that her Tie.

The spirit can't act against the instilled Principle, voluntarily weaken it, or retaliate against the Sidereal for binding him unless he enters a Decision Point and spends one Willpower to resist for a scene. If the Intimacy is ever fully removed, it reforms at Minor intensity at the beginning of the next scene. This Psyche effect last one story or until a spirit has spent (Sidereal's Essence + 2) total Willpower resisting it.

Fire and water elementals and other spirits associated with those elements are especially vulnerable to this Charm. The instilled Principle is always Defining and they can't spend Willpower to retaliate against the Sidereal.

Reset: This Charm can only be used on a given spirit once per story.

Touch Attacks

In combat, touching an unwilling character or something worn or wielded by them requires a difficulty 1 unarmed gambit. Outside of combat, Larceny or Stealth rolls can be used to do so unnoticed, influence rolls can convince a target to allow it, etc.

Baleful Slaughter Omen

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Aspect of the Bear

Making the Greater Sign of the Shield against her foes in blood red stardust, the Sidereal, shatters their courage.

The Sidereal wordlessly makes a (Charisma + Presence) threaten roll against all enemies who can see her, ignoring multiple target penalties. Affected characters suffer the following:

- They must flee, either putting as much distance as possible between themselves and the Sidereal or finding a safe place to hide.
- They add +1 die on rolls to flee or hide from her, but suffer a –3 penalty on all other rolls.
- They must disengage to move away from her as long as they're within medium range of her.

Battle groups are especially vulnerable to this, suffering –2 Resolve against it, or –3 if they have poor Drill. If affected, they suffer +1 target number on rout checks.

Special activation rules: The Sidereal can use this Charm reflexively when she incapacitates a powerful foe or routs a battle group.

Ego-Shattering Reminiscence

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Caught in the Heart's Wake, Presence-in-Absence
Technique

The Sidereal exhales wisps of crimson stardust heavy with her memories, sharing her past with those caught in their light.

Focusing on a memory, the Sidereal makes a special (Charisma + Presence) instill roll, ignoring multiple target penalties and the need for a shared language. Affected characters have the memory implanted in their minds, remembering it as if they'd lived it themselves. The chosen memory can't be more than a scene long.

If the embedded memory is drastically inappropriate for a character's life experiences, he suffers a –3 penalty on social and mental actions: giving a memory of berserk violence to a pacifist, or of life in Yu-Shan to a peasant.

A character who uncovers evidence of a discrepancy in his memory may pay three Willpower to resist this Charm.

Special activation rules: If the chosen memory relates to an Intimacy, the Sidereal can reflexively use Impose Nature, conveying its effect through this Charm's roll.

Seizing the Heart

Cost: 10m, 1wp (5m, 1wp); **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Force Decision

The Sidereal weeps tears of tears of blood, pouring herself into the unknowable other.

The Sidereal makes a special (Charisma + Presence) persuade roll against a single target. If successful, she seizes a foothold in his mind, choosing a specific type of decision — e.g., “decisions involving romance,” “decisions involving Vanehan politics,” “decisions made while drunk.” When he’s faced with such a decision, the Sidereal becomes aware of his circumstances and may intervene as per Force Decision. Once she’s done so (Essence) times, this Psyche effect ends.

This Charm’s cost is reduced by five motes against characters with an Intimacy instilled by Impose Nature or who’re affected by Presence-in-Absence Technique or Ego-Shattering Reminiscence. This discount remains even if the Intimacy is removed or the Charm ends.

Reset: This Charm can only be used against a character once per story.

Wounded Lion Strength

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Perilous

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Aspect of the Bear

The Sidereal’s agony is more than she can contain; it spills out through her blows that her enemies might share in it.

The Sidereal adds (1 + wound penalty) dice of **decisive** damage and post-soak **withering** damage. She also adds that many dice on feats of strength, ignoring wound penalties.

If the Sidereal’s unarmed, she adds (1 + wound penalty) soak.

Beyond the Shattered Wall

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Ego-Shattering Reminiscence, Seizing the Heart

Shattering the boundaries that keep her from someone's soul, the Sidereal rescues him from spiritual turmoil.

The Sidereal enters the mindscape of a willing, unconscious, or restrained target, allowing her to interact with his mind or soul. This can't be used to influence others — it's limited to observation, healing or mitigating maladies, and esoteric interactions that aren't otherwise possible. The Sidereal rolls (Charisma + Presence) against a difficulty or opposing roll appropriate to the specific effect.

Examples include:

- Roll against a target's Guile to sift through his memories, seeking a specific piece of information or to look for signs of spiritual or mental maladies, like possession. She may suffer a penalty if the memories she seeks out are old or somehow obscured. She can make Perception-based rolls and use Charms to examine these memories for information her target missed.
- Weaken or subvert the control exerted by a Psyche effect, rolling against an appropriate (Attribute + Ability) roll by the character responsible. The Sidereal's player should work out the specifics with the Storyteller, but they should involve altering how it affects the target, rather than reducing Willpower costs, mitigating penalties, or other mechanical effects.
- Roll against a Fair Folk's Resolve to enter its spiritual maw and wrest free the shards of someone's psyche that it's devoured. A subsequent use of this Charm can return them to that character, rolling against a difficulty based on how it's been since the raksha fed on him.

Storm's Eye Stance

Cost: 10m (5m, 1wp); **Mins:** Presence 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: Shaping (Fate)

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Any ten Presence Charms

The Sidereal casts a prayer strip bearing the Scripture of the One-Handed Maiden into the air, where it burns like a hot coal, casting a flickering red light as an unnatural night falls around her.

The Sidereal rolls (Strength + Presence) opposing the (Strength + Integrity) rolls against all enemies within long range, even those she's unaware of. Those who fail are bound to the Sidereal, suffering +1 target number on rolls opposing her. When she takes damage, she may pay five motes, one Willpower to inflict the same amount of damage on one or more affected enemies, dividing that damage evenly among them, rounded up. **Withering** damage inflicted this way doesn't award Initiative.

War — The Banner

Sidereal War Charms evince their genius as strategists, tacticians, and generals. Her plans and strategies are subtle and far-ranging, safeguarding those things she cherishes most with the Maiden at War's long reach. Under the Banner's auspices, these Charms also ensure that a

Sidereal's leadership, reputation, and storied deeds are not overlooked, wreathing her in heroic glory. Sidereal War contains Form Charms called battle patterns. While Martial Arts Form involve a stylist's stance and movements, a battle pattern is a harmonious geomantic formation that empowers the soldiers who fight in it. While War can be used with Appearance, Charisma, or Intelligence, Sidereal War Charms particularly benefit from high Intelligence.

The Scripture of the Maiden at War

Once, there was a maiden...

...whose battles called her far from home.

She slew the thing she feared most, and conquered the land that feared her.

As she fought, far away, she knew her children needed guidance.

She knew they faced tyrants.

She knew they faced fear.

In her homeland, things were broken.

So, she held up her hand before the sun and cast a shadow on the world, and cast the troubles of her home in darkness.

"Survival's a long reach," she said.

Heroic General Presence

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** War 2, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Exhibiting her prowess at the forefront of battle, the Sidereal inspires her troops to glory.

An order roll grants a targeted battle group -1 target number on an ordered attack's damage roll or on the roll for a non-attack action.

Predestined Triumph Practice

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Stackable

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Heroic General Presence

Fate conspires in the Sidereal's strategy, submitting to the mounting pressure of her inevitable

victory on the weave of events.

To use this Charm, the Sidereal must be fighting under a stratagem or prophecy she's enacted. An allied battle group gains -1 target number on all rolls. The Sidereal can use this Charm on multiple battle groups.

Battle-Fellow Attitude

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** War 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal stands tall as a legend of the battlefield to every soldier who has ever fought for her.

Characters who've served under the Sidereal's command count as having a Minor Tie of respect to her. If the Sidereal makes an influence roll to convince such a character to rejoin a military she commands, it's treated as a Major Tie for that roll unless he has a negative Tie to her.

If any such characters have negative Ties applicable to the Sidereal that aren't directly toward her (e.g. a Tie of contempt for the Sidereal Exalted as a whole), their intensity is treated as one step lower when applied to her.

Auspicious Recruitment Drive

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** War 4, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Battle-Fellow Attitude

The Sidereal draws those around her into the web of conflict, weaving fate to fill her forces' ranks.

After spending a day recruiting soldiers, negotiating with mercenaries, posting that she's calling up troops, or inciting crowds to violence, the Sidereal rolls ([Appearance, Charisma, or Manipulation] + War). She recruits a battle group with one dot of Size for every two successes. The Storyteller can provide more or less generous troop traits based on the events of the story and the Sidereal's stunt. This battle group is willing to fight under the Sidereal or a character designated by her, though they aren't guaranteed to have any Tie toward their commander.

By default, this battle group has battle-ready troop traits (**Exalted**, p. 496), average Drill, and Might 0. The Sidereal can increase the battle group's traits to elite troops (**Exalted**, p. 497) or increase its Drill to elite, with each such upgrade increasing the cost per dot of Size by one success. She can also increase its Might to 1 by increasing the cost by two successes per dot if she

could reasonably recruit beastfolk, God-Blooded, or other such characters.

At the end of the story, the battle group dissolves as its surviving members return to their lives unless the Storyteller deems the Sidereal has treated them well enough to retain their enduring loyalty.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by upholding a Major or Defining Intimacy by leading a battle group in combat. Shieldbearers can reset it by fulfilling an auspicious prospect.

Foretold Strategy Technique

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Foreseeing how a strategy might be defeated, the Sidereal chooses an alternative.

The Sidereal can use this Charm after a Strategic Maneuver roll to reroll it. It receives the benefits of all magic used to enhance the first roll; the Sidereal can use additional Charms as well. She may change what stratagem she seeks to enact with the reroll.

Knowing the Enemy

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** War 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Foretold Strategy Technique

The Sidereal sees her enemy's true face revealed in his strategy.

The Sidereal adds (Perception) dice on a Strategic Maneuver roll and ignores penalties for being unfamiliar with an enemy general or forces. She also treats her roll as a special read intentions opposing the enemy general's Guile. Beating his Guile lets her player asks the Storyteller one of the following questions, plus an additional question for every 3 extra successes over his Guile:

- What's his motivation for fighting?
- What should I watch out for in the coming battle?
- What are his forces' greatest weakness?
- Which of my positive Ties does he pose the greatest threat to?

If the Storyteller doesn't have an answer in mind for a question, the Sidereal's player should provide one, as if introducing a fact.

Reset: Once per scene.

Training Mandate of Auspicious Battle

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** War 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Auspicious Recruitment Drive

The Sidereal weaves together the fates of those who fight alongside each other, letting each soldier's confidence in his training bolster that of his comrades.

The Sidereal spends an hour training a battle group of up to Size (Intelligence). In its next battle, it gains -1 target number on Join Battle rolls, rout checks, and damage rolls against enemies of fate and crashed foes. This lasts one battle and is lost if not used within a week. Only one battle group can benefit at a time.

Special activation rules: When the Sidereal uses Training Mandate of Celestial Empowerment, she can use this Charm reflexively, waiving its Willpower cost, to confer its benefits on the trained group until the story's end.

Training Mandate of Celestial Empowerment

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** War 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Training Mandate of Auspicious Battle

The Sidereal weaves the fates of her soldiers into a great lash, tilting the odds of every battle in their favor.

The Sidereal spends a month training a battle group of up to Size (Intelligence). It permanently gains the following benefits:

- Its Drill increases by one step.
- +1 Might (maximum 2) against enemies of fate.
- If one of its members benefits from the Sidereal's Auspicious (Caste) Horoscopes, the entire battle group receives its benefit.
- Its members are immune to the Sidereal's arcane fate for as long as they serve under her.

This Charm can't train Exalted, player characters, or others who are inappropriate for inclusion in battle groups.

Essence-Draining Battle Pattern

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Form

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Predestined Triumph Practice

The Sidereal marshals her forces into an auspicious formation that dams, blocks, and diverts the flow of a puissant enemy's Essence.

The Sidereal chooses a Charm or magical power possessed by an enemy. She can't choose Excellencies or Permanent Charms. If an allied battle group crashes that enemy or deals **decisive** damage to him while he's crashed, that effect is negated if it's active and he can't use it for the rest of the scene.

Special activation rules: The Sidereal can use this Charm reflexively when she or an allied battle group successfully defends against an attack or other danger enhanced by magic. She must name one of the powers used to enhance that attack for this Charm.

Fiend-Blocking Battle Pattern

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Form

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Predestined Triumph Practice

The Sidereal orders her troops into an auspicious formation antithetical to the Essence of destiny's enemies, turning the distortions they cause in the weave of fate back against them.

The Sidereal gains the following benefits when leading forces against enemies of fate:

- Allied battle groups gain Might 1 against enemies of fate.
- Command actions to order battle groups against enemies of fate or rally a group routed by an enemy of fate gain -1 target number.
- Hostile battle groups comprised of enemies of fate suffer +1 target number on all rolls by one.

Special activation rules: The Sidereal can reflexively activate this Charm when she or an allied battle group wins Join Battle against an enemy of fate.

Heroic Exploit Propagation

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Auspicious Recruitment Drive

The Sidereal may be forgotten, but not her deeds; the world itself sings of her victory.

Once a battle ends, the Sidereal spreads its tale through the weave of fate. For the next day, anyone who sleeps within (Essence x50) miles of the battlefield dreams of that battle, a vivid and detailed reenactment that's easily remembered upon waking. The Sidereal's arcane fate applies to her appearances in these dreams. Enemies of fate appear as vague, indistinct figures in these dreams, as with Divination Charms (p. XX).

If the Sidereal fought to uphold a Defining Intimacy, those who dream of the battle gain that Intimacy at Minor intensity unless they spend one Willpower.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by accomplishing a major character or story goal through warfare. Shieldbearers can reset it by fulfilling an auspicious prospect.

Tide of History

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Predestined Triumph Practice

The Sidereal's forces fight with the assurance of those who know their victory has already been written into history, free of fear and hesitation.

Allied battle groups gain -1 target number on rout checks; fear-based influence suffers +1 target number against them. They gain perfect morale against enemies of fate or in battles that align with one of the Sidereal's Defining Principles.

Training Mandate of War-God Puissance

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** War 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Training Mandate of Celestial Empowerment

The Sidereal's esoteric training regimen cultivates the unrealized potential of Essence, elevating

gods to wrathful guardians and honing the legends of Exalted heroes.

The Sidereal teaches another character a spell or Martial Arts Charm (including Sidereal Martial Arts) she knows, letting him go into experience debt (p. XX) to learn it. Alternatively, by drilling him in the use of an artifact weapon or armor, she may let him awaken one of its Evocations. Fellow Sidereals can be taught any Sidereal Charm she knows, while spirits can be taught spirit Charms appropriate to their purview through Essence-cultivating regimens. The training time needed to learn this power is divided by (Sidereal's Essence + Intelligence). The Sidereal's student must meet the prerequisites of any powers learned this way.

Spirit-Binding Battle Pattern

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** War 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: Form, Psyche

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Any ten War Charms

The Sidereal prayer strip bearing the Scripture of the Maiden at War, scattering letters of smoke and blood on the wind to entreat a divine champion.

The Sidereal consecrates a battle to Heaven, offering up every fallen soldier and shattered sword as a sacrifice. Allied battle groups gain -1 target number on all rolls.

Once the battle ends, the Sidereal rolls (Charisma + War) against a specific god or elemental with Essence up to the Sidereal's own. She may add either the highest (Essence/2, rounded up) among supernatural characters who died in that battle or the highest Might among battle groups that lost dots of Size or faced other losses to the maximum Essence of spirit she can summon.

The chosen spirit appears on the battlefield. If the Sidereal's roll succeeds against his Resolve, she has two options. She may demand a single favor from him, which he'll perform dutifully, forming a Defining Principle to completing that task which can't be altered or weakened until its done. Most spirits consider this a fair exchange for the Sidereal's offering; only if she demands a truly unreasonable favor will the spirit hold a grudge against her for asking.

Alternatively, she can bind the spirit to her for a year and a day, imposing a Defining Tie of loyalty to her that can't be altered or weakened during that time. Almost all spirits will consider this a grievous offense; one must be truly desperate for worship to gladly accept this as the price of the Sidereal's offering. Historically, the most common form of reprisal for this has been efforts to bind Sidereal offenders into similar servitude, though it's far from the only one.

Special activation rules: The Sidereal may use this Charm when an allied battle group loses a dot of Size or fails a rout check.

Reset: Once per story.

The House of Secrets

Ascending Secrets Horoscope

Cost: 1m or 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Any Secrets Ability 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Shaping (Fate), Stackable

Duration: One story

Prerequisite Charms: Any three Secrets Charms

Under Jupiter's auspices, the Sidereal conceals that which should be hidden and reveals that which ought be known.

The Sidereal blesses another character, bestowing good fortune in keeping or discovering a certain secret. This costs one mote for mortals or three motes, one Willpower for others. The blessing's effect depends on whether the Sidereal wishes to keep the secret hidden or reveal it.

A blessing for keeping secrets inflicts +1 target number rolls against the character's Guile that would reveal the secret and grants -1 target number on his Manipulation and Larceny rolls to conceal it.

A blessing for revealing secrets grants -1 target number on relevant Awareness, Investigation, Lore, Occult, and read intentions rolls.

Blessing a character requires a constellation-themed interaction with him. Upon taking this Charm, the Sidereal's player chooses two of the below options. Additional options can be purchased for one bonus point or three experience points apiece.

Artless Prodigy Blessing (The Key): The Sidereal's target shows cleverness or innovation in solving a problem, performing an experiment, or discovering new information.

Counterfeit Talisman Blessing (The Guardians): The Sidereal's target practices a superstition, hears a (supposed) prediction of his future, or seeks guidance from otherworldly forces.

Mysterious Benefactor Style (The Mask): The Sidereal observes her target without him being aware of her.

Obeisance-Rewarding Patronage (The Sorcerer): The Sidereal's target expresses his respect for her intellect, knowledge, power, or authority.

Wisdom of All Things (The Treasure Trove): The Sidereal's target tells her some secret, news, or other information she didn't already know.

The Sidereal can bless multiple characters with this Charm.

Descending Secrets Horoscope

Cost: 1m or 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Any Secrets Ability 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Shaping (Fate), Stackable

Duration: One story

Prerequisite Charms: Any three Secrets Charms

The Sidereal brings Jupiter's disfavor against her victim, snarling his fate in secret matters.

The Sidereal rolls (Manipulation + Secrets Ability) opposing her target's (Perception + Secrets Ability) roll. This costs one mote for mortals or three motes, one Willpower for others. Success inflicts misfortune on his efforts to keep or uncover a secret.

A curse on a character's efforts to keep a secret grants -1 target number on rolls against his Guile that would reveal it and inflicts +1 target number on his Manipulation and Larceny rolls to conceal it.

A curse on efforts to uncover a secret inflicts +1 target number on relevant Awareness, Investigation, Lore, Occult, and read intentions rolls.

Cursing a character requires a constellation-themed interaction with him. Upon taking this Charm, the Sidereal's player chooses two of the below options. Additional options can be purchased for one bonus point or three experience points apiece.

Baleful Phantom Harbinger (The Mask): The Sidereal observes her target without him being aware of her.

Hubris-Punishing Downfall (The Sorcerer): The Sidereal's target disrespects, insults, or expresses feelings of superiority to a supernatural being.

Nine Lives Extinguished (The Key): The Sidereal's target tries to uncover a secret she's keeping, her nature as a Sidereal, or details about her personal life she doesn't want to share with him.

Serpent-Strangling Malison (The Guardians): The Sidereal's target lies to her or tries to cheat or take advantage of her.

Willful Ignorance Reward (The Treasure Trove): The Sidereal's target ignores advice he sought from her about intellectual pursuits, useful information to pursue, or the application of knowledge. She becomes aware when he does so and can use this Charm reflexively.

The Sidereal can curse multiple characters with this Charm.

Ascending Destiny Mien

Cost: —; **Mins:** Any Secrets Ability 1, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Any Secrets Charm

The Sidereal gets on her formidable intellect in delicate negotiations and clandestine intrigues, employing deductive reasoning to plot out a path through a conversation.

When calculating Guile and Resolve, the Sidereal can use a Secrets Caste Ability instead of Integrity or Socialize. She may also use Intelligence instead of Appearance to add bonus dice on influence rolls (**Exalted**, p. 218).

Enticing Puzzle Exculpation

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Any Secrets Ability 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Any three Secrets Charms

The Sidereal shrouds misdeeds in mystery, throwing censors and investigators off the track with tantalizing red herrings.

The Sidereal adds (higher of Essence or 3) dice on a conceal evidence roll. Characters that fail opposing rolls believe they succeeded, uncovering a false clue shrouded under the auspices of one of the House of Secret's constellations:

The Guardians: The evidence points to a crime committed in an attempt to cover up something else.

The Key: The evidence points to something seemingly paradoxical or contradictory that *must* have some rational explanation — the stuff of locked-room mysteries, mistaken identities, and contrived thought experiments.

The Mask: The evidence points to a conspiracy, criminal syndicate, or other secretive assemblage.

The Sorcerer: The evidence points to the power of supernatural beings, artifacts, places of power, or the like.

The Treasure Trove: The evidence points to a premeditated crime that was planned out methodically, the work of a criminal genius.

With an Essence 2 repurchase, the Sidereal may pay a one-Willpower surcharge to make investigators think the false evidence is genuine even on a successful, in addition to the true evidence. The investigator is aware of the discrepancy, but not of which piece of evidence is true. This effect can only be used once per story, unless reset by accomplishing a major character or story goal through deception or concealment. Oracles can reset it by fulfilling an auspicious prospect.

Infallible Broker's Confidences

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Any Secrets Ability 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Any three Secrets Charms

The Sidereal's discerning eye seeks out those she can trust with her secrets.

Contemplating some specific piece of information, the Sidereal makes a special (Perception + Secrets Ability) read intentions roll against a character. Success lets her player asks the Storyteller one of the following questions, plus an additional question for every 3 extra successes:

- Does he know this information?
- What would he do to obtain this information?
- How would this information help or hurt him?
- Who would he share this information with?

If the Storyteller doesn't have an answer in mind for a question, the Sidereal's player should provide one, as if introducing a fact.

Reset: Once per scene.

Never Cease Moving

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Any Secrets Ability 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Any three Secrets Charms

The Sidereal's ever-mounting workload precludes such luxuries as sleep.

The Sidereal treats time spent reading, writing, researching, or performing bureaucratic tasks as restful sleep for all purposes, including natural healing and recovering Willpower once per day.

Oldest Secret Revealed

Cost: —; **Mins:** Any Secrets Ability 3, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Any Ascending (Caste) Horoscope or Descending (Caste) Horoscope

All secrets are identical from the perspective of one who doesn't know them; thus, the Sidereal reasons, all knowledge is implicit in her ignorance.

The Sidereal waives the experience point or bonus point cost for the next three interaction triggers she unlocks for her Ascending (Caste) Horoscope or Descending (Caste) Horoscope. When she uses one of those Charms, she can do so using the interaction trigger of a different such Charm. If she's previously unlocked identical interaction triggers for different Charms, she's refunded the experience point cost of each trigger made redundant by this.

Birthing the Maiden of Wisdom

Cost: —; **Mins:** Any Secrets Ability 5, Essence 4

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Any ten Secrets Charms

The Sidereal's anima shifts through the Five Maidens' colors in a rainbow wave that culminates in glorious colorless brilliance, unsealing her patron Maiden's Greater Sign.

When the Sidereal accomplishes a major character or story goal by fulfilling an auspicious prospect, she may reset her Greater Sign anima power. Doing so raises her anima banner to bonfire.

Investigation — The Key

Sidereal Investigation Charms hone the deductive reasoning, piercing insight, and uncanny intuition of Sidereal inquisitors, auditors, and sleuths. Under the Key's auspices, a Side'al's dogged determination in pursuing her case to its end is rewarded with the truth. These Charms also invoke the world's esteem for a Sidereal, bringing forth witnesses and assistants in hopes that she, like That Old Thing, might love and protect it in return. While Investigation is most often rolled with Perception, Sidereal Investigation Charms also benefit from high Intelligence.

The Scripture of That Old Thing

Once, there was that old thing...

...that wasn't like a shadow, because you could see it too well.

...and that wasn't like a light, because it didn't make flowers grow.

So, it had to be a maiden, but she didn't mind.

"To know the world is to love it," said she.

Efficient Secretary Technique

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Investigation 1, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Divination, Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Upon learning this Charm, the Sidereal spits up a small spider of living emerald, a jubilant assistant that skitters into the strands of her fate until she beckons it forth.

The Sidereal's spider emerges so that she may ask it a single factual question, to which it

provides an accurate answer. It can't answer questions involving speculation, matters of opinion, or subjective judgments, nor does it have any insight into supernatural powers or people's thoughts, plans, and emotions. It also can't reveal any information that anyone's taken efforts to conceal, nor can it reveal information if it's not known to anyone in existence.

Examples of information the secretary can provide straightforwardly include the name of the local carpenter, how long ago a widow's wife died, how many oxen an old friend owns, or the temperature of in Nexus. A question like "what's the Bull of the North doing?" will typically give an accurate but not useful result, as the secretary can't ascertain the Solar's intentions or speculate as to the purpose of his current activities. Questions like "who's winning this war?" or "which of these two men is more beautiful" are too speculative or subjective for the secretary to answer; it can only chitter its apologies.

This Charm may be repurchased any number of times, each repurchase adding an Evocation to the Sidereal's secretary that can expand the range of its information gathering and talent as an assistant. These Evocations' themes and functions derive from the secretary's established personality, the Sidereal's Caste, and the themes of the constellation of the Key and the Scripture of That Old Thing. If the Sidereal has a pattern spider familiar, she can also use these Evocations through it.

Marvelous Inclusion of Details

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Investigation 3, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The world aids the Sidereal in her investigations, contriving to present her with exactly the evidence she was looking for.

The Sidereal completes a case scene or profile character roll instantly. If she has a relevant Intimacy, she adds (Intimacy) bonus dice. If successful, her player may specify the type of evidence she wishes to receive: "the murder weapon," "footprints," "the door to a secret passageway," etc. As long as there's something like that involved in the Sidereal's investigation and it being at the scene wouldn't contradict established facts or the Storyteller's plans, she uncovers it serendipitously. If not, she finds the closest equivalent evidence.

Provable Location of the Gate

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Investigation 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Marvelous Inclusion of Details

Performing certain esoteric measurements, mathematical calculations, and intuitive deductions, the Sidereal proves that the wandering Calibration Gate will appear as she predicts.

The Sidereal makes an (Intelligence + Investigation) introduce fact roll to declare the location and time of the Calibration Gate's next appearance in Creation (p. XX). The amount of time before the gate appears depends on her roll; its location is chosen by the Storyteller but should be reachable from the Sidereal's current location within the allotted timeframe.

BEGIN TABLE

Successes Gate Appears

1	Within a few days
2-3	By the end of the day
4-5	Within a few hours
6-7	Within a few minutes
8+	Instantly, at the Sidereal's current location

END TABLE

Once the Calibration Gate appears, it remains open for at least a scene, but the Storyteller is encouraged to be generous if the player characters need more time to accomplish a goal using it.

Reset: Once per session.

Unwritten Words Revelation

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Investigation 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Marvelous Inclusion of Details

What the Sidereal reads is not always what's written; missives, poems, and books reveal their writer's secrets to aid in her investigation.

After reading a book, letter, or other writing, the Sidereal makes a special (Perception + Investigation) read intentions roll against its writer's Guile. Success reveals a relevant and useful fact about the writing of the work, plus an additional such fact for every three extra successes: where it was drafted, the writer's emotional state when he wrote it, who else was present when it was written, etc. If the text conveys written influence, she can use her successes on this roll in place of her Resolve.

With an Investigation 5, Essence 2 repurchase, this Charm can be used against any object or

artificial structure, not just writing.

Research Assistant Invocation

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: None

Clapping her hands over a small plant, the Sidereal bids it grow into a dedicated savant, taking on a human-like shape.

The Sidereal turns a plant into a wood elemental that serves as her research assistant. She can have up to (Intelligence) assistants.

Upon purchasing this Charm, the Sidereal chooses three of the follow Charms, granting it to her research assistants. She can purchase additional Charms for them for three experience points or one bonus point each.

Academic Diligence (Permanent): Assistants' Willpower increases to (higher of Sidereal's Essence or 3).

Divine Functionary (Permanent): If the Sidereal knows Superior-Entreating Memorial Style (p. XX), Underling Invisibility Practice (p. XX), or Wise Choice (p. XX), her secretaries can also use those Charms.

Flourishing Knowledge (Permanent): Assistants gain a Lore background of the Sidereal's choice. At the end of each story, she can choose an additional Lore background to grant them.

Expeditious Study (5m; Simple; Instant): The assistant can read a page of text in a second and longer texts in one to ten minutes.

Hurry Home (10m, 1wp; Simple; Instant): The assistant begins to visibly fade away. At the start of its next turn, it vanishes, reappearing either at the Sidereal's side or in any library, archive, or the like that she personally maintains.

Swift Reed Stylus (5m; Simple; Instant): The assistant writes with incredible speed, able to complete a page-long memorandum in seconds or copy out a large book in a day.

Tome-Summoning Requisition (5m; Simple; Instant): The assistant summons any book or other repository of information contained in a library, archive, or the like that the assistant's currently in or that's maintained by the Sidereal or her subordinates.

Research Assistants

[THIS IS A STAT BLOCK IN A SIDEBAR]

Essence: 1; Willpower: 1; Join Battle: N/A (see Wilt)

Personal Notes: (Sidereal's Essence x5)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-2/-4/Incap.

Actions: Administration: 6 dice; Crafting: 4 dice; Resist Poison/Disease: 6 dice; Scholarship: 10 dice (see Fruits of Knowledge); Senses: 4 dice.

Appearance 1, Resolve 2, Guile 2

Intimacies

Defining Tie: The Sidereal (Loyalty)

Defining Principle: The pursuit of knowledge is my greatest joy.

Minor Principle: My temperament, habits, and preferences reflect the plant I was created from.

Merits

Fruits of Knowledge: The research assistant has all the Sidereal's Lore backgrounds. If she uses this Charm in a library, archive, academy, or other place of knowledge, she can also grant it a Lore background appropriate to that body of knowledge.

Photosynthesis: The research assistant has no need for food or sleep; instead, it must receive at least eight hours of sunlight a day to provide nourishment and recover Willpower.

Wilt: In combat, the research assistant immediately collapses back into the form of the plant it was created from, rather than fighting. The Sidereal can call it back out once combat ends with a subsequent use of this Charm.

Wilting Petal Witness

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Investigation 4, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Research Assistant Invocation

Digging into the earth with her bare hands, the Sidereal calls forth a witness to the deceits of the wicked.

The Sidereal bids a green chrysanthemum bloom. It won't deteriorate with time, even if plucked. If a narratively relevant lie is spoken in its presence, it withers and dies, warning the Sidereal. Against magic capable of contesting this, she rolls (Perception + Investigation) opposing that Charm's roll. If she fails, the flower doesn't die.

Bending the Mirror

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Investigation 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Marvelous Inclusion of Details

Tracing the successive strands of fate intertwined with her Exaltation, the Sidereal calls upon the wisdom of her past lives.

Upon purchasing this Charm, the Sidereal's player details one of their character's previous incarnations. This includes a separate set of Intimacies for him, (Essence) of his Lore backgrounds, and (Sidereal's languages) dots of Languages she spoke.

Using this Charm grants the Sidereal access to her past life's Lore backgrounds and languages. She gains one of his Intimacies at Major intensity, which she can't voluntarily weaken until the end of the next scene.

The Sidereal can use this Charm to introduce a fact based on one of her past life's Lore backgrounds or to use his knowledge of a language to understand or make a single statement. Doing so causes her to gain one of his Intimacies at Minor intensity, which she can't voluntarily weaken that scene.

The Sidereal may pay three experience points or one bonus point to detail another past life, maximum (higher of Essence or 3).

An Investigation 5, Essence 3 repurchase lets the Sidereal pay a three-mote surcharge to extend this Charm's duration indefinitely. The Intimacy conferred becomes Defining. She can't voluntarily weaken it for this Charm's duration.

Witness Invention Technique

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Investigation 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Marvelous Inclusion of Details

Focusing on a cherished keepsake or important piece of evidence, the Sidereal attunes herself to its secret heart, hearing what it would say if it could speak.

The Sidereal can use this Charm on an object that's relevant to one of her Intimacies, making a difficulty 1 (Perception + Investigation) roll with (Intimacy) bonus dice. One success attunes her to that object's Essence and fate, letting her hear and interact with it as though dealing with a person.

The Storyteller plays the object like any other Storyteller character, but it isn't real and can't directly affect anyone but the Sidereal. The Storyteller can assign it whatever traits he chooses; the default is five dice for all social and mental pools and no ability to take physical action at all. It has a positive Defining Tie toward the Sidereal chosen by the Storyteller.

If the Sidereal rolls any extra successes, she banks that many intuition points and can spend them on the following effects while interacting with the object:

4 points: The object points out something the Sidereal missed, letting her reroll an Awareness, Investigation, or Lore roll.

4 points: The object makes an influence roll to overturn influence affecting the Sidereal (**Exalted**, p. 221), with a pool of (Sidereal's Essence + 10) dice.

4 points: The object accurately describes the last person to handle it. The Sidereal can subsequently use this option again for a description of the possessor before the last one, and so on.

7 points: The object accurately describes an event chosen by the Sidereal that it was present for and will include at least some useful information if any exists.

Reset: Once per story, unless reset by upholding a Major or Defining Tie in the course of an investigation. Oracles can reset it by fulfilling an auspicious prospect.

Lucid Enigma Labyrinth

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Investigation 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: One dream

Prerequisite Charms: Witness Invention Technique

The Sidereal's case leads her down into the lurid theater of the subconscious, seeking counsel from the multitude of herself.

As the Sidereal sleeps, her player chooses a clue she's uncovered recently with a case scene or profile character action. Each other player (including the Storyteller) chooses one of the Sidereal's Intimacies. The Sidereal dreams of her investigation — whether a picture-perfect replica of the crime scene or a grotesque symbolist nightmare — and receives counsel from personifications of the chosen Intimacies, each roleplayed by the player who selected it. The scene ends once each Intimacy that wants to has offered its opinion as to how the Sidereal should follow up on the clue. These suggestions must be mutually exclusive, an Intimacy can't "yes, and" another's advice.

If the Sidereal subsequently acts on one of these suggestions, it counts as upholding the Intimacy that suggested it and is guaranteed to be productive for her case no matter how foolish it is or how disastrously it goes. She might find another clue that substantially advances her investigation; befriend a Storyteller character who can provide useful information, assets, or assistance; learn a weakness or vulnerability of a powerful suspect; etc.

Conversely, the other Intimacy's suggestions lead only to dead ends; the Sidereal automatically fails any Investigation rolls or other rolls that could potentially provide useful information or advantages in the case.

The Sidereal's dream is privileged against intrusion; she receives +5 non-Charm Resolve and

Guile against any magic that would let another view, enter, or tamper with her dreams. Effects that don't normally require a roll must be rolled with an appropriate (Attribute + Ability) pool against whichever static value is most appropriate.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by discovering a clue that completely changes or recontextualizes an ongoing investigation.

Embracing Life Method

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Investigation 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Any ten Investigation Charms

The Sidereal whispers a question into the earth as she buries a prayer strip bearing the Scripture of That Old Thing, knowing that the world will provide her answer once this strange seed is fully grown.

The Sidereal's buried prayer strip grows into a tall mulberry tree over the course of the next five days. Upon returning to it, she rolls (Charisma + Investigation). She need not wait for the tree to complete its growth to return, but she subtracts one successes for each day early she returns. For each success, she discovers some useful gift left by local spirits drawn to the tree. By default, these are clues relevant to the Sidereal's question or a larger investigation; if she rolls more successes than there are relevant clues for the Storyteller to share, these gifts might instead be valuable treasures, items she's misplaced, clues unrelated to her investigation that have some other relevance to her, or other useful offerings. These are accompanied by worthless gifts of twigs, leaves, and interesting stones left by minor spirits.

Reset: Once per story.

Larceny — The Guardians

Sidereal Larceny Charms evince legendary skill in subterfuge and criminal dealings and the power to steal things beyond stealing — thoughts, names, dreams, and more. Under the Guardians' auspices, these Charms deal in deception, half-truths, and charlatanry. They defy and drive out the forces of the Wyld, offering the same escape the Savory Maiden found from her shambolic prison. While Larceny is most often rolled with Dexterity and Intelligence, Sidereal Larceny Charms also benefit from high Manipulation and Wits.

The Scripture of the Savory Maiden

Once, there was a maiden...

...who ate 236 leaves. She had to, because otherwise she'd forget where she came from, and that would make everyone very sad, or, possibly, very happy.

She found herself in a woods full of monsters, impelled toward their cook pot. "Do you want to cook me?" she asked. "Or do you just think that's

where maidens belong?"

There was a crack in the cook pot's bottom that let in the sky.

She started to squirm through the crack, but then she saw that the clouds carried chains and the wind was their manacles.

As the monsters pulled her back, she called to the stones and she called to the sky, but it was the night that came to her aid, and in the night, fire and pain. "Why should you help me?" she asked.

"To know the world is to serve it," they said.

Honorable Thief Spirit

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Larceny 1, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal rumples the strands of her fate in a flash of glittering green sparks, affecting the disreputable demeanor of the romantic outlaw.

Criminals who interact with the Sidereal count as having a Minor Tie of admiration to her. If characters interacting with her have any negative Ties toward criminals or those condemned by a ruler, government, or religion, those Ties are treated as one step weaker with regard to her.

Hayseed Eye

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Larceny 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Honorable Thief Spirit

Criminals and con artists seeking to prey on the Sidereal soon learn the folly of trying to cheat a master cheater.

The Sidereal makes a special (Perception + Larceny) read intentions roll against a character. Success lets her player asks the Storyteller one of the following questions, plus an additional question for every 3 extra successes:

- Is he planning to cheat, exploit, or take advantage of me?
- Is he planning to commit a crime?
- Does he think I suspect him?

- Do any crimes weigh on his conscience?

If the Storyteller doesn't have an answer in mind for a question, the Sidereal's player should provide one, as if introducing a fact.

Reset: Once per scene.

Maiden-in-the-Pot Escape

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Larceny 2, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal escapes from bad into worse, trading imprisonment for the perils of freedom.

When the Sidereal rolls to pick a lock, she succeeds even on a failed roll. Instead, her failure introduces some complication: her tools break, a guard catches her, she can't pick the lock quickly enough to evade the Lunar chasing her, etc. If opening the lock would directly imperil the Sidereal — e.g., the chest she's opening is trapped or there are enemies on the other side of the door she's unlocking — she succeeds automatically without needing to roll.

This Charm can also enhance rolls with any Ability to bypass esoteric barriers and obstructions, like a curtain of sorcerous flame or a ring of runes that render a door immovable, but it doesn't let the Sidereal make a roll if she couldn't normally attempt one.

Creation-Smuggling Procedures

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One hour

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal reveals hidden strands of green phosphorescence twined around her fingers, weaving her surroundings into fate.

The Sidereal and everything within short range of her are immune to the effects of Wyld exposure. The environment within that area follows Creation's physical laws. If the Sidereal renews this Charm when its duration ends, she waives its Willpower cost.

Wyld Exposure

Resisting exposure to the Wyld is a (Wits + Integrity) roll; failure results in unwanted transformation that count as Flaws (**Exalted**, p. 167), addiction, or Derangements. The difficulty, consequences for failure, and

frequency at which the roll must be made depend on the Wyld's intensity. Certain ritual practices, meditative disciplines, and warding talismans may add bonus dice; accepting faerie hospitality may impose penalties. Once a character fails a roll against exposure, she doesn't need to make rolls for that specific location again for the rest of the story.

Different Wyld locales have their own distinctive character. The mutations they inflict reflect this: a glacial ziggurat transforms people into living ice; a subterranean labyrinth twists those who pass through it into pale, elongated creatures; a forest of speaking beasts traps humans in animalistic forms.

BEGIN TABLE

Intensity	Difficulty	Interval	Possible Effects
Bordermarch	3	Monthly	Addiction. Largely superficial transformations. No Derangements.
Middlemarch	5	Weekly	Addiction. Minor Derangements. Undesirable transformations, inflicting a -2 penalty on a limited range of actions or similar detriments: physical dependency on an unusual substance, vulnerability to iron, etc.
Deep Wyld	7	Daily	Addition. Major Derangements, or increasing existing Major Derangements to Defining. Life-altering transformations: bodily reconstructions that impose a -3 penalty on a broad range of actions; eternally rotting and unhealing flesh; sapient, parasitic organs; etc.

END TABLE

Characters who roll against the Wyld may choose to go into experience debt to purchase up to five dots of thematically appropriate mutations whether they succeed or fail.

Masque of the Uncanny

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Twisting the strands of her fate, the Sidereal inverts her semblance into that of her nemeses.

The Sidereal rolls to instantly disguise herself as an enemy of fate, without needing equipment. She ignores penalties for disguising herself as characters of a different race, sex, or body type or impersonating specific characters. She can manifest supernatural sensory displays and mimic the

Caste Marks and anima banners of Exalted enemies of fate.

Characters without superhuman or magically enhanced senses can't roll opposing the Sidereal's disguise unless she acts out of character; even then, they suffer +1 target number. Success doesn't reveal the Sidereal's identity, only that she's not what she seems.

With a Larceny 5, Essence 3 repurchase, divination, magical scrying, magic based on someone's identity, and similar effects can't provide information that contradicts this disguise, giving false results where necessary. Magic that enhances mundane efforts to contest disguises is unimpeded.

Name-Pilfering Practice

Cost: 5m, 1wp (1m, 1wp); **Mins:** Larceny 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Shaping (Fate, Mind), Stackable

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: None

Tugging at someone's name, the Sidereal pulls it free of his fate and appends it to her own.

The Sidereal rolls (Wits + Larceny) against the Resolve of a character within short range to steal his name — or one of the names he goes by, if there's more than one. Sobriquets, like “the Roseblack” or an Abyssal's title, can also be stolen.

If the Sidereal succeeds, she takes the name and can truthfully use it to identify herself. Her victim can't use the stolen name to identify himself, whether directly or indirectly. Other character with Resolve lower than the roll's success can't remember that it's the victim's name.

The Sidereal's victim can steal his name back by identifying her as the thief and winning a noteworthy victory over her — defeating her in combat, decisively outmaneuvering her in social intrigues, etc. He must make a brief monologue in which he reclaims the name.

Other characters can pay one Willpower to regain memories suppressed by this Charm if they have a Major or Defining Ties toward the victim or have evidence that the name is his. It can also be resisted with magic that specifically protects against memory-altering Psyche effects.

The Sidereal may have up to (Essence) stolen names at a time, reducing the mote cost of subsequent uses to one mote, one Willpower.

Dream Confiscation Approach

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Larceny 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Aggravated, Mute, Psyche

Duration: One story or Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Name-Pilfering Practice

Bumping casually into someone, the Sidereal walks away with his dreams.

The Sidereal touches a character and rolls (Wits + Larceny) against his Resolve. If successful, he loses one Willpower as she steals his dreams. He does not dream when he sleeps, rendering him immune to magic that would cause him to do so or manipulate his dreams, but he can't recover Willpower from sleeping. The Sidereal learns one of the target's Intimacies from examining his stolen dreams.

Against fae, this Charm instead unravels the dream-like patterns of their Essence, inflicting (higher of Essence or 3) dice of aggravated **decisive** damage, ignoring Hardness. This doesn't include or reset the Sidereal's Initiative. A damaged fae is inspired with overwhelming hunger and can't spend Willpower to resist. Such uses have instant duration.

Sidereal Shell Games

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Larceny 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Mute, Shaping (Fate), Stackable

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Running her fingers through the weave of fate and crossing her wrists, the Sidereal switches strands of fate between herself and an enemy.

The Sidereal rolls a (Wits + Larceny) gambit against the Resolve of an enemy within short range. The Initiative roll's difficulty is 3. Success lets the Sidereal either impose a -3 penalty on all of her victim's mental, physical, or social actions or lower his soak by three. The Sidereal profits from her theft, adding three dice on all rolls of the penalized category or gaining three soak. This lasts until the scene ends.

A single character can only suffer a single use of this Charm at a time, but the Sidereal can stack the benefits from multiple uses, but can't stack the same bonus (e.g. dice on physical actions) multiple times.

Special activation rules: This Charm can be flurried and doesn't count as an attack for determining what it can be flurried with (including other attacks).

Expedited Approval of Justice

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Shaping (Mind)

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Maiden-in-the-Pot Escape

Once the Sidereal's confessed her guilt, there's no need for a lengthy trial; fate ensures she meets

an appropriate sentence.

Truthfully confessing a crime to a legitimate authority figure, the Sidereal vanishes and reappears within a prison, stockade, dungeon, or other place of confinement or punishment chosen by her within $([Essence + Charisma] \times 5)$ miles. She can bring her Circlemates and up to $(Essence + 1)$ other willing characters, even if they aren't present in the scene. They appear suitably restrained and surveilled upon arrival.

The Sidereal's player chooses three Secrets Charms or Secrets Maiden Charms she qualifies for that would aid in her purpose for imprisoning herself, gaining them until she escapes.

Alternatively, she can grant those Charms to another qualifying Sidereal she brings as an accomplice. Once they escape, they can incur experience debt to learn the Charms permanently (p. XX).

If magic would prevent entry, roll $(Charisma + Larceny)$ against it, waiving the cost to reduce target numbers with Excellencies, even if the effect normally can't be contested. In that case, the effect's creator makes an appropriate $(Attribute + Ability)$ roll.

Memories of the Sidereal's disappearance are erased, while the memories of anyone involved in the chosen location are revised to account for the Sidereal having already been imprisoned there at the time of her confession, with a sentence dictated by her. This can be resisted with magic that specifically protects against memory-altering Psyche effects.

The Sidereal can confess a violation of Heavenly law to any god or priest, imprisoning herself within any of Heaven's gaols regardless of distance. Pursuant to the Yozi's surrender oaths, she may travel to their prison in Malfeas without need for confession, though she must still travel five days through the Endless Desert to reach it.

A record of the Sidereal's confession appears in the inbox of Itzcalimon, God of Blackmail.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by violating a law that would subject the Sidereal to punishment severe enough to be a significant obstacle.

Talisman Forgery Technique

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Honorable Thief Spirit

Mortals denied destiny's favor seek to make their own luck; the Sidereal is eager to assist, sporting colorful paper talismans and strange-smelling elixirs.

The Sidereal makes a $(Manipulation + Larceny)$ bargain roll to offer a character a phony good luck talisman, medicinal elixir, or similar piece of charlatanry, along with instructions on how to use it. Her target can't use Intimacies of distrust, cynicism, or skepticism to bolster his Resolve or in Decision Points against it. If she succeeds, he must keep a good luck charm on him or display it in a meaningful place, take regular doses of a medicinal elixir, or otherwise make use of the talisman. If it's depletable, he'll seek to stay in stock, though not to the point of destitution.

Affected characters will attribute any good fortune they encounter to a good luck charm — winning a hand of cards, surviving a bandit raid, discovering fresh water in desert, etc. Medicinal elixirs are instead credited for any improvements in an affected character's health or significant physical or mental accomplishments. When such an event occurs, he forms a Minor Principle or strengthens reflecting the Sidereal's instructions, e.g., "I must wear my lucky ring" or "I can't eat fowl with my medication." As long as he continues to use the talisman, he can't weaken this Intimacy, though if an elixir or other depletable runs out, the Intimacy becomes vulnerable until he's restocked.

An affected character can only be convinced to take off or stop using a talisman if he suffers a great misfortune despite it; doing so uses the rules for overturning influence (**Exalted**, p. 221), requiring the victim to cite an Intimacy that's equal or greater to the one instilled by the talisman. This frees him from this Psyche effect, even if he later resumes using the talisman. Absent such a roll, even the worst luck won't make him doubt in the talisman.

Special activation rules: The Sidereal can reflexively use any of her Ascending (Caste) Horoscope or Descending (Caste) Horoscopes on the talisman. Her blessings or curses only apply while her target uses the talisman.

Lazy Works Smart

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One task

Prerequisite Charms: Sidereal Shell Games

The Sidereal fights fiercely to preserve what little free time she has, shortening her labors with stolen productivity.

The Sidereal saps productivity from a project or bureaucratic task, rolling (Wits + Larceny) opposing the project leader's ([Charisma, Intelligence, or Manipulation] + Bureaucracy). If successful, the time needed to complete the project is multiplied by (2 + extra successes).

The Sidereal can apply the stolen productivity to a project or task of any kind using any Ability, applying the same multiplier to the speed at which she works. This doesn't stack with other magic that speeds her efforts. She can't apply this benefit to a task that would normally take significantly longer to complete than the sabotaged project would.

Reset: This Charm can only be used on a given organization once per story.

Legitimate Pseudonym Trick

Cost: —; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Name-Pilfering Practice

The Sidereal shamelessly trades on someone else's good name.

The Sidereal gains the following benefits when disguising herself as someone who's name she's stolen.

- She ignores the penalty for impersonating unfamiliar people.
- Rolls against her disguise suffer +1 target number.
- She can flawlessly mimic her target's voice and handwriting.
- She can use Masque of the Uncanny to enhance the disguise.

Thought-Swiping Distraction

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Dream Confiscation Approach

Even one's innermost thoughts aren't safe from the deft fingers of a Sidereal thief.

The Sidereal rolls (Wits + Larceny) against the Guile of a character within short range. Success reveals that character's current train of thought — harboring suspicions that she's a spy in his ranks, anticipating the revenge he plans to take on a rival, or ignoring a meeting to pine after his beloved. If the Sidereal's roll also beat his Resolve, she may steal this thought from him; he forgets what he was thinking about and can't resume that line of thought for the rest of the scene. If something gives him reason to return to it — e.g., someone else bringing it up in conversation — he may spend one Willpower to do so.

Sanctum-Breaching Heist

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Maiden-in-the-Pot Escape

Deft fingers trace the contours of mystical seals and otherworldly portals, feeling for the crack through which the Sidereal can pass.

The Sidereal rolls (Wits + Larceny) to enter a spirit's sanctum, use an otherwise inaccessible portal, cross between realms of existence, or temporarily breach a magical barrier. The roll's

difficulty equals the Essence of the character who created or owns the boundary; if no such character exists, the Storyteller assigns a difficulty from 1-5. Success lets the Sidereal and (Essence x2) companions pass through safely.

Conning Chaos Technique

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Larceny 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: Shaping (Fate)

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Any ten Larceny Charms

The Sidereal nails a prayer strip bearing the Scripture of the Savory Maiden to the air in an effulgence of emerald light, invoking a pact older than humanity between Jupiter and Chaos.

The Sidereal pledges someone she's interacted with in the last day as an offering to the Wyld, rolling (Manipulation + Larceny) against his Resolve. He sees the prayer strip through the Sidereal's eyes in this instant, glimpsing the source of the suffering that is to come, though he does not yet realize this.

If the Sidereal succeeds, the Wyld relinquishes territory back to Creation in exchange for this tribute. As long as there's any Wyld within (Essence x2) miles of the prayer strip, (Essence x10) squares miles of bordermarches will revert to Creation each month, or that many square miles of middlemarches diminish to bordermarches. Deep Wyld is unaffected. The restored land reverts to whatever form it had before it was absorbed into the Wyld, though potentially marked by the transformation. Once there's no Wyld left within this Charm's range, it ends.

In exchange for this, the offered character is marked for the Wyld's attention, no matter how far he may roam. He suffers -2 Resolve against Shaping and Psyche effects used by fae and +1 target number on against such magic. Fae are drawn to him from miles away; even in regions with no significant Wyld presence, he can expect to encounter hostile fae at least once a month: rapacious Fair Folk, swarms of silverwights, mutated beasts, etc. Near bordermarches and other places where faeries congregate, attacks become more frequent. The Storyteller may handle this narratively for Storyteller character; for player characters, such encounters should occur when they'd help advance or provide a needed break in a narrative.

A tribute can piece together the nature of the curse that afflicts him with an extended (Intelligence + Occult) roll, as can other characters who've personally experienced its manifestations. It has a goal number of 10 and a one-month interval. The difficulty for interval rolls begins at 7 and drops by one with each subsequent interval, minimum 3. Success reveals that the curse can be thwarted by destroying the prayer strip; succeeding within the first five intervals reveals the precise location of the prayer strip as well.

Only the cursed character can destroy the prayer strip. He can tear it from the air to which it's affixed with a feat of demolition that requires Strength 5 or disturb the pact sealed by the prayer strip with an (Intelligence + Occult) roll. Both have difficulty 7. In combat, it can be destroyed with a difficulty 8 gambit against Defense 7. If he fails such a roll, he can't attempt to destroy the prayer strip again by any means for a month.

Reset: Once per story.

Lore — The Treasure Trove

Sidereal Lore Charms hone a Sidereal savant's reason and intellect, the legendary skill with which they discover secret or unknown wisdoms and share them with the world. Sidereals' powers of foresight, prophecy, and divination are most prominent in their Lore Charms, revealing what the future holds so that a Sidereal, like the Maiden in Terror, might know what she has to fear.

The Scripture of the Maiden in Terror

Once, there was a maiden...

...who knew some things about a man. He didn't like that, but he kissed her anyway.

She told him everything in her heart:

she whispered truths to him, but he didn't care;

she whispered hopes to him, but he didn't care;

she whispered her prayers to him, but only heard silence;

and she whispered her fear to him, but he didn't care.

He looked upon her inner self,

and the void met his eyes.

"To know the world is to fear it," said he.

Systematic Understanding of Everything

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Lore 1, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Stackable

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal has glimpsed hints of a grand design in dreams and half-remembered visions and gained certain insights thereby.

After a night's sleep, the Sidereal gains a temporary Lore specialty in a topic of her choice. It must be related or thematically relevant to the current story's events, the Five Maidens, or the Celestial Bureaucracy. She can stack up to (higher of Essence or 3) uses of this Charm.

Once per story, the Sidereal may permanently purchase a specialty gained with this Charm for one experience point as a training effect (p. XX).

The Methodology of Secrets

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Lore 2, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Systematic Understanding of Everything

The Sidereal is possessed of unusual competences, employing methods and techniques only dreamt of.

The Sidereal applies a Lore specialty to an action with another Ability. She might use a mathematics specialty on an engineering project, a specialty in Yu-Shan for bureaucratic dealings, or a metallurgy specialty to target a weak spot in an enemy's armor.

Reset: Once per scene.

Of Truths Best Unspoken

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Divination

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Systematic Understanding of Everything

The Sidereal invokes her divine authority to summon forth a sepulcher interred by the Heptarchs of Tragedy, seven gods of unpleasant truths and unhappy futures who bury knowledge of horrors not yet come to pass beneath the earth.

The Sidereal spends three hours ritually invoking the Heptarchs of Tragedy; upon its completion, a sepulcher is unearthed by unseen forces and whisked to her, its door swinging open to reveal what is to come.

The Sidereal's player makes a special introduce fact roll to reveal what secret the sepulcher holds, introducing a fact relevant to the near future. She's still dependent on her Lore backgrounds but treats them as though they represented the knowledge of a savant at the age's end, however many decades or centuries hence that might be.

The Sidereal banks any extra successes on this roll and can add them on rolls with any Ability that benefit from the introduced fact. If the game's events ultimately contradict a fact about the future, this doesn't mean the Sidereal was wrong, but that by the age's end, a false narrative of events will have superseded the truth in the scholarly consensus.

Of the Shape of the World

Cost: —; **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Systematic Understanding of Everything

Averting her eyes from the truth of the world, the Sidereal invokes the future she wishes to create.

The Sidereal waives the Willpower cost of an Ascending (Caste) Horoscope or Descending (Caste) Horoscope Charm or to reduce a prophecy roll with any Ability's target number using Excellencies.

Reset: Once per day unless reset by fulfilling an auspicious prospect.

Professorial Mien

Cost: —; **Mins:** Lore 1, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal need not go to great lengths to establish her scholarly credentials; her sagacity is a self-evident fact.

The Sidereal gains the following benefits:

- She may reflexively make her scholarly eminence known to all who see her. Anyone who can perceive her becomes intuitively aware of all Lore backgrounds she possesses and regards her as the perfect expert to consult on matters involving them, treating this as a Minor Tie.
- When she successfully reads a character's intentions or profiles him, she also learns one of his Lore backgrounds.
- Characters she teaches halve training times.
- At the end of each story, she gains a new Lore background based on that story's events.

Avoiding-the-Truth Technique

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal speaks the truth but is not believed, inflecting her words with a tenor of unspeakable dread that makes listeners refuse to believe them.

When the Sidereal makes a spoken influence roll or up to ten seconds of normal speech, everyone

who hears her believes she's lying and gaining a Minor Principle reflecting this. Characters whose Resolve is higher than the Sidereal's Manipulation can spend one Willpower to resist. If a character with this Intimacy makes a roll opposing the Sidereal's Guile that could reveal she wasn't lying, he suffers +1 target number.

This Charm can contest lie-detecting magic like Judge's Ear Technique; the Sidereal uses her influence roll to oppose that Charm's roll, or a (Manipulation + Lore) roll at -1 target number for normal speech.

Of Things Desired and Feared

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Lore 3, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Systematic Understanding of Everything

The Sidereal envisions the countless ways in which events could unfold like the blossoming of a flower, finding a path to the future she seeks and the consequences she dreads.

After a scene spent meditating, the Sidereal states a goal she wishes to achieve. The Storyteller tells her player one way she could achieve it and the cost of doing so, ranging from minor consequences like "a few bumps and bruises" or "however much cash you have on hand" to those as dire as "the destruction of everything you hold dear" or "the deaths of millions." If all players are willing to pay this cost, they achieve that goal without the need for any further rolls, resolving it briefly in a montage rather than playing it out in full. The options presented by this Charm are rarely the best ones, leaving characters free to try another approach in hopes of accomplishing their goal without having to pay the revealed price.

If the Storyteller considers a task completely impossible, the Sidereal becomes aware of this impossibility and is refunded this Charm's cost. If the Storyteller considers a task possible but so incredibly difficult that allowing a guaranteed success would be detrimental to the game's narrative at any cost, then he can give the Sidereal's player a way to solve the problem but not a guarantee of success, refunding this Charm's cost.

Of Horrors Best Unknown

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: The Methodology of Secrets

The Sidereal spins gossamer filaments of fate into a net to bind otherworldly threat.

The Sidereal rolls an unblockable (Dexterity + Lore) gambit against an enemy of fate within short

range. The gambit's difficulty is (target's Essence). If successful, the Sidereal names a specific circumstance — "combat," "negotiation," "keeping secrets," "courtship," etc. While the bound enemy is in those circumstances, he suffers +1 target number on all rolls.

Against un-Exalted targets, this lasts a year and a day; against Exalted, it lasts only one scene.

Of Secrets Yet Untold

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Systematic Understanding of Everything

The Sidereal hisses a long susurration in a spirit's ear, whispering gibberish syllables in which the spirit nonetheless hears a secret about the future, one that it can never repeat.

The spirit the Sidereal bestows this secret upon is indebted to the Sidereal; fate reveals what he must do to repay her. The Sidereal doesn't learn what the secret is and the spirit is incapable of disclosing it to anyone in any fashion, treating all contrary influence as unacceptable.

The Storyteller chooses what task the spirit's assigned, though it's always beneficial to the Sidereal or her interests, even if it's not clear how at first. The spirit must perform that favor as if convinced with a persuade roll that it can't resist with Willpower. If a character makes an influence roll to convince the spirit to prioritize something else over completing the task, he must use the rules for overturning influence (**Exalted**, p. 221).

Earth elementals and other spirits associated with earth must make this task their foremost priority unless they enter a Decision Point, citing a Defining Intimacy to spend one Willpower.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by upholding a Major or Defining Intimacy through revealing secrets or making calculated disclosures of information. Oracles can reset it by fulfilling an auspicious prospect.

Horoscope Revision Technique

Cost: 1wp; **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Avoiding-the-Truth Technique

The Sidereal suffuses her horoscope with unspeakable dread, causing the pattern spiders to avert their gaze from her true birth sign in favor of a plausible alternative.

Upon purchasing this Charm, the Sidereal's player chooses three constellations. When she uses this Charm, she may exchange one of those constellations for her birth sign for this Charm's

duration, gaining its benefits for prophesy (p. XX).

The Sidereal can add additional constellations to her repertoire for three experience points each.

Stab the Seer's Eye

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Horoscope Revision Technique

Mortal astrologers who try to read the Sidereal's destiny in the stars are struck blind to her secrets.

When a character uses magic to scry on the Sidereal from afar or to predict her future, she becomes aware of this and asserts her Guile against his roll. If the opposing effect is unrolled, that character rolls (Perception + Occult). If he fails, the Sidereal learns his identity and dictates what his prophesy or scrying reveals.

Alternatively, this Charm can negate magic that guarantees some outcome will come to pass, like Transcendent Hatchet of Fate (p. XX). If such an effect would harm or impede the Sidereal, an employee of the Celestial Bureaucracy, or someone the Sidereal has a Major or Defining Tie for, she becomes aware of the effect and the identity of the character responsible. If she wins a notable victory over him — defeating him in combat, turning the audience against him in a debate, driving his business bankrupt — that effect is negated.

Seers and Shrikes

Stab the Seer's Eye is intended to oppose magic like God-King Shrike, but the Storyteller should be judicious in introducing Sidereal opposition. If the players want to try to wipe the Imperial City off the map, they should expect to face Bronze Faction opposition — potentially the likes of Chejop Kejak — but there's not a Sidereal for every possible disaster. The Storyteller should warn players if a particular prediction is likely to draw Heaven's notice.

Well-Schooled Pedant Defense

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Professorial Mien

The Sidereal has no time for the foolish remarks of the ignorant and unlettered, waving away arguments beneath her notice.

The Sidereal may cite a Lore background in a Decision Point as though it were a Major Intimacy. If it relates a Defining Intimacy, it counts as Defining itself.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by gaining a new Lore background (typically by purchasing a Lore specialty).

Dismissive Scholar's Sniff

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Well-Schooled Pedant Defense

The Sidereal's comprehensive body of knowledge lets her recognize and expose the flaws in another's argument, citing an authority he has yet to read.

The Sidereal opposes an influence roll with an introduce fact roll, presenting contradictory evidence. She converts Resolve bonuses, like those from Intimacies, to automatic successes on the roll. If she succeeds, she defends against the influence (if it targeted her) and adds (extra successes/2, rounded up) to the Resolve of others targeted by the influence. Multiple uses of this Charm don't stack their Resolve bonus.

This Charm doesn't count against the once-per-scene limit on introducing facts.

Transcendent Hatchet of Fate

Cost: 30m, 1wp; **Mins:** Lore 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: Shaping (Fate)

Duration: (Victim's Integrity + 5) days

Prerequisite Charms: Any ten Lore Charms

The Sidereal brandishes a prayer strip bearing the Scripture of the Maiden in Terror, which glows a sickly green as it twists and sinks into her palm, leaving a faint tracery of emerald symbols that spell out someone's doom.

The Sidereal rolls (Intelligence + Lore) opposing the Resolve of a character within short range. The Sidereal's player proposes a general description of the fate that will befall him if she succeeds, though that doom's severity won't be determined until after she rolls. Her victim's Intimacies modify his Resolve against the Sidereal's roll if they support or oppose the doom.

Success assures that the victim's doom will come to pass. The Sidereal's player finalizes the details of that doom. Normally, it can cause serious complications for the victim but can't

endanger his or anyone else's life — being sold out by a trusted friend, having one's most prized treasure stolen, falling into disgrace in one's community. With three extra successes, the Sidereal's player can preordain a seriously dangerous peril — facing a great warrior in battle, contracting a life-threatening disease, having one's yet-unborn daughter grow up to eventually strive to kill them. With five extra successes, she can cause life-changing catastrophes: being lost at sea ten years before finally returning home, facing an uprising against one's reign as prince, being imprisoned by a treacherous sibling's courtly intrigues.

The Sidereal's victim has an interval of at least (his Integrity + 5) days before any events will be set in motion, though some dooms may take much longer to come to pass. During this time, he can seek to break the prophecy with applicable magic or prepare for his doom. The Sidereal must commit this Charm's cost for this interval; if she ends it prematurely or is killed, the doom subsides from an inevitability to a mere possibility.

The doom is sure to happen, though the specifics may vary from the player's description based on how events unfold in play, but fate will adapt to whatever happens to ensure her victim faces that doom in some meaningful form. However, the victim can mitigate the overall harm and impact of this doom with successful rolls, creative thinking, assistance from his allies, and other assets. This prophecy can influence the lives and decisions of mortal characters in addition to its target as necessary to bring that doom to pass but can't force the Exalted and other supernatural beings to do anything unless their player agrees. The Sidereal has no conscious choice in the matter; she simply reveals what is inevitable.

Reset: Once per story unless by accomplishing a legendary social goal (**Exalted**, p. 134) by fulfilling an auspicious prospect.

Occult — The Sorcerer

Sidereal Occult Charms evince both prowess in dealings with the uncanny and otherworldly and divine authority as Chosen of the Maidens. These Charms exert a Sidereal's dominion over spirits and the Celestial Bureaucracy itself, the fetters that both bind the gods and give them power over the world like the Maiden in Chains. Under the Sorcerer's auspices, these Charms affirm the Sidereals' power as Princes of the Earth and let them master the eerie arts of sorcery.

The Scripture of the Maiden in Chains

Once, there was a maiden...

...and before her came all the peoples of Creation, and knelt.

They set aside their petty squabbles in her name.

They acclaimed her with many shouts.

They prayed for her safety, and her weal.

Not one of them struck free her chains.

"To know the world..."

"...is to own it," she said.

Incite Decorum

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Occult 1, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal invokes her intrinsic authority as one of the Maidens' Chosen to facilitate smooth dealings with the spirit world.

Gods and elementals count as having Minor Ties of professional respect to the Sidereal; spirits who are enemies of fate count as having one of fear. So long as she and her allies give such spirits no reason to take offense, they must hear her out when she speaks. The imposed Tie always penalizes summoned spirits' Resolve against the Sidereal's rolls to bind them with magic like Summon Elemental.

A spirit may pay one Willpower to ignore or interrupt the Sidereal or two Willpower to initiate hostilities, but still retains the Tie of respect. If the Sidereal or any of her companions engage in combat, even in self-defense, further spirits may attack without spending Willpower.

Prince-of-the-Earth Attitude

Cost: —; **Mins:** Occult 3, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Incite Decorum

Assuming the glory of the Chosen, the Sidereal's presence commands deference and cows the weak-willed.

While using Incite Decorum, as long as the Sidereal openly presents herself as an Exalt or acts as her audience would expect one to act, all un-Exalted characters count as having a Minor Tie of awe to her and are subjected to the restriction on interrupting or attacking her.

Incite Decorum still imposes Ties of respect or fear rather than awe on spirits. While using Mark of Exaltation, spirits also count as having Minor Ties of awe.

Mark of Exaltation

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Occult 1, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Until next turn

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal's Caste Mark shines as a symbol of her authority over spirits, illuminating the unseen world.

Dematerialized characters within short range of the Sidereal become visible to her and any other characters she wishes to extend this benefit to. She can focus this light on a dematerialized character within long range as a miscellaneous action, rolling (Perception + Occult) against his Evasion to render him visible.

Spirits can always see the light shed by the Sidereal's Caste Mark, letting the knowledgeable roll to recognize its use (p. XX).

Manifestation-Haling Summons

Cost: Varies; **Mins:** Occult 2, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Mark of Exaltation

Citing a spirit's responsibilities to the world, the Sidereal weaves the chains of his duty into a worldly form.

The Sidereal materializes a willing spirit within medium range for the rest of the scene for free. The cost depends on how closely the task the Sidereal materializes the spirit for relates to his role in the Celestial Bureaucracy:

- One mote if it's directly relevant to the spirit's duties.
- Three motes if it's indirectly relevant.
- Five motes if it's not relevant at all or the spirit isn't in the Celestial Bureaucracy.

Spirit familiars and those bound with sorcery never cost more than three motes to materialize.

Tell-Tale Symphony

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Occult 2, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Mark of Exaltation

Patterns of Essence sing to the Sidereal, revealing the subtle harmonies of the cosmos.

The Sidereal can sense when a spirit is within earshot by soft ringing of bells that surrounds them, even if they're dematerialized. This typically extends out to medium range, though environmental conditions and magic may increase or decrease it. She can roll (Perception + Occult) instead of the usual roll to oppose such spirits' Stealth or read their intentions. A successful read intentions

roll also reveals whether they belong to the Celestial Bureaucracy and, if so, learn what position they hold.

With Occult 5, Essence 2, the Sidereal can hear the subtler music of sorcery, Evocations, and spirit or fae Charms. While this reveals the presence of such effects and their general nature, it doesn't reveal what they do or how they work.

Panoply of Fallen Stars

Cost: —; **Mins:** Occult 1, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

Bearing the iconic panoply of the Chosen, the Sidereal binds her treasures to her.

While the Sidereal has one full-cost attunement to an artifact weapon, she reduces the attunement cost of further artifact weapons by three motes each. This doesn't stack with other discounts. If she ends her full-cost attunement, she must commit enough motes to bring another attunement to its full cost, or else all discounted attunements end.

Seer's Starry Eye

Cost: —; **Mins:** Occult 3, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal has an intuitive understanding of astrological divinations, fortune-telling, and similar folk magics.

She gains the Thaumaturgist Merit and the two-dot Astrological Horoscope ritual or a similar fortune-telling or divinatory ritual. She may subsequently learn up to four dots worth of thaumaturgical rituals of any kind for no experience point cost, although she must have access to a tutor.

This Charm can be repurchased up to (Essence/2, rounded up) times, letting the Sidereal learn five additional dots of rituals for each purchase.

Thaumaturgical Divination

The Astrological Horoscope ritual is identical to Reading the Tea Leaves (**Exalted**, p. 490), except that it involves consulting the positions of the stars rather than tea leaves. The ritual's one-dot version lets a

thaumaturgist predict the course a subject's life will take with a difficulty 2 (Perception + Occult) roll or the most life-changing event that will happen in the next day with a difficulty 4 roll. The two-dot version also lets her divine a subject's best chances for success or failure in the coming months with a difficulty 3 roll.

Numerous other divinatory rituals exist in Creation – haruspicy, reading cards, casting oracle bones, and more. While players and Storytellers are free to devise bespoke mechanics for such rituals, Reading the Tea Leaves' mechanics can be used as the default for such rituals.

While Reading the Tea Leaves refers to a character's "destiny," this is figurative, not the destiny planned by Heaven. Divinatory rituals offer glimpses into the future through mystic rituals, not fate or destiny.

Unweaving Method

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Dual

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal uses her understanding of the Wyld's chaotic energies and the Underworld's deathly stillness to corrupt the pattern of an enemy's fate.

The Sidereal rolls a **withering** or **decisive** (Wits + Occult) attack against an enemy within medium range with this baleful energy. A **withering** attack uses the Accuracy of an artifact Archery weapon (Close -1; Short +5; Medium +3; Long +1; Extreme -1). It ignores armored soak, with (Intelligence + 3 + extra successes) raw damage and Overwhelming (Essence + 1). **Decisive** attacks ignore Hardness from armor. She can enhance this attack with Archery Charms, Thrown Charms, or Martial Arts Charms that are compatible with any ranged weapons, but can't combine Charms from multiple such Abilities unless they're explicitly compatible with other Abilities.

Enemies who're immune to exposure to the Wyld, like a Solar using Integrity-Protecting Prana (**Exalted**, p. 303), are also protected from this attack, receiving +5 soak and Hardness 5 against it. The undead likewise receive this benefit.

Invincible Essence Mantle

Cost: 1wp or 3a; **Mins:** Occult 3, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Prince-of-the-Earth Attitude

Drawing from the eternal core of her Exaltation, the Sidereal floods her body, mind, and Essence with unassailable divinity.

The Sidereal adds a free full Excellency on a roll or static value using any Ability against a Psyche effect, Shaping effect, or any effect that interferes with her Essence or magic — ending an ongoing Charm, stealing motes, breaking attunement to an artifact, etc. If the opposing effect is unrolled, she instead forces an opposed (temporary Willpower) roll, gaining -1 target number on it. Against unrolled environmental effects, the Storyteller sets a difficulty.

Personal motes spent on this Charm still increase the Sidereal's anima.

Unimpeachable Divinity Credentials

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Tell-Tale Symphony

The Sidereal conceals her true place under the Sorcerer's auspices and in the Celestial Bureaucracy, hiding her Exalted nature behind counterfeit divinity.

The Sidereal gains the following benefits:

- The Celestial Bureaucracy's records list her as a god with a purview too insignificant to draw scrutiny or suspicion. (She can use the same purview across multiple uses of this Charm). Under this false identity, she counts as wearing a resplendent destiny.
- She counts as a spirit if it's advantageous to her. This doesn't let her dematerialize or use spirit Charms.
- If she disguises herself appropriately, opposing rolls fail automatically unless enhanced by magic; even then, they suffer $+1$ target number. She can manifest appropriate supernatural sensory displays. Magic that reveals her nature shows her as a god of that purview, even when not disguised.
- She can hear prayers directed to her (including those to her cover identities or disguises). Discerning useful information from this requires a (Perception + Occult) roll at difficulty (Cult). The difficulty can vary based on factors like how many people make the same prayer, praying at a shrine to the Sidereal or her cover identity, etc.

Official Notice of Alienation

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Incite Decorum, Tell-Tale Symphony

Presenting a warrant of Heaven's reproof, the Sidereal demands that a possessing spirit take up refuge elsewhere.

The Sidereal rolls (Charisma + Occult) against a possessing spirit's Resolve to exorcise it. If successful, the spirit is expelled and can't possess that character again until the next new moon. Enemies of fate lose one Willpower.

If the Sidereal knows Terminal Sanction (p. XX), she can inflict any of its effects on an exorcised spirit.

With an Occult 5, Essence 3 repurchase, the Sidereal can pay a five-mote to banish spirits that aren't possessing hosts. If successful, the spirit immediately dematerializes and must flee the Sidereal's presence. This costs two Willpower to resist, and the spirit can't do so until the scene ends. Enemies of fate native to other worlds are also driven to return to their realms; they can't resist until they've spent a day traveling to their native realm or reach it. This effect also applies to exorcised spirits.

Innocuous Maneuver

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Incite Decorum, Mark of Exaltation

Wrapped in the terrible grandeur of the stars, the Sidereal presents a convincing case to the heavens.

The Sidereal makes a ([Charisma or Manipulation] + Occult) persuade or bargain roll to convince a god to support her in some political matter, waiving the mote and Willpower costs to reduce the roll's target number with the Occult Excellency. Spirits other than gods who hold positions in the Celestial Bureaucracy can also be affected.

Resisting this influence costs three Willpower. Targets can't use Intimacies of corruption, greed, self-indulgence, or laziness to bolster their Resolve against this influence or in the Decision Point to resist.

Reset: This Charm can only be used against a spirit once per story.

Fate is All Things

Cost: —; **Mins:** Occult 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Innocuous Maneuver

Those untethered from fate's weave are still bound by the iron web of the Sidereal's will.

The Sidereal treats un-Exalted enemies of fate as spirits for purposes of Sidereal Charms. This doesn't apply for Charms that affect specific types of spirit, like gods, only those applicable to all spirits.

Willing Assumption of Chains

Cost: 20m, 1wp; **Mins:** Occult 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Any ten Occult Charms

The Sidereal promotes a god to a position within the Celestial Bureaucracy, presenting him with a prayer strip bearing the Scripture of the Maiden in Chains for his signature, upon which it burns away in a gout of emerald fire.

The Sidereal assigns a god a position instantly and unquestionably, effected by the Celestial Bureaucracy's very Essence. The position can't already be occupied — the Sidereal must choose either a vacant office or a position that does not yet exist. The god must willingly accept the promotion. If he already held a position in the Celestial Bureaucracy, the two are folded together into a single office; unemployed gods simply step into their new role.

Upon being promoted, the god gains the following benefits:

- An additional dot of Essence, maximum (Sidereal's Essence).
- A Defining Principle of diligently fulfilling the duties he's been appointed to.
- Up to six dots of Merits reflecting his new position. This typically includes Backing, Resources, and the like, but can also include mutations.
- (God's Essence) new Charms reflecting his new position. These don't manifest immediately; Charms are only gained once the Sidereal's player and the Storyteller have agreed on how they work.
- If the Sidereal knows Godly Companion (p. XX), the promoted god becomes her familiar.

While the promotion is intrinsically legitimate in Heaven's eyes, it's not irrevocable; the god can still be demoted or fired. Bureaucratic restructurings may eliminate the appointed position entirely if its existence is called into question and can't be justified, though this is unlikely unless a Sidereal invents particularly implausible offices.

This Charm can be used on elementals, though they gain no benefits other than the Defining Principle and status as a familiar. Sidereals with Celestial Circle Sorcery can offer employment demons, a power known as An End to Darkness. They receive the same benefits as elementals and cease to be creatures of darkness and enemies of fate while employed.

Reset: Once per story.

Sorcery

Terrestrial Circle Sorcery

Cost: —; **Mins:** Occult 3, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Any four Secrets Charms

Steeped in ancient wisdom and the secrets of the stars, the Sidereal masters the Emerald Circle's secrets.

The Sidereal can use Terrestrial Circle sorcery. She learns one Terrestrial spell — her control spell — and one shaping ritual for free.

Cloaked in Mystery

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Occult 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Terrestrial Circle Sorcery

The Sidereal veils herself in the subtlety of the unseen forces she has mastered.

The Sidereal gains +1 Resolve and Guile until her next turn when she takes a Shape Sorcery action. She doesn't lose sorcerous motes for going a turn without gathering them.

While wearing the resplendent destiny of an Exalt, other supernatural being, sorcerer, or mysterious sage, this Charm is free.

Weaver of Mystery

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Occult 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: One turn

Prerequisite Charms: Cloaked in Enigma

The Sidereal spins threads of fate with her right hand and threads of sorcery with her left.

The Sidereal flurries a Shape Sorcery action with a non-attack action, reducing the penalty on both rolls by one. If she knows Celestial Circle Sorcery, she negates the flurry penalty entirely, including the Defense penalty.

An Occult 5, Essence 3 repurchase lets the Sidereal pay a four-mote, one-Willpower surcharge to extend this Charm's duration to one scene.

Celestial Circle Sorcery

Cost: —; **Mins:** Occult 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Terrestrial Circle Sorcery, any five Terrestrial Circle spells

The Sidereal has recreated the constellation of the Sorcerer within her mind from stars of radiant enlightenment; within it, she has found a path to the Sapphire Circle's mysteries.

The Sidereal can use Celestial Circle sorcery. She learns one Celestial spell — an additional control spell — and one shaping ritual for free.

Stealth — The Mask

Sidereal Stealth Charms evince their expertise in subtlety, covert action, and concealment. Under the Mask's auspices, these Charms strengthen a Sidereal's arcane fate and let her exploit to her own advantage. She need not stop at being forgotten: she can abandon her face, her fate, and even her life, every detail that makes her more than a thing that is hiding. There is no maiden in the Scripture of Absence; the Sidereal, too, is gone from the world. While Stealth is most often rolled with Dexterity, Sidereal Stealth Charms also benefit from high Manipulation.

The Scripture of Absence

Once, there were...

...shadows in the window.

...footsteps at the gates of life.

...whispering at the door:

"Should I live or die? Am I living or dead?"

"To know the world is to choose it," says the Void.

Soft Presence Practice

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Stealth 2, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal steps lightly through the tapestry of fate.

The Sidereal ignores up to (Essence) points of penalty on a Stealth roll. If the roll's target number is reduced, each point of reduction lets her ignore an additional point of penalty.

Foot Treads No Twig

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Stealth 5, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Soft Presence Practice

The world does not protest the Sidereal's passage, a willing accomplice to fate's covert servant.

The Sidereal can use this Charm after a Stealth roll or a roll to conceal her tracks to reroll it, using the higher of the two results. The reroll receives the benefits of all magic used to enhance the first roll; the Sidereal can use additional Charms as well.

Blinding the Boar

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Stealth 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

Casting forth shadows of a thousand possible futures, the Sidereal conceals the truths of her existence from another.

The Sidereal rolls (Manipulation + Stealth) against the Resolve of a character within long range. If she succeeds, that character, can't focus on any specific details about her, though he can still perceive her location and actions. He can't understand anything she says and suffers a penalty of (1 + Sidereal's extra successes, maximum 5) on rolls targeting only her. He suffers -1 Defense and Guile against her.

Special activation rolls: This Charm can be flurried with Stealth rolls.

Legend-Dimming Obscurity

Cost: —; **Mins:** Stealth 3, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

Embracing her arcane fate, the Sidereal fades from the world.

Characters automatically fail rolls against the Sidereal's arcane fate unless they use applicable magic or have a Major or Defining Tie toward her. Even then, they suffer +1 target number on the roll.

Privacy-Enhancing Gesture

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Stealth 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute,

Duration: One hour

Prerequisite Charms: None

Making the Lesser Sign of the Mask, the Sidereal occludes her surroundings from unwanted surveillance.

The Sidereal rolls (Manipulation + Stealth) to secure an area within medium range from outside observation. Characters outside this area suffer +1 target number on Perception rolls to observe it and must always roll to notice details about it and those within it, even if no roll would normally be required.

Attempts to scry on the warded area, teleport into it, or otherwise use magic to observe or intrude upon it require an (Attribute + Ability) roll with the appropriate dice pool against the Sidereal's successes. If successful, that effect functions normally. If he fails, the effect is negated and can't be reused for the rest of this Charm's duration.

If the Sidereal renews this Charm at its duration's end, she waives its Willpower cost and doesn't need to roll, reusing her successes from before.

Extinguished Stars Constellation

Cost: 1m per character, 1wp; **Mins:** Stealth 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Shaping (Fate)

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Privacy-Enhancing Gesture

The Sidereal conceals the threads of her companions' fates within the constellation she stands under, subsuming them into her resplendent destiny.

The Sidereal extends her resplendent destiny to her Circlemates and up to (Essence + 1) other willing characters, giving them a semblance suitable for companions of resplendent destiny's role and the usual benefits of a resplendent destiny (p. XX).

If multiple characters under a destiny make disguise rolls that benefit from it simultaneously, they can all use the highest roll among them. In places concealed by Privacy-Enhancing Gesture, that Charm's target number increase applies to rolls against such disguises. Rolls not enhanced by superhuman senses or magic automatically fail.

Subordinate Inspiration Technique

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Stealth 3, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Mute, Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Soft Presence Practice

Whispering from the shadows, the Sidereal bends those around her to her will.

The Sidereal need not speak to make a Manipulation-based influence roll from concealment with any Ability from concealment against a single target. Her target hears her words as if they were his own thoughts, suffering -2 Resolve. If her roll fails, he rolls (Perception + Integrity) opposing it. Success reveals that someone's attempting to tamper with his thoughts, but not who. The Sidereal's never perceived as the source of this influence.

Unbreakable Silence

Cost: —; **Mins:** Stealth 5, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Soft Presence Practice

The Sidereal has made a labyrinth of her heart, sealing her secrets away within its coils.

The Sidereal can treat influence that would make her reveal a secret or do something she knows could give it away as unacceptable (**Exalted**, p. 220). She can voluntarily reveal secrets, but doing so causes her to lose this Charm's protection until she upholds a Defining Intimacy through secrecy, subterfuge, deception, or covert acts. An Oracle can also regain this protection by

fulfilling an auspicious prospect.

Characters can attempt a special instill roll to convince the Sidereal she can share her secrets, rolling twice and taking the lower result. The cost of effects used to enhance it must be paid separately for each roll. Success negates this Charm's protection as above.

Self-Annihilating Discretion

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Stealth 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Unbreakable Silence

The Sidereal entrusts her secrets to nothingness.

The Sidereal seals away her own memories. She chooses which memories to suppress, but the Storyteller may require a (Manipulation + Stealth) roll for extensive or complex manipulations, like suppressing the last twenty years or selectively editing her memories of a Circlemate to suppress anything that could reveal he's a double agent. The Sidereal's memory of using this Charm is always suppressed. Most magic is incapable of viewing or accessing the sealed memories, those specialized Charms like Soul Projection Method (**Exalted**, p. 358).

The Sidereal can use this Charm after a roll against her Guile or any other roll to which its effect is relevant, letting her negate its effect if she suppresses whatever memories are necessary to do so.

Alternatively, the Sidereal can use this Charm after she succumbs to a Psyche effect that creates false memories or alters existing ones, rolling (Manipulation + Stealth) opposing the Psyche effect's roll — or an appropriate (Attribute + Ability) roll, if it's unrolled. Success erases any implanted false memories or any alterations that add new details to existing memories.

If the Sidereal's presented with convincing evidence that her memory's been erased, she can use this Charm a second time to unseal suppressed memories. If the only evidence is another character telling her she used this Charm, he must roll as if overturning influence (**Exalted**, p. 221) and the Sidereal must cite a Major or Defining Intimacy in the Decision Point.

Gift of a Broken Mask

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Stealth 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Shaping (Mind)

Duration: Varies

Prerequisite Charms: Extinguished Stars Constellation, Legend-Dimming Obscurity

The Sidereal affixes a violet memorandum designating someone an honorary member of the Fivescore Fellowship to his brow, bringing him under the Mask's obscure dominion.

The Sidereal touches someone and rolls (Manipulation + Stealth) opposing his ([Appearance or Charisma] + Presence) roll. If successful, he suffers arcane fate (p. XX) for (1 + extra successes) months, or that many days for supernatural beings.

While only Sidereals can create resplendent destinies, the Storyteller should reward creative use of magic. A Solar might approximate a resplendent destiny by using Heart-Eclipsing Shroud and Flawlessly Impenetrable Disguise together, etc.

Walking Outside Fate

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Stealth 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Foot Treads No Twig

The Sidereal steps outside the weave of fate to walk unnoticed.

Rolls opposing the Sidereal's Stealth or to track her suffer +1 target number. Characters without superhuman senses or applicable magic can't perceive her directly while she's in concealment even if they beat her Stealth roll. Success only reveals that there's a presence nearby, providing enough forewarning that the Sidereal's attack won't be unexpected. She's considered an enemy of fate.

This Charm ends if the Sidereal takes an overt action, including Joining Battle or blatantly displaying supernatural power, or if her anima reaches burning or higher.

Cracked Mask Sacrifice

Cost: —; **Mins:** Stealth 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Self-Annihilating Discretion, Walking Outside Fate

The Sidereal is struck by a fatal blow, but it is not her who dies — only someone who never was.

When the Sidereal takes a crippling injury (**Exalted**, p. 201), she may sacrifice a resplendent destiny instead of suffering maiming. If she has one active, she must sacrifice it; otherwise, she can expend any of her resplendent destinies. This negates (Essence, maximum 5) levels of damage.

The sundered resplendent destiny is cast off as a corpse of appropriate appearance, though it unravels into gossamer threads under physical examination. Observer's memories of the corpse

and its strange nature are subject to arcane fate.

Everywhere-and-Nowhere Technique

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Until the Sidereal leaves concealment

Prerequisite Charms: Walking Outside Fate

The Sidereal hides between raindrops, under fallen leaves, and in the steam that rises from a freshly poured tea, keeping her existence a secret from the world.

The Sidereal rolls (Dexterity + Stealth) to establish concealment in even the most inadequate of hiding spaces, ignoring any related penalties — a blade of grass or a single hair is more than enough for her to hide behind. She can pass through the slightest of openings to hide inside closed containers and other obstructed spaces, even if they're smaller than she is, though can't bypass magical barriers or wards. Some hiding spots may offer cover (**Exalted**, p. 198) or similar circumstantial benefits or obstacles.

Once the Sidereal's hidden with this Charm, she can use it again to move to another hiding spot within close range without crossing the space between them, ignoring Stealth penalties for movement.

While using Walking Outside Fate, this Charm's Willpower cost is waived.

Ceasing-to-Exist Approach

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Stealth 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: Shaping (Fate)

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Any ten Stealth Charms

As the Sidereal presses a prayer strip bearing the Scripture of Absence against her chest, it sinks into her flesh in a flash of green light to encircle her heart, wresting her from her life to take refuge in a new one.

The Sidereal vanishes, reappearing in a location chosen by the Storyteller where she can start a new life in a way that will advance the chronicle's story. Her player creates a new identity appropriate to this locale; this can be a mortal, an Exalt, a spirit, or another supernatural creature, though she can't imitate specific characters.

The Sidereal rolls (Manipulation + Stealth) to determine her cover identity's social context, choosing Story Merits whose total rating equals her successes. The Sidereal's player and Storyteller should work together to determine what exactly these Merits represent. With four-dot

Backing and five-dot Command, she could be a prominent general in a warrior-queen's army; with three-dot Cult and five-dot Followers, she could be the patron god of a city-state's beggars.

- Those who reside in the chosen location or otherwise have reason to interact with the Sidereal's cover identity remember her having always been there and gain appropriate Intimacies. The specifics of the relationship a character remembers having with the Sidereal's cover identity should be determined between that character's player and the Sidereal's. If a nontrivial character discovers evidence his memories have been altered, he may pay three Willpower to reject the false memories.
- She takes on the physical appearance of her cover identity, and any overt magic she uses takes on a suitable appearance. This includes her anima banner; it won't rise above dim in un-Exalted cover identities. Seeing through this disguise is impossible without magic like Eye of the Unconquered Sun (**Exalted**, p. 273). Divination, scrying, and similar magic won't provide information that contradicts her cover identity.
- Characters automatically fail rolls opposing the Sidereal's Guile that could contradict her cover identity unless they use magic or have a Tie to the Sidereal's true identity; even then, they suffer +2 target number.
- Her cover identity takes the place of a resplendent destiny, suppressing her arcane fate but preventing her from donning other destinies — unless her cover identity's also a Sidereal.
- If she disguises herself as a supernatural being, she can learn Eclipse Charms appropriate to its nature. She retains them even after this Charm ends, though she must wear a resplendent destiny of that type of being to use them.
- All Psyche effects, Shaping effects, sorcerous curses, and other harmful ongoing magic she suffers from at the time she uses this Charm are suppressed for its duration.
- If she knows Self-Annihilating Discretion, she may use it for free with this Charm to erase memories as appropriate to her new cover identity, without needing a roll. These changes revert when this Charm ends.
- If she knows Death-of-Self Meditation (p. XX), she may exchange any number of her Intimacies for new Intimacies of equal intensity appropriate to her cover identity. These remain even after this Charm ends.

Once this Charm ends, the cover identity begins to unravel. The disguise itself ends immediately; memories of the cover identity fade away with each passing hour, gone entirely in a matter of days. The Sidereal loses access to Merits as the relevant character's memories fade, though she may be able to retain some through ingenuity.

Reset: Once per story.

The House of Endings

Ascending Endings Horoscope

Cost: 1m or 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Any Endings Ability 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Shaping (Fate), Stackable, Uniform

Duration: One story

Prerequisite Charms: Any three Endings Charms

The Sidereal entreats Saturn to stay her hand, postponing an ending whose time is not yet come.

The Sidereal blesses another character, ensuring his end doesn't come too soon. This costs one mote for mortals or three motes, one Willpower for others. The blessed character gains -1 target number on Awareness rolls to detect danger outside of combat and Resistance rolls. Once per scene, he may inflict +1 target number on a damage roll against him.

Blessing a character requires a constellation-themed interaction with him. Upon taking this Charm, the Sidereal's player chooses two of the below options. Additional options can be purchased for one bonus point or three experience points apiece.

Apprenticeship's End Blessing (The Rising Smoke): The Sidereal's target talks about how he's changed and grown as a person.

Best Medicine Approach (The Crow): The Sidereal's target laughs with or at her.

Chrysalis Cerement Rebirth (The Corpse): The Sidereal's target heeds her advice about making a change in his life. She becomes aware when he does so and can use this Charm reflexively.

Death-of-Hope Acceptance (The Sword): The Sidereal's target discusses his hopes or dreams for the future with her.

Ruin Without Failure (The Haywain): The Sidereal's target suffers a setback, loses money, or is betrayed.

The Sidereal can bless multiple characters with this Charm.

Descending Endings Horoscope

Cost: 1m or 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Any Endings Ability 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Shaping (Fate), Stackable, Uniform

Duration: One story

Prerequisite Charms: Any three Endings Charms

The Sidereal rolls (Strength + Endings Ability) opposing her target's (Stamina + Endings Ability) roll. This costs one mote for mortals or three motes, one Willpower for others. Success hastens his end, inflicting +1 target number on Awareness rolls to detect danger outside of combat and Resistance rolls. Once per scene, the Sidereal's player may grant -1 target number to an attack roll, damage roll, or other harmful roll against him.

Cursing a character requires a constellation-themed interaction with him. Upon taking this Charm, the Sidereal's player chooses two of the below options. Additional options can be purchased for one bonus point or three experience points apiece.

Crumbling Bureau Curse (The Haywain): The Sidereal's target suffers a setback, loses money,

or is betrayed.

Crushed Butterfly Doom (The Corpse): The Sidereal's target ignores advice he sought from her about making a change in his life. She becomes aware when he does so and can use this Charm reflexively.

Dream-Killing Blade (The Sword): The Sidereal's target discusses his hopes or dreams for the future with her.

Face the Inevitable (The Crow): The Sidereal's target refuses to acknowledge a problem or his own mortality.

Unnecessary Burden Affliction (The Rising Smoke): The Sidereal's target refuses to abandon or give up on something that's inferior to an alternative, more trouble than it's worth, or no longer useful to him. These might be people, strategies, institutions, alliances, traditions, etc.

The Sidereal can curse multiple characters with this Charm.

Superior-Entreating Memorial Style

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Any Endings Ability 1, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Any Endings Charm

The Sidereal invokes the auspices of the Rising Smoke to ensure her official communications swiftly meet their end in the hands of their recipients.

The Sidereal burns a letter addressed to a fellow Sidereal, a god in the Bureau of Destiny's employ, or any character who holds authority over her within a hierarchy or bureaucracy. It appears instantly, hidden discreetly against his skin, regardless of the distance between them. Noticing its appearance requires magical senses and a difficulty 7 (Perception + Awareness) roll. The letter's recipient can recognize its author if he's met her in her true identity, smelling her anima banner on the paper before he reads it.

The letter's recipient can write on the letter and then burn it to send this response to the Sidereal, appearing as above.

Morbid Premonition

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Any Endings Ability 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Any three Endings Charms

Death awaits all things that live; the Sidereal merely looks ahead to this foregone conclusion.

The Sidereal makes a special (Perception + Endings Ability) read intentions roll against a living character. Success lets her player asks the Storyteller one of the following questions, plus an additional question for every 3 extra successes:

- What's his greatest vulnerability?
- What is he willing to die for?
- If he died, would any unfinished business cause his ghost to linger?
- If he died, who would mourn him?

If the Storyteller doesn't have an answer in mind for a question, the Sidereal's player should provide one, as if introducing a fact.

Reset: Once per scene.

Crossing Plutonian Shores

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Any Endings Ability 4, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One day

Prerequisite Charms: Any five Endings Charms

The Sidereal performs a funereal ritual for herself, formally registering her death with the Division of Endings and joining the rolls of the dead.

The Sidereal gains the following benefits:

- She's considered undead by magical effects if this would be beneficial for her. This doesn't render her an enemy of fate or a creature of darkness.
- She doesn't need to eat, drink, or breathe.
- She adds (highest Endings Ability) dice on rolls with any Ability against disease, poison, or necromancy.
- The undead recognize her as one of their own and count as having a Minor Tie of familiarity to her. Trivial undead can't attack her.

With an Any Endings Ability 5, Essence 2 repurchase, the Sidereal can perform a funeral for another character to confer this Charm's benefits on him. She can grant this benefit to multiple characters; the cost of uses past the first is reduced to one mote.

Tears of the Blade

Cost: —(+5m); **Mins:** Any Endings Ability 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Descending Endings Horoscope

The Sidereal looks away as she cuts short a strand of fate, weeping tears like falling stars.

The Sidereal can pay a five-mote surcharge when she uses Descending Endings Horoscope to name the general method or circumstances of her victim's impending death — “poisoned,” “betrayed,” “at sea,” “by heart attack,” etc. Trivial characters die in this fashion, or the nearest possible equivalent, within no more than five days.

A nontrivial character suffers Descending Endings Horoscope's target number increase on all rolls that would directly aid in avoiding the specified death. When he encounters circumstances in which he might die that way, he rolls (Wits + Integrity) at difficulty (Sidereal's Essence), losing one Willpower if he fails. If he dies this way, it counts as a fulfilled auspicious prospect (p. XX).

Athletics — The Rising Smoke

Sidereal Athletics Charms are expressions of superhuman grace, speed, and strength, seeing a Sidereal through to the end of her journey under their constellation's auspices. Like the flames from which the Rising Smoke ascends, these Charms hunger, demanding that a Sidereal burn away her life, fate, and Essence. The incautious and those driven beyond their limits may meet the same end as the Maiden and the Dust. This hunger can also be turned against the world, hastening the inevitability of destruction.

The Scripture of the Maiden and the Dust

Once, there was a maiden...

...who learned that the faster she ran, the faster she could run.

Thus, running consumed her,

until one day, she flew beyond the ending of her life.

“And here I thought it'd last forever,” she said. “But—”

“There's always an ending,” said the run.

Forgotten Earth

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Athletics 2, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal momentarily severs the invisible tether that binds her to the ground.

The Sidereal can use a reflexive move action to jump one range band in any direction without needing to roll, which counts as her movement action. Alternatively, she can inflict +1 target number on a falling damage roll.

With an Athletics 4, Essence 2 repurchase, the Sidereal can pay a three-mote surcharge to end a horizontal leap in mid-air. On her next turn, she must use this Charm again to continue the leap or fall to the ground. She can choose to descend one range band in addition to her forward movement.

Hungry Touch

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Athletics 2, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal consumes an object's future, bringing about its inevitable destruction early.

The Sidereal performs a feat of demolition simply by touching an object. Lengthy feats, like bashing through a thick stone wall, are completed instantly if the Storyteller deems it feasible; if not, the time required to complete it is divided by the Sidereal's (Strength + Athletics).

In combat, a successful feat awards one Initiative if the feat changes the scene in the Sidereal's favor. This Charm can't be used to destroy objects worn or wielded by enemies, but an Athletics 4, Essence 2 repurchase removes this limit.

Refused Burden

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Athletics 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Stackable

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Hungry Touch

The Sidereal burns away the weightiness of steel and stone, making the heaviest burdens as light as ash in her hands.

The Sidereal diminishes a touched object's weight, reducing the Strength minimum of feats of demolition against it by (Essence/2, rounded up). Armors' mobility penalties are reduced by the same amount, as are similar penalties from other burdensome loads. It smells distinctively of smoke.

This Charm can be used on multiple objects, but its effects can't be stacked on a single object.

Burn Life

Cost: 3m per dot, 1wp, 1ahl; **Mins:** Athletics 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Perilous

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal shortens her allotted lifespan by a few days to suffuse her body with strength stolen her future.

The Sidereal gains up to (Essence) bonus dots of Strength, paying three motes per dot. This can raise her above Strength 5. If she's unarmored, she adds +(Strength) soak, which includes these bonus dots. Using this Charm slightly but permanently reduces the Sidereal's lifespan; this doesn't need to be tracked but can provide roleplaying opportunities.

If the Sidereal has five dots in a Martial Art, she can use its Form Charm reflexively when she uses Burn Life.

Inexorable Advance

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Eliding the moments between her footsteps, the Sidereal acts without motion.

The Sidereal ignores wound penalties and mobility penalties on a movement action with any Ability. Alternatively, she can negate the penalty on a Stealth roll from moving in wide open terrain (*Exalted*, p. 204), flashing instantly between hiding places.

Distance-Severing Stride

Cost: —(+2m); **Mins:** Athletics 4, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Inexorable Advance

The Sidereal seems to flicker from rather than move, appearing at her destination in the instant she vanishes.

The Sidereal can pay a two-mote surcharge when she uses Inexorable Advance to move between range bands (including with a reflexive move action). She moves without crossing the space between, circumventing difficult terrain, environmental hazards, and the like. A clear path must exist; she can't move through walls.

Step-Silencing Exercise

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Athletics 4, Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Inexorable Advance

The Sidereal omits sound from her movement, even the slightest footsteps dissipating into invisible smoke before they can be heard.

The Sidereal becomes perfectly silent; rolls opposing her Stealth that are based solely on hearing fail automatically. She can also silence a movement action with any Ability, making it impossible to detect with hearing-based rolls. This doesn't silence indirect consequences of the action, like a rotten timber collapsing under the Sidereal's weight.

Cage-Shattering Grasp

Cost: 1m (+1wp); **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Hungry Touch

The Sidereal refuses untimely conclusions to her journeys, from manacles to a demon's petrifying gaze.

The Sidereal makes a feat of demolition with a free full Excellency against something that restrains her, blocks her movement, or otherwise impedes her physical freedom. She ignores any penalties from such restraints or limitation — even if her entire body is bound in chains, she could shatter them with breath control alone.

For a one-Willpower surcharge, the Sidereal can use this feat to shatter an ongoing magical effect that impedes her physical freedom. Such feats' minimum Strength and difficulty equal the (Essence + 2) of the character responsible for the effect.

Reset: Once per scene.

Chains of Adorjan

Cost: 5m, 4i, 1wp, 1ahl; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Aggravated, Perilous

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Cage-Shattering Grasp, Step-Silencing Exercise

The Sidereal slashes her palm in offering as she recites a promise the Silent Wind once made to Saturn, summoning a portion of the Demon Prince's apocalyptic presence.

The Sidereal summons a deadly vortex within medium range, an environmental hazard extending out to short range from that point with difficulty 4, Damage 4L/round. Demons add +1 target number on rolls against it and are destroyed permanently if incapacitated. All sound is silenced within the vortex. Those outside it can't hear anything from within; those within it can't hear at all.

This wind is a portion of Adorjan; while she can't control it, she perceives the world through it. Sidereals are encouraged to exercise great discretion in what information they expose with this Charm. Adorjan may fall in love with Sidereals who summon her, though such attachments are fleeting.

Inner Flame Purification

Cost: —; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Burn Life

The Sidereal cuts short the lifespan of a disease festering within her, healed by the same flame to which she's fed her life.

When the Sidereal uses Burn Life, she may reflexively roll a feat of demolition against the morbidity of a disease she suffers. Success heals mundane diseases completely or weakens supernatural diseases' intensity by one step. It also waives Burn Life's health level cost and toll on the Sidereal's lifespan. On a failed roll, the Sidereal can't use this Charm against the disease again.

Unexpected Delay

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Hungry Touch

The Sidereal destroys not matter but the force that moves it, negating speed and momentum.

The Sidereal makes an unarmed (Strength + [Athletics, Brawl, or Martial Arts]) gambit, with

difficulty 6. If she succeeds, all her victim's movement counts as being in difficult terrain (**Exalted**, p. 199) for that scene.

This Charm can also be used against inanimate objects in motion, like a barrel rolling downhill or a ship on the sea. The attack roll is made at difficulty 1-5, based on how easy it is to touch the object; the Initiative roll and cost are waived. Success halves the speed at which it moves for the scene.

Shattered Stepping-Stone Advance

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Forgotten Earth, Hungry Touch, Inexorable Advance

The ground erupts beneath the Sidereal's feet as she springs into action, driving her forward with the force of its destruction.

The Sidereal rolls a (Strength + Athletics) feat of demolition to destroy whatever surface she stands on or create a crater in large surfaces like the ground, gaining Hungry Touch's benefits for free. Success propels her forward, letting her either dash up two range bands horizontally in a straight line or leaping two range bands vertically up and one range band horizontally. This counts as her movement action. If this would bring her within close range of an enemy, he rolls (Dexterity + Athletics) opposing her feat; success forces her to choose another destination not within close range of him.

Special activation rules: This Charm can be flurried with an attack against an enemy within close range at the end of the Sidereal's movement.

Invisible Motion

Cost: 15m, 1wp, 1ahl; **Mins:** Athletics 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One day

Prerequisite Charms: Any ten Athletics Charms

With a prayer strip bearing the Scripture of the Maiden and the Dust wrapped around her forehead or neck, smelling faintly of lilacs and decay, the Sidereal skips past unnecessary seconds, reducing her actions to instantaneousness.

The Sidereal gains the following benefits:

- She waives the cost of Inexorable Advance, Distance-Severing Stride, and Step-Silencing Exercise.

- She waives Shattered Stepping-Stone Advance's Willpower cost.
- She can maintain a speed of (Essence x20) miles per hour over even the harshest terrain, flickering from point to point.
- When she flurries, she can take two physical actions and one action of any type. She ignores the Defense penalty for flurrying and can flurry Stealth rolls to establish concealment.
- Freed from unnecessary motion, physical exertion doesn't tire her. She can complete a night's sleep in a single hour and can run while asleep.

Awareness — The Crow

Sidereal Awareness Charms hone a Sidereal's senses and reveal new perspectives. These Charms foretell and reveal sorrows yet to come with the pessimism and resigned certainty of the Maiden and the Scythe. Under the Crow's auspices, a Sidereal faces those perils she can't avoid with acceptance, resolve, and morbid humor, bold unto her last.

The Scripture of the Maiden and the Scythe

Once, there was a maiden...

...who was born, and told her Mom, "I know how I'm gonna die."

"It's gonna hurt bad,
and I ain't coming back."

"...I could avoid it, but I won't."

"'Cause one day, death'd come to me and say, 'Baby, don't you know?'"

"'There's always an ending.'"

Prior Warning

Cost: —; **Mins:** Awareness 1, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Divination

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal's senses extend into her immediate future, probing for anything that could cause her harm.

The Sidereal can roll to detect an immediate threat in advance of when she would be able to detect it normally. This roll uses whatever dice pool and difficulty would be used to detect the threat; if that's not clear, the Sidereal rolls (Perception + Awareness) against difficulty 1-5. Success doesn't reveal the threat but gives the Sidereal a feeling of unease that lets her know there is some form of impending danger. This foreboding adds (Essence) dice on her roll to actually detect the threat.

This Charm's premonitions typically occur a few minutes in advance, but if this isn't feasible, the

Storyteller should ensure the warning comes in time to be potentially useful to the Sidereal. She can't sense dangers that only threaten her in the long run, like a slow-acting poison or a courtier planning to frame her.

Expected Pain

Cost: —(5m); **Mins:** Awareness 3, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Divination, Mute, Uniform

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Prior Warning

The Sidereal is burdened with an awareness of the bad things that will happen in her life, realizing what tragedies are about to befall her with only seconds to spare.

When the Sidereal's about to suffer from an unexpected danger or unpleasant occurrence — drinking poison, suffering humiliation, being exposed to a disease, losing a loved one, being betrayed, being sold fraudulent merchandise — the Storyteller should inform her player. She may pay five motes to learn the threat's general nature and reflexively take an action with any Ability to try to prevent it. If she uses this to attack or move in combat, it counts against the limit on how often she can do so per round.

Alternatively, if she uses this Charm in response to an unexpected attack (**Exalted**, p. 203) — even an ambush — she rolls (Perception + Awareness) opposing her attacker's Stealth successes. If her attacker used magic to make an unexpected attack without establishing Stealth, the difficulty is that magic's minimum Essence. Against surprise attacks, success negates their Defense penalty. Against ambushes, she can defend normally, but sets her Defense to 1, plus one for every two extra successes, up to a maximum of her normal base Defense.

Anticipated Betrayal

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Awareness 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Expected Pain

The Sidereal is never caught unprepared, forearmed by her prescient sense for danger.

The Sidereal readies a weapon or dons armor instantly. This doesn't entail any action on her part; instead, it's revealed that she anticipated this conflict and had the weapon or armor handy, perhaps hiding it under her clothes.

Heavenly Sentinel Eye

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Awareness 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Prior Warning

The Sidereal sees the shape of perils to come.

The Sidereal rolls (Perception + Awareness) against a difficulty of 1-5, varying with both the subtlety or deceptiveness of any threats present and the number of threats present, or against the highest difficulty to notice a hidden enemy or danger present in the scene if that's higher. Success lets her player asks the Storyteller one of the following questions, plus an additional question for every 3 extra successes:

- Who here is in the greatest danger?
- What here poses the greatest danger to me?
- What's the safest place here?
- What's the best way to get out of here?

If the Storyteller doesn't have an answer in mind for a question, the Sidereal's player should provide one, as if introducing a fact.

Reset: Once per scene.

Wise Choice

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Awareness 1, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Divination

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal glimpses ahead to the consequences of her possible decisions, narrowing her range of options.

The Sidereal contemplates up to (Essence + 1) options she has in a given situation and her desired outcome. The Storyteller tells her player which of those options would be best for achieving that outcome in the short term. However, there's no guarantee it'll be beneficial in the long term, and the Sidereal receives no warning if *all* the options she proposes are bad ones.

Once for a given situation.

Feathered Cloak Trick

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Awareness 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal changes her perspective and herself, donning feathers better suited to a bird's-eye view of Creation.

The Sidereal transforms into a crow, raven, or other corvid (use raiton traits, **Exalted**, p. 570), with the following effects:

- She loses any mutations she possesses intrinsically (but not those granted by magic).
- When she takes an action that raitons have dice pools for, she can use that pool if it's higher than her own. Any dice over her base (Attribute + Ability + specialty) count as Charm dice.
- She can use a raiton's natural weapons. If her (Dexterity + Brawl) pool is higher than a natural weapon's attack pool, her **withering** attacks with it gain +1 Accuracy in addition to using her pool.
- She gains the animal's innate special abilities and Merits. Dice or successes added by these count as Charm bonuses.
- She remains capable of speech, like ravens and many other corvids.
- Any equipment she can't use in bird form vanishes Elsewhere for this Charm's duration.
- She can't use Martial Arts to attack or block or use Martial Arts Charms. Any ongoing Martial Arts Charms end.
- Onlookers can't tell she isn't what she seems unless they have superhuman or magically enhanced senses; doing so requires a difficulty 7 (Perception + Awareness) roll, with success revealing she's a shapeshifter in animal form.

Inevitable Pursuit

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Awareness 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal senses the subtle impressions left by her quarry on the fates of everything around him, tracing his past back to him.

The Sidereal makes a (Perception + Awareness) tracking roll, ignoring penalties from the age or condition of the tracks she follows. She can track characters even if there is no physical trace of their passage whatsoever, so long as the trail is no more than (Essence) weeks old. In sparsely populated areas, where there are fewer people to leave their mark on fate, this increases to

(Essence) months. This can contest Traceless Passage (**Exalted**, p. 412) and similar magic.

Supernal Awareness

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Awareness 4, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Stackable

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Inevitable Pursuit

The Sidereal observes the web of fates around her, reading in it the patterns of her local reality.

The Sidereal she chooses a specific activity — “fighting,” “eating,” “gambling,” etc. She can sense when that activity occurs within (Essence + 3) range bands of her and recognize if anyone or anything she’s familiar with is involved in it but can’t determine the actual course of events. If a character rolls to conceal the activity or his involvement in it, the Sidereal must make an opposing (Perception + Awareness) roll to detect it.

Alternatively, the Sidereal can use this Charm to monitor either mortals or spirits. This works as above, except that she can sense all activities of all mortals or spirits within range.

The Sidereal can stack this Charm to monitor multiple activities.

Bold Filcher

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Prior Warning

Spotting the perfect moment for theft, the Sidereal strips away materialistic delusions of self-importance.

The Sidereal adds (Perception) dice on a pickpocketing roll and can steal in plain sight; her theft can’t be noticed until (her Essence) minutes have passed or circumstances draw attention to it. If her target has an Intimacy related to the stolen object — an artisan’s Principle of pride in his handiwork, a merrymaker’s Tie of fondness for strong drink, a warrior’s Tie of respect for his blade — it’s weakened by one step.

Reading Dead Eyes

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Awareness 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Feathered Cloak Trick

The Sidereal picks at the frayed strands of fate that twine about a corpse to find its final moments, seeing through the eyes of one about to die.

Touching a corpse or the grave dirt over a newly buried corpse, the Sidereal rolls (Perception + Awareness) at a difficulty of the deceased's Guile, potentially suffering penalties if a great deal of time has passed since the corpse died. If successful, she witnesses the scene in which he died. She views it from his perspective but may make Perception-based rolls to notice details he may have overlooked. She also learns if the deceased still lingers as a ghost and if his lower soul has become a hungry ghost.

Illusion-Piercing Vigilance

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Awareness 5, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Prior Warning

Shedding the scales from her eyes, the Sidereal realizes when she's been compromised.

The Sidereal rolls ([Perception or Wits] + Awareness) to detect a Derangement, Psyche effect, Shaping effect, sorcerous curse, or possession she suffers from. If an effect gives no difficulty for detecting it, use the Essence of an effect's creator or the Guile of a possessing spirit. If successful, she gains -1 target number on rolls with any Ability to resist the identified effect and reduces any Willpower cost to resist it by one. Completely overcoming the effect counts as fulfilling an auspicious prospect (p. XX).

With an Awareness 5, Essence 3 repurchase, success lets the Sidereal's player ask the Storyteller if a character is responsible for the effect. If she's correct, she can end the effect by killing that character. Spirits and the like must be destroyed permanently.

Conclusive Wisdom

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Awareness 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Any ten Awareness Charms

The Sidereal brandishes a prayer strip bearing the Scripture of the Maiden and the Scythe, which blossoms with pungent violet flowers whose petals slowly wither, fall, and crumble into dust, a

harbinger of death to come.

The Sidereal rolls (Perception + Awareness) against the Resolve of a character who can see her prayer strip. If she beats his Resolve, he witnesses a vision of his destined death. If his death isn't planned for in destiny — almost always the case for the Exalted — he instead sees what the Storyteller thinks is the most likely way for him to die based on current conditions. The Storyteller can briefly summarize or skip over Storyteller character's visions. A player character's vision can play out as a scene if the playgroup's interested in doing so or can simply be narrated by the character's player.

The character rolls (current temporary Willpower); for each failed die, he loses one Willpower and gains one Limit. If he loses any Willpower, he gains a Defining Principle reflecting fear of death; otherwise, he gains a Defining Principle reflecting a positive outlook on death.

The foretold death is not inevitable. If the affected character encounters circumstances similar to it and survives, his will to live is redoubled. His current temporary Willpower is set to ten, which can raise him above his permanent Willpower, and he loses all Limit. If he has Intimacies expressing fear of death, they become Principles that oppose that fear, chosen by his player.

An Abyssal relives the moment of his Exaltation rather than witnessing his future end; while relieving his near-death is still harrowing, he doesn't gain Limit from it.

Reset: This Charm can only be used on a given character once per story.

Bureaucracy — The Haywain

Sidereal Bureaucracy Charms are their legendary prowess and serene calm as magistrates, censors, and functionaries of the Bureau of Destiny. It's also their power to protect the world, fulfilling the Maiden's Promise by bringing an ending to that which stands in the way of effective bureaucracy: corruption, discord, and if need be, lives. Under the Haywain's auspices, these endings cast down what is stagnant and broken letting something new take their place. Needless to say, such power is greatly feared within the Celestial Bureaucracy. While Bureaucracy is most often rolled with Charisma, Manipulation, and Intelligence, Sidereal Bureaucracy Charms also benefit from high Strength.

The Scripture of the Maiden's Promise

Once, there was a maiden...

...who was the living embodiment of everything right in the world.

While she lived, no real harm could come to anyone. Oh, wounds, diseases, even death, sure. But she stood between the world and anything worse.

"Except," she said. "I'm going to die." And no one listened.

"I'm going to die tomorrow," she said. And no one heard.

Into the silence, she said: "There's always an ending, after all."

Terminal Sanction

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 2, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal formally invokes her divine authority as she makes the Lesser Sign of the Haywain against a spirit, binding it into a form she can attack and kill.

The Sidereal rolls (Charisma + Bureaucracy) against the Resolve of a spirit or other dematerialized character within medium range, adding (higher of Essence or 3) bonus dice against enemies of fate (p. XX). If she succeeds, that character materializes at no cost and can't dematerialize for the rest of the scene.

With Bureaucracy 3, if the Sidereal kills a spirit under this Charm's effect, she determines the ending he meets. She can destroy him permanently, seal him away within a nearby object until it is destroyed, or bind him to her service, imposing a Defining Tie of loyalty that lasts a year and a day and can't be weakened or changed.

With a Bureaucracy 5, Essence 3 repurchase, the Sidereal can pay a one-Willpower surcharge to apply this effect against all targets within medium range.

Icy Hand

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal's hand is wreathed with purifying cold, driving away bureaucratic corruption.

Touching a character — a difficulty 1 unarmed gambit in combat — the Sidereal makes a special (Strength + Bureaucracy) instill roll against him. Success causes him to gain a Defining Principle of "I must perform my official duties diligently and refrain from all corruption." He can't voluntarily erode that Principle while this Charm remains active.

Harvest Ripe Wheat, Father Falling Hay

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Icy Hand

The Sidereal need only stroll through a shop floor or come to a receptionist's desk to take the measure of an office.

When the Sidereal examines a business or bureaucratic entity, she rolls (Perception + Bureaucracy) opposing the Guile of that group's leader. Success lets her player asks the Storyteller one of the following questions, plus an additional question for every 3 extra successes:

- How corrupt is this organization's group culture?
- What forms of corruption should I be on the lookout for?
- Is this organization likely to notice if I perform some specific misdeed right now?
- Who here knows the most about this organization's official business?

If the Storyteller doesn't have an answer in mind for a question, the Sidereal's player should provide one, as if introducing a fact.

Reset: This Charm can only be used on a given organization once per story.

Corruption Elimination Agenda

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Icy Hand

The Sidereal's exhortations of diligence give even the most corrupt functionaries reason to reconsider their ways.

The Sidereal addresses an organization's members, circulates a memorandum, or otherwise disseminates a message that corruption will not be tolerated. Organization members who receive this message may treat the agenda as a Defining Principle opposing corruption when its advantageous to them, though it can't be used against them. They aren't forced to obey it, but lose this benefit if they engage in corruption.

Record-Obtaining Inquiry

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One task

Prerequisite Charms: Icy Hand

The Sidereal trades a clean ending for an expedient one, hastening her pursuit of documents, a judgment, or divine intervention at the cost of leaving a leaving some loose ends.

The Sidereal undertakes a project or bureaucratic task, reducing the interval of time necessary to complete it by one step: years to seasons, seasons to months, months to weeks, and weeks to days. Tasks that would take less than a day are completed instantly. This doesn't speed physical labor, only the planning, authorization, allocation of resources, and other bureaucratic tasks involved in fulfilling her request.

However, something is always left undone — a small task left incomplete, an overlooked problem, an unpaid contractor, etc. It's only a small inconvenience compared to the project's significance, but one that may complicate the Sidereal's life down the line.

Slick Essence Replenishment

Cost: —; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 3, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal maintains perfect tranquility even as she juggles countless projects, rising above the frantic masses milling about her.

When the Sidereal succeeds on a Bureaucracy, Integrity, Investigation, or Lore roll, she gains motes equal to the 9s and 10s on the roll. When she successfully asserts her Resolve against an inspire roll, an instill roll to create or strengthen an emotion-based Tie, or any influence that tempts her with opportunities for pleasure or self-indulgence, she gains motes equal to the 1s and 2s on the influence roll. This can't exceed the number of motes spent enhancing the roll or value.

When the Sidereal upholds a Major or Defining Intimacy through knowledge or exerting dominance over another, she may gain five motes in place of the Willpower she'd normally receive (**Exalted**, p. 169).

Underling Invisibility Practice

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute, Psyche

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

Those who think themselves above the Sidereal are those most vulnerable to her, so blinded by their hubris that they don't notice her until it's too late.

The Sidereal is overlooked by characters whose Intimacies reflect feelings of self-importance and superiority to her: a Tie of contempt toward her, a Principle like "Things would be better if everyone listened to me," and the like. Such characters can't notice her or anything that would directly indicate her presence, like an ally's warning. A character with a Major or Defining

Intimacy of compassion, humility, or self-doubt can spend one Willpower to resist this.

This Charm ends if the Sidereal takes an overt action, including Joining Battle or blatantly displaying supernatural power.

Old Fellows Society Luncheon

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 4, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Underling Invisibility Practice

The Sidereal shrouds herself amid corruption, hunting iniquity in meetings, junkets, business lunches, and after-work drinks.

After a few hours or days spent meeting with public officials, merchants, businessmen, and other key players in government or the local business community, the Sidereal secures a position within a government bureau or a business concern. The Storyteller chooses the group, but the Sidereal may specify a broad description, like “a Guild merchant company” or “a government ministry.” Her position has no real duties or responsibilities beyond occasionally showing up and looking busy. Alternatively, she can empower such a position that she already holds.

As long as the Sidereal maintains this position and spends significant time attending work-related functions over downtimes, she gains the following benefits:

- Group members and members of similar organizations assume she’s just as corrupt as they are. This counts as a Minor Tie.
- She gains Backing 2 in that organization.
- She waives Excellencies’ mote costs to reduce the target number of Bureaucracy, Lore, and Socialize rolls involving her organization, similar groups, or the subject matter of their official business.
- Underling Invisibility Presence applies to group members and members of similar organizations even if they don’t consider themselves her superior; such characters don’t need an Intimacy to resist with Willpower.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by accomplishing a major character or story goal through bureaucratic or business acumen or by abusing the privileges of one’s office. Reckoners can reset it by fulfilling an auspicious prospect.

Employment Termination Venom

Cost: —(+3m); **Mins:** Bureaucracy 3, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Aggravated

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Icy Hand

Corrupt officials sow the seeds of their own downfall; the Sidereal hastens this appointed end.

The Sidereal can pay a three-mote surcharge when she uses Icy Hand to also convey a poison that only affects the corrupt. It has Damage 1A/hour, Duration (Sidereal's successes) hours, and a -3 penalty. It's resisted with (Manipulation + Bureaucracy). Characters who've never engaged in corruption in the position they currently hold are immune to this. Targets must roll against the poison before the Sidereal's influence roll is compared to their Resolve.

Celestial Intervention Appeal

Cost: 20m, 2wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Terminal Sanction

Making the Superior Sign of the Haywain, the Sidereal submits a matter for the consideration of those most severe of Heaven's bureaucrats.

The Sidereal submits a plea to the celestial censor — a lesser elemental dragon (p. XX) — with jurisdiction over her current surroundings. The censor becomes aware of the Sidereal's current circumstances and may choose to appear at her location, potentially bringing along a retinue of celestial lions, thunderbirds, and huraka, if they deem the situation calls for it.

The use of this Charm is politically sensitive, as celestial censors belong to the Bureau of Heaven rather than the Bureau of Fate. While a censor called to fight against a major threat will likely aid the Sidereal if she's on official business, it can be seen as a concession that the Bureau of Fate can't handle the situation, with potential repercussions for the Sidereal and the Bureau as a whole. Censors who feel their goodwill is being abused or their time is being wasted may bring low-level criminal charges against the Sidereal.

Reset: Once per story, unless reset by achieving a legendary social goal (**Exalted**, p. 134) that benefits the Bureau of Heaven or a specific celestial censor.

Crisis-Weathering Insurance

Cost: —(+4m); **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Corruption Elimination Agenda

The Sidereal's imprimatur holds all threats to an organization at bay, securing it against turmoil and sabotage.

The Sidereal may pay a four-mote surcharge when she uses Corruption Elimination Agenda to protect the targeted organization from harm. Hostile effects that target the organization as a whole, like Indolent Official Charm, suffer +1 target number. If the effect is normally unrolled, the character using it must make an appropriate (Attribute + Ability) roll opposing the Sidereal's (Intelligence + Bureaucracy) roll. Additionally, when organization members make rolls opposing a threat to the group as a whole — a disease spreading through its ranks, poison vapors released in its headquarters, a campaign of sabotage, etc. — they gain -1 target number.

This Charm's benefits extend to organization members who didn't receive the Sidereal's message, but for very large organizations like the Celestial Bureaucracy or the Guild, it applies only to that subdivision of the group that the Sidereal spread her message through.

Calamity-Stalling Patience

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: As long as the Sidereal opposes the crisis

Prerequisite Charms: Crisis-Weathering Insurance

The Sidereal stands between Creation and all threats to it, holding at bay the worst that could happen.

To use this Charm, the Sidereal must be actively opposing a crisis, disaster, or similar that has not yet reached its peak: fighting against an enemy army that has reinforcements on the way, getting people to shelter from an approaching hurricane, trying to stabilize a manse that's about to explode, etc. While she continues to actively oppose the crisis, it can't reach its peak: circumstance delays the enemy reinforcements, the hurricane's advance slows, the manse remains stable long enough to give the Sidereal a chance to implement her plans. If the Sidereal chooses or is forced to stop her opposition, the crisis resumes building to its peak, although it's delayed by however long she spent opposing it.

This Charm can't affect the Exalted or negate the effects of Charms and other magic. The Sidereal could prevent an enemy's reinforcements from reaching them, but not their outcaste general.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by achieving a legendary social goal (**Exalted**, p. 134).

Paralyzed Committee Infliction

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: One task

Prerequisite Charms: Icy Hand

The Sidereal halts the wheels of a bureaucracy, putting its business on hold while she conducts her audit.

After a scene spent interacting with a project or bureaucratic task, the Sidereal rolls (Strength + Bureaucracy) opposing the ([Charisma, Intelligence, or Manipulation] + Bureaucracy) roll of the task's leader. If she succeeds, the interval of time necessary to complete the task is increased by one step: from days to weeks, weeks to months, months to seasons, or seasons to years. This doesn't slow physical labor, but bureaucratic functions like planning, securing authorization, and allocation of resources.

Reset: This Charm can only be used against a given group once per scene.

End Debate

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Bureaucracy 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Any ten Bureaucracy Charms

The Sidereal throws down a prayer strip bearing the Scripture of the Maiden's Promise, which explodes in a searing amethyst light that brings conversation and debate to a close.

The Sidereal makes a special (Strength + Bureaucracy) persuade roll to bring an argument, debate, meeting, planning session, or similar interaction to an end, preventing any further opinions from being voiced. Anyone wishing to get in a final influence roll may pay one Willpower and roll (Wits + Bureaucracy) opposing the Sidereal. If multiple characters attempt to do so, only the one with the highest successful result gets to speak.

Once any final remarks are concluded, all characters involved immediately cease discussion and immediately make a decision, take a vote, or take other appropriate action based on what's been said so far. If no such decision is necessary, participants simply lose interest and wander off. If a character's Resolve is beaten, he can't take issue with the process by which the decision was reached, though he may disagree with the decision itself. He forgets the Sidereal's use of this Charm is forgotten by witnesses, assuming the conversation reached a natural ending while he wasn't paying attention.

If ending the conversation threatens one of a character's Defining Intimacies, he may pay three Willpower to resist; while other participants remain silent, he can continue to speak. This also renders him immune to the additional effects described below.

If the Sidereal knows Icy Hand, ending a conversation among an organization's members about a corrupt agenda or activities lets her inflict that Charm's effect on group members whose Resolve is beaten by her roll. This is permanent unless they resign their position within that organization and refrain from any involvement with it for the rest of the story.

Alternatively, if the Sidereal ends a conversation about a bureaucratic task she's stymied with Paralyzed Mandarin Infliction with one of that task's leaders, she can bring that task to an end if her successes exceed the leader's Resolve. He'll take all steps possible to abandon it as quickly as possible, though he may face pushback from others within the organization. He can't subsequently initiate a similar task, though others in the organization are unaffected.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by accomplishing a major character or story goal through bureaucratic reforms, investigations into corruption, etc.

Integrity — The Sword

Sidereal Integrity Charms hone a Sidereal's will, steeling her to do what she must. Like the Expectant Maiden, a Sidereal may cling fiercely to hopes and dreams no matter how doomed they may be, while accepting that such things must ultimately meet their end under the Sword's auspices. With the dedication these Charms evince, the Sidereal is willing to sacrifice everything in the name of duty, holding the Sword itself against her throat lest she betray Creation.

Until Hope's End

Cost: —; **Mins:** Integrity 1, Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

All hopes must end, but until they do, the Sidereals clings fiercely to hers.

The Sidereal gains the following:

- Her hopeful Intimacies increase their Resolve bonus by one.
- Once per day, she can lower the Willpower cost to resist an inspire roll to create despair by one.
- While acting in accordance with a hopeful Intimacy, she adds (Intimacy) to her Stamina to determine how long she can go without food, air, and water.
- If a hope expressed by one of her Intimacies is decisively thwarted, it counts as fulfilling an auspicious prospect (p. XX).

Hopeful Intimacies

Hopeful Intimacies express a character's hopes, dreams, and desires for the future, even if they aren't explicitly worded as hopes: a Tie of great expectations for one's child, a Principle of commitment to a long-term agenda, a Tie toward the object of one's affections, etc.

Promise of Tomorrow

Cost: 2m; **Mins:** Integrity 4, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Until Hope's End

The Sidereal may have no hopes, but Creation's hopes for her sustain her.

The Sidereal can use this Charm upon discerning an auspicious prospect to form a Defining Principle of hope toward fulfilling it. This Intimacy can't be weakened by any means except the Sidereal's own Integrity Charms.

Upon fulfilling the auspicious prospect, the Sidereal loses this Principle and rolls (Intimacy) dice. For each success, she may gain one Willpower or lose one Limit.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by fulfilling the chosen prospect.

Necessary Betrayal Attitude

Cost: —(2m); **Mins:** Integrity 2, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal serves the world's needs above all else; should fate demand it, she will turn her sword against those closest to her heart.

The Sidereal gains +2 Resolve against influence that would instill her with a positive Tie toward an enemy of fate or strengthen such a Tie. For two motes, she may apply this bonus against any influence that leverages such a Tie. Acting against these Intimacies doesn't cause her to gain Limit or cause her to suffer any ill effects from magic that punishes such violations.

With Integrity 4, these benefits apply against mortals. With Integrity 5, they apply against all characters but other Sidereals.

Dream-Sacrificing Maneuver

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Integrity 4, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Necessary Betrayal Attitude

The Sidereal makes the Lesser Sign of the Sword against her own hopes and dreams, severing them from her heart.

When the Sidereal is targeted by an influence roll that's exploits one of her Intimacies, she may sacrifice that Intimacy completely to prevent the influence from leveraging it. For the rest of the story, she can't voluntarily reform or strengthen that Intimacy. Rolls to instill it use the rules for overturning influence (**Exalted**, p. 221). If she sacrifices a hopeful Intimacy, the Willpower cost to resist is reduced by (Intimacy – 1).

Hope-Ending Bluntness

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Dream-Sacrificing Maneuver

Hope is precious but fragile; it can be broken with but a word.

The Sidereal makes an instill roll against one character to weaken a hopeful Intimacy, a persuade roll to convince him to abandon a course of action he thinks will fulfill his hopes, or an inspire roll to fill him with despair.

Affected character also succumb to a dark melancholy, treating hopeful Intimacies as one step weaker and suffering +1 target number on social and mental rolls related to such Intimacies. This lasts until another character overturns this melancholy (**Exalted**, p. 221).

Minimum Legal Defense Competence

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Integrity 2, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Hoping for no more than the least she could expect, the Sidereal is unmoved by enticing promises and idealistic visions.

The Sidereal's Resolve can't be reduced below (higher of Essence or 3) except by penalties from Intimacies. If her Resolve is penalized by an Intimacy of hope, the penalty's reduced by one.

Creation-Preserving Will

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Integrity 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Minimum Legal Defense Competence

The Sidereal tangles words in a web of fate and despair, souring their promise of a better future.

The Sidereal inflicts +1 target number on an influence roll against her (it doesn't apply for other targets). If her Resolve is penalized by a hopeful Intimacy, she inflicts +2 target number instead.

Oath of the Sword

Cost: 1|hl+; **Mins:** Integrity 4, Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Minimum Legal Defense Competence

The Sidereal has sworn upon the Sword and the pitiless Maiden who wields it, vowing to die before forsaking her duty to Creation.

When a persuade roll or other influence would cause the Sidereal to act against a Major or Defining Intimacy, her oath calls down a doom to stay her hand. She suffers unavoidable lethal damage equal to the Willpower cost to resist the influence. The Storyteller chooses what form this takes: being hit by a stray arrow mid-battle, coughing up blood, being struck by lightning, etc.

Using this Charm terminates the offending influence and lets the Sidereal roll (Intimacy) dice, losing Limit equal to her successes.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by upholding a Defining Intimacy of that opposes the rejected influence or a Major or Defining Intimacy of loyalty or duty. Reckoners can reset it by fulfilling an auspicious prospect.

The Scripture of the Expectant Maiden

Once, there was a maiden...

...who was always looking forward to the way things would be.

She said, "Someday, I'm getting out of this place."

"Someday, I'm going to kill that boy that put me here."

"And while I wait, I don't much mind,"

"' cause it's better to dream tomorrow than to be there."

"I'm holding at bay," she said, "what I know to be true."

"That I'll never get out. I won't let my dreams die!"

"I'll hang on to hope," she said, "until Time itself ends. But—"

"There's always an ending," said Time.

In Destiny's Service

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Integrity 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Minimum Legal Defense Competence

Without dreams, without hope, the Sidereal becomes a creature of absolute duty.

The Sidereal can cite an auspicious prospect as though it were a Major Intimacy in a Decision Point against influence that would impede her in fulfilling it. She reduces the Willpower cost to resist by one. At the Storyteller's discretion, especially significant prospects count as a Defining Intimacies.

The Sidereal can alternatively cite one of the following:

- **Journeys:** Harbingers can cite memories of places they've visited against influence opposing that location, a group that resides there, its culture, or its laws.
- **Serenity:** Joybringer can cite relationships — romantic or otherwise — that they've created, protected, or improved against influence opposing the best interests of a character in that relationship or the relationship's overall emotional tenor.
- **Battles:** Shieldbearers can cite memories of a battle, argument, or competition against influence that opposes her motivation for it or a lesson she learned from it.
- **Secrets:** Oracles can cite secrets entrusted to them or one of their own secrets against influence opposing her reasons for keeping the secret or the best interests of someone whose secret she keeps.
- **Endings:** Reckoners can cite people they've killed or narratively relevant things they've otherwise ended against influence opposing her motivation for doing so or the memory or legacy of what she ended.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by fulfilling an auspicious prospect in a way that meaningfully advances the story.

Loyalty-Sacrificing Sidestep

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Integrity 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Creation-Preserving Will, Dream-Sacrificing Maneuver

Accepting betrayal as the price of her survival, the Sidereal deflects assaults upon her mind

against those closest to her.

When the Sidereal's Resolve or opposed roll is beaten by a Psyche effect, she can defend against it by redirecting it against a character with a positive Major or Defining Tie to her, no matter how far away he may be. She can't redirect it against a character already targeted by it. Mortals don't recognize the Sidereal's agency in this, but supernatural characters do; they can sacrifice their Tie to the Sidereal to avoid the redirected effect. She must then either contend against the effect herself or use this Charm again to redirect it against a different character.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by instilling an Exalt or other supernatural being with a positive Tie to the Sidereal and raising it to Defining intensity.

Death-of-Self Meditation

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute, Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Dream-Sacrificing Maneuver, Oath of the Sword

The Sidereal kills that part of herself that would betray her duty, even if she must cut away all that she is.

The Sidereal can use this Charm after an influence roll beats her Resolve, recreating her personality to negate it. She gains a Defining Intimacy, chosen by her player, that renders that influence unacceptable (**Exalted**, p. 220). She also gains a number of Major Intimacies equal to the influence's Willpower cost, chosen by the Storyteller, reflecting changes in personality and eccentricities caused by the mental alterations necessary to negate the influence.

Any Intimacies that support the influence are lost. Influence rolls to instill them again use the rules for overturning influence (**Exalted**, p. 221) for the rest of the story. The Sidereal can't voluntarily strengthen them until they've been instilled by influence.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by upholding one of Intimacies imposed by this Charm.

Last Hope Salvation

Cost: 10m, 1wp, 1ahl; **Mins:** Integrity 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Any ten Integrity Charms

Holding a prayer strip bearing the Scripture of the Expectant Maiden against her throat like a blade, the Sidereal murders her most closely cherished dreams on the altar of necessity.

The Sidereal sacrifices a hopeful Defining Intimacy, cutting it from her heart so that she can

never gain it again by any means. If it's a Tie toward someone, he senses the Sidereal abandoning her hopes for him. Heaven recognizes this sacrifice: beneath the Violet Bier of Sorrows, a basalt sepulcher's sealed gates swing open, unleashing the divine intervention of something imprisoned by Saturn before history's dawn.

The Storyteller determines both what form this intervention takes and its mechanical effects, but some things are always true. It will always substantially alter the Sidereal's immediate situation in a way that significantly and unambiguously advantages her, no matter how great the opposition she faces. This intervention reflects both endings and the sacrificed hope in some way and will never contravene destiny. Any harmful effects it inflicts on nontrivial enemies can be defended against with opposed rolls or static values.

Reset: Once per story.

Medicine — The Corpse

Sidereal Medicine Charms evince their legendary skill as physicians. These Charms empower them to both cling to life in the face of an untimely end and to destroy that which is already dead, sending lingering revenants to their final fate and purifying the Underworld's corruption under the Corpse's auspices. These Charms also hold power over the moment of death, reincarnation and the boundary between life and death, that ending beyond which the Maiden and the Road could not cross. While Medicine is most often rolled with mental Attributes, Sidereal Medicine Charms also benefit from high Charisma.

The Scripture of the Maiden and the Road

Once, there was a maiden...

...who found herself climbing up an earthen path.

Her footsteps made no sound.

There was a silence in the air.

She walked for years, and then, came to a cliff. The road gave way to clouds, and she could go no further.

"There's always an ending," said she.

Smooth Transition

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Medicine 1, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Aggravated, Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Making the Lesser Sign of the Corpse, the Sidereal ushers that which has lingered too long in the world into nonexistence.

The Sidereal rolls (Charisma + Medicine) against the Resolve of an undead within medium range. Success inflicts (higher of Essence or 3) dice of aggravated **decisive** damage, ignoring Hardness.

If the Sidereal has an applicable Intimacy of courage, recklessness, audacity, or anger, this increases to (Essence + Intimacy) dice. This doesn't include or reset her Initiative. Zombies and other mindless undead are instead destroyed instantly, as are trivial undead.

Alternatively, the Sidereal can use this Charm against a ghost if his corpse is present in the scene, rolling (Charisma + Medicine) against its Resolve. Success banishes it to a location of the Storyteller's choice in the Underworld and makes him incapable of leaving the Underworld for (extra successes x10, minimum 1) years, or permanently if it's Essence 1 or trivial. Nontrivial ghosts whose Essence equals or exceeds the Sidereal's may pay one Willpower to resist.

Reset: Once per scene. Using this Charm against mindless or trivial undead doesn't require a reset.

Peaceable Conclusion

Cost: 1m; **Mins:** Medicine 1, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Smooth Transition

The Sidereal reaches out to those who suffer or have lived beyond their time, bidding them let go of their attachment to their lives.

The Sidereal touches a character who is either incapacitated or willing to die, killing him instantly and painlessly. His higher soul passes immediately into Lethe, his lower soul won't linger as a hungry ghost, and his corpse can't be reanimated as a zombie or other undead. If his corpse is ever placed on bare earth or stone, it sinks into the ground, arranging for its own burial.

Once per session, using this Charm grants the Sidereal (Essence + 3) motes and lets her shed one Limit as she upholds the cosmic order.

Rising Butterfly Prayer

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Medicine 5, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Peaceable Conclusion

Reciting a short homily, the Sidereal commends a deceased's soul to an auspicious reincarnation, burning silk memoranda addressed to Taru-Han, Lady of Souls, and Wayang, head of the Division of Endings.

The Sidereal must use this Charm at a funeral ritual for the deceased or the site of his remains within three days of his death. Doing so lodges a formal request that his soul receive a relatively

peaceful and pleasant life in his next reincarnation. This request requires the participation of multiple Bureaus and destiny planning is only so accurate, but Heaven will make meaningful efforts to assure him a favorable reincarnation.

Once per day, using this Charm for someone the Sidereal has a positive Tie toward awards her one Willpower. If it was a Major or Defining Tie, she also loses one Limit.

Obituary Composition Technique

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Medicine 3, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Smooth Transition

Having accepted death's inevitability, the Sidereal attains clarity and insight into it.

Examining a corpse, the Sidereal rolls ([Intelligence or Perception] + Medicine) at difficulty 1-5, based on its age and any decomposition or mutilation it's suffered. If a character has made a conceal evidence roll to tamper with the corpse or a similar roll, the Sidereal must beat that roll as well. Alternatively, she can use this Charm when interacting with an undead character, rolling against his Guile. Success lets her player asks the Storyteller one of the following questions, plus an additional question for every 3 extra successes:

- What was the cause of death?
- How long has it been since he died?
- What unfinished business did he have?
- Was his death in accordance with destiny?

If the Storyteller doesn't have an answer in mind for a question, the Sidereal's player should provide one, as if introducing a fact.

Reset: Once per scene.

Solemn Psychopomp Duty

Cost: —; **Mins:** Medicine 3, Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Obituary Composition Technique

Though destiny may demand a life be cut short, the Sidereal may grant the dead the solace of seeing their final wishes fulfilled.

When the Sidereal uses Obituary Composition Technique to discover a dead person's unfinished business, she may take it on in their stead, committing the Charm's cost indefinitely. She gains all of the deceased's Intimacies relevant to his unfinished business, which can't be weakened below Minor, and all his relevant memories. The Storyteller should reveal specific memories as they become important. The Sidereal may use them as a Lore background to introduce facts.

When the Sidereal's in a situation where she could make progress on the unfinished business, the Storyteller should tell her player, though not what she must do. Likewise, when she encounters someone relevant to the unfinished business, she learns that, but not how they're relevant.

This Charm ends when the Sidereal completes the unfinished business or it becomes impossible for her to do so; she can't end it prematurely. She loses all Intimacies and memories conferred by it. If she was successful, she may summon the deceased's ghost to seek repayment, as though binding a demon (**Exalted**, p. 473) without a roll. Alternatively, she may send him unto Lethe — with Rising Butterfly Prayer's benefits if she knows it. This counts as fulfilling an auspicious prospect (p. XX). Especially powerful ghosts may require a roll to affect, though their unfinished business should be the most difficult part of affecting them.

If the Sidereal fails to accomplish the deceased's unfinished business, (current temporary Willpower) dice, losing one Willpower for each failed die and one Limit for each 10.

Soul-Reviving Eulogy

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Medicine 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Smooth Transition

The Sidereal dredges forth memories lost to Lethe, stirring dead hearts with passions they once held.

The Sidereal makes a special (Charisma + Medicine) instill roll against an undead, imposing an Intimacy that it possessed in life on it for the scene if she succeeds. Mindless undead are susceptible to this Charm and can be affected by influence rolls that align with the revived Intimacy. The Sidereal can revive a specific Intimacy if she's aware of it and of one of the target's experiences or memories related to it; otherwise, the Storyteller chooses the Intimacy. Undead with Essence greater than the Sidereal's can spend one Willpower to resist, becoming immune to further uses that scene.

Abyssals don't regain Intimacies; instead, their mind and Essence reject these memories in a moment of soul-rending agony, gaining one Limit. Similarly, Liminals are disoriented and overwhelmed by the memories dredged from their flesh, gaining an Intimacy chosen by the Storyteller and suffering a -3 penalty on all actions they take that scene. This costs one Willpower to resist, rendering the victim immune for the scene.

Dignity of the Dead

Cost: 1m per point of penalty; **Mins:** Medicine 2, Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal is assured of eloquence in her last words and dignity in her final moments.

The Sidereal negates penalties on an influence roll from wounds, crippling, poison, fatigue, or deprivation, paying one mote per point. If she lowers an influence roll's target number, each point of reduction negates a point of penalty for free.

Deferred Wounds

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal postpones the hour of her patient's death, making his wounds seem to vanish with a touch.

The Sidereal rolls (Intelligence + Medicine), healing levels of damage equal to her successes. This damage is held in abeyance for this Charm's duration, diminishing over time with the patient's natural healing (**Exalted**, p. 173). If this Charm ends before all damage is healed, the remaining levels are inflicted on the patient.

Denature Venom

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal hastens the end of a venom's potency, rendering it harmless.

The Sidereal rolls to treat poison instantly and without needing any medicine or tools. Her successes are applied directly to lowering its duration, without needing to overcome its difficulty. Alternatively, the Sidereal can cleanse a patient's system of toxins or drugs.

This Charm can also be used to denature a poison or intoxicant with a touch (including touch its container), neutralizing its effect. Against magical poisons or intoxicants, she rolls (Strength +

Medicine) against a difficulty set by the Storyteller.

Terminate Illness

Cost: 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** Medicine 3, Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The Sidereal makes the Lesser Sign of the Corpse over one suffering illness, striking his name from the rolls of that disease's god.

The Sidereal rolls to treat disease instantly and without needing tools. In addition to the roll's usual effect, her patient can roll (Stamina + Resistance) against that disease immediately with -1 target number. A mundane disease is cured immediately if he succeeds.

Embracing the Mortal Coil

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Medicine 4, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Any two of Deferred Wounds, Denature Venom, or Terminate Illness

Offering philosophical guidance or spiritual insights, the Sidereal helps patients accept the frailties of flesh, facing such ailments with dignity and grace.

The Sidereal rolls (Charisma + Medicine) against a living character to instill an Intimacy that supports accepting one's mortality. (No roll is necessary if the target's willing). An affected character gains (Intimacy) soak, ignores the effects of disease, and ignores up to (Intimacy/2, rounded up) points of penalties from wounds, fatigue, poison, and crippling effects.

Dutiful Dead Conscription

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Rising Butterfly Prayer

The Sidereal deputizes the dead into fate's service, offering them a chance to pass on into the next life in exchange for their assistance. She requests that a ghost undertake a serious or life-changing task (**Exalted**, p. 216) in service to herself, destiny, or the Celestial Bureaucracy. If the ghost accepts, the Sidereal's Essence crystallizes into an amethyst butterfly brooch, a badge of the authority with which she invests him. He gains the following benefits:

- He gains a Defining Principle toward completing that task, which can't be weakened or altered by any means.
- Once per scene, he may gain -1 target number on a roll that's part of that task.
- He can use the Sidereal's auspicious prospects anima power (p. XX).
- He gains the Materialize Charm (**Exalted**, p. 510) if he doesn't already have it.
- He's not considered an enemy of fate or a creature of darkness.
- If he's destroyed without the use of magic like Ghost-Eating Technique, he reforms at the Sidereal's side within a day.
- Upon completing the task, the ghost passes onto Lethe, enjoying Rising Butterfly Prayer's benefits.

If the Sidereal uses necromancy to summon and bind a ghost, she can use this Charm reflexively to confer its benefits upon him for the binding's duration without assigning a task.

The Sidereal can also deputize Liminals and Abyssals, though the only benefit this confers is that they aren't considered enemies of fate (or creatures of darkness, for Abyssals). This benefit becomes permanent if they fulfill the task, though they may still revert to the status if their actions warrant it.

With Essence 3, the Sidereal can pay two experience points to change this Charm's duration to Instant. If the deputized ghost is permanently destroyed or completes his assignment, she's refunded this experience cost.

Invocation of the Storm-Following Silence

Cost: 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Medicine 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Aggravated, Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Peaceable Conclusion

The Sidereal makes the Lesser Sign of the Corpse, shining with a violent radiance that brings stillness to the world.

The Sidereal rolls (Charisma + Medicine). Against undead enemies within medium range, this is a **decisive** attack rolled against their Resolve. This has a base damage of (Charisma) dice of aggravated damage against each hit enemy; the Sidereal divides her Initiative evenly, rounded up among each damage roll. Zombies and other mindless undead are destroyed instantly, without counting against the Sidereal's Initiative, as are trivial undead.

Undead spirits possessing others are also exorcised from their hosts if the Sidereal's successes exceed their Resolve. They can't attempt to possess that character again for a month. If the damage incapacitates them, they're rendered permanently incapable of possessing those hosts.

The Sidereal may offer a Peaceable Conclusion to living characters within medium range for free. If any accept, she's refunded this Charm's Willpower cost.

Foretold Epitaph Epiphany

Cost: —; **Mins:** Medicine 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Invocation of the Storm-Following Silence

Those destined to die are no different than corpses in the Sidereal's eyes.

Once the Sidereal or another character has used Auspicious Prospects for Endings to determine someone's destined to die, he counts as undead for her magic, if that's advantageous for her. If this doesn't make sense for certain effects, like Soul-Reviving Eulogy (p. XX), the Storyteller should adjust it as appropriate. This also applies to character she's cursed with Descending Endings Horoscope, Tears of the Blade, or a prophecy meant to kill them.

With a repurchase, this effect extends to all enemies of fate.

Shadow of the Reaper

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Embracing the Mortal Coil, Peaceable Conclusion

Making the Superior Sign of the Corpse, the Sidereal confronts the living with their own mortality.

The Sidereal makes a special (Charisma + Medicine) persuade roll against a living character. Success places him in a special Decision Point. If he cites a Major or Defining Intimacy that supports accepting his mortality, he gains one Willpower and the Intimacy is reinforced for the rest of the story. Influence rolls to weaken it use the rules for overturning influence (**Exalted**, p. 221).

A character without an applicable Intimacy is haunted by his mortality, gaining the Megrims Derangement (**Exalted**, p. 169) at Major intensity. He must make a Willpower roll against it when he becomes aware of a serious and imminent threat to his life. Failing a roll against it in combat also causes him to lose (Sidereal's Essence) Initiative. He can end his Megrims by

upholding a Major or Defining Tie in a way that reflects his acceptance of mortality.

Reset: This Charm can only be used against a character once per story.

Dead Man's Stand

Cost: 5m, 5i, 1wp; **Mins:** Medicine 5, Essence 4

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only, Mute, Perilous

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Dignity of the Dead, Embracing the Mortal Coil

The Sidereal proclaims her acceptance of her own mortality with the Greater Sign of the Corpse; if she is to die, she will meet her end nobly.

Any non-aggravated **decisive** damage the Sidereal suffers is held in abeyance rather than being applied to her health track. Likewise, any crippling effects used against her after this Charm is activated are suspended for this Charm's duration. She still suffers physical injury but doesn't face any consequences from them while this Charm lasts. This Charm ends if she's crashed.

Once this Charm ends, the Sidereal suffers all suspended damage and crippling effects. If this kills her, her corpse remains sufficiently intact for an open-casket funeral, no matter how grievous her injuries.

Earth-and-Sky Bargain

Cost: 15m, 1wp (3m per Charm); **Mins:** Medicine 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One story

Prerequisite Charms: Any ten Medicine Charms

Buried beneath a stone cairn by the Sidereal, a prayer strip bearing the Scripture of the Maiden and the Road erupts with ten spines of indigo light that rise skyward, revealing a spirit in such desperate peril that he might accept the Earth-and-Sky Bargain,

The Sidereal rolls (Intelligence + Medicine) to introduce the fact that there's a god or elemental on the brink of permanent destruction nearby. (While some Exalted can kill spirits, more common causes of permanent death include puissant supernatural beings and monsters; certain supernatural diseases; exotic magical poisons; sorcerous workings that compromise immortality; etc.). She can specify the general kind of spirit — "a fire elemental," "a martial god," etc. — and its Essence rating, but not a specific spirit. The roll's difficulty is the (Essence + Willpower) of the spirit; on a failed roll, the Sidereal still discovers a spirit of lesser strength Essence chosen by the Storyteller.

If the Sidereal convinces the spirit to accept her bargain — an inconvenient task (**Exalted**, p. 216)

— she binds it to her soul, granting the following benefits:

- She gains his Cult rating.
- She can temporarily access his Eclipse Charms for three motes each, which she must commit upon using this Charm. She can learn them permanently for eight experience points each.
- She adds (his Essence) soak and gains Hardness (his Essence + Willpower).
- She gains half his total health track as temporary health levels, rounding up for each type of level (e.g., if the god has five -1 levels and three -2 levels, the Sidereal would gain three -1 levels and two -2 levels). These levels are the first of their type to be filled and vanish when damaged. The Sidereal regains a single lost temporary level after a full night's sleep, starting with -4 levels and moving up.
- If the spirit's an air or wood elemental or a god associated with those elements, the Sidereal adds his Essence to the number of motes she recovers each hour.

The Sidereal can pay fifteen motes and one Willpower to transfer the bound spirit to a touched character, conferring the above benefits on him. She must still maintain her commit to this Charm. That character can't transfer the spirit to others, nor can he return it to the Sidereal.

Once this Charm ends, the bound spirit reforms. Its nature often changes to reflect the personality and passions of its host, and spirits weaker than their host may become more powerful. If the Sidereal maintains this Charm for its full duration, the spirit is unlikely to feel any obligation to her, but if she cuts it short so the spirit may be reborn earlier, it may be willing to perform a serious or even a life-defining task for her without requiring a roll.

Reset: Once per story.

Chapter Seven: Martial Arts and Sorcery

Martial Arts

The Sidereal Exalted are renowned as masters of the martial arts, unmatched in their enlightened mastery of esoteric reality-warping styles.

Throne Shadow Style

Throne Shadow style is the fighting art of the éminence grise who lurks behind queens and princes, moving unnoticed as all eyes watch the crown. Its practitioners master the ways of insight, subtlety, and misdirection; they're sometimes called viziers, for while they're skilled in hand-to-hand combat, their greatest strength is their students and disciples. When the vizier feints, her student strikes; when she moves back, he advances.

Many Sidereals practice Throne Shadow style, befitting those who shape the course of history unseen, but they're far from its only masters. Few schools are wholly devoted to it, but some schools of other styles incorporate it as a set of advanced techniques that must be mastered to be recognized as a teacher of martial arts. On thistle-wreathed Mount Kenoi, courtiers and royal consorts study Throne Shadow to survive the autokrator's deadly court. The Celadon Lowlands' peasant farmers have practiced it for generations, the legacy of a wandering Sidereal who fought alongside them in a long-ago rebellion.

Throne Shadow Weapons: Throne Shadow unarmed attacks are primarily open palm strikes, pushes, and low kicks, though stylists make use of their forearms, elbows, and knees as well. It's also compatible with fighting chains, rope darts, seven-section staffs, staffs, and wind-and-fire wheels.

Armor: This style isn't compatible with armor.

Complementary Abilities: Throne Shadow style employs the subtlety and deception of Larceny, Socialize, and Stealth.

Meteor Hammer/Rope Dart

Medium (Damage +9, Overwhelming 1)

Tags: Bashing (Meteor Hammer), Flexible, Lethal (Rope Dart), Martial Arts, Special, Thrown (Short), Two-Handed

Special: After attacking with a meteor hammer or rope dart, a character may pull it back to hand with a miscellaneous action. With 3+ extra successes on the attack roll, this can be done reflexively.

Note: Ranged weapons with the Martial Arts tag can only be used with Martial Arts, as usual. The Archery and Thrown tags are used solely to determine weapon traits.

Lion Mouse Stratagem

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

The vizier affects the unassuming air of the neophyte and the hanger on, presenting herself as something less than she is.

The stylist gains +1 Guile. When characters roll against her Guile to reveal her hostile intentions or pierce a disguise that makes her seem less dangerous than she is, they reroll a successful die for each 1 (maximum stylist's Essence), starting with the lowest number and going up.

In combat, the stylist instead gains +2 Guile and 1s on opposing rolls subtract successes in addition to rerolling dice.

Lotus Eye Tactics

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Lion Mouse Stratagem

The vizier's learned eye discerns peers and worthy foes from the masses.

The stylist makes a special (Perception + Martial Arts) read intentions roll. Success lets her player ask the Storyteller one of the following questions about her target plus an additional question for every three extra successes.

- How significant a threat would he pose to me in combat?
- What should I watch out for in a fight with him?
- Does he have any weapons, armor, or nearby allies I don't know about?
- Who's someone he learned to fight from?

If the Storyteller doesn't have an answer in mind for a question, the stylist's player should provide one, as if introducing a fact.

This Charm can only be used once per scene.

Master's Useful Fingers

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mastery, Mute, Terrestrial

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Lotus Eye Tactics

Disdaining such crude implements as blades, fists, and appropriated barstools, the vizier turns others into her weapons.

The stylist can train another character over a scene of conversation, sparring, or combat, letting him go into experience debt (p. XX) to purchase either the Martial Artist Merit, a single dot in a Martial Arts Ability, or a Martial Arts specialty. He can't purchase dots in Martial Arts the stylist doesn't know and can't raise his rating above the stylist's.

If the character chooses to go into experience debt, he becomes one of the stylist's shadow fingers, students and disciples who benefit from other Throne Shadow Charms. The stylist can have up to (Essence x2) shadow fingers at a time; claiming more requires revoking an existing shadow finger's status.

Mastery: The stylist can train her student in up to (higher of Essence or 3) dots in Martial Arts Abilities and/or specialties with a single use of this Charm. With Martial Arts 5, Essence 3, she can instead teach him any Martial Arts Charm she knows whose prerequisites he meets; Sidereals may teach Sidereal Martial Arts Charms this way.

Terrestrial: The stylist's tutelage requires training time rather than occurring in a single scene, though the amount of time necessary is divided by the stylist's (Charisma, Intelligence, or Manipulation) — whichever best fits her teaching style.

Throne Shadow Form

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Form

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Master's Useful Fingers

Bending her knees low to sink into a stance that minimizes her profile, the vizier recedes from the front lines to guide her shadow fingers in battle.

The stylist gains the following benefits:

- When she's attacked, the stylist may treat a shadow finger within close range as protecting her with a defend other action.
- She can make a distract gambit to benefit all her shadow fingers. She divides Initiative equal to twice the gambit's cost among all shadow fingers, rounding up.
- She reduces the -3 penalty for Stealth in combat by the number of shadow fingers within short range.
- She adds (higher of Essence or 3) dice on rolls to introduce facts and may do so reflexively.

Special activation rules: When one of the stylist's shadow fingers wins Join Battle, she may reflexively enter this Form.

Clear Eyes Defense

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Clash, Decisive-only, Mastery

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Throne Shadow Form

Centering herself in mind, body, and Essence, the vizier strikes through magic that would cloud her vision or twist her mind to punish those responsible.

The stylist clashes a Psyche effect with a **decisive** attack, rolling Join Battle to determine her Initiative if she uses this Charm outside of combat. If the Psyche effect is normally unrolled, the character using it makes an appropriate (Attribute + Ability) roll.

Winning this clash negates that Psyche effect; if the character using it is within range of the stylist's attacks, she rolls **decisive** damage against him normally. She can also do so if he's within range of a shadow finger's weapon, making her attack through her disciple.

Mastery: The stylist may pay a five-mote surcharge to clash a Psyche effect against a shadow finger within long range.

Shadow Lost in the Court

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Perilous, Terrestrial

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Throne Shadow Form

The vizier adopts the stance of one who lurks behind the throne, vanishing behind her shadow fingers.

When a shadow finger within close range crashes an enemy whose Initiative was higher than the stylist's or deals 5+ levels of **decisive** damage, she may reflexively roll to establish concealment without needing a hiding spot. If the shadow finger has an anima banner, the stylist adds (his Anima) successes on the roll.

In Throne Shadow Form, this extends to shadow fingers within short range.

Terrestrial: This Charm's minimums increase to Martial Arts 5, Essence 3. It can only be used once per scene unless reset by incapacitating an enemy with a decisive unexpected attack.

Showing the Secret Hand

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Terrestrial, Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Throne Shadow Form

As the vizier's subtle ways force an opening in her enemy's guard, her shadow fingers strike like her closed fist.

When the stylist succeeds on a disengage, read intentions, or influence roll against a nontrivial enemy or successfully asserts her Guile or Resolve against one, she may use this Charm to have a shadow finger reflexive make a **withering** or **decisive** attack against him.

Terrestrial: This counts as the stylist's attack for the round.

Finger-Stealing Handshake

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Mute, Terrestrial

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Showing the Secret Hand

The vizier can't always be assured of her trusted disciples' presence, but with deft improvisation and well-chosen words, she makes do.

The stylist makes a (Charisma + Martial Arts) persuade roll against all enemies, ignoring multiple target penalties, to sway them to her side. This is typically a life-defining task (**Exalted**, p. 216), though it may only be a serious task for enemies who expect their side to lose, resent their leader, etc. Trivial enemies can be persuaded without needing a supporting Intimacy. Enemies who resist this influence with Willpower lose (stylist's Essence + extra successes) Initiative, which she doesn't gain.

Persuaded characters gain a Minor Tie of loyalty to the stylist and count as shadow fingers for the scene. Once the scene ends, if she's able to take on more shadow fingers, she may choose to retain any of them who're willing to continue on with her.

This Charm can only be used once per scene.

Terrestrial: Enemies who resist with Willpower lose only (stylist's Essence) Initiative.

World-as-Weapon Mastery

Cost: —(Varies); **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Mastery, Mute, Terrestrial

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Clear Eyes Defense, Finger-Stealing Handshake, Shadow Lost in the Court

The vizier need not act to seize victory; the lessons she's imparted to her shadow fingers have already ensured her triumph.

The stylist can enhance the attacks of shadow fingers present in the same scene with the following techniques:

Deadliest of All Weapons (5m, 1wp; Reflexive; Dual): After a shadow finger's **withering** attack crashes an enemy or his **decisive** attack hits, the stylist asks that enemy one question, to which he must respond truthfully (in character) unless he spends one Willpower. Incapacitated enemies answer before succumbing to their wounds.

Flow-Breaking Strike (2m, 1wp; Supplemental; Decisive-only): Each 9 and 10 on a **decisive** attack also causes the enemy to lose one Initiative, which the shadow finger doesn't gain.

Pneuma-Sealing Strike (5m; Reflexive; Withering-only): After a **withering** damage roll, the shadow finger can forgo up to (his Essence + stylist's Essence) Initiative awarded by it. Each point of Initiative forgone reduces the number of motes regained by the damaged enemy at the end of the round by one. If this exceeds the amount he'd recover, the excess is applied to the next round's recovery.

Welcoming the Uninvited Guest (3m; Supplemental; Uniform): The shadow finger can attack an enemy he's unaware of as long as the stylist is aware of him and has beaten his Stealth, if applicable.

In Throne Shadow Form, if the stylist enhances an attack with multiple techniques with Willpower costs, she need only pay one Willpower.

Mastery: The stylist's shadow fingers can pay the cost of these techniques instead of her.

Terrestrial: This Charm's minimum Essence increases to 4. Each of its techniques can only be used once per scene, unless reset when a shadow finger lands a decisive attack that resets his Initiative and builds back to Initiative 15+. This resets all used techniques.

Violet Bier of Sorrows Style

Violet Bier of Sorrows is an ancient style, old as the First Age if not older. Some stories attribute its creation to a Sidereal inspired by the Maiden of Endings' power and conviction; others say it arose from the ancient cult of Saturn, attribute it to one of the many legendary martial artists of the First Age, or claim that Saturn herself created it. It emphasizes speed, exploiting enemies' injuries, and powerful killing blows. Its students often cultivate detachment from emotion and compassion in battle, able to act infinitesimally faster than enemies because they do not feel the emotional experience of violence in the moment.

The Division of Endings has maintained the style's lineage unbroken for millennia, but it is not other schools exist in Creation. In the Spindrift Archipelago, the Cult of Saturn Pharmacopeia practices an ancient variant of the style, often aiding and training peasant uprisings. Sijan's Reverent Lodge of the Broken Sepulcher, a secret society and trade guild of morticians, studies the style as a philosophical and mystical discipline. The dueling academies of seven-bridged

Padhia teach a bastardized offshoot, the so-called Silent Executioner style.

Violet Bier of Sorrows Weapons: This style's unarmed attacks are primarily open-palmed blows, knife-hand strikes, and graceful kicks, all executed with flowing ease. It's also compatible with chopping swords, great swords, short swords, slashing swords, straight swords, knives, staves, and seven-section staves.

Armor: This style is incompatible with armor.

Secrets of Future Strife

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mastery

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The martial artist has resigned herself to never knowing she might meet her death; her unhesitating action chills the blood of those who still cling to survival.

The stylist adds (higher of Essence or 3) to her effective Initiative to determine when she takes her turn. If she takes her turn before any enemy does, all enemies increase their wound penalty by one for that round.

Mastery: If an enemy already suffers a wound penalty, the stylist automatically takes her turn before him, doing so one tick before him unless she'd normally act before then.

Blade of the Battle Maiden

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Dual, Mastery

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Secrets of Future Strife

The martial artist brings the battle to a close with grim solemnity, dispatching foes to their appointed ends.

The stylist's attack adds (1 + enemy's wound penalty) dice of post-soak **withering** damage or **decisive** damage.

Mastery: If the stylist's attack increases her enemy's wound penalty, she rolls an additional die of damage for each point his penalty increases.

Flight of Mercury

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Perilous, Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Secrets of Future Strife

The stylist moves with the swift precision of one who knows the inevitability of her journey's end.

The onslaught penalty inflicted by the stylist's attack applies to her target's Defense against that attack roll. If she deals 5+ **withering** damage or any **decisive** damage, she treats her target's onslaught penalty as a wound penalty for this style's Charms, stacking with any existing wound penalties. This lasts until his onslaught refreshes.

Joy-in-Adversity Stance

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Perilous, Terrestrial, Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Secrets of Future Strife

Savoring each breath as though it were her last, the martial artist finds joy in each moment that postpones her end.

The stylist gains +1 Defense. Successfully defending awards motes equal to the attack roll's 1s, which can't exceed the motes spent defending against it.

Terrestrial: These motes are lost if not spent by the end of the stylist's next turn.

Violet Bier of Sorrows Form

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Form

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Blade of the Battle Maiden, Flight of Mercury, Joy-in-Adversity Stance

Having mastered those things that precede the end, the martial artist fights with the same cold detachment with which Saturn makes her sign.

The stylist gains the following benefits:

- When she uses Secrets of Future Strife, her enemies' wound penalties apply to their effective Initiative to determine when they act that round.

- When she uses Blade of the Battle Maiden, she also adds the same number of dice on the attack roll.
- When she uses Flight of Mercury, she may reflexively advance one range band toward her target if he's crashed or has a wound penalty of -2 or worse. This doesn't count as her move action.
- Joy-in-Adversity Stance's cost is reduced by (her attacker's wound penalty/2, rounded up).

Special activation rules: When the stylist deals enough **decisive** damage to increase a nontrivial enemy's wound penalty, she may reflexively enter this Form.

Life-Severing Blow

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Violet Bier of Sorrows Form

Focusing the entirety of her existence on ending her foe's life, the martial artist cuts his corpse free from his soul.

After a **decisive** attack roll, the stylist can use this Charm to add up to (Essence) extra successes from the attack roll as dice of damage. For each of the following conditions she satisfies, she may add an additional extra success from the attack roll:

- Her enemy suffers at least a -1 wound penalty.
- Her enemy's Initiative is lower than hers.
- Her enemy is crashed.
- She's in Violet Bier of Sorrows Form.

Metal Storm

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Terrestrial

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Life-Severing Blow

The martial artist strikes everywhere at once, leaving her victim nowhere to flee.

To use this Charm, the stylist must have Initiative 15+. She makes undodgeable **decisive** attacks against an enemy until she misses or has made (Essence + his wound penalty) attacks. She

doesn't roll damage until she's finished making attacks; each has a base damage of (enemy's wound penalty), and she divides her Initiative evenly among them, rounded up.

Terrestrial: The stylist can't make more than (enemy's wound penalty + 1) attacks. She rounds down when dividing Initiative among them.

Death-Parrying Stroke

Cost: 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Clash, Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Metal Storm

Such is the martial artist's speed that she is not seen to move as she strikes aside fatal blows.

After an attack beats the stylist's Defense, but before the damage roll, she can use this Charm to make a **decisive** counterattack. If she deals damage, her attacker's damage roll suffers a penalty of (her attack roll extra successes + damage roll 10s). If she incapacitates him, she gains one Willpower and is treated as if she'd successfully blocked the attack.

This Charm can only be used once per scene unless reset by crashing an enemy who's suffering wound penalties.

Conclusion-Pursuing Approach

Cost: —(+5m, 1wp); **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Dual

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Death-Parrying Stroke

The martial artist is as death herself, her blade offering a final release to those whose time has come.

The stylist may pay a five-mote, one-Willpower surcharge when she uses Violet Bier of Sorrows Form to gain the following additional benefits:

- Her withering attacks add (Strength) Overwhelming.
- When she crashes an enemy, his wound penalty is doubled until he leaves crash.
- When she lands a decisive attack that resets her Initiative, she adds her enemy's wound penalty to her base Initiative.
- Incapacitating a nontrivial enemy awards her one Willpower.

Sidereal Martial Arts

Sidereal Martial Arts styles are the legendary secret arts of the Fivescore Fellowship. They are abstract and esoteric, each a philosophical meditation upon a concept or cosmic principle: consumption, decay, Essence, possibility, time, and more. While most Martial Arts styles are rooted in the physicality of battle, Sidereal Martial Arts transcend it, warping and transforming reality itself.

Effects that refer to Martial Arts include Sidereal Martial Arts, but the specific limitations on learning and teaching Sidereal Martial Arts trump anything to the contrary.

Learning Sidereal Martial Arts

Among the Exalted, only Sidereals, Getimians, Solars, Abyssals, and Infernals can learn Sidereal Martial Arts. Some rare or unique beings may also be able to learn them or even create them at the Storyteller's discretion — for example, the Deathlord known as the Bishop of the Chalcedony Thurible can use Sidereal Martial Arts and has created the Albicant Sepulcher of Extinction style, a bleak expression of the Neverborn's feverish desire for total destruction.

Before a character can begin learning Sidereal Martial Arts, she must learn either all Charms of a single Martial Arts style or a total of ten Charms among any number of styles. Sidereal Martial Arts Charm costs ten experience for characters for whom Martial Arts is a Caste or Favored Ability and twelve experience for others. Solars with Supernal Martial Arts and other Exalted with similar advantages don't apply them to Sidereal Martial Arts.

Only Sidereals are capable of learning Sidereal Martial Arts without a mentor and creating new styles. Other characters must seek out a Sidereal's tutelage. However, Sidereal Essence is intrinsically instructive, making it possible for such characters to learn Sidereal Martial Arts through repeated battles against a Sidereal stylist.

New Keyword: Enlightenment

Attaining the apex of Sidereal Martial Arts' power demands an understanding of subtle cosmic principles and a harmony with the nature of reality beyond many students. Sidereals always gain the benefits of a Sidereal Martial Arts' Enlightenment effects. Getimians access Enlightenment effects based on whether their Essence's current nature is Flowing or Still. Other Exalted can't ordinarily access Enlightenment effects.

Charcoal March of Spiders Style

It's said this style was created when an ancient Sidereal witnessed Asna Firstborn, mother of pattern spiders, kill and consume her mate. Enlightened by the sublime horror-beauty of the act, they attained an understanding of the cosmic principles of consumption. Its practitioners emulate the movements of pattern spiders, striking with venomous techniques that devour Essence, dissolve souls, and reweave reality.

Students fast throughout their training as they undergo grueling regimens that hone their body and guide them to this style's enlightenment: elaborate footwork drills, aerial contortions while dangling upside-down from silken threads, striking the surface of vats of poison and acid, and meditating while surrounded with heaping platters of delicacies.

Charcoal March of Spiders Weapons: This style's unarmed attacks are sweeping rapid kicks and four-fingered strikes that can jab pressure points as easily as they gouge eyes. It's also compatible with fighting chains, knives, meteor hammers, nunchaku, rope darts, seven-section staffs, and whips.

Armor: This style is incompatible with armor.

Complementary Abilities: Athletics supports stylists' mobility.

Nature: Flowing.

Nunchaku

Light (Accuracy +4, Damage +7, Defense +0, Overwhelming 1)

Tags: Bashing, Martial Arts, Disarming, Flexible

Rain of Unseen Threads

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: None

The martial artist casts strands of fate from her sleeves or fingertips, spinning reality itself into hair-fine threads.

The stylist may create threads of Essence, with the following benefits:

- She can use threads to take actions out to medium range: attacking with weapons, picking up or otherwise interacting with objects, or performing simple tasks that could be done with one hand. The threads are exceptional equipment (**Exalted**, p. 580) for weaving, climbing, laying snares, swinging between handholds, etc. They're also exceptional equipment for lifting or suspending heavy objects — a feat of strength rolled with (Wits + Martial Arts), using (Essence + Wits) instead of Strength to determine if the feat can be attempted.
- The stylist can attack with the threads. They're light weapons with the Bashing, Martial Arts, Thrown (Medium), Disarming, Flexible, Grappling, and Subtle tags. They count as style weapons.
- The stylist can still flurry while grappling an enemy with a thread and suffers no Defense penalty. If the stylist grapples an enemy from beyond close range, she can only take restrain or drag actions, and a character can sever the thread — ending the grapple — with a difficulty (stylist's rounds of control) gambit. The stylist can have up to a total of (Wits) enemies grappled at a time. While grappling multiple enemies, on each, she may either restrain them all, expending two rounds of control over each of them; make a savaging attack against them; or release them. **Withering** savaging attacks use a single attack roll but roll damage separately against each grappled foe. Only the single highest **withering** damage roll awards Initiative. **Decisive** savaging attacks divide her Initiative evenly among all foes (rounded up) to determine the damage rolled against them, ignoring Hardness.

Nest of Living Strands

Cost: —(+1wp); **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Enlightenment

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Rain of Unseen Threads

Hundreds of nearly invisible threads spit from the stylist's hands, whipping around physical and spiritual leverage points to weave the world into her web.

The stylist may pay a one-Willpower surcharge when she uses Rain of Unseen Threads to weave a web extending out to short range. At the start of each of her turns, it extends another range band outward, to a maximum of four range bands. The web has the following effects:

- The stylist's enemies treat the web as difficult terrain (**Exalted**, p. 199). Its -3 penalty applies on all physical actions rolled while in the web.
- The stylist receives heavy cover (**Exalted**, p. 199) from her web. Once her web reaches long range, it affords full cover against enemies at long range or further. This cover extends to any character she protects with a defend other action.
- While in the web, the stylist waives the mote cost to create threads with Rain of Unseen Threads.

An enemy can clear their location of webbing with a difficulty 8 feat of strength that requires Strength 5, though it regrows on the stylist's next turn. An enemy with an edged weapon, firewand, or the like can also destroy webbing with a difficulty 4 gambit, rolled against Defense (stylist's Essence).

If the stylist moves from her location, the built-up webbing fades away, and a new web forms out to short range at the end of her movement. Otherwise, it continues to build, filling the air with strands of cobweb that eventually grow into an opaque forest of webbing surrounding the stylist, thick as stone.

Enlightenment: Once per story, the stylist may pay three levels of anima when she uses this Charm to have her web initially form out to long range. Spiders of anima scuttle through the web; their radiance extends the web's difficult terrain penalty to enemies' Stealth rolls.

Unnatural Many-Step Stride

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Enlightenment, Mute, Perilous

Duration: Until next turn

Prerequisite Charms: Rain of Unseen Threads

The martial artist scurries along the strands of fate like a pattern spider, moving with disturbingly inhuman grace.

The stylist can stand on thin air, finding footholds in the weave of fate, and can move vertically by running upward. Any movement action rolls she makes also count as threaten rolls against all enemies and bystanders — the way she moves is *wrong*, not how human limbs should move. Affected enemies flee the stylist or otherwise seek safety.

Enlightenment: When the stylist uses this Charm, she may pay a one-Willpower surcharge to dematerialize for its duration, becoming unable to interact with the material world or be harmed by it without the use of magic.

Dance of the Hungry Spider

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Enlightenment, Uniform

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Unnatural Many-Step Stride

The martial artist moves with shifting and shuffling footwork, keeping her feet constantly in motion to emulate the spider, balanced on six legs and striking with two.

The stylist gains the following benefits:

- She's immune to grapple gambits, effects that would knock her prone or forcibly move her, or effects that specifically affect her lower body. This defense can be overwhelmed — after negating two such effects, the stylist becomes vulnerable to the third, after which this defense resets.
- Once per round, she can either reflexively glide one range band toward an enemy before attacking him or reflexively move one range band in any direction after an attack against her. This doesn't count as her movement action for the round.
- When she threatens characters with a movement roll using Unnatural Many-Step Stride, they're treated as having a Major Intimacy supporting the influence. As long as she beats a nontrivial target's Resolve, she gains one Initiative.

Enlightenment: The stylist waives the Willpower cost to dematerialize with Unnatural Many-Step Stride.

Maw of Dripping Venom

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Enlightenment

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Rain of Unseen Threads

The martial artist strikes her foe like a thousand venomous fangs, tainting her victim's Essence

and dissolving his soul from the inside out.

To use this Charm, the stylist must have Initiative 15+. She makes a **decisive** attack. A damaged enemy suffers a poison with duration (stylist's Essence + levels of damage inflicted) rounds and a -3 penalty. Instead of taking damage, at each interval, he rolls (Sidereal's Essence) dice and loses motes equal to his successes. If he doesn't have enough motes, excess successes instead inflict that many levels of aggravated damage.

If this poison incapacitates a character, he falls comatose. The stylist may touch him to devour his soul, killing him instantly and permanently and granting her (his Essence x10) motes. Human souls devoured this way don't pass on to Lethe.

Enlightenment: When the martial artist devours a victim's soul, she may absorb his memories. She can't eidetically recall every moment of his life, remembering only to the extent that he did. This only conveys memories of events, not skills, though she may rely on his memories as a mentor for mundane traits (**Exalted**, p. 178). However, in doing so, she gains one of the target's Intimacies, chosen by the Storyteller, at the same intensity he had it at. She can't willingly erode this Intimacy for the rest of the story.

The Scripture of Consumption

Once, there was a small maiden...

who climbed a whirlwind over water,
over and over, until she reached the top
and became a mother.

To one child, she said "I have many things to show you."

And to another, she said "You may rest within my home and eat, no need to fly."

And to a third, she said "How beautiful you are."

And as each heard her words and came to the center of the web,
she ate them.

Charcoal March of Spiders Form

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Form, Perilous

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Dance of the Hungry Spider, Maw of Dripping Venom, Nest of Living Strands

The martial artist shifts languidly through interwoven stances meant for eight legs, acting with grace and precision beyond humanity.

The stylist rolls Join Battle twice, using each roll to establish a new Initiative track. She still only

takes one turn each round, but at any point where the martial artist's Initiative is relevant — determining her turn order, paying an Initiative cost, determining a **decisive** attack's damage, resetting to base — she chooses which of her three Initiative tracks she wants to use in that instant. If she resets to base Initiative after a successful **decisive** attack or the like, she must reset the Initiative track used for that effect.

The only exception is that when she resets to base Initiative, if one of her Initiative tracks is at or below base Initiative, she can't choose to reset that one unless all of them are that low.

If one of the martial artist's Initiative tracks is crashed, it's permanently lost. If this Charm ends, the stylist chooses which Initiative track she keeps but notes the other two, which she reuses instead of rolling if she reenters this Form that scene. Tracks lost to crash don't return for the rest of the scene.

Special activation rules: When the stylist lands a **decisive** attack against a nontrivial enemy on the same turn she moves into or out of close range with him, she may reflexively enter this Form.

Cannibalistic Heritage Technique

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Clash, Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Charcoal March of Spiders Form

The martial artist moves her hands in swirling motions, creating a hungry vortex of whirling cobwebs and spiritual pressure and whirling cobwebs to devour an enemy's attack.

To use this Charm, the stylist must have Initiative 20+. She reflexively clashes an attack against her with this vortex as a **decisive** attack. She can do so against attacks made from any range, but she only rolls damage on a successful clash if her attacker is within close range — or, if Rain of Unseen Threads is active, medium range.

If the stylist wins the clash, the vortex engulfs and consumes her attacker's weapon or projectile. Mundane hand-to-hand weapons are destroyed entirely while artifacts are corroded and damaged to the point of being unusable until repaired (**Exalted**, p. 242). If her attacker was unarmed, he must instead choose between accepting a crippling injury (**Exalted**, p. 201) to the limb used to attack or adding his attack roll successes as damage dice to the stylist's clash. If he takes a crippling injury, it doesn't count against the once-per-story limit on doing so.

If Charcoal March of Spiders Form is active, the stylist may choose to combine more than one of her multiple Initiative tracks to determine her clash's damage. She chooses one track to keep, resetting if she succeeds or losing Initiative if she misses; the other tracks she used are expended as if crashed.

Jumping Spider Strike

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Enlightenment

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Charcoal March of Spiders Form

The martial artist bounds forward to strike a distant foe with impossible speed and force, as if the all the tension of fate's tapestry was released through her.

The stylist makes an unblockable **decisive** attack against any enemy she can perceive regardless of distance, even out to extreme range, leaping to whatever range she wishes to attack from in a single monstrous bound. She must have an unobstructed path along which to leap. She strikes with terrible force, adding two dice of damage per range band crossed, maximum ten dice. An enemy incapacitated by this attack is reduced to nothing but blood and dust.

If the stylist uses this Charm from concealment or from extreme range, her target rolls (Perception + Awareness) opposing her attack roll. If he fails, her attack is an ambush (**Exalted**, p. 203).

The stylist can use this Charm outside of combat, prompting a Join Battle roll for all involved parties. She can also use it against inanimate objects and structures, in which case she treats the attack as a feat of demolition with effective Strength 10, rolling (Strength + Martial Arts) with (Essence + range bands) non-Charm successes.

This Charm can only be used once per scene unless reset by successfully defending against an attack from long or extreme range by a nontrivial enemy.

Enlightenment: The stylist may use this Charm to mediate on a character for whom she holds a negative Major or Defining Tie, committing its mote cost indefinitely while she meditates. If that character comes within (Essence) range bands of her, she automatically and reflexively attacks him as above, without needing to perceive him. This is an ambush (**Exalted**, p. 203) unless the enemy was already aware of the Sidereal's location.

Thumbnail Spider March

Cost: 15m, 1wp (+1wp); **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Enlightenment

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Jumping Spider Strike

The martial artist sweeps across the battlefield like the East's migrating thumbnail spiders, striking like thousands or millions of tiny, hungry spiders devouring all they swarm over.

The stylist moves up to two range bands, or three range bands if Dance of the Hungry Spider is active. At the conclusion of her movement, she makes a single undodgeable **decisive** attack roll against each enemy she came within range of at any point during her movement. She rolls

damage separately for each; each attack has (Initiative/2, rounded up) damage dice. This attack can't be clashed, nor can counterattacks be used against it; the death of a single spider doesn't harm the swarm. This counts as the stylist's movement action for the turn.

This Charm can only be used once per scene unless reset when the stylist takes a movement action to come within close range of at least three nontrivial enemies while she has Initiative 20+.

Enlightenment: The stylist's attacks can strike dematerialized enemies. If the stylist is dematerialized — using Unnatural Many-Step Stride or other magic — she can pay a one-Willpower surcharge to strike materialized targets with it.

Water Spider Bite

Cost: —(+5m); **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Enlightenment, Shaping (Soul)

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Charcoal March of Spiders Form

The martial artist's venomous touch paralyzes her victim's Essence, numbing his inner power that she might feast on it.

The stylist can pay a five-mote surcharge when she uses Maw of Dripping Venom to enhance its venom with the following effects:

- Any motes the victim loses to the poison are granted to the stylist. She can't gain more than (Essence) motes per round total, no matter how many victims she has.
- No matter how many successes the poison's victim rolls, its duration can't be reduced below one round.
- While the victim's poisoned, the stylist's attacks against him steal motes equal to the damage roll's 10s. If she crashes him or deals enough **decisive** damage to increase his wound penalty, she steals motes for 9s as well.
- The stylist can use the victim's anima banner to pay the anima costs of her own Charms.

Enlightenment: When an enemy takes aggravated damage from the poison, the stylist's player chooses one of that character's ongoing Charms or other effects to end, awarding the stylist any motes that were committed to that effect as above. Permanent effects can't be negated.

Pattern Spider Touch

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Psyche, Shaping (Body, Fate, Mind)

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Cannibalistic Heritage Technique, Jumping Spider Strike, Water Spider Bite

The martial artist has studied the eight secret motions for weaving the Loom that Asna Firstborn taught her teeming young; through them, she reweaves her enemies' fates.

The stylist makes a gambit against a crashed enemy. Its difficulty is (victim's Essence + Resolve, minimum 6). Success lets her inflict one of the following transformations:

Another Life Venom: The stylist transforms her target into a human of any appearance, though not a duplicate of an existing individual. She can alternatively give him the appearance of a god, demon, elemental, ghost, or other supernatural creature, though this doesn't grant any actual power beyond cosmetic supernatural displays. The stylist's player may briefly describe a backstory and social role for this new person — “a coal-hauler in the city's industrial district,” “a notorious local gossip,” “god of this cairn.” The stylist's will shapes reality through subtle manipulations of probability and alterations to the memories of trivial characters to bring the victim into that role or the nearest feasible equivalent. His memories are suppressed and replaced by constructed memories suitable to his role and backstory that will hold up to at least modest scrutiny. His Intimacies are unchanged, though he may not be able to understand them immediately. If the victim finds evidence his memories have been compromised, he can pay one Willpower to either regain his memory of one scene or regain all memories associated with one of his Intimacies. Once he's spent a total of (stylist's Essence) Willpower this way, his memories are restored in full.

Inner Beast Awakening Venom: The stylist transforms her victim into an animal. His actions use the lower of his or the animal's dice pool (3 dice if it has no listed pool). He also uses its Evasion, Parry, and natural soak if they're worse than his own. He can attack with his animal form's natural weapons and make use of its non-latent special abilities and Merits, subject to the above restriction, but any dice added are Charm dice. His consciousness and intellect become typical for that animal. His memories and Intimacies are unaltered, but he typically loses his understanding of language and his capacity for higher reasoning may be diminished, among other potential effects. He can pay one Willpower to restore his mind for one scene; once he's spent a total of (stylist's Essence) Willpower this way, it's restored for the remainder of his transformation.

People-as-Things Venom: The stylist transforms her victim into an object or other inanimate natural phenomena with roughly the same mass as her victim. A victim typically becomes an object that typically has a similar appearance in some way: a statute, an oak tree that resembles him from a certain perspective, an empty suit of armor, etc. Victims remain conscious and aware of their surroundings but are typically unable to act. Exalted and other puissant beings may find ways to take actions as objects with stunts or clever use of Charms, facing penalties appropriate to their form. If the object is destroyed, the victim lapses into a coma-like state, but can potentially be brought back if it's repaired.

By default, these transformations are permanent, persisting until undone by magic like Order-Affirming Blow (**Exalted**, p. 334). The stylist may choose to set a limited duration for it as well as one or more conditional triggers her victim can satisfy to end the transformation.

Charms that let a character protect themselves from poison, like Immunity to Everything Technique (**Exalted**, p. 379), can be used against Pattern Spider Touch. However, magic that

treats poison can't undo these transformations.

This Charm can only be used once per story unless reset by devouring the soul of an Exalt or Essence 6+ being with Maw of Dripping Venom. It can't be reset by the Dawn Caste anima or similar effects. If the stylist fails to transform her Charm, it doesn't need to be reset, though she can't use it again for the rest of the scene.

Grandmother Spider Mastery

Cost: —(+15m, 1wp); **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Enlightenment

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Pattern Spider Touch

A web of endless invisible filaments surrounds the martial artist as she enters a stance of eightfold victory, seeming to split into many selves as she moves with a speed that transcends space and time.

The stylist can pay a fifteen-mote, one-Willpower surcharge when she uses this style's Form to gain the following benefits:

- Her extra Initiative tracks can be crashed normally, rather than being lost completely upon crash.
- She can flurry this style's Simple Charms with each other and other actions. This includes flurrying Charms that let her make attacks, but she must use a different Initiative track for each Charm's attacks.
- When she makes an attack, she may treat herself as being at any point within short range of her actual location for all purposes, including ranged attacks' Accuracy bonuses, the applicability of cover, whether she is within range for a clash or counterattack, etc. This doesn't let her attack at extreme range.
- When an enemy makes an attack against her, she may treat herself as being at any point within short range of her actual location for all purposes, including ranged attacks' Accuracy bonuses, the applicability of cover, whether she is within range for a clash or counterattack, etc. However, she can't negate an attack outright by "moving" her location to a point beyond its range — in such cases, the attack is still rolled normally.

Enlightenment: In addition to the above effects, the stylist waives the Willpower cost of this style's Charms.

Citrine Poxes of Contagion Style

This style is a contemplation on decay, both causing and reversing it. It was created long ago by the Joybringer and physician Perdurance of Blossoms, who sought aid from the Three Supreme Plagues, Heaven's foremost gods of disease. She seduced languid Kel-Aina, ruler of drunken moth sickness. Sylvi, the Crone of Fire, god of white sun fever, was won over by appeals to her storied pride. The nameless god of the uttermost West who presides over jigsaw organ condition

forbade Perdurance of Blossoms from ever speaking of the favor they demanded, and so it remains unknown.

Understanding disease, injury, and similar ailments as stemming from imbalances in one's Essence, this style's students inflict strange, terrible diseases by imbalancing enemies' Essence and curing maladies by resolving the underlying imbalance they arise from. Students study anatomy and memorize catalogues of diseases and their cures. This foundation undergirds esoteric regimens that hone a stylist's awareness and control of the flow of Essence through their body, until they can exert its full force through a fingertip or a needle's point.

Citrine Poxes of Contagion Weapons: This style's unarmed strikes target multiple pressure points in rapid succession or twist an enemy's limbs to wrench their bones and spine into or out of alignment. It's also compatible with darts and needles.

Armor: This style is incompatible with armor.

Complementary Abilities: Medicine provides foundational knowledge of anatomy and disease and is used with this style's healing techniques.

Nature: Flowing.

Special: Characters with any ten Medicine Charms can learn Citrine Poxes of Contagion style even without the requisite Martial Arts Charms to learn Sidereal styles (p. XX).

The Scripture of Decay
Once, there was a sickly maiden...
who told me this: "You shall know your enemies
when they teach you to forget
what is whole
and what is diseased."

Perfect Reconstruction Method

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Enlightenment

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The martial artist batters her patient's body back into alignment with the patterns of his Essence.

The stylist makes a gambit to heal herself or another character, rolling Join Battle to calculate Initiative if she uses it outside of combat. The Initiative roll's difficulty equals (5 + patient's total levels of damage); no attack roll is necessary unless he's unwilling. Success heals (Medicine + extra successes) levels of non-aggravated damage or converts that many levels of aggravated damage to lethal damage, maximum (her Essence + her Medicine + patient's Essence) levels.

If the stylist knows other Charms that can heal damage or grant temporary health levels to other

characters in combat, she may use them reflexively with this Charm, waiving Willpower costs, to extend their benefits through the gambit as well. If they require a roll, she uses her Initiative roll instead. The stylist likewise waives the Willpower cost of Charms like Instant Treatment Methodology that let her use such Charms in combat.

Spirit-and-Body Purification Touch

Cost: —(Varies); **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Perfect Reconstruction Method

The martial artist strikes with a gentle blow, cleansing a patient's body and spirit as cool rain washes away blood and tears.

Upon purchasing this Charm, the stylist expands Perfect Reconstruction Method with one of the following techniques, letting her forgo levels of healing to treat other ailments or empower her patient in other ways. She can use multiple techniques together. Some techniques require her to pay a surcharge; others require prerequisite techniques.

Essence-Aligning Touch: The stylist grants her patient four motes per level of healing she forgoes.

Will-Tempering Touch (+10m; requires Essence-Aligning Touch): The stylist grants her patient one Willpower per level of healing she forgoes.

Hex Negation Technique (Requires Will-Tempering Touch): The stylist can negate a Shaping effect or a sorcerous curse, like the spell Corrupted Words (**Exalted**, p. 472) by forgoing levels of healing equal to the Essence of the character responsible.

Spiritual Parasite Banishment (Requires Hex Negation Technique) The stylist can banish a possessing spirit by forgoing (its Resolve/2, rounded up) levels of healing.

Trauma-Erasing Touch (Requires Will-Tempering Touch): The stylist can forgo one level of healing to erase a scene's worth of memories that are painful, traumatic, or a source of grief or regret. If her target is unwilling, this fails unless her Initiative roll also beat his Resolve. A character presented with evidence of his erased memories may pay three Willpower to restore a single scene's worth of them.

Impurity-Purging Flow: The stylist can completely purge a disease or poison from her target's system by forgoing levels of healing equal to a disease's morbidity or a poison's remaining duration.

Wound Negation Touch (Requires Impurity-Purging Flow): The stylist can permanently reduce crippling penalties from temporary injuries by one point per level of healing she forgoes; reducing an effect's penalty to zero negates it completely.

This Charm can be repurchased any number of times, each granting another benefit.

Enlightenment: The stylist can also learn the following techniques. Getimians can only use them

while their Essence is Flowing.

Essence Template Restoration (+10m, 1wp; requires Wound Negation Touch): The stylist can heal permanent crippling effects, forgoing two levels per point of penalty for missing digits, a lost eye, a mangled foot, etc.; three levels per point for a severed hand, congenital blindness, organ failure, etc.; or four levels per point for severed limbs, destroyed vital organs, and other grievous maiming.

Psyche-Cleansing Technique (+10m, 1wp; requires Trauma-Erasing Touch): The stylist can lower a Derangement's intensity one step, to a minimum of Minor, by forgoing (its intensity) levels of healing. She can negate a Psyche effect by forgoing of healing equal to the higher of the Essence of the character responsible or the total Willpower cost to resist it.

Feverish Essence Infection

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Enlightenment

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The martial artist has learned ten thousand subtle principles of infection and ten thousand ways in which each of them might be used.

Upon purchasing this Charm, the stylist chooses a supernatural disease — one of the diseases presented with this style, puppeteer's plague (**Exalted**, p. 235), cracked mirror blight (**Arms of the Chosen**, p. 61), or others. The Storyteller can veto disproportionately powerful diseases like the Great Contagion. The sacred diseases of the Three Supreme Plagues — drunken moth sickness, jigsaw organ condition, and white sun fever — are so closely entwined with this style's Essence that any stylist can master them. For other ailments, the stylist must first encounter the disease — either directly or through close interaction with a victim.

When the stylist uses this Charm, she makes a difficulty 3 gambit. Success exposes her victim to the disease. Mortals and trivial characters don't receive a roll against it. Others suffer infection even if their roll succeeds but automatically succeed on their first roll against the disease's morbidity.

This Charm can be repurchased any number of times, each adding a new disease to the stylist's repertoire.

Enlightenment: The stylist may make a damaging **decisive** attack instead of a gambit, inflicting the disease if she deals 3+ levels of damage.

Spiritual Decay

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

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Enlightenment, Uniform

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Feverish Essence Infection

The martial artist understands the true nature of disease — not a malady of blood and flesh, but a disruption in the patterns and flows of Essence.

When the stylist uses Infectious Essence Discharge or other magic that transmits diseases, a victim who fails his opposed roll loses motes equal to his 1s and 2s. Characters without motes lose Willpower instead.

Additionally, the stylist can infect automata, undead, and other beings who're intrinsically immune to disease. This doesn't overcome magic like Immunity to Everything Technique (**Exalted**, p. 379).

Enlightenment: Victims also lose Initiative for their 1s and 2s, which the stylist doesn't gain. If this crashes an enemy, he contracts the disease at Major Intensity.

Citrine Poxes of Contagion Form

Cost: 20m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: Form, Withering-only

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Spirit-and-Body Purification Touch, Spiritual Decay

The martial artist corrupts and scars the world's Essence; a latticework of iron appears above her like scar tissue in the sky, drenched with blood and seawater as she brings forth Iphimedeia, the Revel Outside the Sealing of the Gates.

The stylist gains the following benefits:

- When an enemy comes within short range of her, he must roll against Iphimedeia (p. XX). Success renders him immune to this effect for the scene. Mortals and trivial characters fail automatically.
- When she crashes a diseased enemy, she may increase the intensity of one disease, maximum Defining. Incapacitating an enemy lets her raise a disease's intensity any amount.
- Diseased characters suffer a penalty equal to the highest intensity among diseases on rolls opposing her.
- She's immune to mundane poison and disease and adds (Essence) non-Charms dice on rolls against supernatural ailments. If a disease wouldn't normally allow a roll against it, she rolls at difficulty 5.

Upon learning this form, the stylist adds Iphimedeia to the repertoire of diseases she can inflict with Feverish Essence Infection.

Special activation rules: When the stylist successfully infects a powerful enemy with a disease, she may reflexively enter this Form.

Gentle Touch of the Wicked Hand

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Enlightenment

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Citrine Poxes of Contagion Form

Infusing Essence into pressure points and meridians corrupted by disease, the stylist ignites a conflagration of decay that consumes her victim from within.

The stylist makes a **decisive** attack against a diseased enemy with base damage ([Essence x Intensity] + attack roll extra successes), ignoring Hardness. This doesn't include or reset her Initiative. The stylist need only touch her victim; noticing the attack requires a (Perception + Medicine) roll against a difficulty of her (Manipulation + Medicine). She can make an ambush (**Exalted**, p. 203) without needing to establish concealment as long as her victim is willing to let her touch him.

Enlightenment: The stylist may add her Initiative to the attack's damage, resetting if she hits.

Reset: This Charm can only be used once per scene unless reset by landing a **decisive** attack that resets the stylist's Initiative and then crashing a diseased enemy.

Spiritual Perfection

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Clash, Enlightenment

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Citrine Poxes of Contagion Form

The martial artist's understanding of the many vectors by which her Essence might be corrupted shields her from such afflictions.

The stylist clashes an attempt to inflict a poison, disease, crippling effect, Shaping effect, Psyche effect, possession, or sorcerous curse on her, rolling (Wits + Medicine), adding a free full Excellency (including target number reduction for Sidereals). If the effect is normally unrolled, the opposing character makes an appropriate (Attribute + Ability) roll. Success negates that effect and renders her immune to all further effects of that type for the scene.

Enlightenment: Success also negates all such effects already afflicting the stylist.

Glorious Citrine Protection

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Spiritual Perfection

The martial artist channels the flow of her Essence into a tenfold pattern of harmonious completion.

The stylist can use this Charm after being hit by an attack but before the damage roll, halving the damage she suffers, rounded down. If she used Spiritual Perfection, this Charm's Willpower cost is waived, and she still gains the benefits of a successful clash if she doesn't take damage.

Reset: This Charm can only be used against **decisive** damage once per scene unless reset by going a round without suffering any damage or harmful effects.

Inner Dragon Unbinding

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: Enlightenment, Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Spiritual Perfection

The stylist acts in accordance with the quadrumvirate of redress: four patterns of Essence that overcome restraints on the heart, mind, body, and soul.

The stylist rolls (Stamina + Medicine) to negate any effect she suffers that she could heal with Spirit-and-Body Purification Touch. The roll's difficulty is the Essence of the character responsible, or a 1-5 difficulty for effects not used by a character. Success negates the effect; on failure, she can't use this Charm against that affliction again. In combat, this also counts as a Join Battle roll.

Enlightenment: This roll applies to all such effects the stylist suffers, even those she's not aware of.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by upholding a Major or Defining Intimacy using this style or Medicine.

Flare of Invulnerability

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Dual, Perilous

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Glorious Citrine Protection

The martial artist stirs her Essence into a furious conflagration of life and energy.

The stylist gains Hardness (Essence + Stamina + Medicine) and may use it in place of her soak if it's higher. When determining if her Hardness prevents damage **decisive** damage, her attacker uses only his Initiative, not damage dice from other sources. Against magical attacks that don't include an attacker's Initiative, he uses the lower of his Initiative or the attack's base damage.

This Charm ends if the stylist is crashed or goes a round without spending at least ten motes. In Citrine Poxes of Contagion Form, she need only spend five motes per round.

Reset: Once per scene.

Essence-Shattering Typhoon

Cost: 20m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: Aggravated, Enlightenment, Perilous

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Flare of Invulnerability, Gentle Touch of the Wicked Hand, Inner Dragon Unbinding

The martial artist's fists blur as she pounds them against the air, infecting and shattering reality to unleash a storm of tainted Essence.

The stylist creates a miasma of spiritual decay, an environmental hazard imbued with a disease from Feverish Essence Infection's repertoire, with difficulty 5 and damage 4A/round. It must be resisted with (Stamina + Resistance), and damaged characters are exposed to the disease. Even inanimate matter is infected, with effects determined by the Storyteller. It extends out to short range; at the end of each turn after the one she used this Charm on, the hazard's range increases by one band. This Charm ends if the stylist takes a non-reflexive actions, moves or is moved, or is crashed.

If left uninterrupted, the environmental hazard expands by one mile per hour, maximum (Essence) miles. At this point, the Storyteller need not make individual rolls for trivial characters caught in the storm; he can simply narrate the mass deaths and panic that result. A difficulty 2 (Perception + Occult) roll lets a character discern the storm is actively emanating from a source at its center.

Enlightenment: While using this Charm, the stylist can sustain Flare of Invulnerability without needing to spend motes and waives the Willpower costs of Glorious Citrine Protection and Spiritual Perfection.

Reset: Once per story unless reset by accomplishing a major character or story goal using this style or Medicine.

Supernatural Diseases

The following are among the maladies that Citrine Poxes stylists might wield.

Drunken Moth Sickness

Those who consume food or drink within which a spirit's been bound risk contracting drunken moth sickness. The spirit's thoughts — or those of a Citrine Poxes stylist — infect the victim's mind with one of the spirit's Principles — or one of a Citrine Poxes stylist's.

The victim counts as having that Principle at this disease's intensity. Drunken moth sickness has virulence and morbidity (spirit or stylist's Essence + 2) and an interval of one day. It's a Psyche effect as well as a disease; rolls against it use (Wits + Integrity) instead of (Stamina + Resistance). It can also be cured by exorcism, using the spirit or stylist's Resolve. Medical treatment is useless unless enhanced by magic.

Minor: The victim can't regain Willpower from sleep if she's acted against the Principle the day before.

Major: As above, and when the victim has the opportunity to act on the Principle, the Storyteller may force him to do so unless he enters a Decision Point and cites an Intimacy of equal or greater intensity to spend one Willpower. This counts as a botch toward the limit the disease can inflict (**Exalted**, p. 234).

Defining: As above, and when the victim acts in a way that aligns with the Principle, the Storyteller chooses one of his Intimacies to weaken by one step. He can spend one Willpower to resist a Defining Intimacy being weakened.

Death: The victim's mind is emptied of all but the disease's Principle, suppressing his other Intimacies and preventing him from taking any action that doesn't directly advance the Principle. Death typically results from dehydration or similar self-neglect. This can kill even the Exalted, though they may be more resilient to deprivation than mortal victims.

Jigsaw Organ Condition

This bizarre disease occurs in nature, but it's vanishingly rare. The Convention on Pestilence has documented a total of forty cases in the Second Age and has no conclusive theory as to its cause. It fractures the victim's Essence, weakening his body's physical integrity and coherence. The least harm can sever limbs or cut loose organs, but such wounds are trifling concerns. A severed limb stuck back on its stump will regrow and reattach; a swallowed organ slides back into place.

A detached body part doesn't bleed, deteriorate, or decay; neither does the flesh from which it was expelled. Reattaching it is a miscellaneous action. While characters suffer ill effects from losing vital organs like hearts and lungs, this isn't fatal as long as the organ remains intact. Attacking a detached body part is treated as attacking the victim for all purposes, including him being able to use his Charms to defend.

Jigsaw organ condition has virulence 5, morbidity 4, and an interval of one day. Medical treatment is useless unless enhanced by magic. It's a Shaping effect that alters the body as well as a disease.

Minor: The first time the victim takes **decisive** damage each scene, he suffers a crippling injury (**Exalted**, p. 201) commensurate to the damage dealt, though it doesn't reduce damage. Injuries inflicted by this disease don't count against the once-per-scene limit. Detached body parts heal instantly upon being reattached.

Major: As above, and when the victim suffers enough **decisive** damage to increase his wound penalty, he suffers a commensurate crippling injury. Reattached body parts don't heal until the

current scene ends.

Defining: As above, and the victim suffers a crippling injury when he's crashed. Use half the **withering** damage, rounded up, instead of **decisive** damage to determine the injury's severity. Reattached body parts don't heal until the victim's received a full night's rest.

Death: The victim loses all physical coherence, sloughing off skin, muscle, organs, and bone until his body has fallen apart completely. This incapacitates him but isn't fatal: his tissues remain alive and capable of reattachment, but no amount of care can keep up with the pace of his deterioration. The Exalted and similarly resilient beings never reach this stage.

White Sun Fever

Those who spend too long meditating on the numinous, the transcendent, and the infinite are at risk of this rare fever of the soul. It festers in its victim's Essence, posing the greatest threat to the most powerful. The hallucinations, disorientation, and spiritual malaise it causes grow stronger as its victim spends Essence, seeping deeper into their soul.

White sun fever has virulence and morbidity (victim's Essence + 2) and a one-day interval. Medical treatment is useless unless enhanced by magic.

Minor: Once per day, the victim loses one Willpower when he spends five or more motes in an instant, suffering exacerbated symptoms.

Major: As above, and hallucinations at the edge of the victim's peripheral vision inflict a -1 penalty on rolls requiring intense focus, concentration, or attention to detail and -1 Resolve. Spending five or motes in an instant exacerbates this, increasing both penalties by one for the rest of the scene, maximum (victim's Essence).

Defining: As above, and the victim's penalty is added to the mote cost of all magic he uses. Effects without mote costs are unaffected.

Death: The victim's Essence rages unrestrained, destroying his body from within while his mind is locked in a ceaseless hallucination, a fever-dream that lasts until his Essence has fully consumed him. Mortals never reach this stage.

Iphimedeia, the Revel Outside the Sealing of the Gates.

Iphimedeia's only known vector in the modern age is Citrine Poxes of Contagion style. Sidereals debate its nature. Evidence of a mysterious Fourth Supreme Plague? A weapon of the enemies of the gods? A terrible secret hidden in the Essence of all things? It warps and melts its victim's flesh and drives them to feverish dancing. If someone who wishes to have a child is infected and subsequently recovers, his player may choose to have him become pregnant, regardless of whether he could normally bear children.

Iphimedeia's virulence and morbidity is equal its victim's Resolve; the greater his composure and self-restraint, the harder the sickness is to resist. It has a one-day interval. Medical treatment is useless unless enhanced by magic. Its flesh-warping symptoms are a Shaping effect, while the compulsion to dance is a Psyche effect.

Minor Symptom: The victim suffers one die of aggravated damage each day, ignoring Hardness, as her flesh distorts. She adds (Intensity) successes on dance-based Performance rolls. If he can dance without facing any meaningful risks or consequences, he must do so, requiring him to flurry to take any action other than dancing. He may pay one Willpower to resist for a day.

Major Symptom: As above, but the victim's flesh is noticeably warped, imposing a -1 crippling penalty on physical rolls. The damage it inflicts increases to (victim's Resolve) dice; the first roll occurring upon reaching Major Intensity. The compulsion to dance now applies even when doing so is dangerous, even in combat.

Defining Symptom: As above, but the victim's body is half-melted and constantly deteriorating. The crippling penalty increases to -3 and the damage inflicted increases to (victim's Resolve + 5) dice; the first roll occurring upon reaching Defining intensity. Spending Willpower only lets him reduce the urge to dance for a scene, not a day.

Death: The victim's warped and distorted flesh finally slips free as he completes one final dance, shaking off globs of skin and muscle until all that remains is his spasming skeleton.

Emerald Gyre of Aeons Style

Jehu Khor aged a thousand years in a single blow from the Prince of Hours, and glimpsed the shape of eternity thereby. He spent the remainder of his life both creating this style to express this understanding and authoring the *Tractate of Eternity*. The text is infamously impenetrable, equal parts metaphysical treatise, theory of history, and mystical allegory. It has no end and no beginning, endlessly recursive. Interpretations vary wildly: Raxevi Alzira views the *Tractate* as an allegory of the events of Creation's history; Countervalent Raven sees it as a guide to escaping the prison of eternity.

Students of this style consume heavy quantities of hashish, salvia, and other drugs that alter their perception of time before practicing circle walking, breathing exercises, and weapon drills. They also devote much time to the study of Khor's text, or at least their teacher's explanation of it. One traditionally concludes their training by penning their own exegesis, creating a body of interpretation, critiques, and commentary as dense as the text itself.

Emerald Gyre of Aeons Weapons: This style specializes in striking while moving, using open-palm blows and spinning kicks whose force comes from the stylist's spiraling body movements. It's also compatible with kusarigama, meteor hammers (p. XX), nunchaku (p. XX), rope darts (p. XX), staves, seven-section staves, and wind-and-fire wheels.

Armor: This style is incompatible with armor.

Complementary Abilities: Stylists use Lore to study this style's foundational text and to understand the nature of time so that they may manipulate it.

Nature: Flowing.

Kusarigama

A kusarigama is a sickle with a weighted chain attached to the base of its handle or blade. The chain's weighted end is held in one hand to strike and entangle, while the sickle, held in the offhand, is used to deal killing blows to grappled enemies.

Medium (Accuracy +2, Damage +9, Defense +1, Overwhelming 1)

Tags: Lethal, Martial Arts, Disarming, Flexible, Grappling, Reaching, Two-Handed

Futures Best Avoided

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Clash, Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Winding her mind through eternity's gyre, the stylist remembers that which is yet to come,

The stylist can use this Charm when she would be disadvantaged due to a surprising event or something she hasn't noticed: facing a surprise attacking, failing an Awareness roll to notice a trap, a thief sneaking past her bedchamber while she's asleep, etc. It can be used against ambushes, though this doesn't let her use other magic to enhance the roll.

The stylist rolls (Intelligence + Lore) against an enemy's opposed roll or a peril's difficulty adding a free full Excellency. If successful, she foresees — or rather, remembers — this eventuality in time to defend against it as though she'd noticed the threat in advance. Against attacks, this counts as a clash.

This Charm can also be used against threats that are more narrative in nature than an attack or trap or that would disadvantage the stylist even if she succeeds on her roll or doesn't get a chance to roll. The stylist rolls as above, opposing an appropriate (Attribute + Ability) roll by the relevant character — or the character with the highest such pool, if there are multiple characters. If successful, her player may reveal a preparation she's taken for this, which must be something she could have feasibly done in the last few minutes with the materials available to her. She might reveal she's awoken everyone in her camp just before a midnight raid by bandits, or that she's wearing armor under her clothes in anticipation of a trusted friend's betrayal.

Striking Through Eternity

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Futures Best Avoided

The stylist's blow echoes through the future, striking at multiple points along her enemy's progression through time.

The stylist makes a **withering** or **decisive** attack against an enemy. If it hits, the attack is repeated at the end of the round as a surprise attack, inflicting a -2 Defense penalty. It benefits from all magic used to enhance the original attack, but the stylist can't use additional effects to benefit it. **Decisive** attacks have the same base damage as the initial attack and don't reset the stylist's Initiative. She doesn't need to still be within range of the enemy when the attack recurs.

Reset: This Charm can only be used once per scene unless reset by landing a **decisive** attack at

12+ Initiative against a crashed enemy.

Then Is Now

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Enlightenment, Shaping (Object)

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

All things revolve through eternity's gyre, but the stylist has learned to spin back history.

The stylist rolls (Intelligence + Lore) to revert an inanimate object that fits within a single range band to a state it held in the past. If the object is being held, worn, or used by someone, this is a difficulty 3 unarmed gambit against him.

The stylist can either revert the object to its condition at the time of a previous interaction she's had with it or by a set amount of time. She could repair a broken weapon, revert a door to a time before it was locked, or revert an ancient skeleton to a fresh corpse to determine its cause of death.

The difficulty of the roll depends on the amount of time unwound: difficulty 3 for up to a year, difficulty 5 for up to a decade, difficulty 7 for up to a century, or difficulty 10 for any amount of time. The difficulty can't exceed the difficulty to destroy the object with a feat of demolition, at which point the stylist can revert the object to its constituent components before it was created. She can't unmake artifacts, but she can revert them to damaged states.

Enlightenment: Once per day, the stylist can use this Charm on an objects or structure that fit within three range bands.

The Perpetual Moment

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Enlightenment

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Then Is Now

The stylist slows time's flow, trapping her enemy a half-step behind her in eternity's gyre.

The stylist makes a **decisive** attack against a lower-Initiative enemy. If its damage equals or exceeds (target's Integrity or Resistance), he suffers the following effects:

- Acting on his turn requires him to flurry to take a single action. He can still take actions that couldn't normally be flurried, like using Simple Charms.
- All of his movement counts as being through difficult terrain.

- His onslaught penalty doesn't refresh at the start of his turn — instead, it's reduced by one.

This effect ends at the end of the scene or if the target crashes or incapacitates the stylist.

Enlightenment: The target's onslaught penalty doesn't decrease on his turn.

Emerald Gyre of Aeons Form

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: Dual, Form

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Striking Through Eternity, The Perpetual Moment

The stylist's circle walks in a pattern that seems to defy geometry, trailing echoes of her past and future selves as she traces out the shape that Jehu Koor witnessed in the depths of time.

The stylist gains the following benefits:

- She may pay one Willpower to flurry two Simple Martial Arts Charms, or Charms that are compatible with martial arts attacks. If she flurries two Simple Charms that both let her make attacks, she can combine their effects in a single attack as long as they aren't incompatible in any way. (This doesn't apply to Charms that let her make multiple attacks or area-of-effect attacks).
- She ignores all penalties from flurries that include at least one Lore or Martial Arts action.
- Her attacks add dice equal to her target's onslaught penalty. If this exceeds her dice limit, the excess is added as dice of decisive or post-soaking withering damage
- Her enemies' onslaught penalties apply on movement actions opposed by her.

Special activation rules: When the stylist increases an enemy's onslaught penalty to -4 or higher, she may reflexively enter this Form.

The Scripture of Eternity

One day, there'll be a maiden...

Who'll slip free of Time's clutches
and stand outside eternity.

But try as she might,
she won't be able to escape
her memories

or her hopes for the future.

Perceiving the nature of her prison,
She'll see how many times she'll escaped
and how many times she failed.

“Do you understand now?” asked Time,
“There is no end and no beginning.”

Battered by Eternity’s Tides

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Dual, Enlightenment

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Emerald Gyre of Aeons Form

The force of countless blows strikes not as they land, but all at once, sending enemies spiraling away from the stylist as they impact.

The stylist makes a **withering** or **decisive** attack. If she crashes her target or 3+ **decisive** damage, the impact of the blow is held in abeyance, as is that of subsequent attacks against him. (They still deal damage normally). At the end of the round, the enemy experiences each impact simultaneously sending him one range band away from the stylist’s position when she used this Charm, plus an additional range band for each other attack that’s hit him since then, maximum long range.

If the enemy collides with an object or surface, he suffers damage as per a fall of the same range (**Exalted**, p. 232) — or, if only sent back to close range, suffers (Strength) dice of **decisive** damage, ignoring Hardness This is normally bashing, although some objects may inflict lethal damage. The total damage successes also count as a feat of demolition to destroy the impacted object or surface, adding +1 to the stylist’s effective Strength to determine what feats she can accomplish for each range band the enemy was flung back.

Alternatively, this Charm can be used purely for a feat of demolition, rolling (Strength + [Athletics or Martial Arts]) with a free full Excellency, adding +5 to her effective Strength to determine what feats she can accomplish. She can attempt feats of strength that would normally be impossible for her size and leverage, letting her target objects or portions of structures extending one range band beyond what she could normally accomplish. With Essence 5, this increases by one range band per five extra successes.

Enlightenment: This can knock an enemy out to (Essence) range bands. Collision damage can’t exceed that for a long-range fall.

Doomed to Repeat

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Counterattack, Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Emerald Gyre of Aeons Form

The stylist intertwines her enemy's failures in the present with the mistakes to be made in his future.

The stylist can use this Charm after someone she can perceive fails a roll, making a special (Intelligence + Lore) counterattack opposed his (Wits + [Integrity or Resistance]). If successful, he must repeat that action on his next turn (or repeat it immediately, outside of combat). He must target the same character, use the same Charms, and so on — for instance, if he fails an attempt to seduce a merchant, he repeats the exact same words. He can still flurry the action normally.

If changed circumstances make it impossible to repeat the action precisely, the enemy must repeat as much as possible. If the target of a failed attack has moved out of range, he may repeat the attack against a different enemy. If the enemy no longer has enough motes to pay the cost of all Charms used on the first action, he must use as many as possible on the second.

Reset: This Charm can't be used against the same character more than once per scene.

Lotus Labyrinth Durance

Cost: 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Enlightenment, Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Doomed to Repeat

Revealing the endless coils of eternity, the stylist imprisons her foe in an endless succession of a single day.

The stylist makes a gambit to impart a lesson unto an enemy, represented by an Intimacy of her choice. Its difficulty is her target's (Essence + base Resolve), but it's reduced by his onslaught penalty at the time she attacks. If successful, her enemy bears witness to the shape of eternity: in the time it takes him to blink, he relives the past day up until the moment of being struck, at which point he returns to the beginning of the day.

If the enemy chooses to internalize the stylist's lesson as a Defining Intimacy, he emerges from this unscathed. If he rejects it, the endless succession ends only when his will is broken, causing him to lose all Willpower and fall to Initiative 0. The stylist gains all Initiative he gains this way. Afterwards, his memories of the repeated day fade, preventing him from recalling specific details about it.

Alternatively, this Charm can be used to train a student, letting him incur experience debt (p. XX) to learn a single Charm or spell whose prerequisites he meets or up to (stylist's Essence) dots of social or Mental Attributes, Abilities, or specialties. This can't confer Charms, spells, or specialties the stylist doesn't know or raise his traits above the stylist's own. She can teach Charms she's chosen for Histories Yet Unwritten without needing to use it.

Enlightenment: When using this Charm for training, the stylist's student can learn Charms, spells, and specialties that she doesn't know and raise his trait minimums above hers. In order to

learn a spell, he must have been able to feasibly access a teacher or record of it within the repeated span of time.

Histories Yet Unwritten

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Enlightenment

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: Lotus Labyrinth Durance

Contemplating who she is and who she may become, the stylist takes on the power and the pain of her future.

Upon learning this Charm, the stylist's player chooses five Martial Arts Charm or Charms compatible with Martial Arts attacks or parries. She must meet their prerequisites, but can use the Charms she picks to meet the prerequisites for others chosen with this Charm.

Using this Charm causes the stylist to experience a flood of memories and emotions from a possible future self, gaining access to up to (Essence) of these Charms for five motes each. However, this communion with her future self changes who she is in the present — she must change one of her Major or Defining Intimacies in a way that reflects a profound change that might happen in her future. For instance, she might change a Tie of love to a Circlemate to one of heartbreak.

The stylist can go into experience debt (p. XX) to learn a Charm she's chosen for Histories Yet Unwritten. The training time necessary is divided by her (Essence + Lore). If she learns one of the chosen — either by going into debt or paying experience normally — she chooses another Charm to replace it.

Enlightenment: The stylist may choose her Exalt type's native Charms for Histories Yet Unwritten even if they aren't compatible with Martial Arts. Once per story, she can use this Charm during downtime to access a qualifying Charm that she hasn't chosen for it.

The Unwinding Gyre

Cost: 10m, 3i, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Enlightenment, Perilous, Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Lotus Labyrinth Durance

Sighting along the flow of time, the stylist severs a course of events from its cause.

The stylist can use this Charm after an enemy succeeds on an action, rolling (Intelligence + Lore) against his roll's successes. If the action was unrolled, he rolls an appropriate (Attribute +

Ability) pool. If the stylist succeeds, the consequences of that action: an attack deals no damage, movement is reversed, a drawn weapon returns to its sheath, an influence roll has no effect. The enemy isn't refunded any costs he paid as part of that effect. This can't be used against actions that affect no one but the enemy, like an Awareness roll to notice something, an introduce fact roll, or using a Simple Charm that confers a benefit on him without affecting others.

Alternatively, the stylist can use this Charm to undo a similar occurrence that wasn't caused by a character: a field catching flame, a building collapsing, Wyld mutation, etc. She rolls against the difficulty of an environmental hazard or similar effect, or the difficulty it would have taken to stop the event from occurring if there isn't one associated with it, maximum 10.

If the stylist uses Futures Best Avoided against an ambush, she can use this Charm to defend if the attack hits.

Enlightenment: This Charm can be used to undo actions with no external effect.

Reset: Once per scene.

Today Is Tomorrow

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Enlightenment, Perilous, Uniform

Duration: Until next turn

Prerequisite Charms: Histories Yet Unwritten, The Unwinding Gyre

Walking the coiling path of time, the stylist puts the distance of seconds between herself and her foes.

If the stylist is hit by an attack or suffers from another harmful power, its effects doesn't take place immediately — instead, it's delayed until the end of the round. This includes Psyche effects, but not other social influence. She doesn't suffer any effects used by characters she crashes or incapacitates before the end of the round.

If the stylist crashes or incapacitates the enemy who used one of the delayed effects, that effect is negated entirely.

Enlightenment: The stylist can negate an effect by landing an attack that deals 5+ **withering** damage or 3+ **decisive** damage to the enemy who used it.

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by negating a delayed effect used by an enemy whose strength is comparable to or greater than the stylist's.

The Moment That Is Murder

Cost: 30m, 10i, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Battered by Eternity's Tides, Today Is Tomorrow

Moving with a speed beyond that of time itself, the stylist this style's ultimate killing art, a technique that Jehu Koor forbade his disciples to use.

The stylist makes a **decisive** attack against any number of enemies she can perceive within medium range, blurring between them all in a split-second, ending her movement anywhere within medium range of her starting point. This has a base damage of (Initiative/2) against each enemy. Trivial characters are hit automatically and slain instantly.

Against enemies whose onslaught penalty equals or exceeds their Essence, this attack is unblockable and undodgeable for them. If it exceeds their Essence by three or more, the attack becomes an ambush for them.

Reset: Once per scene, unless reset by gaining 20+ Initiative in a single tick.

Obsidian Shards of Infinity Style

One morning, as the philosopher-assassin Ei Zou trimmed his whiskers while waiting for his tea to steep, he saw himself in his mirror and was enlightened. He had no words with which to express his understanding of the infinite; rather, his teaching was shaped like a knife. This is Obsidian Shards of Infinity style. It is a contemplation of the interplay of choice and possibility, of reality and its reflections. It is thus a killer's art, for every decision murders countless futures.

The only way to learn this style is to face one of its practitioners; no student or victim of Ei Zou has ever surpassed him in that. Students cultivate insight, imagination, and Essence by contemplating koans, navigating mirror-filled labyrinths, and undergoing prolonged sensory deprivation. They must be ever vigilant, for their teacher might attack at any time. Some Sidereals follow Ei Zou's practice of ambushing those in whom he saw potential, conferring enlightenment with a knife's edge.

In battle, the Obsidian Shards stylist breathes with a steady rhythm, is constantly aware of all possible angles of attack, and makes no unnecessary movement. Every mirror is a weapon to them; thus, they keep their blades well-polished and choose wisely the sites of their ambushes. Many a boudoir

Obsidian Shards of Infinity Weapons: This style emphasizes knifehand strikes, often delivered two-handed; rapid successions of kicks, and joint locks. It's compatible with khatars, sais, and knives, which are traditionally dual wielded.

Armor: This style is incompatible with armor.

Complementary Abilities: Stealth is a significant part of this style, befitting its creator.

Nature: Still.

The First Koan

Ei Zou asked his shadow, "What is the shape of reality?"

His shadow said, "I'm hungry. Why don't you stop asking questions and find me something to eat?"

Ei Zou was struck by a realization.

Ripple in the Silvered Glass

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only, Enlightenment

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Perception is inextricable from reality; space and time are illusions obscuring the truth.

The stylist can use this Charm on her turn to reveal that a character within medium range of her has actually been somewhere within short range of his apparent location all along. Any appearances to the contrary were but a trick of perspective. Against unwilling characters, this requires a difficulty 3 gambit with (Perception + Martial Arts), opposed by their (Manipulation + Integrity) roll. This doesn't count as her attack for the round, but she can only use it once per turn.

If the stylist can see a target in a reflective surface, she can use this Charm on him as long as he's within (Essence) range bands.

Enlightenment: Upon winning Join Battle, the stylist can use this Charm any number of times and without needing gambits against unwilling targets, waiving the Willpower cost of uses past the first.

A Likeness of Absence

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 4, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only, Enlightenment, Mute, Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Ripple in the Silvered Glass

Consider: There are many kinds of nothingness.

After a **decisive** attack roll against her, but before the damage roll, the stylist can use this Charm to roll (Initiative + current temporary Willpower), negating levels of damage equal to her successes. Uncountable damage is negated without needing a roll or resetting Initiative.

If the attack deals no damage, the stylist shatters into black glass as reality recognizes a new possibility for her location. She reappears somewhere within short range and may reflexively roll Stealth to establish concealment. This counts as defending against the attack.

The reflective shards of glass are a one-time environmental hazard with difficulty (Perception) and damage (Essence, maximum 5) against all characters — friend or foe — within close range of the stylist's original apparent location.

Enlightenment: This Charm's Willpower cost is waived against enemies who are currently suffering Derangements, Psyche effects, or visibility-based penalties.

Reset: Once per scene, unless reset by successfully establishing concealment against all enemies and then making a surprise attack that crashes or deals 3+ **decisive** damage to a nontrivial enemy.

Black Shards Fall Like Ice

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Enlightenment

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: A Likeness of Absence

Every choice creates the future that follows it — but sometimes, all choices lead to the same inevitable outcome.

The stylist makes ([lower of Essence or Perception] + 1) undodgeable **decisive** attacks against a single enemy, seeming to multiply into countless reflections that strike from every possible angle. Each attack has base damage (Perception); she divides her Initiative evenly among them, rounded up, to determine their total damage. Each ignores Hardness and Defense bonuses from full defenses and light or heavy cover. If there's any possible angle from which an enemy behind full cover could be attacked, she can do so, though he receives +3 non-Charm Defense. The defend other action and similar effects can't protect characters from this attack unless enhanced by magic capable of defending against unblockable and undodgeable attacks.

Once all attacks are complete, the stylist appears anywhere she chooses within close range of her target as the reflections shatter into reflective black glass. This is a one-time environmental hazard with difficulty (Perception) and damage (Essence, maximum 5) against all characters—friend or foe — within close range of her victim, except the stylist.

Enlightenment: Non-Excellency Charms need only have their cost paid once to apply to all attacks the stylist makes.

Vanished Within the Glass

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Until the grapple is released

Prerequisite Charms: Ripple in the Silvered Glass

There are no boundaries, save those created by perception.

The stylist makes a grapple gambit against an enemy within close range of a reflective surface that's at least as large as he is. Charms that increase the distance the stylist can throw a grappled enemy increase the range from which she can trap him in a reflective surface for the grapple's duration. If successful, she traps him within that surface. While trapped, he can perceive the outside world and speak with characters in it, but has no physical presence. The stylist is capable

of attacking him by striking at the mirror.

Each turn, the trapped enemy can attempt to escape the mirror, making a difficulty (stylist's Essence) roll using (Mental Attribute + Occult) to find a way out or (Strength + Athletics) to make one. Success removes one round of grapple control, or two rounds with 3+ extra successes.

He can also be freed by using a feat of demolition to destroy the mirror, but the difficulty to do is increased by (Essence), even if it normally wouldn't require a roll. Breaking the mirror from the outside causes him to suffer five dice of **decisive** lethal damage, ignoring Hardness — which the stylist and her allies are free to take advantage of.

Obsidian Shards of Infinity Form

Cost: 25m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: Clash, Dual, Form, Mute

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Black Shards Fall Like Ice, Vanished Within the Glass

Look upon the infinite, and grasp enlightenment like a knife.

The stylist gains the following benefits:

- Once per round, she can clash an attack against her with a **decisive** attack. If she was in concealment, she can reflexively roll Stealth to reestablish it. She can't clash unexpected attacks.
- Her appearance is indistinct and amorphous, more reflection than flesh, inflicting a -3 penalty on attacks against her. This counts as a darkness-based penalty.
- She can attack enemies within medium range by striking a surface they're reflected in. If there's a reflective surface within close range of the enemy, she can instead attack him through any reflective surface. These becomes surprise attacks, inflicting -2 Defense.
- Her eyes become black and glassy, granting a bonus dot of Perception, which can raise it above 5. Unlike with most bonus dots, this is counted by any Obsidian Shards Charms that use her Perception. She ignores penalties from darkness or excessive light and can't be blinded by magic.

Special Activation Rules: When the stylist establishes concealment against all enemies, she may reflexively enter this Form.

The Second Koan

One day, Ei Zou told his shadow, "I'm sick of you watching me. I'm going to kill you."

His shadow asked, "How can you kill me when you don't even know how much I weigh?"

Ei Zou agreed and went to find scales.

Glimpse of Infinity

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Enlightenment, Psyche

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Obsidian Shards of Infinity Form

Those who cling to their selfhood blind themselves to infinity.

The stylist strikes her target's own perception of himself, a **decisive** attack opposing the higher of his Defense or Resolve. Appropriate Intimacies can bolster his Resolve against this. It ignores Hardness and does not deal damage; instead, each success on the damage roll causes the enemy to lose one Willpower. The stylist resets to base Initiative as usual.

If the stylist's damage roll successes beat her target's Willpower or if he's depleted of all temporary Willpower, his mind is flooded with visions of other lives he might have lived, until he can no longer tell which life is real:

- He gains a Defining Principle of "I'm not sure who I am." It supports all Psyche effects used against him. It can't be weakened or altered by any means, except as below.
- He suffers a -3 penalty on mental rolls, social rolls that involve his identity or history, and Willpower rolls against Derangement.
- Whenever his memory of his past becomes relevant — meeting an old friend, recounting a story his mother told him, trying to remember who his spouse is — he must roll (Wits + Integrity) at difficulty (stylist's Perception + 3). On a failed roll, he instead remembers the details of a possible life, determined by the Storyteller.

Some characters are especially susceptible to this: Getimians, whose true lives never happened; people suffering Derangements, Psyche effects, or other magic that impede their ability to tell what's real; and the Fair Folk, whose identities are supremely mutable. Such characters halve their base Resolve against both against the attack roll and to determine if they suffer the Psyche effect.

When a victim succeeds on a roll to remember his true past, learns something important about himself that he'd forgotten, or has some experience that affirms his true identity, he may pay three Willpower to weaken the instilled Principle by one step. Once this Principle has been fully eroded, the Psyche effect ends. He gradually regains any forgotten memories over the next few months, though he won't forget memories of his other lives.

Enlightenment: If the stylist is within close range of a reflective surface showing her target, she can use this Charm by striking at him, making the attack unblockable and undodgeable.

Shattered Self Duality

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 4

Type: Simple

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Glimpse of Infinity

Nothing exists in itself; reality is defined by its reflection.

The stylist manifests her reflection within close range of herself. Its appearance is almost identical to hers, save for subtle evidence of it having lived a different life, such as a missing tattoo, a scar, or a lack of laugh lines. If there's a reflective surface that's at least as large as the stylist is within long range, she may have her reflection emerge from it instead.

This has the following effects:

- She and the reflection are treated as a single character, sharing all traits, except for their health track. The reflection has (Essence + 3) –0 levels.
- Her player can take actions through either her or her reflection (or both, with a flurry), subject to the usual rules on how many actions she can take in a turn.
- If she flurries one of her actions with one of her reflection's actions, she ignores flurry penalties and can combine two of the same action, except for attacks and Shape Sorcery rolls.
- If she takes a reflexive move action, both she and her reflection can move.
- She waives Black Shards Fall Like Ice's Willpower cost.
- Neither she nor her reflection appear in mirrors.

If the stylist's reflection is incapacitated, it shatters into black glass, reappearing after a day. Until then, the stylist can't use this Charm.

Special activation rules: The stylist can use this Charm reflexively when she uses this style's Form.

Draw Forth Every Shard

Cost: —(+5m); **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Dual, Perilous

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Shattered Self Duality

Shatter what is, and reveal all that could be.

The stylist may pay a five-mote surcharge when she uses Shattered Self Duality to manifest countless reflections, forming a battle group of one. She gains the follow benefits:

- She gains Size (Essence/2, round up) and Magnitude (10 + Size). She doesn't have Drill or Might and can still use Charms.
- She adds (Size) dice on attack rolls and **withering** damage rolls.
- She adds +(Size) soak.

- She can make both **withering** and **decisive** area attacks and engage gambits (**Exalted**, pp. 208-209). On **withering** attacks, only the highest damage roll awards Initiative. On **decisive** attacks, she divides her Initiative evenly among all hit enemies (rounding up) to determine the damage rolled against them. Area attacks are incompatible with Simple Charms.
- She has (10 + Size) Magnitude. This is separate from her health track, representing the destruction of her reflections. Each time she loses a dot of Size, she rolls (Wits + Martial Arts) instead of making a rout check. On a failed roll, this Charm ends, and she suffers a level of unpreventable lethal damage.
- She can't benefit from command actions or Charms that specifically enhance battle groups.

The stylist still waives Black Shards Fall Like Ice's Willpower cost and doesn't appear in mirrors, but doesn't gain any other benefits of Shattered Self Duality's base effect.

Reset: Once per scene.

Splintered Ego Nemesis

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Enlightenment

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Shattered Self Duality

Not all possibilities can coexist. Choose carefully which ones you let survive.

The stylist rolls a (Perception + Martial Arts) gambit against an enemy within short range of a reflective surface that's at least as large as he is. The gambit's difficulty is the higher of her target's Essence or base Resolve. If successful, she draws her enemy's reflection forth from the mirror to fight him. Its appearance mirrors the target's, but has some subtle difference.

The reflection's traits are identical to the target's (including how many motes, Initiative, Willpower, undamaged health levels, etc. it has). It has copies of all artifacts and other equipment the target possesses. It has a Defining Tie of hatred toward him, a Defining Tie of loyalty toward the stylist, and no other Intimacies. Its sole goal in combat is to kill the target — while it will act in self-preservation, it won't attack other enemies, help the stylist or her allies, or the like.

Once the scene ends, the reflection and its equipment shatter into reflective black glass. Equipment taken from it likewise shatters into glass unless retrieved by the next round's end. The target doesn't appear in mirrors until then. If the reflection is incapacitated, the target doesn't regain it until the story ends. Mortals never regain them.

Enlightenment: This Charm's duration becomes indefinite. The stylist must pay one Willpower each subsequent day to maintain it.

Reset: Once per scene.

Echoes of Infinity

Cost: —(+5m, 1wp); **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Draw Forth Every Shard, Splintered Ego Nemesis

Embody all possibilities, commit to none.

The stylist may pay a five-mote, one-Willpower surcharge when she uses this style's Form to gain the following benefits:

- She gains a second bonus dot of Perception.
- When attacking enemies through their reflection, she can strike out to (Essence) range bands away.
- The Form and this style's other Charms are Mute.
- When she uses the Form to clash an attack, she may reflexively use Glimpse of Infinity, Splintered Ego Nemesis, or Vanished Within the Glass instead of making a normal attack, waiving their Willpower cost.

Breathing on the Black Mirror

Cost: 20m, 2wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Echoes of Infinity

Reality is a lie. Perception is a lie. The only truth is that which you choose.

The stylist rolls her Initiative at a difficulty equal to the highest number of undamaged health levels possessed by any enemy. If she succeeds, combat ends as the crossroads of possibility unfold before her. The Storyteller and each other player can each propose a plausible outcome for the battle that relates to one of the stylist's Intimacies, or another character's Intimacy that's directly relevant to the battle. Each proposed outcome must carry some meaningful consequence or cost that the stylist must accept, rather than giving an unconditional victory — except for the Storyteller, who can offer unconditional victory. Conversely, proposals in which the stylist is defeated or is unable to accomplish his goals must bring some benefit or reward commensurate to that setback.

Example outcomes include:

- Just as the stylist seems to be on the brink of defeat, the tide is turned by the arrival of her beloved son and his reinforcements — but he'll suffer a grievous, life-threatening injury.

- The fight ends in a draw as an even greater danger appears. The stylist and her enemies join forces against it, in accordance with her Principle of “The enemy of my enemy is my friend.”
- As she pursues her foe through his fortress-manse, the stylist comes across her trusted Circlemate, whom she came her to rescue — but in the time it takes to free them, her foe will escape.

A nontrivial character’s player can veto him being incapacitated, killed, or harmed in a way that has long-lasting personal consequences, like suffering a crippling injury. Likewise, courses of action opposed to a Major or Defining Intimacy can be vetoed.

Once everyone who wants to make a proposal has, the stylist’s player chooses one and briefly narrates how it unfolds — or can have the player who proposed it do narrate it. This experience is indescribable for those present in the scene. As the stylist contemplate the possibilities that lie before her, they all seem to exist simultaneously. Their understanding of reality begins to crack under the strain, until the stylist finally makes her choice, and they shatter. Enemies with Resolve lower than the successes on the stylist’s Initiative roll suffer the effects of Glimpse of Infinity.

If the stylist doesn’t choose any of the options above, combat resumes, but her moment of indecision causes her to suffer from Glimpse of Infinity along with the affected enemies.

Reset: Once per story.

The Third Koan

A lifetime later, as Ei Zou lay on his deathbed, his shadow rose up, leering. “Do you concede?” it asked.

Ei Zou said, “I know you now,” and shattered his shadow with a single strike.

“Now you are gone forever,” he said, and stepped into his shadow’s place.

Prismatic Arrangement of Creation Style

Essence is immanent in all things, even the least grain of sand. It is both primal substrate of reality and the grand cosmology of worlds raised upon it. The flow of Essence is the dance of all things. Prismatic Arrangement of Creation style is a meditation on the world’s Essence. Drawing from the primal force that gave rise to all things, it’s considered the most foundational Sidereal Martial Art, and is among the most commonly practiced within the Bureau of Destiny.

The style’s creator is thought to have trained under many martial artists among the Exalted and the spirits of the world, studying the nature of each master’s Essence to attain understanding of another facet of reality. Learning the style requires refining one’s control over Essence through breathing exercises, secluded meditation, and cyclically expending and respiring Essence. Students also seek out spirits, other Exalted, places of geomantic power, and other manifestations of Essence to expand their understanding of Essence beyond their own.

Prismatic Arrangement of Creation Weapons: This style’s unarmed strikes are primarily pushing blows that disrupt enemies’ balance and footing, along with offensive elbow and shoulder strikes. It’s incompatible with weaponry.

Armor: This style is incompatible with armor.

Complementary Abilities: Stylists gain Lore and Occult as they study the world's Essence. Some incorporate Performance into this style, another path to understanding the dance of all things.

Nature: Both Flowing and Still.

Deadly Starmetal Offensive

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The stylist's fingernails sharpen, elongate, and harden, flashing with the rainbow sheen of starmetal.

The stylist adds a free full Excellency on an attack roll.

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by using a Form Charm.

Five Jade Fury

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Dual, Stackable

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

A halo of elemental power radiates from the stylist's blow, her Essence embodying the rarefied substance of Creation.

The stylist's attack gains one of the following benefits:

Black Jade (Water): Moving with the fluidity of black jade, the attack inflicts its onslaught penalty before the attack roll and ignores Defense bonuses from light and heavy cover and the full defense action.

Blue Jade (Air): Striking with the swiftness and precision of blue jade, the stylist adds (Lore or Occult) dice on an attack roll. Its onslaught penalty is increased by one.

Green Jade (Wood): Imbuing her attack with the vitality of green jade, the stylist heals a level of non-aggravated damage if she crashes or deals 3+ levels of **decisive** damage to an enemy.

Red Jade (Fire): Channeling the destructive power of red jade, the stylist adds (Lore or Occult) to the raw damage and Overwhelming of a **withering** attack or adds up to (Essence) attack roll extra successes as **decisive** damage dice.

White Jade (Earth): Embodying the stability of white jade, the stylist adds (Essence, maximum

5) to the Initiative awarded for crashing an enemy with a **withering** attack or adds half that value, rounded up, to her base Initiative after a **decisive** attack.

The stylist can use this Charm multiple times to enhance the same attack with different effects.

Orichalcum Sheathing Stance

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Dual, Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Golden Essence limns the stylist's skin, girding her with orichalcum's invincibility.

The stylist can use this Charm after an attack roll against her to gain (Essence + [Lore or Occult]) armored soak against a **withering** attack or (Essence + [Lore or Occult]) Hardness against a **decisive** attack. If she doesn't take damage, she channels the attack's force inward, gaining motes equal to the attack roll's 10s, maximum (Essence).

Flickering Moonsilver Approach

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

The stylist's movements emulate moonsilver's fluid and mutable nature, rendering her location indeterminate until she strikes.

The stylist makes a **withering** or **decisive** against an enemy within medium range, appearing within close range of him as she strikes. He rolls (Perception + Awareness) against her attack roll; if he fails, it becomes a surprise attack (**Exalted**, p. 203). The stylist doesn't move through the space she crosses, letting her bypass obstacles and hazards. This counts as her movement action.

Astrology Interruption Method

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: None

Strumming the threads of fate, the stylist shakes loose curses and predictions.

Touching a character, the stylist negates all fate-altering Shaping effects affecting him and renders him immune to such effects for the scene.

Alternatively, when the stylist makes a roll with any Ability, she can use this Charm may negate any effects that increase her roll's target number or decrease an opposing roll's target number.

Characters with this Charm are immune to arcane fate.

Sequential Essence Disruption

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

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Astrology Interruption Method

Striking at the pattern of her foe's Essence, the stylist impedes and redirects its flow.

To use this Charm, the stylist must have Initiative 10+. When she deals **decisive** damage, she may forgo (his Essence/3, rounded up) levels of damage to negate one of her target's ongoing magical effects. This doesn't affect Permanent Charms.

This Charm can also enhance grapples, letting the Sidereal forgo (enemy's Essence) rounds of control to negate an effect.

Essence Redirection Technique

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Enlightenment, Perilous, Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Sequential Essence Disruption

Using gentle touches to divert the Essence flowing through an attack, the stylist channels its power into her own.

When a lower-Initiative enemy attacks the stylist, she may cancel a single non-Excellency Supplemental or Reflexive Charm or Evocation with an Instant duration enhancing the attack. This Charm must ordinarily be declared before the attack is rolled but can be used after the attack roll to negate a Charm declared after the roll.

If the stylist clashes the attack or makes a counterattack against it, she can pay the negated effect's cost to apply it to her clash or counterattack. She can do so even if that effect isn't normally compatible with Martial Arts, but it must otherwise make sense for it to enhance her attack.

Enlightenment: The stylist doesn't need to pay the cost of the negated effect to apply it to her clash attack or counterattack.

The Scripture of Essence
Once, there were maidens...
and their names were Treasure
and Power,
and Heaven and Earth.
The last maiden's name was Divinity.
These were their names, but they knew them not.

Spell-Shattering Palm

Cost: 5m (+0-3wp); **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Clash, Decisive-only, Enlightenment

Duration: Instant

Prerequisite Charms: Sequential Essence Disruption

Delicate threads of spellcraft unravel as the stylist yanks and pulls at them.

When a character the stylist can perceive casts a spell that targets her, she clashes the final Shape Sorcery roll with a **decisive** ([Intelligence or Wits] + Martial Arts) attack. Against ritual spells or other unrolled spells, the caster rolls (Intelligence + Occult) for the clash. Winning the clash negates the spell's effect, including its effects on other characters. The stylist doesn't make a damage roll or reset her Initiative.

Against spells of a Circle the stylist can't cast, she must pay a surcharge of one Willpower per circle she falls short — e.g., a Terrestrial Circle sorcerer would need to pay a two-Willpower surcharge to clash Solar Circle sorcery. Sorcerous initiation doesn't aid in clashing necromantic spells or vice versa.

Enlightenment: The stylist can channel and redirect a clashed spell's Essence back at the caster, dealing (spell's Circle x2) dice of lethal damage, ignoring Hardness. This doesn't reset her Initiative.

Demesne Emulation Practice

Cost: —(2m or 4m); **Mins:** Martial Arts 3, Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: None

The martial artist's stance bends the flows of Essence around her, becoming a nexus through which the world's breath flows.

Upon purchasing this Charm, the stylist chooses (Lore or Occult) hearthstones (including Linked stones). She can reflexively manifest one of these hearthstones as a jewel upon her brow, committing two motes for a lesser hearthstone or four motes for a greater hearthstone.

Hearthstones that enhance weapons benefit her unarmed attacks. She gains the increased mote recovery for being in an attuned greater demesne (**Exalted**, p. 160). The hearthstones are indestructible but don't survive the stylist's death. The Storyteller should veto hearthstone choices that are overpowered if made permanent, like the Gem of Incomparable Wellness.

While in a Martial Arts Form, if the stylist makes an attack that benefits from the manifested hearthstone, she adds one die of post-soak **withering** or **decisive** damage, or two dice for a greater hearthstone.

Ways of Exaltation

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Enlightenment

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charms: None

The martial artist strikes her throat, abdomen, spine, brow, and crown in a lightning-swift blur, altering the pattern of her Essence to conceal her Exaltation.

The stylist chooses an Exalt type she's familiar with and a Caste or Aspect, causing her anima banner to take on an appropriate appearance and mimicking effects like the anima flux of the Dragon-Blooded. If she uses native Charms with overtly supernatural effects, they change to resemble the mimicked Exalt type's magic. She adds (Anima) dice on rolls with chosen Caste or Aspect's Attributes or Abilities and adds (Anima/2, rounded up) to static values based on them.

If the martial artist uses this Charm to emulate a Dragon-Blood, she can enter Elemental Aura using the Immaculate Dragon styles' Charms or Five Jade Fury, letting her access the Immaculate Charms' Aura benefits.

Enlightenment: While emulating a different Caste of the stylist's Exalt type, she gains that Caste's anima powers in addition to her own.

God Ways

Cost: 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Enlightenment, Psyche

Duration: (Essence) turns

Prerequisite Charms: Ways of Exaltation

The martial artist dissolves into pure spirit, coiling around a victim's soul or pouring her Essence into an object.

The stylist makes a (Charisma + [Lore or Occult]) gambit against the Resolve of an enemy within short range. Its difficulty is 5 against mortals and trivial characters and (higher of Willpower or 7) for others. If successful, the stylist dematerializes and possesses that character. She can't take actions herself, but dictates target's actions, including spending his motes and Willpower on Charms or other magic. This lasts until the Sidereal has taken (Essence) turns while possessing him. If she tries to force a character to violate one of his Major or Defining Intimacies, he regains control of his own actions until his next turn. If the martial artist's anima flares, it shines through her host, making him seem to be Exalted.

Alternatively, the martial artist can possess a mundane object, rolling (Charisma + Martial Arts) against difficulty 1 for objects that could be held in one hand, 3 for objects the size of a person, or 5 for objects the size of a wagon. Anything larger can't be possessed. Success lets her dematerialize and inhabit it. She can still act using her own traits, lending the object whatever animation and flexibility is necessary to do so. This lasts until she's taken (Essence) turns or (Essence) non-reflexive actions outside of combat

Any damage or harmful effects that befall a possessed character or object don't apply to the martial artist; magic capable of attacking dematerialized characters is necessary to harm her.

Enlightenment: The martial artist can use this Charm for ten motes and one Willpower to dematerialize for one scene without possessing anything.

Four Magical Materials Form

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Enlightenment, Form

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Deadly Starmetal Offensive, Five Jade Fury, Flickering Moonsilver Approach, Orichalcum Sheathing Stance

The martial artist's stance, breathing, footwork, and Essence embody the magical materials, transforming her into a living artifact.

The stylist gains the following benefits:

- Her unarmed attacks gain artifact traits (Accuracy +5, Damage +10B/3).
- She reduces the cost of this Charm's prerequisites by two motes.
- She's immune to crippling effects and ignores crippling penalties.
- She can use Evocations she's awakened from a jade, orichalcum, moonsilver, or starmetal artifacts without needing that artifact, letting her use weapon Evocations through unarmed attacks. She can't use Evocations whose effect requires the artifact.

Enlightenment: The stylist becomes resonant with jade, moonsilver, orichalcum, and starmetal.

Special activation rules: The stylist can reflexively enter this Form when she uses all four of its prerequisite Charms in a round.

Other Magical Materials

This style has no Charm for soulsteel, but the potential exists. Sidereals lack the affinity for death's Essence necessary to create such a Charm themselves, but a Sidereal who's learned all this style's Charms could do so with an Abyssal's aid, as could an Abyssal who's mastered this style.

Similarly, a Sidereal would need the aid of a character who's resonant with adamant, like an Adamant Caste Alchemical, to create a Charm for Adamant.

In Four Magical Materials Form, such Charms would receive its discount and the stylist could use Evocations of weapons made from their materials. With Enlightenment, she'd gain resonance with them.

Soul-Fire Shaper Form

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Enlightenment, Form

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Essence Redirection Technique, Spell-Shattering Palm

The Sidereal acts in perfect balance with the cosmos, bringing the world around her into alignment with her victory.

- She adds +2 effective Essence, maximum 10, for magic that uses Essence ratings in calculations (but not for any other purpose).
- Once per round, she may reduce the Willpower cost of Astrology Interruption Method, Essence Redirection Technique, Sequential Essence Disruption, or Spell-Shattering Palm by one.
- When she would gain Initiative, she may exchange some or all of it for that many motes instead. She can't do so when resetting Initiative.
- When paying Willpower, she may spend five motes in place of a point of Willpower.

Enlightenment: The stylist counts as having Essence 10 for calculations.

Special activation rules: The stylist can reflexively enter this Form when she goes from dim anima to bonfire in a single instant.

Demesne-and-Manse Form

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Aggravated, Dual, Enlightenment, Form

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Demesne Emulation Practice

Adapting the stately grandeur of an ancient temple, the martial artist channels and directs Creation's geomancy through her stance and movements.

The stylist gains the following benefits:

- She gains the benefits of any number of hearthstones chosen with Demesne Emulation Practice, manifesting a unique stone in the colors of her anima on her brow.
- Demesne Emulation Practice's damage bonus increases to (Essence/2, rounded up) for lesser hearthstones and (Essence, maximum 5) for greater hearthstones. Her **decisive** attacks deal aggravated damage, blazing with raw Essence.
- While fighting in a demesne or manse, she recovers an additional mote at the end of each round. She gains an additional mote if it's a greater demesne or manse, and another mote if she's attuned to it.
- She adds (Essence/2, rounded up) non-Charm successes on Lore and Occult rolls involving geomancy, including demesnes, manses, or hearthstones.

Enlightenment: While fighting in a demesne or manse, the stylist adds ([Lore or Occult]/2, rounded up) to her base Initiative.

Special activation rules: The stylist can reflexively enter this Form when she Joins Battle while her mote pools are full or while in a demesne or manse.

Games of Divinity Form

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Form

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: God Ways

Moving with infinitely baroque complexity, the martial artist comes as close to perfect beauty as any imperfect being can.

The stylist gains the following benefits:

- Her Appearance adds bonus dice (**Exalted**, p. 218) on all opposed physical rolls against enemies who can perceive her.
- She gains +1 Evasion against characters with Resolve lower than her Appearance (including bonus dots).

- Enemies can't attack her or take harmful actions against her unless they spend one Willpower to resist for the scene. Characters whose Resolve is lower than her Appearance or who have positive Ties toward her must pay two Willpower instead.
- Any character — friend or foe — who witnesses the martial artist in this Form must succeed on a (Wits + Integrity) roll at a difficulty of the stylist's Appearance (including bonus dots) or become addicted to viewing this Form, with -3 withdrawal penalty (**Exalted**, p. 167). Other depictions of the Games of Divinity, like dreamstones, can substitute for the Form.

Enlightenment: Characters addicted to this Form count as having a Major Tie of Obsession toward the stylist.

Special activation rules: The stylist can reflexively enter this Form when she succeeds on an Appearance-based influence roll or a dance-based Performance roll in with 5+ successes.

Prismatic Arrangement of Creation Form

Cost: 30m, 2wp; **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: Form

Duration: One scene

Prerequisite Charms: Demesne-and-Manse Form, Four Magical Materials Form, Games of Divinity Form, Soul-Fire Shaper Form

The martial artist vanishes into the world's Essence, dancing the dance of all things before returning to the world, at one with it.

The stylist gains either the benefits of all this style's other Forms or up to three Martial Arts Forms she knows of any style. If she chooses the latter option, only one Form can be from a Sidereal Martial Art. Combining Forms of different styles lets her use each style's weapons and the best of their armor compatibility with each of the other styles.

If the stylist satisfies the special activation rules of a Form she knows, she may swap it for one of the chosen Forms, as long as it's still a permissible combination.

Enlightenment: Upon entering this Form, the stylist gains one Initiative for each style she's learned all Charms for (including this one), maximum (Essence + [Lore or Occult]). Sidereals count Archery, Brawl, Melee, and Thrown as completed styles if they've learned their prayer strip Charm.

Sorcery

Sidereals pursue countless paths of sorcerous initiation, whether learned in their mortal lives or guided through them by their mentors, both Sidereals and gods alike. Such mentorships are often the foundation of deep bonds that endure for centuries.

Sorcerous Initiation: The Path of the Celestial Design

Sidereals trained in sorcery by the Bureau commonly seek initiation through the Path of the Celestial Design, a meditation upon the numinous pattern that undergirds the Celestial

Bureaucracy. This pattern is the divine order by which the Celestial Bureaucracy binds Heaven to Creation and gods to their purviews, forged by the Ancients and reforged by the Incarnae. Through meditation upon it, sorcerers draw on Heaven's power to work miracles of sorcery.

This initiation is also common among gods who are sorcerers, as well as some elementals, Heaven's Dragons, and others in the Celestial Bureaucracy's employ.

Shaping Rituals

Arbiter of Harmonious Balance

Once per scene, when the sorcerer creates, strengthens, or facilitates a bureaucratic process, cooperative relationship, negotiation, business deal, or similar arrangement, she gains (Bureaucracy + extra successes) sorcerous motes, which last until the story ends. If the arrangement was between gods, she gains additional sorcerous motes equal to the (highest god's Essence/2, round up). If her achievement wasn't rolled, she rolls (Charisma + Bureaucracy) for this. She can only have sorcerous motes from one use of this ritual at a time; gaining more replaces any previous uses.

Dignity of the Divine Magus

Once per scene, when the sorcerer succeeds on an influence role to assert the authority of a bureaucratic position she holds or a god on whose behalf she's acting, she gains (Bureaucracy) sorcerous motes. She can also gain this benefit when she's insulted, cheated, slandered, or otherwise treated rudely or unfairly. If she spends these sorcerous motes on a harmful spell that targets someone who's slighted her, she adds (Bureaucracy) dice on any rolls involved.

Writ of Auspicious Patronage

The sorcerer may seek patronage from a prominent god of the Celestial Bureaucracy: one of the most high-ranking of terrestrial gods or a celestial god who has their own purview. This patronage is formally submitted to the Celestial Bureaucracy by burning a silk petition signed by both sorcerer and patron. Once per day, she can invoke her patron to gain (his Essence/2, round up) sorcerous motes, which last until the scene ends. If her patron has a positive Major or Defining Tie to her, she gains (his Essence) motes instead. If she spends these sorcerous motes on a spell that's thematically related to her patron's purview, each mote spent counts as two. She can have any number of patrons, but can only benefit from one each day.

Gods don't give their patronage freely, as they can be punished under Heaven's law for spells cast under their auspices. For purposes of persuasion, it's typically a serious task (**Exalted**, p. 216), though it may be life-changing for sorcerers known to have abused past patrons' trust. Gods may revoke their patronage if it's misused. The Storyteller should make it clear to a player in advance when a course of action will risk her patronage. Gods might also revoke their patronage out of political convenience if it's central to a story involving political intrigues among spirits.

Other Benefits

The Song of Heaven (•): Gods hear the harmony of the Celestial Bureaucracy in the sorcerer's voice. Gods who've heard her speak this scene count as having a Minor Tie of fascination or respect toward her, whichever best fits their Intimacies.

Visage Made Law (•••): When someone forges the sorcerer's signature or credentials or falsely claims to be her or to be acting on her behalf, she makes a special (Perception + Bureaucracy) read intentions rolls against him, imposing a -2 Guile penalty for being unaware of observes.

Success reveals that such deceit has occurred and provides a clue to the perpetrator's identity, methods, or motives. Every three extra successes reveal an additional clue.

Writ in the Firmament (•): The sorcerer may use Occult or Bureaucracy instead of Lore to introduce facts about the Celestial Bureaucracy or the nature and history of a specific god. She doesn't need a Lore background. If successful, her player can speculate about a related fact. The Storyteller states whether the speculation's completely accurate, mostly accurate, somewhat accurate, or completely inaccurate.

Celestial Circle Spells

Molten Shape of Shifting Glass

Cost: 20sm, 2wp

Keywords: None

Duration: One scene

The Hyaline Bloom sought to shine like the sun, but shattered beneath the weight of such magnificence. As the sorcerer recites an ode to it, she takes on its nature, becoming a thing of living, liquid glass that shimmers with molten heat.

This transformation grants the sorcerer the following benefits:

- She can ignite or melt mundane materials with a touch, requiring a miscellaneous action. Against an object that's in use by someone, this requires a difficulty 3 unarmed gambit.
- She can flow through any opening that isn't watertight. This always ignites or melts mundane materials surrounding the opening.
- Grapple gambits against her suffer a -4 penalty on the attack and control rolls. They fail automatically unless enhanced by magic.
- An enemy who hits her with an unarmed attack or spends a round grappling her suffers (her Essence) dice of lethal damage, ignoring Hardness.

The sorcerer also gains the following powers while transformed:

Jagged Shard Revenge (5m; Reflexive; Instant; Counterattack, Decisive-only): When the sorcerer is dealt lethal damage by an attack at close range, she may use this power to make a (Stamina + Occult) **decisive** counterattack as her shed blood turns to shards of glass. This deals (her Essence) dice of lethal damage, ignoring Hardness, and doesn't reset her Initiative.

Unseen in Stillness (3m; Supplemental; Indefinite): As the sorcerer makes a Stealth roll, she sheds all heat from her glassy form to become completely translucent, but immobile. 1s and 2s subtract successes on opposing Awareness rolls, and they fail automatically unless enhanced by magic. However, taking any physical action breaks this concealment.

Glass-Bending Flourish (4m; Supplemental; Instant; Uniform): The sorcerer stretches her sinuous limbs of glass to take a physical action at short range.

Control: The sorcerer's hands glow from within with molten light, though this can be hidden with gloves or similar. They count as exceptional equipment for tasks involving smithing, cooking, glassblowing, etc. This spell's duration becomes one day.

Distortion (10): The sorcerer's body cools and becomes brittle. She suffers a -2 penalty on

Strength and Dexterity rolls and counts as being in difficult terrain.

Hidden Judges of the Secret Flame

Cost: 20sm, 1wp

Keywords: None

Duration: Varies

The Hidden Judges of the Secret Flame swore themselves to the Unconquered Sun shortly after his Creation. Offering up a sacred vow, the sorcerer entreats them to punish the wicked.

The sorcerer summons a hidden judge, a wraithsome figure of blue flame clothed in uttermost black. She rolls (Charisma + Occult) to entreat them to punish someone who's grievously wronged her or another, or who's willfully broken Heaven's law. The difficulty depends on the severity of the offense: difficulty 3 for the most severe; difficulty 5 for less severe offenses that still involve violence, significant corruption, or the like; and difficulty 7 for lesser offenses. The sorcerer is incapable of lying to the summoned judge. If successful, the judge sets out to tirelessly pursue the wrongdoer until he's imposed a fitting punishment. If the sorcerer summons the judge to the site of an injustice in progress, it may be that no roll is necessary.

Alternatively, a judge may be summoned at difficulty 3 to advise the sorcerers in legal matters for either a season or for the duration of a specific legal matter. The sorcerer remains incapable of lying to them. Judges may perform similar duties if convinced of their righteousness.

Control: When the sorcerer realizes someone is lying, she may cause her eyes to flash brilliantly with a hidden judge's blue balefire. Those who see this add (her Essence) successes on rolls to see through the same lie for the rest of the scene. Trivial characters gain a Minor Tie of suspicion toward the liar from witnessing this.

Distortion (15): Distorting this spell lets the opposing sorcerer beguile the judge, causing them to pursue someone else whom he truly believes has committed an offense of equal severity to that which the judge was summoned to punish.

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Hidden Judge

Essence: 5; Willpower: 8; Join Battle: 12 dice

Personal: 100

Health Levels: -0x6/-1x2/-2x2/-4x2/Incap.

Actions: Bureaucracy: 12 dice (see Learned Hand of Justice);

Investigation: 14 dice; Legal Knowledge: 14 dice (see Learned Hand of

Justice); Read Intentions: 12 dice; Resist Poison/Disease: 8 dice; Senses: 12

dice; Social Influence: 10 dice; Stealth: 8 dice; Tracking: 12 dice

Appearance 3 (Hideous), Resolve 7, Guile 7

Combat

Attack (Daiklave): 14 dice (Damage 12L/4)

Attack (Grapple): 10 dice (8 dice to control)

Combat Movement: 10 dice

Evasion: 3; Parry: 6

Soak/Hardness: 10/10

Intimacies

Defining Principle: Justice must come to the wicked.

Defining Principle: Punishment must be proportionate and purposeful.

Defining Tie: The Unconquered Sun (Loyalty)

Major Tie: Victims of Crime (Protection)

Merits

Learned Hand of Justice: Judges double 7s on Bureaucracy and Legal Knowledge rolls involving the Celestial Bureaucracy or other legal systems they're familiar with. A scene spent observing, studying, or interacting with a legal system is sufficient familiarity for the judge.

Sworn to the Unconquered Sun: A judge's attacks deal aggravated damage against creatures of darkness.

Offensive Charms

Sacred Blade Summoning (2m; Reflexive; Instant; Essence 1): The judge's daiklave bursts into blue flame and reappears in their hand. Alternatively, it can be banished to Elsewhere or called back in a burst of flame.

Sword of Heaven's Verdict (8m; Supplemental; Instant; Decisive-only; Essence 3): The judge adds up to five attack roll extra successes as dice of **decisive** damage. Against the wrongdoer they've been summoned to pursue or someone who's grievously wronged another in the judge's presence, they add all extra successes instead.

Defensive Charms

Wrathed in Righteousness (10m, 1wp; Reflexive; Until next turn; Counterattack, Decisive-only, Perilous; Essence 5): The judge gains +2 Parry and can make **decisive** counterattacks in response to each attack made against them. Counterattacks against the wrongdoer they've been summoned to pursue or those who's grievously wronged another in the judge's presence add +5 dice of damage.

Mobility Charms

Implacable Justiciar (10m, 1wp; Simple; Indefinite; Essence 5): As long as the judge is pursuing the wrongdoer, they can move up to fifty miles per hour and pass through all mundane obstacles and barriers as if dematerialized. If the wrongdoer can travel faster than that, the judge matches his speed.

Social Charms

Come Forth to Justice (10m, 1wp; Supplemental; Instant; Essence 3): Double 7s on an influence roll to inspire remorse or convince someone to

accept punishment. Resisting requires citing a Major or Defining Intimacy in a Decision Point, and costs two Willpower.

Perjury-Abjuring Charge (5m; Supplemental; Instant): When the judge makes an influence roll to convince someone to tell the truth or reveal something he's hidden, he can't use Intimacies based on self-interest, fear, or disregard for law or negative Ties toward the judge or their summoner to defend against that influence. Even if they fail, the judge can tell if their target's response is a lie

Weight the Scales (10m; Simple; Instant; Essence 2; Eclipse): Roll Read Intentions against everyone the judge can see. Success reveals what each character would consider a just punishment for a given act, or for a given individual based on what he knows of her misdeeds. The judge can leverage information revealed this way as though it were a Minor Intimacy.

Miscellaneous Charms

Scheme-Unveiling Contemplation (10m, 1wp; Supplemental; Instant): Double 7s on an Investigation or Tracking roll, succeeding automatically unless opposed by magic. Every three extra successes reveal a clue about a character's identity, motives, past crimes, or countermeasures taken against pursuers. This can oppose magic like Traceless Passage.

Mirror Nemesis Vizier

Cost: Ritual, 2wp

Keywords: None

Duration: One week

Guising herself in an enemy's visage, the sorcerer binds his reflection to herself to bear witness against its master.

Tracing a foe's name in her blood or spittle upon a mirror, the sorcerer binds his reflection to bear witness against him.

The sorcerer performs a ritual to bind the reflection of someone she has a negative Tie toward. This takes a few minutes and requires her wear some symbolic link to him — a piece of his clothing, a piece of his hair worn in a locket, etc. She rolls (Wits + Occult) against his Guile, adding (Intimacy) non-Charm dice. Success changes her reflection into the target's own, leaving him without a reflection. The reflection advises her on the target's weaknesses and plots — although it is a willful, chaotic, and frustrating advisor. For other characters, noticing the sorcerer's altered reflection is a ([Wits or Perception] + Awareness) against the sorcerer's (Essence), which fails automatically unless enhanced by magic.

The sorcerer may spend one Willpower to ask the reflection a question about her target, rolling (Manipulation + Occult) against a difficulty of the target's Guile and adding (Intimacy) bonus dice. If successful, she's able to outwit it into giving a useful answer. It has extensive knowledge

of the target's habits, instincts, skills, vulnerabilities, and Intimacies, and may be aware of other aspects of his life, though it's not aware of his current activities while it's bound.

Control: The reflections of those the sorcerer's previously used this spell on occasionally appear in mirrors alongside her own. She may cast it without a link if she's previously interacted with her target in person. Once she does, she must meet him in person again before she can cast this spell on him without a link again.

Distortion (15): A rival sorcerer may twist the spell to empower the reflection, granting it +3 Guile. He may do so from afar if it's his own reflection. If casting sorcerer fails a roll to interrogate the reflection, it disgorges convincing lies that seem true, but ultimately serve the original target.

Masquerade of Coquelicot Veils

Cost: 20sm, 2wp

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: (Essence) days

A crimson haze fills her surroundings as the sorcerer issues a mandatory invitation to the Court of Coquelicot Veils, a numinous presence that costumes all in its penumbra with masks and cloaks of every shade of red.

The spell enchants a single location out to a mile from the sorcerer. Anyone who enters or carries in the area is clothed in an illusory costume of random design that disguises their appearance, voice, scent, and nature, including distinctive supernatural displays like anima banners. Attempts to identify others under this enchantment automatically fail unless supplemented by magic, and even then suffer a -(sorcerer's Essence) penalty.

Characters can spend two Willpower to tear off their illusory costume, reasserting their identity. This disguise also sloughs off if a target leaves the enchanted location.

Control: The sorcerer can spend five notes to instantly don a random costume as if they'd cast the spell. It is not as flawless as the true spell; she rolls (Manipulation + Occult + Essence) to determine the difficulty to see through the illusion.

Distortion (15): A sorcerer within the masquerade may warp the spell so that its disguises no longer conceal one of the following features: voice, scent, or nature.

Warden the Nepenthean Gardens

Cost: 25sm, 2wp

Keywords: None

Duration: (Essence) hours

In the waning days of the Divine Revolution, war-weary Ancients took to wrecking a Creation they thought they might soon lose, and thus were the wardens of the nepenthean gardens exiled beyond reality to a realm of smoke and loneliness. Through will and work, a sorcerer may loosen this exile, drawing a warden back into Creation to resume its benevolent work.

These gentle beings speak no language but understand all, even the calls of animals. While they gain a Major Tie of loyalty and gratitude towards their summoner, they offer their healing gifts

freely whenever safe to do so, even to the sorcerer's foes.

Control: The spell's duration extends to one day, and once per story she may permanently release one of the wardens from their exile; while forever grateful, they never remain in her retinue for more than a story, instead venturing into the world to continue their healing work.

Distortion (20): The sorcerer wracks a warden within medium range with visions of the prison-realm to which they will soon return, inflicting a (sorcerer's Essence) penalty on their actions and removing the effects of Inviolable Purpose.

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Warden of the Nepenthean Gardens

A warden of the nepenthean gardens is a pearlescent, many-armed being standing roughly ten feet tall; their wrinkled flesh overflows with bountiful patches of healing fungi.

Essence: 5; **Willpower:** 7; **Join Battle:** 5 dice

Personal: 100

Health Levels: -0x4/-1x6/-2x6/-4x6/Incap.

Actions: Comforting Influence: 12 dice; Feats of Strength: 9 dice (can attempt Strength 5 feats); Medicine: 14 dice; Read Intentions: 12 dice

Appearance 1, Resolve 5, Guile 1

Combat

Attack (Unarmed): 7 dice (Damage 10B)

Attack (Grapple): 10 dice (10 dice to control)

Combat Movement: 4 dice

Evasion: 1; **Parry:** 3

Soak/Hardness: 12/5

Intimacies

Defining Principle: All living beings deserve my gifts.

Defining Tie: The wounded and ill (Devotion)

Major Tie: The sorcerer (Gratitude)

Merits

Inviolable Purpose: The warden treats any influence that would prevent

them from attending to those in need of healing as unacceptable.

Defensive Charms

Who Strikes the Innocent? (5m; Reflexive; Instant): An attack against the warden removes one success for each 1 or 2 rolled.

Social Charms

A Plea for All Life (15m, 1wp; Supplemental; Instant): The warden releases a wordless, bone-vibrating plea, doubling 8s on a persuade roll to halt hostilities. This waives penalties for targeting multiple characters and can be understood without a shared language. Characters must spend an extra point of Willpower to resist in a Decision Point. Once per scene.

Miscellaneous Charms

Pain Finds No Purchase (7m; Reflexive; One scene): Characters within short range reduce their total penalties from wounds, illness, and disease by 5. The warden may reflexively spend one Willpower to extend this to medium range until the start of their next turn.

Merciful Resurgence (10m, 1wp; Simple; Instant): Allies within short range roll (their current wound penalty) dice, healing one level of non-aggravated damage for each success. The warden can reactivate this Charm on their next turn, paying a cumulative ten mote surcharge — twenty motes for the second use, thirty for the third, etc. Characters who have intentionally maimed or killed in the scene cannot benefit from this Charm. Once per scene.

Gentle Ministration (15m; Simple; One day): One resting character under the warden's care doesn't suffer damage or ill effects from ongoing poison or disease.

Bountiful Pharmacy Flesh (4m; Simple; Instant): The warden metabolizes a remedy from their body's fungi, removing the need for equipment when treating mundane afflictions.

Wheel of the Turning Heavens

Cost: 15sm, 2wp

Keywords: Psyche

Duration: One hour

The sorcerer shapes a slender needle of prismatic light and looses it into the sky, where it explodes into a swarm of sparkling constellations. The false stars linger in the sky, tracing lazy orbits than entrance all who look upon them.

The sorcerer makes a (Manipulation + Occult) roll, doubling 9s, against the Resolve of everyone within a mile who can see the open sky. Those overcome by the spell stare contentedly at the lights unless provoked or endangered, taking only reflexive actions. Characters can enter a Decision Point and cite a Major or Defining Intimacy that compels them to resist, allowing them to spend one Willpower to shake off the enchantment. Actions that don't directly serve or flow from the cited Intimacy suffer a -2 penalty as his mind returns time and again to how pleasant it would be to look back up at the display. At the end of the spell, anyone entranced loses all memory of the spell and what happened during it, as per arcane fate (p. XX); some savants suggest, in half-remembered accounts, that this wasn't always the case.

Control: The sorcerer can shape dazzling displays of light which count as exceptional equipment to entertain, distract, or inspire feelings of joy and wonder. When using this to enhance social influence, she may spend anima to add one non-Charm success for each level spent.

Distortion (15): The sorcerer may spend one Willpower to free up to (Essence) characters at short range from the spell's entrancement. Characters freed this way must roll (Wits + Integrity) against the original caster's (Manipulation) at the end of the spell, or else forget the events as normal.

Chapter Eight: Artifacts

Enlightening Abnegation Sabers (Starmetal Hook Daiklaves, Artifact ●●●)

The Enlightening Abnegation Sabers are an exercise in minimalism. Their hooks are made of starmetal hammered into fine wire; their ornate basket hilts of black jade filigree resemble rapiers more than hook swords. They were forged by Akiyo Majenda, who sought to win the heart of Spring Without Sparrows, a Sidereal who'd instructed her at Versino, predecessor to the modern Heptagram.

Overcome with passion, Majenda nearly bankrupted her household acquiring the scarce quantity of starmetal necessary, but the result was a masterpiece, harnessing starmetal's affinity for ephemeral and esoteric forces to create daiklaves capable of disarming foes of more than just their weapons. Then one morning, Majenda woke up with no memory of Spring Without Sparrows and no idea why she'd forged the daiklaves. She nonetheless found good use for them, most famously in the Wyld Hunt against Hedelshi of the Hands, the anathematic Chosen of Avarice.

Upon Majenda's death, Heaven sent a Sidereal to discreetly retrieve the blades. By chance, Spring Without Sparrows was chosen for the task, though she'd since forgotten her long-ago student. The Scarlet Dynasty wondered over the strange daiklaves' disappearance, but with House Akiyo's fall and the passage of centuries, they've been reduced to a historical footnote.

Attunement: 5m

Type: Medium (+3 ACC, +12 DMG, +1 DEF, OVW 4)

Tags: Lethal, Martial Arts, Disarming

Hearthstone Slot(s): 2

Era: Reign of the Scarlet Empress

Evocations of the Enlightened Abnegation Sabers

Disarm gambits made with the Enlightened Abnegation Sabers reduce their Initiative cost by one.

Essence Diversion Stroke

Cost: 2i; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only, Resonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: None

The sabers disarm enemies of spiritual power, shedding drops of anima and Essence as sure as blood.

A successful disarm gambit also causes its target to lose (1 + Initiative roll's 10s) motes, maximum

(wielder's Dexterity). The wielder chooses which mote pool they're drained from.

Resonant: The wielder gains the lost motes, adding them to the same pool they were drained from.

Reality-Disarming Meditation

Cost: —; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisites: None

In the hands of a Sidereal thief, there are few things the sabers can't deprive her foes of.

The Sidereal can use Larceny instead of Martial Arts with the sabers. She can use Simple Larceny Charms that let her steal abstract or ephemeral qualities, like Name-Pilfering Practice or Sidereal Shell Games, as Supplemental Charms to enhance disarm gambits made with them, using the attack roll in place of those Charm's usual rolls.

Disheartening Abnegation

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only, Shaping (Mind)

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Essence Diversion Stroke

The wielder leaves her enemy's heart as empty as his hands.

If the wielder knows an Intimacy of a character she makes a disarm gambit against, success causes him to suffer (Intimacy) unsoakable **withering** damage and then weakens the Intimacy by one step. The wielder can gain Initiative from this, but if she does, she gains the disarmed Intimacy at Minor intensity.

Word-Twisting Riposte

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: None

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Disheartening Abnegation

As demagogues and sycophants speak, the wielder deprives their words of weight with a flourish of the sabers and a display of disarming wit.

When someone makes a spoken influence roll, the wielder opposes it with a special (Social Attribute + Martial Arts) roll. She must use the sabers as part of this, though it need not be aggressive or hostile. If successful, her roll is also applied as an instill roll against all characters targeted by the original influence, instilling a Minor Tie of contempt to the speaker. This Intimacy automatically opposes his influence. If a character already has an opposing Intimacy, its Resolve bonus increases by one instead.

Resonant: With an Essence 3 repurchase, the wielder can pay a five-mote surcharge to negate the influence roll entirely and prevent him from repeating it for the rest of the scene if she beats the roll. She can't use this effect against the same influence for the rest of the story.

Soul Ejection Technique

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Resonant, Shaping (Soul)

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Word-Twisting Riposte (x2)

Pulling at an enemy's spirit with the saber's hooked tips, the wielder disarms him of his body.

Resonant: Only characters resonant with the sabers can awaken this Evocation.

The wielder makes a special disarm gambit against an enemy who's crashed, suffering at least a -4 wound penalty, or 2+ range bands away from any weapons he had with him at the start of the fight, if any. She adds his (higher of his Essence or 3) to the gambit's difficulty. If successful, his spirit is ejected from his body. His player controls the spirit, which uses his traits but is dematerialized and lacks access to any of his artifacts or other equipment.

The dematerialized character can't interact with material objects normally unless he has applicable magic. However, if he's attacked using magic that can strike dematerialized targets, he can attack that enemy normally until the end of his next turn, striking through the rift they've cut in the veil. The sabers' wielder can perceive and attack him normally. If she damages him or succeeds on a disarm gambit against him, she may knock him one range band away from his body.

The victim can attempt to end this Evocation by possessing his own body, an extended ([Charisma, Intelligence, or Wits] + Occult) roll with difficulty 5, goal number 10, and an interval of one round. Attempting this roll can't be flurried.

A **decisive** against the victim's body becomes an ambush, but the fear of mortal peril drives him back into his body afterward. **Withering** attacks can't be made against his body; there's no strategic advantage in pressuring an unconscious foe.

Reset: Once per scene.

Everlasting Descent (Starmetal Dragon-Tail Threshers, Artifact ●●●)

Wayward Comet Sage walked many esoteric paths — sorcerous austerities, metaphysical engineering, the strange philosophy of the Emerald Gyre. But it wasn't until his last century that he found his greatest

talent, artifice. The starmetal nunchaku known as Everlasting Descent are counted among his early works. They nonetheless evince all the hallmarks of his style, synthesizing the Harbinger's esoteric disciplines to shape subtle cosmic forces.

Everlasting Descent draws on the potent mysteries of gravity to bind foes and fugitives from justice in an inescapable orbit. For its handles, Wayward Comet Sage dared the time-warping labyrinth of the Thousand Millennium Forest to claim the wood of a tree petrified for epochs untold; for its chains, he bargained with Asna Firstborn for starmetal wire and gravity spun into silk.

Everlasting Descent served the Harbinger well, but he abandoned them three days before his death, entrusting them to fate. Since then, the dragon-tail threshers have found their way into the hands of worthy successors time and again. During the rage of the Flame Scourges, the Jasmine Kestrel Maiden used Everlasting Descent to juggle meteors, sparing ancient Okeanos from decimation. Eshet Omuzadma bore them into battle against the Paper Legion and scattered its massed ledger-ranks.

The Bureau of Destiny's quartermasters no longer bother trying to reclaim Everlasting Descent between wielders. Guided by fate, and perhaps by its maker's will, it finds its way into the hands of a successor by coincidence and circumstance. It's often found in humble circumstances — at the bottom of a wood pile, submerged in a bog's muddy depths, or washed ashore with the driftwood.

Attunement: 5m

Type: Light (+5 ACC, +10 DMG, +0 DEF, OVW 3)

Tags: Bashing, Martial Arts, Disarming, Flexible

Hearthstone Slot(s): 2

Era: Ochre Fountain Era

Evocations of Everlasting Descent

The strength of Everlasting Descent's gravitational force depends on its **Spin**. Spin begins at 0 each scene and can rise up to 5. Their wielder gains one Spin each time she crashes an enemy, deals **decisive** damage to a nontrivial enemy, or parries a nontrivial enemy's **decisive** attack.

Upon attuning to Everlasting Descent, its wielder awakens Whirling Ecliptic Barrier for free.

Whirling Ecliptic Barrier

Cost: 3m, 2i; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Dissonant, Perilous, Uniform

Duration: Until next turn

Prerequisites: None

Loose stones, leaves, and other debris dance in orbit around Everlasting Descent's wielder.

The wielder reflexively rolls to take cover by gathering debris, clutter, and other unattended objects within short range. This increases to medium at Spin 1+ and long at Spin 3+.

Success provides light cover for this Evocation's duration and grants one Spin. If there's a significant

amount of debris available within this Evocation's range, it provides heavy cover instead.

If the wielder renews this Evocation when its duration ends, its Initiative cost is waived and she doesn't need to roll again.

Dissonant: This Evocation is Supplemental; the wielder must use an action to take cover normally.

Engulfing Orbit Pull

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Dissonant, Resonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Whirling Ecliptic Barrier

Everlasting Descent's gravity drags an enemy across the battlefield.

The wielder makes a difficulty 3 unblockable (Intelligence + Martial Arts) gambit against an enemy within medium range, adding (Spin) dice on the attack roll. Success pulls her target into close range with her and steals (Spin) Initiative from him. If Whirling Ecliptic Barrier is active, the wielder gains that Initiative.

Alternatively, the wielder can use this Evocation when an enemy within long range suffers forced movement, changing his trajectory so that he moves toward her. This doesn't require a gambit.

Resonant: If this brings an Evocation within close range of the wielder, she may reflexively make a **decisive** attack against him.

Dissonant: The gambit's range is short, but increases to medium with Spin 3+.

Abrupt Conclusion of Descent

Cost: 4m, 2i; **Mins:** Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only, Resonant

Duration: None

Prerequisites: Engulfing Orbit Pull

The wielder lends Everlasting Descent's force to the invisible tether of gravity that binds an enemy to the earth, strengthening it into an unbreakable chain.

To use this Evocation, the wielder must have Spin 1+. An enemy damaged by a **decisive** attack or dragged by Engulfing Orbit Pulls gambit falls prone. For the rest of the scene, he suffers a penalty on all physical rolls equal to the wielder's Spin at the time she attacked, although it can't exceed the total levels of damage he suffered. It subtracts successes instead of dice from rolls to rise from prone, and an affected character must always roll to do so. If he fails, he loses two Initiative, which the wielder gains.

Resonant: The penalty inflicted increases by one, although it still can't exceed the total damage dealt.

The wielder doesn't need any Spin to use this Charm.

Errant Star Diversion

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Dual, Resonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Whirling Ecliptic Barrier

With a flourish, Everlasting Descent's wielder releases captured debris from its orbit to launch it hurtling toward her foes.

The wielder makes a **withering** or **decisive** attack with flung debris against an enemy within medium range. Its range increases to medium with Spin 3+. This counts as an attack made with Everlasting Descent, including for compatibility with Martial Arts. It may gain tags based on what the wielder flings, like Piercing for a pitchfork or Smashing for a pile of bricks, etc. The range from which she can gather debris is the same as with Whirling Ecliptic Barrier.

While Whirling Ecliptic Barrier is active, a **withering** attack adds (Spin) dice of **decisive** damage or post-soak **withering** damage.

Resonant: The wielder doesn't need Spin to attack at medium range. With Spin 3+, she can attack at long range.

Juggling Fallen Stars

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Clash, Dissonant, Perilous, Resonant, Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Abrupt Conclusion of Descent, Errant Star Diversion

Everlasting Descent twists the trajectory of everything from arrows to meteors, sending them off-course in arcing parabolas.

The wielder clashes a ranged attack with (Intelligence + Martial Arts), adding (Spin) bonus dice. Success lets her redirect the projectile, making an attack as with Errant Star Diversion. All magic used on the clashed attack applies its benefits to the wielder's attack, if applicable.

Alternatively, this Evocation can be used to defend the wielder against uncountable damage, rolling (Intelligence + Martial Arts) at difficulty 5. Success negates all damage, and renders the wielder immune to recurring sources of damage. Such force can't be redirected at an enemy; it arcs away uncontrollably but harmlessly. Once per story, the wielder can use this to protect everyone affected by a source of uncountable damage, not just herself, with a difficulty 7 roll.

While Whirling Ecliptic Barrier is active, its cover bonus is added as automatic successes on both the

(Intelligence + Occult) roll and the wielder's attack roll.

Dissonant: Making an attack after a successful clash counts as the wielder's attack for the round.

Tulat's Tread (Starmetal God-Kicking Boots, Artifact ●●)

The strange beast Tulat was possessed of ten thousand faceless shapes and diverse secret arts of concealment, for to be perceived was agony to him. Heaven was his greatest foe, for while most were blinded to him, he could not escape Yu-Shan's unwavering eye, nor purge his history from its capacious records. While the Burnt Temple Riots threw Heaven into upheaval, Tulat made his way into the city, taking the shape of a vine to creep up the Forbidden Manse of Ivy's walls, to destroy its records of his secret name and nature.

Here, Tulat found himself thwarted, for he was seen by the Oracle Senn. She greeted him by name:

"Hail, great Tulat, in your form of ivy. What brings you to visit Heaven?" said she.

The beast, much aggrieved at this, answered tersely. "My business is my own, and my name is not for you to use."

"But your business is within," she replied, undeterred. "Perhaps we can help one another."

"And how," hissed Tulat, "might we do that?"

"I am due for an important meeting inside," said Senn, "but have foolishly left my manse bare-footed, and will surely be ridiculed by my superiors. If it is within your power, perhaps you could take the form of some meager footwear, and we may enter together without incident."

"Meager?" hissed Tulat, whose pride was legend. "I, who possess ten thousand faceless shapes, will become only the finest of sandals."

"If it is within your power," replied Senn.

"Then behold!"

And indeed, Senn had never seen a pair of sandals to match Tulat: the wood of him was rich dark mahogany, gleaming with mother-of-pearl, and his lachets cords of gold. Quick as a flash, the Oracle drove a pair of starmetal nails through the sandals' heels, for she had long foreseen the unforeseeable beast's coming. Glinting with light gleaned from the polestar, the nails bound Tulat to his shape. He howled and gnashed, but could not change.

Senn attended the meeting to report her assignment complete, and was complimented by all on her fine sandals.

Attunement: 5m

Type: Light (+5 ACC, +10 DMG, +0 DEF, OVW 3)

Tags: Bashing, Brawl, Smashing Worn

Hearthstone Slot(s): 2

Era: The Burnt Temple Riots

Evocations of Tulat's Tread

Upon attuning Tulat's Tread, the wearer awakens Passage-Erasing Step for free.

Passage-Erasing Step

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Mute

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: None

Tulat urges his wearer to rethink a move he considers a mistake.

The wearer can use this Evocation after moving — voluntarily or not — to return to her previous location without crossing the space between. Any damage or other harm she'd take as a result of moving is negated: falling, environmental hazards, damage from Heaven Thunder Hammer, etc.

Alternatively, the wearer can use this Evocation at the end of any tick on which she moves, letting her act before she returns to where she was at the start of the tick. Doing so offers no protection against harm from her movement and doesn't refund Initiative for disengaging.

Any Initiative lost from disengaging is refunded if the wearer uses this Evocation to undo that movement.

Unworn Sandal Stride

Cost: —; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisites: Passage-Erasing Stride, any Charm this Evocation enhances

Having never understood how others can endure the ordeals of being perceived, Tulat eagerly shrouds his wearer from the world.

Tulat's wearer reduces the cost of Charms that render her invisible or otherwise imperceptible to any sense or that erase or suppress memories of her by two motes. Sidereals also add +1 to the difficulty of rolls against their arcane fate.

To Walk Unbeheld

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Mute, Resonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Passage-Erasing Stride

Leave no evidence, permit no pursuit.

The wearer leaves behind no physical evidence when she makes an attack, movement action, feat of demolition, or other physical action with Tulat's Tread, using her roll as a conceal evidence roll to hide it. If the action is unrolled, she rolls (Manipulation + appropriate Ability) — usually (Manipulation + Athletics) for reflexive move actions. Her footprints vanish; windows shattered by a kick repair themselves; an upturned table rights itself as spilt food returns to bowls and platters.

Attacks enhanced with this Evocation leave no visible wounds, but still deal damage. The wearer may choose to delay the erasure of evidence until the end of her turn, e.g. to pass through a barrier destroyed with a feat of demolition before it's restored.

Case scene rolls and other rolls that would reveal the action was ever performed fail automatically unless enhanced by magic. Even then, they suffer a -4 penalty.

Resonant: Other Charms and magic that enhance the action are Muted.

The Journey Undone

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Essence 2

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Dual, Resonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Passage-Erasing Step

With a deft twist of Tulat's heel, his wearer unwinds the fate of foes sent flying.

The wearer can use Passage-Erasing Step after a successful smash attack or other action using Tulat's Tread that moves an enemy or object. If successful, he returns to his initial position, as usual, but still suffers any harm he normally would from moving. She gains one Initiative.

If the wearer incapacitates an enemy, she may kick him out of her presence entirely, sending him back to somewhere he's been in the last day or so, chosen by the Storyteller. Sidereals with Avoidance (p. XX) may use it reflexively, waiving its Willpower cost and the need to roll, to follow him and erase memories of both of them.

This Evocation's cost is waived when used on an attack enhanced by To Walk Unbeheld.

Resonant: If an enemy is crashed by a **withering** attack, the wearer may reflexively make a **decisive** attack against him when he returns. If she does so with an attack that forces movement, she adds any range bands of movement undone by this Evocation to the distance he moves.

Curiosity's Reward

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Clash, Decisive-only, Dissonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: The Journey Undone, To Walk Unbeheld

Tulat once knew many secret arts of obfuscation; now, he has but one.

When a character makes a Perception-based roll against Tulat's wearer, she may reflexively move one range band toward him and, if he's within range, clash his roll with a **decisive** attack, rolling Join Battle if necessary. If it's an opposed roll, like an Awareness roll against her Stealth, she must declare this Charm when she takes the action, using the same roll for both the action and the clash. Unrolled effects opposing the wearer's Guile can also be clashed, forcing the opposing character to roll (Perception + Ability).

Dissonant: This counts as the wearer's attack for the round.

Beneath the Hidden Heel

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only, Dissonant, Psyche, Resonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Curiosity's Reward, Unworn Sandal Stride

Acting on misguided compassion, Tulat imparts the gift of going unseen to another.

The wielder makes a **decisive** attack, adding up to (Manipulation) extra successes as dice on the damage roll. If the damage dealt exceeds her target's (higher of Essence or 3), he's obscured from the world. He can't be perceived or remembered by anyone for the rest of the scene, except by his enemies.

This Psyche effect targets those other characters, not the victim himself. Characters can resist by entering a Decision Point and citing a Defining Intimacy to pay one Willpower.

If the attack kills the target, this Psyche effect lingers for (wearer's Essence) days.

Resonant: Trivial characters continue to be affected by this Evocation until the victim has healed all damage in his health track.

Dissonant: Characters need only cite a Major Intimacy to resist.

Waymakers (Starmetal War-God Rings, Artifact ●●)

These starmetal wind-and-fire wheels are large enough for a small child fit through, though their bladed edges are scarcely thicker than paper. Their hand-grips are carved from a mineral that cannot be found in Creation, each with a delicate recess for a hearthstone.

Plaintive Abiona forged them for her Circlemate Unforgiving Lightning to wield against the Sequence of Irreducibles, a chasseur of the Scorpion Empire. The Sequence had folded and encysted itself deep within Creation's substrate. Its armored scales were distance; its talons, fractal blight. Thus, Abiona forged a weapon that to cut space itself, using the arch of a heavenly gate as a whetstone to hone the Waymakers' edges. Thus armed, Unforgiving Lightning descended into the Cascade, cutting a clear path through the infested space of its dominion to strike at its heart-lemma. He prevailed, though his right hand was forever warped by its predatory geometries.

The Waymakers were returned to Abiona after Unforgiving Lightning's death in a Silver Pact ambush.

Too grief-stricken to bear the sight of them in another Sidereal's hands, she sealed them away within the Cascade of Irreducibles' corpse, a strangely-angled maze of envenomed crystal and nacreous porcelain. She's spread rumors of them as she travels through Creation to ensure they're found by a worthy wielder, as long as she never has to meet them.

Attunement: 5m

Type: Light (+5 ACC, +10 DMG, +0 DEF, OVW 3)

Tags: Lethal, Martial Arts, Disarming

Hearthstone Slot(s): 2

Era: Inverted Mountain Incident

Evocations of the Waymakers

The Waymakers' wielder adds one die on **withering** and **decisive** damage rolls against fae, and one success on rolls to navigate the Wyld, overcome its obstacles, or contend with magic that warps space or makes it behave unusually, like certain Getimian Charms.

Cutting Rift

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Resonant, Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: None

The Waymakers wound space itself, cutting open a portal to strike at distant foes.

The wielder's attack can strike out to short range and ignores light and heavy cover. Full cover remains impassable.

With Essence 2, the wielder can attack out to medium range, but requires an aim action to do so.

Resonant: The wielder can cut open larger portals that obviate the need for precision, letting her attack through full cover. However, it grants +3 non-Charm Defense against her attack.

Hidden Gateway Passage

Cost: —; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisites: Cutting Rift, any one Charm this Evocation enhances

When the wielder moves without motion, space around her is cut by her passage.

The wielder reduces the cost of Distance-Severing Stride (p. XX) or other magic that lets her move without crossing the space between by two motes. If she succeeds on an opposed roll for that effect, she gains one Initiative.

Unexpected Portal Detour

Cost: 2m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only, Resonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Cutting Rift

The wielder traps an enemy with an unexpected portal, sending him right where she wants him.

When an enemy within short range of the wielder moves between range bands, voluntarily or not, the wielder rolls (Wits + Martial Arts) opposing his (Dexterity + [Athletics or Dodge]). If he fails, he's unable to avoid the portal, which leaves him one range band in any direction from his starting location. If he had any remaining movement from magic that lets him move multiple range bands, he completes it, but must continue in the same direction he set out in. If this endangers him — e.g., causing him to fall — the Storyteller should allow a roll to avoid it.

The wielder can use Cutting Rift reflexively to extend this Evocation's range.

Reset: Once per round.

Resonant: If this brings the enemy within close range of the wielder, she may reflexively make a **decisive** attack.

Wandering Gate Deflection

Cost: 4m, 1i; **Mins:** Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Clash, Decisive-only, Resonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Unexpected Portal Detour

Countering an attack with her portals, the wielder redirects it where it can do no harm.

The wielder clashes an attack by an enemy at any range with a **decisive** (Wits + Martial Arts) attack. If successful, she doesn't roll damage or reset Initiative, but her attacker loses Initiative equal to the 1s on his attack. His attack is redirected through another portal against scenery or a trivial character chosen by the Storyteller, which suffers whatever harm the Storyteller deems appropriate.

Resonant: The wielder gains the lost Initiative.

Revolving Portal Misdirection

Cost: —(+3m, 1wp); **Mins:** Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Dissonant, Resonant, Uniform

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisites: Wandering Gate Deflection

The wielder turns her enemies' numbers against them with deftly positioned portals.

When the wielder uses Wandering Gate Deflection, she may pay a three mote, one Willpower surcharge to let her redirect a clashed attack to a second enemy within close range, using her attack roll against his Defense to determine whether it hits but keeping any Charms used on the first attack. Any Initiative a **withering** attack would grant the attacker goes to the stylist instead. If it was a **decisive** attack, the attacker loses Initiative for 1s before he resets, but doesn't subtract them from his damage roll. The redirected attack's target must use any defensive Charms before the clash is rolled.

Resonant: When using this Evocation multiple times in a single round, waive the Willpower cost of uses past the first.

Dissonant: The attack can only be redirected to crashed or trivial enemies.

Conjunction of Location

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Resonant

Duration: One scene

Prerequisites: Hidden Gateway Passage, Revolving Portal Misdirection

The wielder cuts open twin gateways, spiritual mirrors of the Waymakers.

The wielder creates a portal at her location and another at a point within medium range. Characters can use move actions to cross between portals or make attacks. Characters can also make attacks through the portal. The distance between the portals doesn't count against the attack's range, and they can potentially bypass cover. Environmental effects like a spreading bonfire can also pass through the portals.

On the wielder's turn, she can use her movement action to reflexively move one of the portals one range band in any direction.

Special activation rules: This Charm can be flurried with a disengage roll to enter the portal or a rush roll after entering it with a reflexive move action.

Resonant: When an enemy attempts to move through the portals, he must roll (Dexterity + Athletics) against the wielder's (Wits + Martial Arts) to do so. The wielder may likewise roll to oppose attack rolls or other hostile effects made through a portal, or against a difficulty set by the Storyteller for unrolled effects and environmental effects.

Seven Star Alignment (Starmetal Dragon-Coil Staff, Artifact ●●●●)

Seven Star Alignment is a seven-section staff. Its links of gleaming starmetal connect rods carved from the branches of the Mourning Tree, which blooms from the graves of heroes who did not shirk from prophecy of death. Each movement of the staff brings its seven sections into a new conjunction, which mirror the patterns of the twenty-five constellations.

Talismanic inscriptions of starmetal and red jade adorn each of Seven Star Alignment's section, telling the myth of Pavonis the Vanguard. A valiant son of Mars and the cunning god of martial sorcery, Pavonis fell in battle alongside his Exalted lover in the tumultuous aftermath of the Divine Revolution. Pavonis wielded Seven Star Alignment only once, on the day of his death. Gifted with his mother's foresight, he witnessed the staff in a vision of his final battle and spent his last days forging his foretold weapon.

Unlike other artifacts kept in the Crimson Panoply of Victory's vaults, Seven Star Alignment doesn't belong to the Bureau of Destiny. With Pavonis dead, his weapon now belongs to Mars herself, who's placed it in trust with her Chosen. Mindful of this, the division's quatermasters evaluate the staff's would-be wielders more thoroughly than most. They test the boldness, cunning, and sorcerous talent of candidates to ensure that they're both suited to the weapon's temperament and worthy of Pavonis' legacy. Wielders who've come before Mars have spoken of the silent intensity of her gaze, as if considering their worth.

Attunement: 5m

Type: Medium (+3 ACC, +12 DMG, +1 DEF, OVW 4)

Tags: Bashing, Martial Arts, Disarming, Flexible

Hearthstone Slot(s): 2

Era: The Fomalhaut Discordance

Evocations of Seven Star Alignment

Seven Star Alignment's wielder doesn't lose sorcerous motes for not taking a shape sorcery action that turn if she made a **decisive** attack with or used a Simple Charm from a Martial Art that's compatible with seven-section staffs.

Other Paths

This artifact's listed Evocations are unsuitable for wielders who aren't sorcerers. Such characters might instead awaken Evocations that evoke Pavonis' prophetic sight and foreknowledge of his death, empower the wielder against foes might enough to test her courage, or emphasize cunning with a focus on gambits.

Omen-Gathering Apogee

Cost: 4m; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Withering-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Terrestrial Circle Sorcery

Weaving sorcerous Essence through the flaws in a foe's defense, the sorcerer makes his defeat part of the pattern of her spell.

The wielder adds (Essence) Overwhelming on a **withering** attack roll. She may exchange up to (higher of Essence or 3) Initiative awarded by the attack to sorcerous motes, including Initiative from Initiative Breaks. These last until the end of the scene. If she's shaping a spell, she doesn't lose sorcerous motes for not taking a shape sorcery action that turn.

Resonant: If this Evocation brings the wielder to the total needed to cast a spell, she may pay one Willpower to do so reflexively.

Unorthodox Incantation Tactic

Cost: 5m; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Omen-Gathering Apogee

Pavonis' cunning lives on in Seven Star Alignment, inspiring unorthodox uses of martial sorcery.

The wielder adds (Occult) dice on a gambit's attack roll and can spend sorcerous motes as though they were Initiative on the gambit's cost.

This Evocation can also enhance a **decisive** attack made with a spell, letting the wielder disarm her foes as well as damaging them, with the above benefits. No separate Initiative roll is needed for the gambit, but the wielder must pay the disarm gambit's cost before determining the attack's damage. If the attack has multiple targets, she must pay the gambit's cost separately for each of them.

Auspicious Conjunction of Forces

Cost: 3m; **Mins:** Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Perilous, Resonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Omen-Gathering Apogee

Seven Star Alignment's wisdom draws no distinction between the ebb and flow of combat and the subtle patterns of sorcery.

When the wielder regains Willpower for successfully casting a spell in combat (**Exalted**, p. 465), she may exchange it for five Initiative. If the spell lets her make a **decisive** attack, she gains this Initiative before

rolling the attack.

Resonant: This Evocation loses the Perilous keyword.

Foretold Dweomer Counterstrike

Cost: 1m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 2

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Counterattack, Dissonant, Uniform

Duration: Until released

Prerequisites: Unorthodox Incantation Tactic

Seven Star Alignment's master binds a spell within the patterns of its whirling sections, holding her sorcerous puissance back for when her foes least expect it.

Upon completing a spell that lets her make an attack, the wielder may use this Evocation to imbue the spell into Seven Star Alignment instead of casting it. Doing so resets her attack if it's her turn (**Exalted**, p. 254). Onlookers can identify the imbued spell by observing the sorcerous Essence that flows through the staff's patterns, requiring a (Perception + Occult) roll at difficulty (Circle + 2). The imbued spell isn't subject to countermagic.

When attacked, the wielder can end this Evocation to counterattack with the imbued spell. She can counterattack with spells that have multiple targets as long as her attacker is included. As usual, this must be declared before the attack roll. The imbued spell is lost if not used by the end of the scene.

With an Essence 3 repurchase, the wielder can clash with the spell instead of counterattacking.

Dissonant: Casting the imbued spell counts as the wielder's attack for the round.

Seven Constellations Stance

Cost: 2i, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Auspicious Conjunction of Forces, Celestial Circle Sorcery

The movements of Seven Star Alignment's sections reveal Pavonis' sorcerous battle-stance to its wielder.

Upon entering a Martial Arts Form that's compatible with seven-section staves, the wielder may reflexively make a shape sorcery roll to begin or continue casting a spell.

Reset: Once per round.

Crimson Lotus Enlightenment

Cost: 5m, 1wp (+10m, 1wp); **Mins:** Essence 5

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Resonant, Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Foretold Dweomer Counterstrike (x2), Seven Constellations Stance

Whispering the incantation spoken by Pavonis with his last breath, Seven Star Alignment's master draws forth its greatest power.

Resonant: Only characters resonant with this artifact can awaken this Evocation.

An attack made with a spell can benefit from Martial Arts Charms that are compatible with seven-section staffs, treating the spell as one of their style weapons. If the spell has multiple targets, the wielder must pay a ten-mote, one Willpower surcharge.

This Evocation isn't compatible with Sidereal Martial Arts, unless the wielder is a Sidereal.

Tamokhet, Fang of the Betrayer (Starmetal Heartpiercer, Artifact ●●●●)

"I had arrived in Nexus in time to attend the annual gala thrown by Wilting Lily, a merchant prince famed for procuring the most obscure of treasures. Though she was well aware of my diminished personal fortunes, she was more than happy for me to peruse her stock and give my expert opinion of them, if only to improve her sales patter."

"My attention was drawn to a starmetal kakute, which, based on its inscription, I tentatively identified as Tamokhet, one of the lost Betrayer's Tools. My host was delighted as I recounted its supposed provenance, known only from a digression in a medica materia of the Realm Before concerning the diseases of certain heavenly spiders. Sul-Xi, an obscure figure, slew by trickery a traitor among the spiders' ranks. Its death-curse birthed a plague upon reality, contained only when Sul-Xi shattered it into nine different diseases and forged each into a terrible implement of treachery."

"Tamokhet, counted seventh among the nine, is linked to the inauspicious constellation of the Sword, of which I will speak no further. It may be the same needle described obliquely in Yasak Hala's Histories of Treason, or the weapon with which Five-Faced Aknuris ended Old Zephyr's Manuvian Dynasty of Old Zephyr. To my knowledge, no other records of the hand-needle survive."

"I took my leave before the auction concluded, but was told that Tamokhet went for an exorbitant sum. (Thanks in no small part to her paraphrase of my account, I'm sure.) No one I spoke to could recall the winning bidder's appearance, which I fear cannot be solely attributed to the strength of their host's libations. I left the city in haste, shortly before Wilting Lily was murdered by a treacherous conspiracy of her bodyguards, paramours, and advisors."

—Ledaal Kusam Valdris, *One Thousand Shards of Jade*

Attunement: 5m

Type: Light (+5 ACC, +10 DMG, +0 DEF, OVW 3)

Tags: Lethal, Martial Arts, Concealable, Grappling, Worn

Hearthstone Slot(s): None

Era: The Dichotomous Heavens Crisis

Evocations of Tamokhet

The wielder awakens Sting of Betrayal for free.

Sting of Betrayal

Cost: 6m; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Supplemental

Keywords: Dissonant, Mute, Psyche, Resonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: None

The plague sealed within Tamokhet afflicts not its victim's flesh, but his relationships.

When Tamokhet's wielder makes a **decisive** attack, if she knows one of her target's positive Ties to an individual, she adds (Intimacy) dice of damage. If she deals any damage, her victim is exposed to the Doom of Tamokhet, a supernatural disease that infects that Tie. It has virulence and morbidity (6 – Intimacy) and an interval of one week. The Doom is a Psyche effect as well as a disease; rolls against it use (Wits + Integrity) instead of (Stamina + Resistance). Medical diagnosis and treatment are useless unless enhanced by magic.

Minor: The victim's relationship is infected with irrational mistrust. Voluntarily strengthening the Tie costs one Willpower.

Major: The victim obsesses over the possibility of being betrayed by the Tie's object. As above, and when he tries to use the infected Tie against social influence or for another purpose, the Storyteller can deny it unless he pays one Willpower to do so. Otherwise, he must use a different Intimacy. This counts as a botch inflicted by the disease (**Exalted**, p. 234).

Defining: The victim is certain the Tie's object plots his downfall. As above, but the Tie is suppressed completely. Instead of preventing the victim from using the Tie, the Storyteller can prevent him from taking any action that would align with the suppressed Tie. Doing so requires entering a Decision Point and citing a Defining Intimacy.

Death: The Doom's symptoms never result in death — at least, not directly.

Repeat exposures to the Doom can infect multiple Ties, but this is still treated as a single disease, using the same intensity for all infected Intimacies.

Dissonant: Sting of Betrayal can only enhance unexpected attacks and attacks in the first round of combat against enemies who've failed rolls to notice Tamokhet while it's concealed (**Exalted**, p. 588).

Resonant: An Essence 2 repurchase adds +2 to the Doom's virulence and morbidity and lowers its interval to one day.

The Treacherous World

Cost: —(+1wp); **Mins:** Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Resonant

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisites: Sting of Betrayal

The Doom of Tamokhet spreads insidiously, turning family against family and friend against friend.

The wielder can pay a one-Willpower surcharge when she uses Sting of Betrayal to render the Doom of Tamokhet contagious. The next time her victim interacts with a nontrivial character with a positive Tie toward him, that character is exposed to the Doom.

Resonant: With an Essence 3 repurchase, for each success by which the victim failed his roll against the Doom's virulence, another potential target he interacts with must roll against the Doom.

Destined Doom Forewarning

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

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Resonant

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisites: The Treacherous World

With words as sharp as needles, Tamokhet's master confirms her victims' worst fears.

When the wielder makes an influence roll that's opposed by an infected Tie, the Doom penalizes her victim's Resolve according to the Tie's intensity.

Resonant: The infected Intimacy can't be used against the wielder's influence.

Walk the Red Path

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Psyche, Resonant, Shaping (Fate)

Duration: Until the betrayal transpires

Prerequisites: Destined Doom Forewarning, Sting of Betrayal (x2), The Treacherous World (x2),

Having set in motion the events behind an inevitable betrayal, Tamokhet's wielder brings them to their terrible conclusion.

Resonant: Only wielders resonant with Tamokhet can awaken this Evocation.

To use this Evocation, the wielder must have infected a character with the Doom of Tamokhet and had

him spread it to a secondary target with The Treacherous World. She must have interacted with one of this pair within the last (Essence) days. She describes a scenario in which one of them betrays the other, making a special (Manipulation + [Socialize, Presence or Larceny]) influence roll against both characters' Resolve. This ignores multiple target penalties and the need for a shared language. Characters whose Essence equals or exceeds the wielder's add it to their Resolve as a non-Charm bonus.

The wielder's scenario can encompass the events of a single scene. She can specify the betrayal's details, but not the betrayer's motive, the behavior of anyone else, or any details unrelated to the betrayal. She could predict that a chef will poison his infected employer's meal, but his reasons for doing so would be his own. Nor can she guarantee the ultimate outcome of the betrayal; that hinges on successful rolls, creative thinking, the assistance of allies, and other assets brought to bear by the two. The Storyteller can veto details about the betrayal that go too far, as with introducing facts (**Exalted**, p. 238).

If the wielder beats the betrayed character's Resolve, fate ensures that the specified scenario occurs within a week, unless the wielder specifies a longer span. It plays out as close to the wielder's description as possible under the circumstances. However, the traitor is only compelled to play out the scenario if the roll beats their Resolve. Otherwise, they only appear to have betrayed the infected character: a chef might use mushrooms that only resemble amanitas or inadvertently mistake one for the other. The traitor can also resist this Charm's Psyche component by entering a Decision Point and citing an Intimacy whose intensity equals or exceeds that of both characters' symptoms to pay one Willpower.

If Tamokhet's wielder ends this Evocation prematurely or loses attunement to Tamokhet, the foretold betrayal is averted. This also occurs if either victim is cured of the Doom before it comes to pass.

Reset: Once per story.

The Serene Misfortune Sashes (Starmetal Silk Armor, Artifact ●●●)

Upon her loom of sacred cypress, Ouzha Nine-Handed wove nine sashes from nine bolts of rainbow fabric. Nine measures of starmetal she used for her weft, beaten thinner than a maiden's hair. Nine are the colors of the sashes themselves: crimson and ultramarine, jonquil and viridian, cyan and gamboge, indigo and rose, and a singular black snipped from cloth-of-night. She wove for nine years, and smiled at her works, for Ouzha feared nothing in the world but death, and fear was the tenth fabric upon her loom.

Each of the Serene Misfortune Sashes is a delicate froth of woven rainbow and irregular brocade, unique in its pattern from its sister-sashes. They may be tied around the waist or fastened with a needle-fine starmetal pin, their hues shifting subtly to suit the wearer's outfit and complexion. Of the eight sashes whose locations are known to Heaven, some are kept by the Cerulean Lute's quartermasters for Sidereals of suitable temperament. Others belong to the treasure-wardrobes of powerful celestial gods, having been given as gifts by Ouzha (and subsequently changing hands several times). Some of these gods have been known lend their sashes — freely or otherwise — to allies and proteges, whether to curry favor or enrich their sash's burgeoning mythos. Of the ninth, nothing is known.

Woven with Ouzha's fear of death, the sashes are silken armor that subtly bend fate to transform their wearer's tragedies into calamitous bad luck. One might escape certain doom by the grace of their sash, only to find their lives crumbling around them. They are infrequent plot devices in heavenly plays. In tragedies, their wearers batter their fists against the ground in despair; in comedies, they look upon their misfortune and smile. They say: *Calamities may pass with time, but death gives no reprieve.*

Attunement: 4m

Type: Light (Soak +5, Hardness 4, Mobility Penalty -0)

Tags: Special, Silent

Hearthstone Slot(s): 0

Era: The Season of Nine Shoguns

Evocations of the Serene Misfortune Sash

The Serene Misfortune Sashes don't count as armor for determining their compatibility with Martial Arts.

Each of the nine sashes has its own unique set of Evocations, each taking its own approach to substituting misfortune for injury, failure, and other setbacks. The following Evocations focus on protecting the wearer from physical injury, but some sashes might instead protect its wearer's reputation, wealth, relationships, or the like.

Borrowed Luck

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Perilous, Uniform

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: None

Adapting an untroubled mien, the wearer radiates quiet confidence that unnerves and enthralls her would-be attackers.

The wearer adds up to (higher of Essence or 3) to her Defense. However, she suffers a penalty equal to this bonus on her next attack roll, which can't be negated.

Reset: Once per scene, unless reset by attacking.

Tomorrow's Troubles Defense

Cost: 2m per health level; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Decisive-only, Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Dancing Among Razors

Swords and arrows turn aside at the last moment as the sash cinches tight around the wearer's waist, heavy with knotted misfortune.

Against a **decisive** attack, she may pay two motes per health level to transform damage into bad luck, up to (higher of Essence or 3) health levels. This misfortune takes a form of the Storyteller's choice at some point after the scene but before the end of the story, based on the number of health levels transformed:

BEGIN TABLE

Health Levels Transformed Effect

1 or 2 Small twists of fate that inflict a -2 penalty, such as unusual traffic, awful weather, misplaced papers, etc.

3 or 4 Temporary, personal setbacks, such as the theft of an important document, the arrival of an unexpected investigator, or mistaken identity.

5 or more Significant trouble, often for the character's Merits, such as seized assets, incapacitated contacts, or misunderstandings that sour a relationship.

END TABLE

Reset: Once per scene unless reset by falling to a -2 wound penalty or lower.

Resonant: This Charm loses the Perilous keyword.

Waltzing Away from Calamity

Cost: —(6m, 1wp); **Mins:** Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Shaping (Fate)

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisites: Tomorrow's Troubles Defense

The wearer may walk away from an avalanche with nothing worse than rumpled robes...at least, for a time.

The wearer may spend six motes and one Willpower to invoke Tomorrow's Troubles Defense against a Crippling effect or an instance of uncountable damage, negating the harm. In exchange, she becomes the subject of a baleful prophecy of the Storyteller's choice, bringing a certain type of misfortune to herself, such as bankruptcy, illness, defeat, or scandal. She suffers +1 target number to rolls that could result in that misfortune for the rest of the story. If this Charm is used towards the end of the current story, the effect may carry over to the next instead at the Storyteller's discretion.

Repurchase at Essence 3+ allows the wearer to learn how to negate a Shaping effect instead of a Crippling one.

Dissonant: Wearers dissonant with starmetal suffer +2 target number to avoid their misfortune instead.

Grinning Albatross Infliction

Cost: —(+1wp); **Mins:** Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Shaping (Fate)

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisites: Waltzing Away from Calamity

Loosening a knot from the sash's Essence, the wearer shunts her future misery onto someone else.

Once per session when she uses Tomorrow's Troubles Defense, the wearer may pay a one Willpower surcharge to foist her bad luck on a target within short range. If her Essence is higher than the target's, this happens automatically; otherwise, it requires a contested (Wits + Integrity) roll, with the wearer gaining -1 target number. Success subjects the target to the misfortune instead; failure resets this Charm.

Oadenol's Wheel (Starmetal Chariot, Artifact ●●●)

Oadenol's Wheel was made by the Sidereal arch-artificer Oadenol for her young Circlemate Sagacious Sloth, the reincarnation of her closest companion. Sagacious Sloth was perpetually late to his appointments, owing to his preoccupation with outlandish adventures. Oadenol made excuses for him when he skipped a convention meeting to dance and take lovers in the Demon City. She covered for when he dodged a vital mission assigned to the Circle to visit the cities of the cloud people and study their astrology. But when he missed his own wedding, trapped at the bottom of the sea after an unwise wager with Zhuzhao, tentacled god of the depths, Oadenol could no longer sit idly by.

She cut a sliver of starmetal from a comet passing through the constellation of the Messenger to forge the chariot's wheel-spokes, and bound two of the lumenir, wild spirit-horses that chased after the comet, to draw the chariot. Knowing her Circlemate's predilection for rash heroics, she constructed the chariot so it could also be wielded as a weapon, collapsing into a single chariot-wheel with which to bludgeon obstacles to arriving on time.

Sagacious Sloth thanked Oadenol for her gift, which he put to use on a new adventure into the Wyld, battling the many-shadowed princes of the Far Gloaming. This took several years, with intermittent breaks to tend to his official duties, but despite everything, he was later than ever.

Attunement: 5m

Type: Heavy (+1 ACC, +14 DMG, +0 DEF, OVW 5)

Tags: Bashing, Brawl, Smashing, Thrown (Short), Two-Handed.

Hearthstone Slots: 2

Era: Labors of the Tekhelet Circle

Evocations of Oadenol's Wheel

Oadenol's Wheel can be changed between its chariot and weapon forms as a miscellaneous action.

As a chariot, Oadenol's Wheel is an elegant sweep of dark wood, unremarkable save for the glint of starmetal and a light frosting of stellar ice along the spokes of its wheels and can carry its driver and up to two others. It's drawn by the lumenir Skere and Andras, who use horse traits (**Exalted**, p. 567), but add +2 to all dice pools, have soak 10 and Hardness 5. They're spirits, reforming by the next sunrise or sunset if slain, but lack mote pools or Charms. They're naturally material, like elementals. Sidereals treat the lumenir as familiars, as do those like Twilight Caste Solars who can take spirit familiars. They can both be enhanced with a single use or purchase of magic that permanently improves familiars.

As a weapon, Oadenol's Wheel is a single large wheel with a glint of starmetal along its rim. It isn't Improvised, but it's compatible with Martial Arts that use improvised weapons and other magic that enhances them.

Dutiful Charioteer's Boon

Cost: —; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisites: Yellow Path

Oadenol ensured that Sagacious Sloth could always be on time, though even she couldn't force him to.

Meeting a deadline with Yellow Path counts as fulfilling an auspicious prospect (p. XX). Passing on an opportunity to do so is met with disapproving whinnies from the lumenir.

Once per day, the Sidereal can add a free full Excellency, including target number reduction, on a roll to do so.

Special activation rules: This Evocation can't be purchased with experience. It awakens for free when the Sidereal misses a deadline.

Star-Spoke Transition

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

Type: Reflexive

Keywords: Perilous

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: None

With but a thought, the Wheel's master transforms it, striking a foe with its heft before drawing back with the speed of lumenir.

The Wheel's master changes it form reflexively. If she uses this to attack an enemy after moving toward him, she retains the benefits of mounted combat and waives the Initiative cost of making a smash attack. If she uses it to disengage after attacking, she doesn't lose Initiative.

Chariots

Riding a chariot in combat uses the mounted combat rules for the steed that draws the chariot (**Exalted**, p. 202). Most chariots designed for war can carry one to two passengers, who also gain the benefits of mounted combat. Chariots provide light cover to its driver and passengers, without requiring take cover rolls. However, mounts drawing a chariot suffer a -1 mobility penalty. Exceptional chariots, including artifact chariots, have no mobility penalty, which replaces the usual equipment bonus.

Prismatic Leap

Cost: 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 1

Type: Simple

Keywords: Dissonant, Dual, Resonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Star-Spoke Transition

Oadenol's Wheel soars through the air on a glittering trail of the lumenir's varicolored stardust to swoop down on foes.

This Evocation can only be used while the Wheel is a chariot. Its driver leaps one range band horizontally or up to two range bands vertically toward an enemy. If this reaches close range with an enemy, one of the lumenir may reflexively make a **withering** or **decisive** attack. This counts as an impale attack on a vertical leap, adding +5 dice of **withering** damage or +3 dice of **decisive** damage. Alternatively, the Wheel's master can use Star-Spoke Transition for free to attack with it, gaining the same benefit.

Resonant: The attack is impaling on horizontal leaps as well.

Dissonant: This Evocation can only be used once per scene.

Unbridle the Lumenir

Cost: —; **Mins:** Essence 2

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisites: None

The Sidereal releases the lumenir from the Wheel to serve her.

Skere and Adrath can remain manifest while Oadenol's Wheel is in weapon form. The ever-dour Adrath, is always mistrustful and suspicious of her surroundings, while her ebullient sister Skere is ever eager to explore the world.

If a Sidereal uses Spirit-Shape Companion on the lumenir, they remain material, gaining the ability to dematerialize instead, using the same rules as materialization (**Exalted**, p. 510). They gain Hurry Home, letting them return to the Wheel. They return automatically when the Wheel returns to chariot form.

Special activation rules: This Evocation can't be purchased with experience. It awakens for free when the Wheel's master purchases or uses a Charm to permanently enhance the lumenir.

Seven-Colored Comet Leap

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3

Type: Simple

Keywords: Decisive-only

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Dutiful Charioteer's Boon, Prismatic Leap, Unbridle the Lumenir

Oadenol's Wheel descends from the sky on a brilliant rainbow, striking with the force of the falling star it was forged from.

This Evocation can only be used while the Wheel is a chariot. The Sidereal leaps up to long range above the battlefield, hanging in midair until her next turn. Unless she's dismounted or knocked from the sky, she crashes back down to the battlefield on her next turn as a comet of rainbow flame, making a **decisive** impaling attack against all enemies within short range of a point within four range bands of her original location. Alternatively, one of the luminer may make the attack. The attacker's Initiative and the +5 impaling bonus are divided evenly among all hit enemies, rounded up, and ignore Hardness. Trivial enemies and battle groups suffer the attack's full damage and aren't counted when dividing Initiative. Hit enemies are knocked prone and suffer a penalty equal to the damage they take on rolls to rise from prone. This attack leaves a rainbow in its wake.

Once per story, the Wheel's master can use this Evocation to leap arbitrarily high if necessary to some task — e.g., taming a new lumenir to replace one slain with Ghost-Eating Technique. She remains aloft as long as needed to attempt the task, and suffers no harm from falling. She can also use this to travel to the Demon City by leaping and cutting a hole in Creation's sky, though she must still spend five days falling through the Endless Desert's sky before landing.

Godcarver (Starmetal Chisel, Artifact ••••)

In every legend of Ashjun Paja — the Zenith Caste priest-artisan who created some of the First Age's greatest shrines, idols, and temples — the chisel Godcarver is at his side. It's a flat sculptor's chisel, a finger-thin starmetal rod gently widening to a thumbnail sized, flat-topped blade. The Old Realm character for "Harmony" is inlaid in orichalcum on both sides of the blade at its base.

Ashjun dedicated his holy service not just to the Unconquered Sun, but to all Creation's gods, and wielded Godcarver as a symbol of sacred authority. The ruins of his Western dominion are still dotted with hundreds of idols to ancient storm gods who once protected the land from drought and typhoon. The deep Wyld has yet to corrupt the embassy-temple he raised in Yo-Ping's name, where Heaven's ambassadors negotiated the Thousand Star Armistice. In Yu-Shan's slums, some walls still bear his frescoes, commemorating the downtrodden and the destitute.

Not all Godcarver's masters have shared its creator's compassionate purpose. In the Great Contagion's aftermath, the Joybringer Anthuris created a shadow-heaven from the sanctuaries of her divine conspirators, using Godcarver to bind them to her hidden labyrinth-manse. Though her Circlemates ultimately thwarted her sedition, by the time they reached her shadow-heaven's heart, she was long gone, never to be seen again. Godcarver was thought lost with her, but was rediscovered the next Calibration, laid atop the tomb of its first inheritor, Ashjun's apprentice.

Attunement: 2m

Era: Era of Limitless Light

Evocations of Godcarver

Godcarver is exceptional equipment (**Exalted**, p. 580) for Craft rolls using it. Godcarver's wielder awakens Celestial Communion for free upon attuning it.

Heaven-Pleasing Altar

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

Type: Simple

Keywords: Resonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: None

No god can bring himself to ignore a prayer spoken before an altar or idol crafted with Godcarver.

The wielder can use this Evocation when she listens to someone pray in or before an idol, shrine, altar, or temple for a god that she's created with Godcarver. That god hears the supplicant's words and counts as having a Minor Tie of gratitude toward him if he makes an influence roll through the prayer. This Intimacy doesn't apply to gods with negative Ties to him, but with an appropriate offering, those Ties may be treated as one step weaker.

The god may choose to answer the prayer in person, manifesting within a depiction of themselves or an immaterial apparition within a holy place, letting them speak and otherwise interact with others there for the scene. They can't take physical actions or use magic through this projection.

Resonant: A god can use a single Charm through their manifestation. Its minimum Essence can't exceed the wielder's.

Temple-Consecrating Talent

Cost: 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 2

Type: Simple

Keywords: Dissonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Heaven-Pleasing Altar

Stately cathedrals and elephantine idols raised with Godcarver are more than sites of reverence; their Essence is interwoven with that of their consecrated deity.

Godcarver's wielder undertakes a mundane superior project to create temple, grand shrine, gigantic idol, or similar for a god whom she has a positive Major or Defining Tie toward, imbuing it with the following benefits:

- When the wielder uses Heaven-Pleasing Altar, the god counts as having a Major Tie of gratitude or reduces the intensity of a negative Tie by two. Negative Minor Ties instead count as Minor Ties of gratitude.
- The god can respond to prayers by appearing physically to the supplicant, committing fifteen motes and paying one Willpower to do so for a scene.
- Members of the god's cult and anyone bearing the god's blessing double 9s on rolls against disease, poison, Derangements, possession, and similar ailments within a structure or while near an idol

or other depiction created by Godcarver.

- Godcarver's wielder and the god can awaken Evocations from the structure, based on the god's purview, history, and relationship with the wielder.

Dissonant: If the wielder ceases to have a qualifying Tie toward the god, this Charm's blessing ends. Any purchased Evocations have their experience point cost refunded.

Miracles in Stone

Cost: —; **Mins:** Essence 3

Type: Permanent

Keywords: Dissonant, Resonant

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisites: Temple-Consecrating Talent

Invoking Heaven's favor, Godcarver's master creates sanctified relics and holy treasures.

When the wielder uses Heaven-Pleasing Altar in a place blessed with Temple-Consecrating Talent, the god can answer the prayer by imbuing an Eclipse Charm or Evocation of the temple into a sacred talisman created by the wielder. Characters with mote pools and a positive Major or Defining Tie who meet that power's prerequisites can incur experience debt to learn it, paying eight points for Eclipse Charms.

The wielder waives the experience debt for the first Charm or Evocation she learns this way. If a blessed object is destroyed or otherwise permanently leaves the narrative or if a character loses his qualifying Tie, the imbued power's experience cost is refunded.

Resonant: With an Essence 5 repurchase, characters without mote pools can use blessed objects, paying one Willpower for each five motes of its cost.

Dissonant: Only the wielder can benefit from blessed objects.

Godwright Chisel Invocation

Cost: 20m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 5

Type: Simple

Keywords: Resonant

Duration: Instant

Prerequisites: Miracles in Stone (x2)

Godcarver brings forth the divinity trapped in the stone, creating a temple like the egg of a newborn god.

Resonant: Only characters resonant with Godcarver can awaken this Evocation.

The wielder undertakes a mundane superior project to create a magnificent temple to a god that does not exist. The wielder determines the general nature of the god, but not its position in the Celestial Bureaucracy. If she created a god of purifying flame, it would have miracles appropriate to that role, but no official status or recognition of such. The construction gains the benefits of Temple-Consecrating

Talent for free.

Signs and portents of the god-to-be appear nearby as the wielder labors. For the god of purifying flame, children might recite rhymes about the wicked world reduced to ash, while rotten trees spontaneously combust. Spirits sense the coming of a new divinity, though not the temple's precise location.

Upon completing the project, the wielder makes one final blow with Godcarver to free the newborn divinity from its stone egg. The craft points for completing the project are doubled (**Exalted**, pp. 241, 243).

The god has the following:

- An Essence rating of (wielder's Essence - 2).
- 50 + (Essence x 2) personal notes.
- Materialize and Hurry Home (**Exalted**, p. 509-510), and (its Essence + 3) other spirit Charms appropriate to its nature or Evocations of the temple. Not all these Charms need to be chosen when the spirit is created; they can be left undetermined and selected later.

The god's other traits are left to the Storyteller to devise together with the wielder's player.

Sidereals with Willing Assumption of Chains (p. XX) can confer its benefits on the god for free. Gods created by Solars with Ephemeral Induction Technique (**Exalted**, p. 360) have Essence equal to theirs and count as familiars, though not subject to that Charm's limit on them.

Resonant: Characters who fail the resistance roll also take a point of lethal damage.

Sidereal Hearthstones

Sidereal demesnes are often touched by supernatural phenomena involving fate, the stars, time, omens, synchronicity, memory, and other subtle forces. Manses raised atop often feature complex geometric forms, auspicious patterns, twisting passageways, and spaces that are open to the night sky. Such locales' ambient Essence often attracts large numbers of spirits, and sometimes suffuse Sidereal demesnes and manses with an emotional ambiance of curiosity, pride, patience, or manipulative cunning.

Covenant Stone (Sidereal, Standard)

Keywords: Manse-Born

The bearer of this yellow-orange topaz can hear prayers directed to her by her worshipers. Gleaning useful information from these prayers or seeking out a specific suppliant's prayer requires a (Perception + Occult) roll against whatever difficulty the Storyteller deems appropriate. Spirits and other characters already capable of hearing prayers instead double 7s on such rolls.

Demon-Banishing Jewel (Sidereal, Standard)

Keywords: None

This glinting star sapphire exists in both the material realm and the immaterial, making it tangible to dematerialized beings. A weapon socketed with it can be used to attack dematerialized enemies. If its wielder could already do so thanks to other magic, she adds a non-Charm die on the attack roll.

Gem of Midnight Omens (Sidereal, Standard)

Keywords: Steady

This ovate chrysolite's facets reflect indistinct glimpses of the future. Those who sleep within three miles of it have strange, vivid dreams that often hint at their future, though their meaning may not become apparent until the foretold event comes to pass. Until they next sleep, they add a non-Charm success on Occult rolls involving fate or omens and on rolls to predict the future, like with thaumaturgical divination (p. XX) or Of Things Desired and Feared (p. XX).

Pattern Spider's Eye (Sidereal, Standard)

Keywords: Wild-Born

The bearer of this faceted emerald can detect the presence of fate-altering Shaping effects and discern their function with a difficulty 5 ([Intelligence or Perception] + Occult) roll. For effects that already allow such a roll, she instead adds a non-Charm success.

Savant's Lens (Sidereal, Standard)

Keywords: Manse-Born

Any text viewed through this lenticular blue stone appears as if written in Old Realm script. Add an automatic success on rolls to decipher codes contained within the text or to notice significant details about the writing.

Cabochon of Celestial Puissance (Sidereal, Greater)

Keywords: Linked, Manse-Born

This unfaceted tourmaline can be imprinted with a single Eclipse Charm, either by a willing character or by pressing the stone to an incapacitated enemy's brow. Socketing the hearthstone grants its bearer access to that Charm if they meet its prerequisites, and they can learn it permanently for eight experience points. Once an Eclipse Charm has been imprinted, it can't be changed until the bearer has spent experience to learn it.

Silken Steel Pearl (Sidereal, Greater)

Keywords: Dependent

This nacreous jewel is strangely light when held, almost as if it might float free of one's grasp. When socketed in armor, the armor counts as one step lighter to determine its compatibility with Martial Arts styles. Light armor doesn't count as armor at all for compatibility.

Chapter Nine: The Roll of Heavenly Personages

Anys Syn

Anys Syn is a legend among the Bronze Faction, often considered the greatest martial artist of the Fivescore Fellowship. She slew the diamond behemoth Gjalagad, shattering its eight true bodies. When Sublime Danger, master of Thousand Blades Style, challenged her to a duel over a petty slight, Syn fought the Lunar to a standstill with a bamboo switch. When the traitor Ni Zhang fled into the demon-temple Suntarankal, she broke down the Crucible of Brass and Iron's great banded gates to pursue him through its Forty-Nine Chambers.

Anys Syn has been a fixture of the Bronze Faction since its nascency. Having seen firsthand atrocities committed by the Solar prince whose dominion she was born into, she was among the first to espouse the necessity of the Solar Purge. Despite this, she has little commitment to the faction's ideology and even less interest in politics. She counts herself among the Bronze solely out of her feelings of personal responsibility for the Solar Purge's consequences and her trust in the faction's elders to safeguard Creation against a return to the First Age's greatest horrors. With the violence of the Solar Purge behind her, Anys Syn has taken on the role of a mentor rather than a warrior, training both Sidereals and Dragon-Blooded to battle threats to Creation. Other students she seeks out from among promising martial artists throughout Creation, testing them to determine if they're worthy of her tutelage. She was among the grandmasters who created the Immaculate Dragon styles, and developed many of the training regimens still used by the Order.

Politics play little role in who Syn chooses as her students, save to the extent her fellow elders request that she mentor their protégés. She has no qualms with training Gold Faction radicals, Immaculate heretics, criminal gods, or demons. While mentoring a Solar or Lunar would be politically problematic, she can't say she wouldn't relish the opportunity.

Syn's students find her an unconventional teacher. She puts them through grueling training regimens and sparring bouts against their fellow students, but also makes them accompany her on shopping trips to expand her collection of antique string instruments and learn to cook to her exacting standards. If questioned on her methods, she insists that the martial arts reflect and are reflected by all other disciplines, and that she cannot afford to retain a chef.

Anys Syn is outwardly unassuming, a petite woman of late middle age with graying hair who dresses in elaborate robes centuries out of fashion. To those unaware of her identity, she enjoys posing as a harmless, eccentric society lady, bejeweled gloves concealing the calluses built up from centuries of training. Her most common resplendent destinies are a stern instructor in the Cloister of Wisdom and a wandering Dragon-Blooded hermit.

Storytellers be warned: Use caution in putting Anys Syn in battles where she has reason to kill the player characters. She's an extremely formidable opponent who can quickly defeat an inexperienced Circle and overwhelm all but the most accomplished opponents in single combat.

Caste: Battles

Essence: 7; Willpower: 10; Join Battle: 14 dice

Personal: 23; Peripheral: 63

Health Levels: -0x11/-1x2/-2x2/-4/Incap.

Actions: Bureaucracy: 6 dice; Command: 9 dice; Cooking: 11 dice; Feats of Strength: 12 dice (may attempt Strength 5 feats); Martial Arts Lore: 14 dice; Read Intentions: 12 dice; Resist Poison/Disease: 12 dice; Senses: 12 dice; Social Influence: 9 dice; Strategy: 9 dice; Zither Performances: 11 dice.

Appearance 2, Resolve 5, Guile 7

Combat

Attack (Unarmed): 14 dice (Damage 11B)

Attack (Grapple): 11 dice (11 dice to control)

Combat Movement: 10 dice

Evasion: 6; Parry: 6

Soak/Hardness: 10/4 (Grandmaster's Bloodied Finery, starmetal silk armor)

Intimacies

Defining Principle: Power must be tempered by responsibility.

Defining Principle: My part in the Solar Purge makes its consequences mine to deal with.

Defining Principle: There is no great pleasure than to test myself against a legendary foe.

Major Principle: I care not for the politics of destiny, only its fulfillment.

Major Principle: I must pass on my knowledge to worthy disciples.

Major Tie: Other martial artists (Respect)

Major Tie: Chejop Kejak (Trust)

Minor Tie: The Immaculate Order (Responsibility)

Escort

In Yu-Shan, Syn is often accompanied by her current protégé — likely another Sidereal, one of Heaven's Dragons, or a spirit. In her resplendent destiny as an Immaculate monk, she may be accompanied by Dragon-Blooded Immaculates and mortal monks. On Wyld Hunts, she's typically backed by at least a Hearth of Immaculate grandmasters and a Size 2-3 battle group of mortal monks.

Anima

Lesser Sign of Mars (5m; Reflexive; Until next turn): Syn and allies within close range gain +1 non-Charisma defense and add +5 dice on War rolls. Free at bonfire anima.

Greater Sign of Mars (20m, 1wp; Simple; One scene): Roll Join Battle. Syn and all allies gain that much Initiative. They also gain +7 base Initiative. Battle groups instead gain Might 2. Once per story.

Excellency

Bonus Dice: Anys Syn can add up to 5 dice on rolls for one mote per die. She can add up to +5 to static values for two motes per +1.

Target Numbers: Anys Syn can reduce a roll's target number for one mote. She can reduce the target number of pools with 7+ dice by two for two motes, or by three for three motes, one Willpower.

Offensive Charms

Blood Devil Fist (10m; Supplemental; Instant): Double 10s on a **decisive** damage roll, adds (1 + enemy's wound penalty) dice of damage, and adds up to five extra successes as dice of damage. If this deals 3+ damage, her target's wound penalty increases by one until he crashes her. If this attack increases the target's wound penalty, he suffers the increase in dice of additional damage.

Certain Kill: Three Venom Heart Strike (20m, 1wp; Simple; Instant): Requires 15+ Initiative. Make a **decisive** attack that doesn't deal damage or reset Initiative. Hit enemies are exposed to three different poisons, making one roll to resist at a -4 penalty. The first poison has Damage 3i/round, Duration (Essence + enemy's onslaught penalty), and a -1 penalty. The second has Damage 2i/round, Duration 11 rounds, and a -2 penalty. The third has Damage 7 motes/round (Aggravated if no motes), Duration 7 rounds, and a -3 penalty.

Many Fools Die (14m, 2i, 1wp; Simple; Instant;): Make a **decisive** attack with +5 dice on the attack roll against all enemies within close range. Each suffers (Initiative/3, rounded up) damage. If the attack roll exceeds a target's Resolve, it becomes a surprise attack against him and adds +6 damage dice to him. Once per scene.

Scourging Judgment Palm (7m; Supplemental; Instant;): Anys Syn adds +5 raw damage and Overwhelming to a withering attack. If any damage is dealt, the target loses 7 Initiative, which she doesn't gain.

Stance-Breaker Strike (4m; Supplemental; Instant): Crashing an enemy with a **withering** attack crashes an opponent grants an additional Initiative and steals (7 + his wound penalty) motes.

Form Charms

Charcoal March of Spiders Form (10m; Simple; One scene): Roll Join Battle twice, using each result as a "passive" Initiative track separate from her normal Initiative. These don't let her take additional turns, but she can use them in place of her actual Initiative for any purpose. Crashed tracks are permanently lost. Can activate reflexively by moving into or out of close range of an enemy and hitting him with a **decisive** attack in the same turn.

Snake Form (8m; Simple; One scene): Add +5 soak. Attacks against Syn suffer a -1 penalty, or -3 for lower-Initiative attackers. Can activate reflexively by bringing an enemy's Initiative from higher than her own to lower with a **withering** attack.

Tiger Form (10m; Simple; One scene): Double up to five **withering** attack roll extra successes to determine damage, and add +7 dice on rushes and rolls opposing disengage action. Gain Initiative lost by enemies who attempt to disengage from her. Ignore prone penalties. Can activate reflexively by dealing 3+ **decisive** damage.

Defensive Charms

Crimson Nemesis Stance (8m, 1wp; Reflexive; Instant): Gain +5 soak, or +7 soak against attacks from long or extreme range, and Hardness 7. Syn suffers no Evasion penalties against a single enemy, doubles 9s on rush and disengage rolls against him, and gains 1 Initiative whenever he gains Initiative, except from attacking her. If he's defeated, she chooses a new target.

Heavenly Mirror Technique (10m, 3i, 2wp; Reflexive; Instant): Clash an attack from close range — even an ambush — with a **decisive** attack, doubling up to five 9s on the attack roll. Negate a non-Excellency Reflexive or Supplemental Charm or Evocation that enhances the opposing attack, and apply it to Syn's own.

Humbled Rival Evasion (4m; Reflexive; Instant): Against a lower-Initiative enemy,

add +2 Evasion after the attack roll. The first time Syn attacks him before the end of her next turn, she adds +1 die of post-soak **withering** or decisive damage, which she can stack against a single enemy. If used multiple times a round, the cost is reduced by one each use, minimum two motes.

Inevitable Survival Strategy (7m, 1wp [+1wp]; Reflexive; Instant): After being hit by a **decisive** attack, but before the damage roll, halve the damage roll, rounded down, and inflict +1 target number on it. Pay a one-Willpower surcharge to inflict +2 target number. Once per scene unless reset by going a round without taking damage.

Unassailable Pinnacle Defense (7m; Reflexive; Instant): Gain +7 soak and reduce post-soak damage by 7 against a **withering** attack. If Syn takes no damage, onlookers must roll (Perception + Awareness) at difficulty 11 to realize she was attacked. If everyone fails, she steals four Initiative from her attacker and gains one Willpower.

Mobility Charms

Dance of the Hungry Spider (5m, 1wp; Reflexive; One scene): Syn is immune to grapples and being knocked prone. After negating two such effects, she becomes vulnerable to a third. Once per round, she can reflexively move a range band towards an enemy before attacking him in any direction after being attacked. This doesn't count as her movement action.

Miscellaneous Charms

Ways of Exaltation: (5m, 1wp; Simple; Indefinite): Imitate another Sidereal Caste or another type of Exalt's Caste or Aspect. Add (Anima) dice on rolls with the Caste or Aspect's associated traits and (Anima/2), rounded up to static values based on them.

Elder Prowess

Blossoming Lotus Lesson

Cost: —(Varies); **Mins:** Martial Arts 5, Essence 7

Type: Permanent

Keywords: None

Duration: Permanent

Prerequisite Charms: Any five complete Sidereal Martial Arts styles

Once per scene, Syn can reflexively use a Form Charm by explaining the style and its strengths and weaknesses to her enemies. If this provides them with useful information, Syn gains one Willpower.

Tactics

Player characters are most likely to come into conflict with Anys Syn when she offers to duel a prospective student or challenges a rival to gauge his talent. Solar and Lunar player characters might instead face her in a Wyld Hunt. Only the most powerful of Anathema warrant the intervention of the Bronze Faction's mightiest enforcer, like experienced Exalted who've amassed strength enough to threaten the Realm's hegemony. She's an endgame threat for player characters.

Anys Syn opens battles with Crimson Nemesis Stance, targeting the most powerful opponent. Against multiple foes, she'll use Thousandfold Master Form on her first turn to counter their action economy advantage. Against the greatest of foes, she'll open with the Greater Sign of Mars if she has allies supporting her.

On the offense, Syn leads with **withering** attacks enhanced with Scourging Judgment Palm, using Stance-Breaker Strike whenever she crashes an enemy. Once she's built sufficient Initiative, she'll deal a finishing blow with Blood Devil Fist, or Three Venoms Heart Strike if her enemy has powerful magic that reduces damage, or use Many Fools Die when outmatched.

In duels, Syn is less brutally efficient, indulging her taste for the dramatic and often using her foe's own styles against him, while flurrying read intentions to take her foe's measure and prepare devastating verbal barbs. She graciously concedes upon suffering damage to a -1 health level.

Combos

These Sidereals Quick Characters have streamlined Charms that combine multiple effects. As always, Storytellers can give them additional Charms, especially relevant Horoscope Charms and other largely narrative effects.

Fulgent Melody

Fulgent Melody was born into Calin's aristocracy and their great game of politics, trained as a negotiator and courtier from a young age. Since her Exaltation, Melody has turned these talents to the Bureau of Destiny's service, spending two centuries building influence among Yu-Shan's criminal underworld as a powerbroker and arbiter of disputes. When vendettas between rival gangs like the Crimson Sigil and the Seven Strings Sisterhood stain Heaven's slums with divine blood, crime bosses turn to her to mediate the feud with equanimity, fairness, and discretion. This is her service to Heaven, sustaining its order through corrupt means.

Fulgent Melody is a heavyset woman with light brown skin and dark, graying hair, looking to be well into middle age. She wears the many-colored silk robes and elaborately braided hair of a Calinti courtier, along with a pair of silver framed glasses for reading fine print. Almost inhumanly calm in tense situations, she rarely raises her voice. Those who succeed in provoking her to anger rarely wish to experience it again.

While Joyous Melody's thoroughly corrupt, her underworld dealings are always in service to destiny's fulfillment, though she has no qualms about lining her own pockets while she's at it. She diligently files reports, written in poetic verse, on all such matters, a key source of intelligence on high-level criminal

activity for the Bureau. But the Joybringer is more easily moved by compassion than she'd admit, even when it comes between her and her duty. Her report exposing Augrem of the Winding Ways's ambrosia-embezzling scheme omitted all evidence of his God-Blooded child, the funds' unwitting beneficiary, and the operational budget for her next several missions was "reallocated" to the child's housing and education.

Happiest in a crowd, Fulgent Melody spends much of her free time in Yu-Shan's gambling dens and tea houses — though her leisure must sometimes give way to business when she encounters an underworld client. She also dedicates much of her time to the mentorship of young Sidereals, even outside the office, training protégés not just in diplomacy and subterfuge, but in the ethics and self-discipline it takes to walk the line she does. They learn to take bribes without being bought and to dirty their hands, but never their conscience. Such lessons serve them well, whether infiltrating criminal syndicates, playing heavenly politics, or pacting with fell horrors.

Caste: Serenity

Essence: 3; Willpower: 8; Join Battle: 6 dice

Personal: 15; Peripheral: 43

Health Levels: -0x2/-1x3/-2x2/-4/Incap.

Actions: Bureaucracy: 8 dice; Investigation: 10 dice; Larceny: 10 dice; Read Intentions: 12 dice; Senses: 6 dice; Social Influence: 12 dice; Stealth: 8 dice.

Appearance 3, Resolve 6, Guile 6

Combat

Attack (War Fans): 7 dice (Damage 9L)

Attack (Grapple): 5 dice (5 dice to control)

Combat Movement: 6 dice

Evasion: 4; Parry: 3

Soak/Hardness: 3/0

Intimacies

Defining Principle: Anyone can be reasoned with if you know what they want.

Defining Tie: The Bureau of Destiny (Commitment)

Major Principle: As long as it gets results, it's an option worth considering.

Major Principle: People deserve my compassion no matter how great their crimes.

Major Tie: Heavenly Criminals (Pragmatic Cooperation)

Minor Principle: Gambling (Enthusiasm)

Minor Tie: Her Students (High Expectations)

Minor Tie: The Bronze Faction (Acquiescence)

Escort

Fulgent Melody is often accompanied by bodyguards. Many are young Heaven's Dragons (use Young Dynast traits, **Exalted**, p. 541) or minor martial deities like lion-dogs.

Excellency

Bonus Dice: Fulgent Melody can add 3 dice on rolls for one mote per die or increase static values by up to +3 for two motes per plus one bonus.

Target Numbers: Fulgent Melody can reduce a roll's target number for one mote. She can reduce the target number of pools with 7+ dice by two for two motes.

Social Charms

Celestial Union Understanding (4m; Reflexive; Instant): Roll Read Intentions against the Guile of two people in a relationship to learn a detail about that relationship, and an additional detail for every three extra successes.

Creation-Preserving Will (5m; Reflexive; Instant; Mute): Inflict +1 target number on an influence roll against Melody. It doesn't apply for other targets.

Favorable Inflection Procedure (3m; Simple; Instant; Mute): Roll Social Influence against a single target to both inspire happiness and instill a positive Tie toward Melody. If he's hostile to her or upset with her, he forgets why, though he may pay one Willpower to remember if prompted by subsequent events. Melody isn't perceived as the influence's source. She can't use this Charm on someone more than once per scene.

Hayseed Eye (4m; Reflexive; Instant): Roll Read Intentions against a character's Guile to learn a detail about any criminal intentions or plans he has, and an additional detail for every three extra successes.

Honorable Thief Spirit (5m; Reflexive; One scene): Criminals count as having a Minor Tie of admiration to Melody. Characters with negative Ties toward criminals or people condemned by a ruler, government, or religion that apply to

Melody, those Ties are treated as one step weaker for her.

Knot of Destiny (1m, 1wp; Simple; One scene): Two characters in a relationship count as having Minor Ties of respect toward each other. Negative Ties to each other count as one step weaker.

Thought-Swiping Distraction (5m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Mute, Psyche): Roll Larceny against the Guile of a character within short range. Success reveals what he's thinking. If the roll also beats his Resolve, Fulgent Melody can steal that thought, preventing from him returning to it for the rest of the scene. He may pay one Willpower to resist if reminded of that train of thought.

Wilting Petal Witness (3m; Simple; Indefinite): Fulgent Melody creates a green chrysanthemum (often worn in her hair) that immediately dies if anyone speaks a falsehood in its presence.

Sad Ivory

Sad Ivory, also called Ahn-Aru, sees herself as an Immaculate first and a Sidereal second. As an orphan fostered in one of the Order's temples, learning Creation's secret history and the true origins of the Immaculate Texts shocked her faith, but did not break it. Wrestling with disbelief, she reached a more nuanced, spiritual understanding of the Immaculate Philosophy, one that looks beyond the words of the Texts to see the good they have wrought in the world. Aligning herself with the Bronze Faction was a natural choice, advancing its interests — and those of the Order — as an assassin and shikari, joining in Wyld Hunts against especially dangerous Anathema. She feels no remorse at this, but carries it out with the grave profundity due to this sacred duty.

Sad Ivory permits herself little in life beyond work, study, training, and battle. She has professional and factional relationships, but no real friends and no Circle. She takes time for convalescence, but not for leisure. She takes sabbatical only when forced by her superiors in the Bronze Faction, and spends it wandering Creation in the guise of an Immaculate theologian, monk, or pilgrim. She is a weapon of necessity, she tells herself, not a person, and a weapon has no wants or desires. She conceals the psychological damage this has done well, even from her closest allies in the Bronze Faction.

Red Osprey saw right through Ahn-Aru. By dint of tremendous tenacity and infectious charm, the Harbinger befriended her, dragging her to parties, outings, festivals, and salons throughout both Creation and Heaven. They even got her to take two sabbaticals in the same decade! For the first time in centuries, Sad Ivory felt human, felt like she could *let* herself be human, and she loved Red Osprey for it. The Joybringer's ideological alignment with the Gold Faction posed little obstacle to their relationship, in the days before the Solars' return. The two simply agreed to ignore factional politics entirely, and that was the end of the matter.

Then came the Time of Tumult. Red Osprey found himself tasked with guiding a young Dawn Caste to a temple of the Cult of the Illuminated. Sad Ivory was charged with his execution. Sad Ivory pleaded for Osprey to stand down and step aside, and they begged the same of her, but neither could abandon their duty. With tears filling her eyes, she killed Red Osprey.

Osprey's death was officially ruled an accident. She faced no official reprimand for her actions, but many within the Bronze Faction have distanced themselves from her. Some in the Gold Faction disbelieve the official story of Osprey's death and seek to have Ivory held accountable for her actions.

They needn't bother. Since Osprey's death, Sad Ivory has reverted to the most self-destructive of her patterns, isolating herself from the Fivescore Fellowship and living as an ascetic. She never filed her report for the mission, and keeps it close to her always. She takes it out in private moments, staring for minutes or hours before putting it away unread. She can't trust her own words, her own memories. Killing Red Osprey was justified; an act of passion; self-defense; murder. It was the right thing to do. It had to be.

Caste: Endings

Essence: 4; Willpower: 9; Join Battle: 9 dice

Personal: 17; Peripheral: 44

Health Levels: -0x4/-1x6/-2x2/-4/Incap.

Actions: Bureaucracy: 9 dice; Command: 8 dice; Feats of Strength: 8 dice (can attempt Strength 3 feats); Immaculate Theology: 12 dice; Intimidation: 10 dice; Investigation: 8 dice; Medicine: 8 dice; Read Intentions: 9 dice; Resist Poison/Disease: 8 dice; Senses: 9 dice; Social Influence: 5 dice; Stealth: 12 dice; Strategy: 8 dice; Theological Debate: 12 dice; Tracking: 12 dice.

Appearance 4, Resolve 5, Guile 5

Combat

Attack (Bone Rain, Starmetal Powerbow): 13 dice (Damage 16L/4)

Attack (Unarmed): 13 dice (Damage 11B)

Attack (Grapple): 10 dice (10 dice to control)

Combat Movement: 10 dice

Evasion: 6; Parry: 5

Soak/Hardness: 4/0

Intimacies

Defining Principle: My wants and needs don't matter compared to my duty.

Defining Tie: The Immaculate Order (Devotion)

Defining Tie: Red Osprey (Grief)

Major Principle: Destiny upholds the Perfected Hierarchy.

Major Principle: Piety and faith mean nothing without action.

Major Principle: I don't need or deserve other people's help.

Major Tie: The Bronze Faction (Loyalty)

Major Tie: Immaculate politics (Support)

Minor Tie: Shajah Holok (Admiration)

Excellency

Bonus Dice: Sad Ivory can add up to 4 dice on rolls for one mote per die. She can add up to +4 to static values for two motes per +1.

Target Numbers: Sad Ivory can reduce a roll's target number for one mote. She can reduce the target number of pools with 7+ dice by two for two motes, or by three for three motes, one Willpower.

Anima

Lesser Sign of Saturn (5m, Reflexive; Until next turn): Sad Ivory and allies within close range add +4 Overwhelming on **withering** attacks and an automatic success on **decisive** damage rolls. Free at bonfire.

Greater Sign of Saturn (20m, 1wp; Simple; Instant): Sad Ivory and allies gain -1 target number on damage rolls (-2 against enemies of fate) and ignore Hardness. Once per story.

Offensive Charms (Ranged)

Death Falls Like Rain (6m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Decisive-only): Make four **decisive** attacks against a target, ignoring Defense bonuses from cover and striking through full cover, though it still provides +3 non-Charm Defense. Each attack has a base pool of four damage dice, and Ivory divides her Initiative evenly among them, rounded up. If any hit, she resets to base once all attacks are completed.

Five Seasons Approach (3m, 3i, 1wp; Simple; Instant): Make a **decisive** attack against an enemy within four range bands without needing to aim. She ignores all attack roll penalties. The attack has a base damage of (4 + extra successes) dice, ignoring Hardness. It doesn't include her Initiative or reset it.

Opportune Shot (4m; Reflexive; Instant; Uniform): Ivory adds +5 effective

Initiative to determine when she acts, but must make a ranged attack on her turn. If she attacks an enemy who hasn't taken a turn this round, the damage roll gains -1 target number.

Offensive Charms (Unarmed)

Blade of the Battle Maiden (3m; Supplemental; Instant; Dual): Add (1 + enemy's wound penalty) dice of post-soak **withering** damage or **decisive** damage. If a **decisive** attack increases an enemy's wound penalty, roll additional dice of damage equal to his new penalty.

Life-Severing Stroke (1m, 1wp; Reflexive; Instant; Decisive-only): After a **decisive** attack, roll add up to four extra successes as damage dice, plus an additional success for each that's true: the target suffers a wound penalty; the target's Initiative is lower than Sad Ivory's; the target is crashed.

No Choice But Surrender (9m, 1wp; Supplemental; Instant; Withering-only): Add +5 raw damage and ignore soak on a **withering** attack.

Defensive Charms

Absent Self (2m; Reflexive; Instant, Uniform): Ivory can dodge attacks with successes equal to her Evasion and ignores four points of penalty to Evasion, except from surprise attacks.

The Center Must Hold (4m [+1wp]; Reflexive; Instant; Uniform): After being hit, inflict +1 target number on the damage roll, or pay a one-Willpower surcharge to inflict +2 target number.

Social Charms

Creation-Preserving Will (5m; Reflexive; Instant; Mute): Inflict +1 target number on an influence roll against Ivory. It doesn't apply for other targets.

Miscellaneous Charms

Inevitable Pursuit: Ignore penalties on a Tracking roll from the age and condition of tracks. Even with no physical trace at all, Ivory can follow trails no more than four weeks old, letting her contest perfect track-concealing magic.

Five-Metal Tang, God of Swords

God of Swords and head of the Bureau of Humanity's Division of Weapons, Five-Metal Tang was once a living daiklave, wielded by an Exalted hero, which attained apotheosis to avenge its master's death. Tang takes many forms — an armored figure made up of countless overlapping daiklaves, a forge-tending crone, an animate sword — and is known by as many pronouns and honorifics. While they're a passionate

connoisseur of swords, their enthusiasm outstrips their bureaucratic acumen. Only by dint of their subordinates' loyalty and love, won through shameless favoritism, have they endured such bureaucratic ordeals as Qast the Spear-Speaker's designs on their position and the long-running dispute over knives with the Division of Tools.

Tang holds great affection for those who forge swords and those who wield them. He visits them in the dreamless sleep after a battle or hard labor, speaking words of encouragement, praise, or guidance — though he can't help but be somewhat patronizing in his praises and excessive in his criticism. He occasionally invites favorites to Yu-Shan to demonstrate their prowess before the Division of Weapons, an opportunity for the skillful to win unimaginable rewards and divine patronage. Tang thrills in dueling Exalted swordsmen, rewarding those who best him by awakening the secret power within their blade.

Unlike many in the Bureau of Humanity, Tang's power and prestige suffered little from the Great Contagion, but that hasn't diminished her ambitions. Eventually, Wun Ja's scheming in Creation will be discovered, and when it is, Tang hopes to replace her as the bureau's head. While she's curried favor with several of her fellow division heads, what she needs most is someone in a position to expose Wun Ja at just the right moment. Wary of being caught in such betrayal, she's made only subtlest of overtures to censors, Sidereals, and gods of the Department of Celestial Concerns, but time is of the essence. The closer Wun Ja seems to being caught, the greater the lengths Tang will go to — which may end poorly for her if Tang misjudges the situation.

Essence: 7; Willpower: 8; Join Battle: 14 dice

Personal: 120

Health Levels: -0x8/-1x8/-2x8/-4x4/Incap.

Actions: Bureaucracy: 5 dice; Feats of Strength: 12 dice (may attempt Strength 5 feats); Knowledge of Swords: 14 dice; Read Intentions: 8 dice; Senses: 11 dice; Social Influence: 10 dice; Swordsmithing: 14 dice.

Appearance 3, Resolve 4, Guile 4

Combat

Attack (Living Daiklave): 14 dice (Damage 20L/5)

Attack (Grapple): 10 dice (8 dice to control)

Combat Movement: 12 dice

Evasion: 5; Parry: 7

Soak/Hardness: 15/10 (Five-Metal Body)

Intimacies

Defining Principle: There is no finer invention than the sword.

Defining Principle: The Bureau of Humanity would thrive under my leadership.

Major Principle: All who live by the blade would benefit from my advice.

Major Principle: Bribery, nepotism, and favor-trading are the way things get done.

Major Tie: Swordsmen and Swordsmiths (Pride)

Major Tie: Their Subordinates (Doting Fondness)

Major Tie: Worthy Foes (Excitement)

Major Tie: Wun Ja (Disloyalty)

Minor Tie: The Bureau of Heaven (Resentment)

Minor Tie: War Gods (Camaraderie)

Merits

Born of the Blade: Tang's metal body knows not the weakness of flesh, rendering them immune to poison and disease, as well as crippling effects that target organs, nerves, or the like. They don't need to eat, drink, sleep, or breathe.

Cult 4: Tang is worshipped across Creation by those who live by the blade.

Three-Natured Blade: Tang can change between shapes as a miscellaneous action. This doesn't change their traits. As an animate daiklave, they can still speak and move by floating, but are limited by their lack of limbs. If Tang allows someone to wield them in this form, they can use their Charms to enhance attacks and parries with them, but can't combine them with their wielder's magic.

Offensive Charms

Lord of All Blades (1wp; Reflexive; One scene; Essence 7): Tang gains access to all the Evocations of an artifact sword — typically one wielded by their enemies or that's previously played a prominent role in the game. Once per scene.

Peerless Sword Flourish (10m, 1wp; Supplemental; Instant; Decisive-only; Essence 7): A **decisive** attack against an enemy whose Initiative is lower than Tang's adds dice of damage equal to the difference, maximum 10. Tang adds +2 base Initiative upon resetting if successful, or +4 against crashed enemies.

Principle of Motion (10m, 1wp; Reflexive; Instant; Essence 2): Tang flurries, ignoring the usual penalties. They can combine two actions of the same type, including two attacks.

Steel-Shearing Finesse (8m, 1wp; Supplemental; Instant; Withering-only; Essence

7): A **withering** attack adds three automatic successes on the attack roll and ignores soak.

Sweep of a Thousand Blades (15m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Decisive-only): To use this Charm, Tang must have Initiative 15+. They make a **decisive** attack against all enemies within short range, rolling (Initiative/3, rounded up) damage against each hit enemy. This increases to (Initiative/2, rounded up) if Tang is within range of at least two nontrivial enemy's weapons.

Defensive Charms

One Against Thousands (5m, 1wp; Reflexive; Instant; Clash, Perilous, Uniform; Essence 7): Tang clashes an attack against them with a **decisive** attack, adding their onslaught penalty in automatic successes on the attack roll. A successful attack doesn't reset their Initiative until their next turn. If they use this Charm again before then, its Willpower cost is waived.

Peerless Guardian Excellence (6m; Reflexive; Instant; Perilous): Tang ignores penalties to Parry, except from surprise attacks, and can block attacks whose successes equal his Parry. Blocking a **decisive** attack grants the Initiative lost by their attacker for missing.

God-Metal Scabbard Stance (8m; Reflexive; Until next turn; Dual): Tang's soak and Hardness can't be reduced below 5, even by magic that negates them entirely. 1s on damage rolls against him subtract successes. Once per round, they gain one Willpower when their soak reduces a **withering** attack to minimum damage or their Hardness negates a **decisive** attack.

Mobility Charms

Battlefield-Carving Stride (6m, 1wp; Reflexive; Instant; Perilous): Tang rushes an enemy from any range, as long as they're within range of that enemy's weapon. Success lets them instantly move into close range with its target, trailing afterimages of phantasmal blades. These blades are a one-time environmental hazard against anyone caught in their path with difficulty 5 and Damage 6L.

Miscellaneous Charms

Daiklave-Emperor Largesse (1wp; Simple; Instant): Tang bestows a blessing on one whose skill has impressed them. They might awaken an Evocation from an artifact blade for the blessed character at no experience point cost, waive the

craft point cost of a character's next project to create an artifact blade, or confer a similar boon. Once per story.

Dematerialize (60m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Essence 1): Sheathing their brilliance, Tang ceases to be material.

Hurry Home (10m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Essence 1): Tang vanishes on his next turn, reappearing in their heavenly manse.

Measure the Wind (5m; Simple; Instant; Essence 1): Tang can take the measure of anyone who opposes them in battle, or whom they see engaged in swordfighting or swordsmithing.

Superior Duelist Art (5m; Supplemental; Instant; Essence 6): Double 8s on any non-attack action in combat if it's unopposed or if its targets all have lower Initiative than Tang.

Sword-God's Eye (2m; Supplemental; Instant; Eclipse; Essence 1): A successful Read Intentions roll also reveals whether that character has any experience in swordfighting or swordsmithing, and how it compares to Tang's own.

Alternatively, they can roll Knowledge of Swords at difficulty 3 while examining a blade to gauge its creator's skill. Eclipse Castes roll (Perception + Craft).

Ohanlei, Goddess of Tea

Every cup of tea is a prayer to Ohanlei, whether quaffed from a peasant's rude cup or sipped from dainty demitasses. A white-haired woman with a kindly smile and flesh of flowing porcelain, few would think that the chamomile-scented goddess was one of Heaven's great intelligencers. From her lavishly appointed salon in the Eye-of-Heaven District, she oversees a vast intelligence-gathering network that spans both Creation and Yu-Shan. She pays unemployed gods and minor functionaries to serve as her informants, blackmails prominent gods and Sidereals for information, and makes it clear that secrets are her preferred bribes. Even in Creation, many teahouse proprietors share whatever secrets they learn in their prayers to Ohanlei. Between her web of influence, her immense wealth, and the enduring prominence of her purview, she's easily fended off all comers for her lofty position in the Bureau of Humanity.

Ohanlei's coterie is far more diverse than that of most gods. A sincere believer in tea's power to bring people and communities together, she does the same herself. Spirits of every rank are seated beside each other at her table without regard for their position. Sidereals fraternize amongst themselves without regard for seniority or faction; Heaven's Dragons, God-Blooded scions, and other denizens of Heaven rub shoulders with Yu-Shan's political elite. Some are invited as a pretext for blackmail, bribery, or favor-trading. Others, Ohanlei seeks to recruit as informants and agents. Not every entry on the guest list is decided by ulterior motive — sometimes, the goddess simply wants to see how an unlikely pair would react if seated next to each other.

Though Ohanlei owes her success to her prowess as a spymaster, she doesn't see herself as one. She

styles herself a figure of mercy and benevolence, and not entirely without justification. She is often a patron of the poor — queens and peasants alike drink tea, but there are far more peasants than queens. Her heart is moved by a mother's prayer that a cup of tea will soothe her sick child's discomfort, or the plight of the starving who brew meager tea to lessen their hunger pangs. She rarely answers prayers personally, but directs her agents in Creation to intervene on her behalf.

The Realm is Creation's single largest tea-drinking culture, making its prosperity key to Ohanlei's continued prominence. She spends much of her political cachet and calls in many favors in planning committees, advocating against destinies that threaten the Realm's farmland or trade. Her goals have so often overlapped with the Bronze Faction's agenda that she's seen as a staunch political ally, but she has no interest in the Bronze ideology. She would not bat an eye if the returned Lawgivers put the Scarlet Dynasty to the sword, so long as the Realm's new Solar god-kings still drink tea.

Essence: 7; Willpower: 7; Join Battle: 6 dice

Personal: 120

Health Levels: -0x2/-1x3/-2x3/-4/Incap.

Actions: Brewing Tea: 14 dice; Brokered Knowledge: 12 dice; Bureaucracy: 10 dice; Herbal Remedies: 10 dice; Investigation: 7 dice; Larceny: 7 dice; Read Intentions: 12 dice; Senses: 7 dice; Social Influence: 12 dice.

Appearance 3, Resolve 5, Guile 6

Combat

Attack (Unarmed): 6 dice (Damage 8B)

Attack (Grapple): 5 dice (5 dice to control)

Combat Movement: 6 dice

Evasion: 2; Parry: 1

Soak/Hardness: 3/0

Intimacies

Defining Principle: All problems can be solved over a cup of tea.

Defining Principle: There is no greater power than knowledge.

Major Tie: Her intelligence network (Confidence)

Major Tie: The Bureau of Humanity (Dedication)

Major Tie: The Realm (Protectiveness)

Major Tie: Political rivals (Scorn)

Minor Tie: Her cultists (Compassion)

Minor Principle: I can't abide equivocators.

Minor Tie: The Bronze Faction (Pragmatic Cooperation)

Minor Tie: Potential protégés (Curiosity)

Escort

Shattered-Mane Lai, Ohanlei's celestial lion bodyguard (p. XX), rarely leaves her side, though his presence isn't always obvious. There's no telling who else might accompany her on any given day.

Merits

Cult 5: Ohanlei is venerated throughout Creation's largest empire and beyond.

Social Charms

All-Seeing Proprietor (10m, 1wp; Supplemental; Instant; Essence 5): Double 8s on a Read Intentions roll, an Investigation roll for profiling, or a Brokered Knowledge roll to introduce a fact. Anyone drinking tea suffers -2 Guile against this.

Bitter Sip of Betrayal (25m, 2wp; Simple; Instant; Essence 7): Ohanlei makes a special introduce fact roll with Brokered Knowledge to reveal an informant or double agent within an organization. The group's leader rolls (Perception + [Bureaucracy, Investigation, or Socialize]) opposing her. Success always provides some immediate benefit to Ohanlei — typically, the infiltrator appears to aid her. Once per story.

Tantalizing Teahouse Rumors (5m; Simple; Instant; Eclipse; Essence 1): Ohanlei makes a special Read Intentions roll against someone, adding three automatic successes. Success reveals the most interesting piece of gossip about him, but not whether it's actually true.

Taste of Tranquil Chamomile (5m; Simple; Instant; Eclipse, Essence 1): Ohanlei makes a Social Influence roll as she brews a pot of tea, using this influence roll to inspire calm in those who drink. Eclipse Castes roll (Charisma + Performance or Socialize). Characters calmed by the tea treat any negative Ties they have to anyone else who shares in the tea as one step weaker for the rest of the scene.

Miscellaneous Charms

Fever-Soothing Brew (5m; Simple; Instant; Eclipse; Essence 1): As Ohanlei pours a cup of tea, she speaks a blessing on its recipient. If he drinks it, the tea counts as exceptional equipment (**Exalted**, p. 580) for his Stamina rolls and Medicine rolls made by others to treat him until he next sleeps. If someone forms a positive Tie to Ohanlei because of this, she gains one Willpower, maximum once per day.

Hurry Home (10m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Essence 1): Ohanlei vanishes on her next turn, reappearing in her celestial manse or any teahouse in Yu-Shan.

Materialize (60m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Essence 1): Ohanlei manifests from billowing steam that smells of tea steeping.

Measure the Wind (5m; Simple; Instant; Essence 1): Ohanlei takes the measure of anyone who accepts her hospitality or who's had tea within the last week.

Upturned Teacup Prophecy (5m; Simple; Instant; Essence 1): Ohanlei performs a divination identical to either version of Reading the Tea Leaves (**Exalted**, p. 490). She rolls Brewing Tea and doubles 7s.

Pallian-Azar, Doorkeeper of the Western Sky

Since the Black Moon Accords were first brokered, the Western horizon has been the prison of devil-stars who broke their pact with Heaven. The Doorkeeper of the Western Sky is their gaoler, tasked by Heaven with keeping eternal vigil. Pallian-Azar isn't the first Doorkeeper, though he's held the title since the First Age. Once scrupulous to a fault, his dedication has waned in the millennia since his crystalline prisoners last challenged their durance, while other pursuits have caught his attention.

While Pallian-Azar's purview is prestigious enough, he also holds the distinction of membership in Luna's heavenly spirit court. His long vigil in Creation kept him from taking part in the court's politics, but his dereliction of duty has created new possibilities for him. He's spent the last century seeking respect and acclaim from his divine peers by establishing himself as a compassionate benefactor of Yu-Shan's impoverished spirits.

Pallian-Azar cares more for the appearance of charity than charity itself, and favors the most expedient means in carrying it out. Heaven's elite may laud and fête him, but for the gods of Yu-Shan's slums, he's just another kingpin, and his Benevolent Sunset Society is no different than any other crime syndicate. Embezzling ambrosia, running protection rackets, and dealing in contraband provide easy funding for Pallian-Azar's philanthropic ventures, with enough left over to pay off the lion-dogs. The Doorkeeper doesn't think of it as crime — in truth, he gives it little thought at all.

Pallian-Azar's subordinates and clerical staff in the Bureau of Nature have picked up much of the slack for his duties in Creation. But the escape of a devil-star demands the Doorkeeper of the Western Sky, not poor Kataji, the much put-upon Undersecretary of Driftwood. Now, Pallian-Azar quietly seeks word of the devil-star's movements and pulls whatever strings he must to keep from being found out. He'll pay decadent sums of ambrosia to Sidereals, Heaven's Dragons, or other Exalted operating in the West for the assistance and discretion in the matter, though he keeps them in the dark on how it happened. He's confident that he'll prevail over then devil-star once he finds it...but it's been much time since he last took

up those duties.

Pallian-Azar could be mistaken for a middle-aged man from almost anywhere in the far West, were it not for the way the light goes strange around him and the perfumed vapor of shadows that trails behind him. He's good-humored by nature, at least when he's not worrying about a fugitive devil-star. When his mood falters, as it often has of late, the temperature around him drops noticeably. His wardrobe boasts all the colors of the sunset, demanding a small fleet of prayerwrights to spin ill-gotten ambrosia into his endless variety of impeccable outfits. He prefers to wear exclusively second-hand jewelry — some offered up in place of protection money, others claimed as trophies from rival crime lords.

Essence: 6; Willpower: 7; Join Battle: 8 dice

Personal: 101

Health Levels: -0x2/-1x4/-2x4/-4x2/Incap.

Actions: Bureaucracy: 9 dice; Command: 6 dice; Investigation: 10 dice; Knowledge of Devil-Stars: 12 dice; Larceny: 11 dice; Navigation: 7 dice; Read Intentions: 10 dice; Senses: 7 dice; Social Influence: 12 dice; Stealth 11 dice; Tracking: 10 dice.

Appearance 4, Resolve 3, Guile 5

Combat

Attack (Splintered Sky, Crystal-Bone Daiklave): 9 dice (Damage 14L/5)

Attack (Grapple): 6 dice (6 dice to control)

Combat Movement: 6 dice

Evasion: 3; Parry: 4

Soak/Hardness: 8/4 (Illimitable Sunset Finery, cloth-of-dusk silken armor)

Intimacies

Defining Principle: I deserve my peers' respect and acclaim.

Major Principle: Those who benefit from my generosity shouldn't complain about my methods.

Major Tie: The fugitive devil-star (Trepidation)

Major Tie: The Benevolent Sunset Society (Pride)

Minor Principle: Wealth exists to be flaunted.

Minor Tie: Luna (Desire for Approval)

Minor Tie: The Bureau of Nature (Discontent)

Minor Tie: Devil-Stars (Fascination)

Escort

Pallian-Azar is often attended by enforcers of the Benevolent Sunset Society: God-Blooded champions (**Exalted**, p. 497), dogs of the unbroken earth (**Exalted**, p. 511), storm mothers (**Exalted**, p. 513), corrupt lion-dogs (p. XX), and the like.

Merits

Cult 3: Important as Pallian-Azar's purview is to Heaven, it's of little concern to most mortals. Those who do worship him most often revere him in his role as sky-god or a god of night.

Gloaming Eye: Pallian-Azar can see even in magical darkness. Senses rolls convert any penalties negated by this to bonus dice.

Twilight Nimbus: Pallian-Azar can stand upon his vaporous shadows to fly. Outside of combat, he travels at sixty miles per hour, or twice that in the West.

Offensive Charms

Mantle of Perfumed Twilight (5m, 4i, 1wp; Reflexive; One scene; Perilous; Essence 4): Pallian-Azar's vaporous shadows extend out to medium range from him. They inflict a -3 penalty on vision-based rolls impeded by its darkness and counts as difficult terrain (**Exalted**, p. 199). Pallian-Azar and his allies are immune, as are characters who can see in the darkness or have no need of sight. This ends if he's crashed. Once per scene.

Social Charms

An Offer Best Accepted (15m, 1wp; Supplemental; Instant; Essence 5): Pallian-Azar doubles 8s on a bargain or threaten roll made in the course of corrupt dealings or criminal activity. Affected characters can't report it to any official authority unless they pay three Willpower, separate from resisting the influence.

Stealth Charms

Descend Into Darkness (10m; Simple; Instant; Essence 6): Pallian-Azar rolls Stealth with double 8s. If he conceals himself from all enemies, he can vanish and reappear anywhere within medium range that has sufficient darkness-based concealment to hide.

Miscellaneous Charms

Hurry Home (10m, 1wp; Simple; Instant): Pallian-Azar vanishes and fades away on his next turn, reappearing in his palace-sanctum in the distant West or his primrose-draped manse in Yu-Shan.

Let Twilight Fall (20m, 1wp; Simple; One scene; Eclipse; Essence 5): Pallian-Azar declares it dusk, and it becomes so. The sun does not set, but seems to fade away between eyeblinks. It counts as being sunset for relevant effects, like some Solar anima powers. Using this to begin casting a demon-summoning spell shortens its ritual's duration to one hour. The false dusk extends out to six range bands from Pallian-Azar, or (Essence) miles in the West. Once per day.

Materialize (55m, 1wp; Simple; Instant): As Pallian-Azar's vaporous shadows manifest, he steps forth from them .

Measure the Wind (5m; Simple; Instant): Pallian-Azar can take the measure of anyone who prays to him, or who stands before him at dusk or under the Western sky.

Shaper of Skies (5m, 1wp; Simple; One day; Essence 3): Pallian-Azar rolls Navigation with double 9s to change the weather within (6 + extra successes) miles, like with Sky-and-Rain Mantra (p. XX).

Pattern Spider

The pattern spiders dwell within the Loom of Fate's threads, working tirelessly and methodically to sustain Creation's reality. When the weave of fate is frayed, they are the first to repair the damage, patching small rifts entirely and stabilizing larger damage until divine intervention arrives. They weave planned destinies into the Loom — not to mention the time spent spinning threads of fate while heavenly committees plan, revise, and discard potential destinies. From the Loom, they have little influence over the outcomes of distant events, capable of only the slightest adjustments to probabilities. But without the pattern spiders nudging the odds, destiny would fall apart — there aren't enough spirits or Sidereals to tend to everything the pattern spiders do.

A pattern spider's carapace is made from living metal and crystal, though they are born, not made. They're specialists by nature, each filling a particular niche in the Loom's metaphysical ecology. They vary greatly in size depending on their age, purpose, and experience. Most range from smaller than a fingernail to the size of a large dog, while the oldest pattern spiders, called august weavers, can grow to the size of an elk. Asna Firstborn, mother of all pattern spiders, rivals lesser elemental dragons in size. Pattern spiders' voices are low and sibilant; while they tend to be terse, some are notorious chatterboxes.

Many outside the Bureau of Destiny think of patten spiders as docile servitors, mistaking the weavers' diligence and the fulfillment they find in their work for servility. In truth, pattern spiders are highly opinionated in matters of destiny, particularly within their areas of expertise. Many put considerable time

into correcting the most minute of details in planned destinies, like a secretary correcting punctuation in his superior's reports. Larger concerns are submitted to the Bureau of Destiny on spun-silk memoranda. Such petitions are given considerable weight — who knows the Loom better than its weavers?

The pattern spiders have a society of their own, made up of twenty-five colleges — one for each constellation of Sidereal astrology — with the august weavers overseeing their younger kin. Young spiders debate the merits of different destiny-weaving techniques between shifts, while their elders reminisce about past weaves they're particularly proud of.

Pattern spiders are particular in their choices of friends and confidantes among their Sidereal colleagues. Winning one's trust can take years, and their respect, even longer. Many respond well to flattery from those whose praise of a spider's work is informed by their understanding of the expertise that goes into weaving destiny. Those who befriend a pattern spider can be highly esteemed within the Bureau of Destiny.

The below traits represent a dog-sized pattern spider. Smaller spiders can be represented by adding Tiny Creature (**Exalted**, p. 561) or Minuscule Size (**Lunars**, p. 361). All three sizes of pattern spider are suitable as three-dot familiars (**Exalted**, p. 161) for Sidereals.

Essence: 2; Willpower: 6; Join Battle: 7 dice

Personal: 70

Health Levels: -0/-1x2/-2x2/-4/Incap.

Actions: Bureaucracy: 5 dice; Climb: 10 dice; Debate Metaphysics: 9 dice; Feats of Strength: 7 dice (can attempt Strength 3 feats); Read Intentions: 5 dice; Senses: 9 dice; Social Influence: 5 dice; Stealth: 10 dice; Tracking: 7 dice; Weaving: 12 dice.

Appearance 1, Resolve 3, Guile 3

Combat

Attack (Bite): 8 dice (Damage 12L)

Attack (Grapple): 8 dice (6 dice to control)

Combat Movement: 10 dice

Evasion: 4; Parry: 2

Soak/Hardness: 5/4

Intimacies

Defining Principle: My work sustains Creation, and I take pride in it.

Defining Tie: The Loom of Fate (Reverence)

Major Principle: I know best when it comes to destiny.

Major Tie: Creation (Interest)

Minor Tie: The Bureau of Destiny (Respect)

Minor Tie: Enemies of Fate (Revulsion)

Merits

Cult 1: Pattern spiders are empowered by the Bureau of Destiny's collective gratitude.

Eightfold Eyes of Fate: Pattern spiders can detect the presence of fate-altering Shaping effects with a difficulty 5 Senses roll. They can distinguish between harmful effects and beneficial ones, but can't discern any more detail than that.

Living Metal: Pattern spiders are immune to poison and disease, as well as crippling effects that target organs, nerves, or the like. They don't need to eat, drink, sleep, or breathe.

Wallcrawling: Pattern spiders can climb up walls and ceilings.

Offensive Charms

Pattern Venom (4m, 1i; Supplemental; Instant; Decisive-only, Eclipse, Shaping (Fate); Essence 2): A **decisive** bite attack carries a metaphysical toxin that causes bad luck. It has Damage 1/round, Duration 5 rounds, and a -3 penalty. It doesn't deal damage. Instead, if there are any successes on the damage roll for an interval, the poisoned character suffers a stroke of misfortune. An overturned wagon might put difficult terrain in his way, or his weapon might slip from his grasp. If there's nothing more fitting, the victim loses one Willpower. Eclipse Castes convey this venom through their unarmed attacks.

Silken Fate Snare (5m; Supplemental; Until the clinch ends; Essence 2): When the pattern spider restrains a grappled enemy, it wraps him in webbing. The spider can take other non-reflexive actions while grappling and suffer no Defense penalties for grappling. The opponent's penalties to attacks increase by one. This can't be used on the turn the spider makes the grapple gambit.

Web of Woven Destiny (10m; Simple; One scene, Essence 2): The spider spins a web out to short range, which is difficult terrain for other characters. While within the web, the spider doubles 9s on movement actions and on hearing-based Senses rolls against others within the web.

Miscellaneous Charms

Hurry Home (10m, 1wp; Simple; Instant): The pattern spider vanishes on its next turn, reappearing within the Loom of Fate. Pattern spider familiars may return to their companion instead.

Materialize (60m, 1wp; Simple; Instant): The pattern spider weaves its physical form from threads of crystal and metal.

Measure the Wind (5m; Simple; Instant): The pattern spider takes the measure of anyone whose current destiny bears the influence of the constellation associated with that spider's college.

Read the Weave (5m; Simple; Instant; Eclipse; Essence 2): This Charm works like the Auspicious Prospects anima power (p. XX), but only for destinies related to the constellation associated with that spider's college. They don't benefit from fulfilling auspicious prospects.

Customizing Pattern Spiders

In addition to customizing a pattern spider's size, Storytellers can also add dice pools, Merits, and spirit Charms based on a spider's particular niche within the Loom or the themes of the constellation associated with its college. It's common for them to have that constellation's versions of the Sidereals' Ascending (Caste) Horoscope and Descending (Caste) Horoscope Charms.

August weavers gain the following benefits in addition to any other unique traits added by the Storyteller. They're not suitable as familiars.

Essence: 3; Willpower: 8; Join Battle: 10 dice.

Personal: 80

Actions: Bureaucracy: 8 dice; Climb: 12 dice; Debate Metaphysics: 12 dice; Feats of Strength: 10 dice (can attempt Strength 5 feats); Read Intentions: 6 dice; Senses: 10 dice; Social Influence: 6 dice; Stealth: 10 dice; Tracking: 7 dice; Weaving: 14 dice.

Appearance 1, Resolve 4, Guile 3

Combat

Attack (Bite): 11 dice (Damage 14L/3)

Attack (Grapple): 11 dice (7 dice to control)

Combat Movement: 12 dice

Evasion: 6; Parry: 4

Soak/Hardness: 10/7

Lion-Dog

Lion-dogs are guardian beasts of living jade standing six feet high, combining the features of a stocky lion and a mastiff. Despite their bestial appearance, they're as intelligent as any other god, and are known for their bravery and loyalty. In Heaven, they're most often involved in law enforcement, but others are given duties in Creation, watching over temples, tombs, and manses of interest to Heaven.

Guard postings may last millennia, even after a lion-dog's charge is reduced to ruins. Some maintain their vigils even after this, but others abandon their defunct posts, serving as guardians to mortal communities in exchange for their gratitude and prayer or traveling the world alongside new friends.

Lion-dogs are amiable spirits and often quite talkative, but they're unforgiving and extremely sensitive to any offense or betrayal. The typical lion-dog has no compunctions against devouring even those they've shared jokes and wine with, if they ignore her warnings not to trespass against her charge or violate heavenly law.

Essence: 3; Willpower: 8; Join Battle: 8 dice

Personal: 80

Health Levels: -0x3/-1x3/-2x2/-4/Incap.

Actions: Feats of Strength: 11 dice (may attempt Strength 5 feats); Heavenly Law: 5 dice; Investigation: 9 dice (see Keen Nose); Read Intentions: 9 dice (see Keen Nose); Resist Poison/Disease: 9 dice; Senses: 9 dice (see Keen Nose); Social Influence: 7 dice; Stealth: 7 dice; Tracking: 9 dice (see Keen Nose).

Appearance 3, Resolve 5, Guile 2

Combat

Attack (Bite): 9 dice (Damage 16L/3)

Attack (Claw): 11 dice (Damage 14L)

Attack (Grapple): 9 dice (11 dice to control)

Combat Movement: 8 dice

Evasion: 4; Parry: 6

Soak/Hardness: 10/10

Merits

Keen Nose: Double 9s on scent-based Investigation, Read Intentions, Senses, and

Tracking rolls.

Offensive Charms

Fangs of the Hunt (6m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Decisive- only; Essence 1): Make a **decisive** attack with double 10s on the damage roll. Success inflicts a crippling penalty equal to the levels of damage dealt on the victim's movement actions. If this penalty exceeds his Dexterity, he can no longer move reflexively; he must instead use a miscellaneous action. The penalty lasts until the damage is healed or he receives medical treatment.

Principle of Motion (10m, 1wp; Reflexive; Instant; Essence 2): The lion-dog flurries, ignoring the usual penalties. It can combine two actions of the same type, including two attacks.

Defensive Charms

Impenetrable Hide (5m; Reflexive; Instant; Uniform; Essence 2): An attack against the lion-dog subtracts a success from its damage roll, plus an additional success for each 1 on the roll, maximum (Essence).

Social Charms

Dutiful Guardian (3m; Reflexive; Instant; Essence 1): Add +3 Resolve against influence that requires the lion-dog to abandon her duties or violate heavenly law.

Villain-Smiting Roar (10m; Supplemental; Instant; Essence 2): Add three automatic successes on a threaten roll and ignore multiple target penalties. Affected characters can't attack the lion-dog, interfere with her charge, or violate heavenly law for the rest of the scene. Resisting requires at least a Major Intimacy.

Miscellaneous Charms

Hunt the Wicked (8m; Supplemental; Instant; Essence 2): Add three successes on an Investigation, Read Intentions, Senses, or Tracking roll against someone the lion-dog suspects of having interfered with her charge or violating heavenly law.

Hurry Home (10m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Essence 1): At the start of the lion-dog's next turn, she vanishes and reappears by whatever she's been appointed to guard. Lion-dogs in heavenly law enforcement instead appear in their district

office.

Materialize (40m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Essence 1): The lion-dog materializes, her stony body forming around her.

Measure the Wind (5m; Simple; Instant; Essence 1): The lion-dog takes the measure of someone she suspects of having interfered with her charge or violated heavenly law.

Celestial Lion

Celestial lions are great beasts of living orichalcum, standing up to nine feet high. They're diligent and honest, honoring their oaths and contracts unfailingly, but they're also prideful to a fault and possessed of a certain feline caprice. In Yu-Shan, they head the Department of Celestial Concerns' law enforcement operations. In Creation, they're entrusted with guarding heavenly gates, the gaols of forbidden gods, and other sites of considerable import to Heaven.

Like lion-dogs, some celestial lions have abandoned their posts in Creation, either out of corrupt self-interest or simply because their duty has been obsoleted. Some find work as mercenaries, guards to queens, princes, or wandering heroes. Others flout heavenly law and serve their own interests, like Ka Hamod, the tyrant of Golden Spire.

Celestial lions use the same traits as lion-dogs, but gain the following:

- Essence 5 and 100 motes. Materializing costs fifty motes and one Willpower.
- +3 dice to all dice pools.
- Appearance 5, Resolve 6, Guile 4
- Health Levels: -0x5/-1x5/-2x5/-4x10/Incap.
- 15 soak.
- +3 Damage and +2 Overwhelming on attacks.

They also gain the following Charms:

Offensive Charms

Wrathful Guardian-Beast Attack (10m, 1wp; Supplemental; Instant; Dual; Essence 3): Double up to five extra successes to determine a **withering** attack's raw damage or add up to five extra successes as **decisive** damage dice. Against enemies the lion suspects have interfered with her charge or violated heavenly law, there's no limit on how many extra successes she can double.

Defensive Charms

Perdurant Orichalcum Hide (20m, 5i, 1wp; Reflexive; Instant; Decisive-only; Perilous; Essence 3): After a **decisive** damage roll that fills all the lion's health levels of one type, she can use this Charm to negate any further damage. Once

per day.

Wrathful Guardian-Beast Attack (10m; Reflexive; Until next turn; Dual; Essence 3): The lion can't be crashed by **withering** attacks that are reduced to minimum damage. When determining if her Hardness prevents **decisive** damage, her attacker doesn't count damage dice from any source but his Initiative. Attacks that don't use his Initiative use the lower of it or their damage pool.

Social Charms

Incorruptible Servant of Heaven (5m, 1wp; Reflexive; Instant; Essence 4): Once per story, waive the need for an Intimacy in a Decision Point to resist influence that requires the lion to abandon her duties, violate heavenly law, or break a promise.

Miscellaneous Charms

Celestial Guardian Puissance (5m; Reflexive; Instant; Essence 4): Add +5 dice or +3 to a static value against anyone the lion suspects of having interfered with her charge or violating heavenly law.

Lesser Elemental Dragon

Elementals of great age and puissance sometimes metamorphose into lesser elemental dragons (p. XX). Powerful spirits, they are "lesser" only by comparison to Gaia's progeny, the Five Elemental Dragons. As they age and cultivate their Essence over millennia, they grow to prodigious sizes. Almost all of them have held themselves back from the apex of their Essence's potential. The rare few who have attained such heights are vast beyond imagining, their very existence a natural disaster that demands immediate intervention. The titanic earth dragon known as the Kukla, for instance, lies imprisoned beneath a volcano swallowed beneath the Western seas, guarded by divine sentinels handpicked by the Unconquered Sun.

The following traits are common to lesser elemental dragons, but some dragons have some unique powers, like Righteous Daram, below. Dragons of considerable age and size have Essence 8-9, a size-based Merit similar to God-Wrought Monster (**Hundred Devils Night Parade**, p. 34), and any high-Essence spirit Charms or unique powers the Storyteller wishes to add.

Essence: 6; Willpower: 8; Join Battle: 10 dice

Personal: 110

Health Levels: -0x5/-1x10/-2x10/-4/Incap.

Speed Bonus: +5

Actions: Feats of Strength: 14 dice (may attempt Strength 10 feats); Fly: 14 dice; Read Intentions: 8 dice; Resistance Poison/Disease: 13 dice; Senses: 10 dice;

Social Influence: 12 dice; Stealth: 7 dice.

Appearance 4, Resolve 5, Guile 4

Combat

Attack (Bite): 11 dice (Damage 22L/5)

Attack (Claws): 14 dice (Damage 18L/3)

Attack (Grapple): 10 dice (12 dice to control). Elemental dragons make unopposed control rolls against smaller enemies, unless they use magic like Dragon Coil Technique.

Combat Movement: 14 dice

Evasion: 7; Parry: 6

Soak/Hardness: 24/10

Merits

Legendary Size: The dragon doesn't suffer onslaught penalties from smaller foes' attacks, unless inflicted by magic. She can't be crashed by smaller enemies' **withering** attacks unless they have 10+ post-soak damage, although attackers gain the full amount of Initiative damage dealt. Smaller enemies' **decisive** attacks can't deal more than (attacker's Strength + 3) levels of damage to her, not counting levels added by magic.

Soaring Dragon Flight: Lesser elemental dragons can fly at 500 miles per hour, or move through their native element at the same speed. In combat, they double 9s on movement rolls and can rush enemies they're flying above from short range.

Offensive Charms

Claw-Fang Rampage (25m, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Decisive-only; Essence 6): Make two **decisive** Claw attacks and a **decisive** Bite attack. Each must be made against a different enemy, unless savaging a grappled foe. The dragon's Initiative doesn't reset until all three attacks are completed. Once per scene unless being attacked 5+ times by nontrivial enemies in a single round.

Draconic Suspiration (25m, 4i, 1wp; Simple; Instant; Withering-only, Perilous): The dragon exhales deadly elemental energy, rolling 15 dice for a **withering** attack against all enemies in a ninety degree arc out to medium range: typically one

enemy at close range, three at short, and five at medium. The attack's base damage is 20. Enemies that take 5+ damage are knocked back one range band and fall prone. The dragon's breath also conveys an elemental effect: poison (**Exalted**, p. 523), setting the battlefield ablaze, etc. Once per scene unless reset by going three rounds without being damaged.

Raging Dragon Strike (12m; Supplemental; Instant; Uniform; Essence 4): Add (current temporary Willpower) dice on an attack roll and double 9s on the damage roll. At Initiative 20+, add 10 dice and double 8s on damage.

Defensive Charms

Elemental Body Dispersal (4m, 2i; Reflexive; Instant): Every 1 and 2 on an attack roll subtracts a success from both the attack and damage rolls.

Miscellaneous Charms

Draconic Might (4m, 1wp or 4m, 4i; Simple; Instant): Add 10 dice on a feat of strength and +10 effective Strength to determine what feats the dragon can attempt.

Dematerialize (60m, 1wp; Simple; Instant): The dragon dissolves into its element, becoming immaterial.

Righteous Daram, Valiant Censor Against Perfidy from the Beyond

Righteous Daram takes nothing more seriously than their job. Their reputation for unflappable composure and unfaltering grace is well-deserved. Their reputation for being incorruptible, less so. Daram's rejected fortunes' worth of ambrosia in bribes, but those who know the censor's preferred currency find the dragon far more amenable: favors owed, backchannels established, and acts of justice done outside the law. Daram is too self-righteous to acknowledge it as corruption, deeming it a justifiable exercise of censorial discretion. That being said, they do take care that there's no evidence of any such dealings, having learned every trick in the book investigating heavenly crimes.

Daram's remit as Valiant Censor Against Perfidy from the Beyond encompasses otherworldly enemies of Creation, like demons, the Fair Folk, and the undead. They've decided that this includes Getimians, Abyssals, and the other Exalted who've appeared since the Divine Revolution's end, and have yet to find disagreement. Their remit also includes spirits who have illicit dealings with otherworldly forces: providing material support to a Second Circle demon's intrigues in Malfeas, dealing in all manner of alien contraband, all the way up to treason against Heaven. Daram's typically scrupulous in observing the limits of their jurisdiction, but takes a broad view when their sense of righteousness is offended.

Daram values the Exalted as allies, going out of their way to deputize them in their investigations. They also make themselves available as legal counsel to Sidereals and Heaven's dragons, asking only a modest retainer of righteous deeds or promised favors. If a client faces legal or bureaucratic obstacles to striking a

blow against Perfidious Entities from the Beyond, Daram clears their schedule and works pro bono.

Daram uses their position as censor to act as patron to the elementals of the Eight Altars Borough. They're the first considered for employment as clerks and retainers in Daram's office, where they'll receive generous salaries and bonuses if they can perform the censor's standards. A considerable portion of the censor's salary goes to sponsoring the neighborhood's businesses, festivals, and public works projects, providing a better standard of living than most majority-elemental neighborhoods enjoy. Even the neighborhood's small mortal populace receives some of the dragon's charity; families keep candles forever lit in the censor's honor. Threats to the borough — be they crime syndicates, unscrupulous land developers, or Getimian insurgents — are one of the few things that can rouse Daram to wrath.

Traits

Daram also has following unique traits:

Actions: Bureaucracy: 13 dice; Feats of Strength: 14 dice (may attempt Strength 10 feats); Fly: 14 dice; Investigation: 12 dice; Otherworldly Lore: 14 dice; Read Intentions: 8 dice; Resistance Poison/Disease: 13 dice; Senses: 10 dice; Social Influence: 12 dice; Stealth: 7 dice; Tracking: 12 dice. Intimacies

Defining Principle: Perfidy from the Beyond must not be allowed to trouble Heaven or Creation.

Defining Principle: Righteousness demands protecting the weak and punishing those who prey upon them.

Major Principle: The law matters, but doing what's right matters more.

Major Tie: Eight Altars Borough and its residents (Protectiveness)

Minor Tie: The Exalted (Interest)

Charms

Censor's Geas (20m, 1wp; Supplemental; Instant; Essence 4): Double 7s on a persuade roll that invokes Daram's authority as censor. Resisting this requires fully eroding any Intimacy that supported their influence and costs three Willpower. Daram's sunordinates count as having a Major Intimacy that supports this and can't resist with Willpower.

Measure the Wind (5m; Simple; Instant; Essence 1): Daram takes the measure of an otherworldly being or Exalt, or someone who's had dealings with such beings this story.

Perfidy-Cleansing Flame (4m, 1wp; Reflexive; One scene; Instant; Aggravated, Decisive-only, Eclipse; Essence 3): Daram's **decisive** attacks and any other fire-

based **decisive** attacks or environmental hazards within long range roll an additional die of damage against otherworldly beings and Exalted and deal aggravated damage. Eclipse Castes must use fire-based attacks to gain this benefit.

Righteousness Burns Bright: (10m, 1wp; Reflexive; Instant; Essence 6): Daram treats influence that opposes a Principle about righteousness as unacceptable, or breaks a Psyche effect that would make them act against such a Principle. Once per story.

Vanquish the Otherworldly (5m; Supplemental; Instant; Essence 4): Add three automatic successes or +3 to a static value against an otherworldly being or Exalt. Add five successes instead on Investigation, Read Intentions, Senses, and Tracking rolls.